

Accessibility Improvement Plan 2015-2016

Accessibility Programme

Executive Board
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Summary

Introduction: The UOC's commitment to accessibility	2
Main areas of action.....	4
Actions	5
1. Organization and management of accessibility at the UOC.....	5
2. Adaptation services for students	6
3. Awareness-raising and education	7
4. Occupational integration services.....	8
5. Website accessibility	9
Appendix. Services offered by the UOC to disabled students	11

Introduction: The UOC's commitment to accessibility

From its inception, the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC) has been committed to working for the social inclusion of people with disabilities, seeking at all times the continuous improvement of accessibility at the University. The UOC has undertaken to foster the empowerment and independence of any member of the University community (students, affiliated teaching staff, professors and administrative staff), on one hand, by considering the accessibility requirements of any project as regards the tools, learning resources and study methodologies used at the University and, on the other hand, making custom adaptations in those cases where it is considered justified.

In the specific case of our students, the University's undertaking is to provide education while adapting to people's capabilities, guaranteeing at all times the acquisition of the necessary skills to obtain a given qualification. Accordingly, the UOC offers an educational model based on personalization and ongoing mentoring, transcending time and space constraints. It is, therefore, a model that intrinsically achieves a high degree of equal opportunity in access to education, which includes such effort as may be required to cater for the specific educational needs that our students may have.

To move forward in its commitment to guarantee accessibility, the UOC created the Accessibility Programme, within Planning and Quality. The purpose of this programme is to coordinate and implement the principles and the action plans approved by the University's Executive Board in this area. In addition, the programme coordinates the activities of the following bodies:

- Accessibility Leaders: a working group composed of representatives from the management teams and the faculty, whose mission is to coordinate the tasks performed by the different teams and share information.
- Curricular Adaptation Committee: this committee's function is to decide on an individual basis the significant curricular adaptations to be made for students when this is considered necessary.

The Accessibility Improvement Plan presented here is valid from 2015 to 2016, and is linked to the Social Responsibility Master Plan developed within the framework of the University's Strategic Plan 2014-2020.

The goal of the Accessibility Improvement Plan is to endow the University with a clear framework within which the UOC's mission and values can be developed, establishing guidelines for achieving a truly inclusive university that promotes the social and occupational inclusion of people with disabilities.

This means that the Accessibility Improvement Plan is directly related with our university's Organizational and Operational Regulations (<http://portaldogc.gencat.cat/utillsEADOP/PDF/6844/1416456.pdf>):

- Article 27. Students' rights and duties:
 - b) To have equal opportunities and not be discriminated on the grounds of birth, gender, sexual orientation, race, opinion, religion, disability or any other personal or social condition or circumstance.

- Article 36. Disability services:

From its inception, the UOC has been committed to the social inclusion of people with disabilities. Accordingly, it strives to make the University accessible to all those who wish to become a member of the University community in whatever capacity. To move forward in its commitment to guaranteeing accessibility, the UOC has created an accessibility programme to promote and coordinate implementation of the principles and the action plans agreed in this field.

In addition, the Accessibility Improvement Plan is linked to the UOC's Strategic Plan 2014-2020 ([://www.uoc.edu/CA/documents/university/programme-2014-2020.pdf](http://www.uoc.edu/CA/documents/university/programme-2014-2020.pdf)), some of whose strategic goals are the following:

- Create a learning environment that provides an intellectually stimulating and socially transformative and inclusive educational experience.

- Offer a high-quality, multidisciplinary education with the possibility of personalizing the curricular pathway so as to maximize for all students the opportunity to satisfy their personal and professional expectations.

With the approval of this accessibility improvement plan, it is wished to fulfil the mandate imposed by current legislation and also to follow the guidelines provided by the Spanish Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality's Strategy Action Plan on Disability 2014-2020, which in turn takes as reference the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the guidelines of the European Strategy on Disability 2010-2020, the Europe 2020 Strategy, and the forecasts of the Spanish Strategy on Disability.

In addition to the actions included in this plan, the UOC is working to ensure that all its educational programmes take into account the principles of universal accessibility and inclusive design. It offers specific training in this field, for example, the University Master's Degree in Learning Difficulties and Language Disorders, and performs specialized research to improve the social inclusion of disabled people.

Main areas of action

- Area 1. Organization and management of accessibility at the UOC
- Area 2. Adaptation services for students
- Area 3. Awareness-raising and education
- Area 4. Occupational integration services
- Area 5. Website accessibility

Actions

1. Organization and management of accessibility at the UOC

- 1.1. Take part in designing and implementing the disabled students database proposed by UNIDISCAT.
Manager: Accessibility Programme
- 1.2. Ensure compliance with the Law on personal data protection (LOPD) as regards data about disability. Manager: Legal Office
- 1.3. Assess the results of the actions proposed in this area.
Manager: Accessibility Programme

2. Adaptation services for students

- 2.1. Redesign the procedure for adapting non-accessible learning resources, when the UOC has not produced or published them.
Manager: Library and Learning Resources
- 2.2. Improve the information about grants, and specifically about those offered exclusively to disabled people.
Manager: Academic Services
- 2.3. Improve the student's guide.
Manager: Academic Services
- 2.4. Improve the welcome section.
Manager: Academic Services
- 2.5. Improve the *My profile* section.
Manager: Academic Services
- 2.6. Assess the results of the actions proposed in this area.
Manager: Accessibility Programme

3. Awareness-raising and education

3.1. Consolidate the existence of educational and awareness-raising actions targeting services provided to disabled people, together with actions to improve accessibility to the Annual Internal Training Plan's catalogue, and ensure that those members of the University's staff (administration and faculty) who interact directly with users/students take these actions on board.

Manager: Personnel and Social Responsibility

3.2. Draft a document with guidance for teachers on how to cater for disabled students.

Manager: eLearn Center

3.3. Create a new information section for course instructors.

Manager: Academic Services

3.4. Assess the results of the actions proposed in this area.

Manager: Accessibility Programme

4. Occupational integration services

4.1. Encourage the recruitment of disabled employees.

Manager: Personnel and Social Responsibility

4.2. Increase the number of cooperation agreements with organizations that promote the workplace insertion of disabled people.

Manager: Academic Services

4.3. Improve information on internships for disabled students.

Manager: Academic Services

4.4. Assess the results of the actions proposed in this area.

Manager: Accessibility Programme

5. Website accessibility

- 5.1. Develop the responsive, mobile web version of the UOC's Library, complying with the principles of accessibility.
Manager: Library and Learning Resources
- 5.2. Disseminate an accessibility analysis methodology.
Manager: Technology
- 5.3. Improve the Campus' accessibility.
Manager: Technology
- 5.4. Improve accessibility of the mobile Virtual Campus app and the mobile version of the Virtual Campus.
Manager: Technology
- 5.5. Design the accessible mobile portal: definition of requirements, graphic design and rollout timeline.
Manager: Communications
- 5.6. Implement the new website for the UOC's teaching and research staff, applying accessibility criteria.
Manager: Communications
- 5.7. Develop a new home page for the UOC Portal with greater presence and showcasing of the UOC's experts, applying accessibility criteria.
Manager: Communications
- 5.8. Convert the UOC's nomenclature document (in Catalan, Spanish, English and French) into an easy-to-use search engine that provides a simple procedure for adding or changing names and ensures accessibility.
Manager: Communications
- 5.9. Advance the rollout and consolidation of the new IntraUOC as a digital work point, ensuring accessibility.
Manager: Communications
- 5.10. Update the Language Service's website from the content (resources), design and browsing viewpoints, applying accessibility criteria.
Manager: Communications
- 5.11. Develop the new Alumni website, which must comply with accessibility requirements.
Manager: Marketing

- 5.12. Take part in drafting the requirements for adapting the new IntraUOC to the new mobile Virtual Campus, ensuring accessibility.
Manager: Communications
- 5.13. Implement the IntraUOC's new restyling.
Manager: Communications
- 5.14. Assess the results of the actions proposed in this area.
Manager: Accessibility Programme

Appendix. Services offered by the UOC to disabled students

(!) On the Campus, there is the **Services / Disability services** section which explains all the services made available by the University to students who have some kind of disability and which are summarized in this document.

Course teaching materials

- **Different formats offered by the University**

The goal of the teaching materials is to enable students to learn irrespective of the circumstances in which they have to study, their location (library, public transport, home, etc.), the device they use (PC, mobile phone, etc.) or their own personal features.

Consequently, a number of projects have been undertaken that have enabled progress to be achieved in creating materials in **XML format**, from which versions of the same content are generated in multiple formats, such as paper, PDF, HTML, karaoke, audiobook or e-book.

The current priority is to ensure that this range of possibilities is available for all course materials.

The audiobook, for example, is very interesting for addressing the needs of visually impaired people as the **DAISY format** it uses enables people to work with the audio content just as they would work with a book, turning pages or going to the next chapter with ease.

The **HTML version** enables searches to be made in the material's content, while the **PDF format** allows automatic reading using **TTS (text to speech)** tools.

The UOC continues to investigate the development of new formats that can be more precisely adapted to the needs of different students, with the goal of advancing towards an increasingly accessible and inclusive university.

- **How can students request adaptation of a given material?**

If a student receives a material that is not accessible, he or she should notify this to his or her tutor or send a query to the *Help Service (Materials / Other queries about materials)*, clearly stating the name of the material and the course, the accessibility problems it has and, if possible, the preferred format so that the UOC can determine what solution it can offer.

Immediately after completing enrolment, disabled students should review the format of the materials for the courses they have enrolled on at *Secretary's Office / Materials / My materials*, so that any problems there may be can be detected as early as possible. Furthermore, as soon as they have access to the classrooms, they should also review the learning resources they will find there.

Students affiliated with the ONCE may ask this organization's literature services to adapt material, by, for example, transcribing the teaching materials into Braille. The students themselves must make the request to the ONCE. In the case of resources for a course for which they have not yet enrolled, they will have to ask the UOC to send this material to the ONCE.

The ONCE may take between three and four months to adapt the material. Consequently, students are advised to plan their enrolments with the tutor and send the request one semester in advance.

Learning platform. The UOC Campus

The Virtual Campus' different interfaces have been adapted to conform to the W3C Consortium WAI AA standardization (www.w3c.org/wai), recommended to enable easy navigation in web interfaces by people with impaired vision.

If any students experience accessibility difficulties in the Campus, they can send a query directly to the *Help Service*.

On-site events

The UOC is a distance university in which all the tuition is provided virtually. However, every semester, a number of on-site activities are carried out.

Although specific instructions are provided for disabled students every time the UOC organizes an on-site activity, the process used for adapting the University's most significant on-site activities are summarized below.

- **Graduation ceremony and activities at the centres**

Disabled students may contact the UOC department responsible for organizing these events to make them aware of their needs.

Any such request must be made via the event's website (if there is a section for making requests) or by sending an email to the address that has sent the information about the event or the invitation.

The services that can be requested are, among others:

- Ramps and adapted accesses
- Reserved parking
- A person to accompany them during the event
- A sign language interpreter

- **On-site assessment tests**

The *Secretary's Office / Assessment / Final assessment tests / Recommendations for preparing for the tests* section has a form that students can use to request the necessary adaptations, if they have any special requirements.

The student may request any type of adaptation, which will be granted provided that it is justified by supporting documentation. The adaptations most commonly requested for on-site assessment tests are the following:

- Ramps, adapted accesses, classroom and furniture
- Jaws or Zoomtext programme
- Texts in Braille
- The help of a PC to do the tests
- Oral tests
- Adapted texts (for example, with a larger type)
- More time to complete the tests

In addition, the UOC offers different sittings for each course so that the student can choose that which suits him or her best. If a student cannot come to any of the sittings in a given semester for justified reasons (for example, hospitalization), he or she may ask for the **right to examination for justified reasons** in the next semester, without having to enrol on the course again. He or she must make the request following the instructions and using the form that can be found at *Secretary's Office / Assessment / Final assessment tests / Recommendations for preparing for the tests / Students with difficulty sitting the final assessment tests*.

Significant curricular adaptations

The UOC has recently created the Curricular Adaptation Committee to evaluate the significant curricular adaptations that a student may need:

- Modifications to the programme of studies.
- Changes in a course's content or learning methodology or the skills that a student must attain.

The student must send the request to the tutor, who will send it to Tutoring Function and the programme director.

Discounts

As regards financial aid, the UOC applies the same exemptions and discounts to official degree fees as other Catalan public universities for students with a level of disability equal to or greater than 33%. The student must request and provide documentary evidence of entitlement to the discount at the time of enrolling.

Request for study support material

The UOC has signed an agreement with the Fundació Universia so that students at the University with an accredited level of disability equal to or greater than 33% can access the Support Products Bank offered by this institution.

The Support Products Bank is a free loan service that provides technological support products to disabled students.

These products must be requested from the UOC using the form that will be found at the Campus, at *Services / Disability services*.

Loan terms:

- The student must be enrolled at the UOC at the time of requesting the loan.
- The material requested is loaned for six months. When the loan period expires, it can be renewed using the same form as above. The student must be enrolled at the UOC at the time of requesting renewal of the loan.

- The material will be sent free of charge to the delivery address given by the student at *Secretary's Office / Student Records / Delivery details*, preferably within the delivery times given on the application form.

Career guidance services and internships

The UOC has signed cooperation agreements with different organizations to offer career guidance services aimed at facilitating the professional insertion of disabled students and graduates:

- **Fundación Prevent**
The UOC has signed an agreement with Fundación Prevent to provide career guidance to the University's disabled students. Any students who are interested can contact directly [Fundación Prevent](#).
- **Fundación Universia**
As a result of the agreement that the UOC has signed with Fundación Universia, disabled students enrolled at our University can benefit from *Programa Empleo*, which targets both companies (offering a free recruitment consultancy service specialized in the qualification profiles of disabled people) and students (providing career guidance material for disabled people). It also includes job and internship offers with the aim of connecting candidates and companies without any third-party involvement. The offers are found at: <http://empleo.fundacionuniversia.net>.
- **ONCE Foundation – FSC Inserta**
The UOC also collaborates on the Talent Opportunity programme. This is a cooperation agreement signed with the ONCE Foundation and FSC Inserta that enables disabled students to develop professionally by means of internships adapted to each student's needs and capabilities and which seek to enhance learning and uncover talent.