Disability Action Plan 2013-2014
Accessibility Programme

Executive Management Committee
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Introduction: the UOC’s commitment to accessibility

From the start, the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC) has been committed to the social inclusion of persons with disabilities. Consequently, it has always sought to facilitate access to the university by anyone seeking to be a part of the different groups that make up its community (students, associate lecturers, teaching staff, and administrative staff). This document refers to disabilities in the broadest sense, as opposed to government-certified disabilities. This is because the university aims to facilitate the autonomy and independence of all individuals by making the necessary adaptations to its workplaces and its study methods and tools without limiting itself strictly to those required for people whose disabilities have been officially recognized.

With regard to the student body, this means starting with the premise that the UOC’s primary goal is to meet the learning needs of all students, maximizing their access to knowledge. To achieve this, the UOC has embraced an educational model based on personalization and ongoing support for students, above and beyond the usual geographical and scheduling constraints. The model intrinsically embraces equal opportunity with regard to access to education and is reinforced with the necessary measures to enable the university to meet its students’ specific educational needs.

The UOC’s commitment is thus to facilitate education by adapting itself, through customization and comprehensive support, in order to accommodate people’s various capacities, thereby ensuring that all students can attain the skills they need to earn their desired degree.

In order to further its commitment to ensuring accessibility, the UOC created the Accessibility Programme, run by the Office of Planning and Quality, to implement the guidelines and principles approved on this area by the Executive Management Committee. Furthermore, the programme will coordinate the activities of the following bodies:

- Accessibility Benchmarks Group
- Committee for Curricular Adaptation

The Accessibility Benchmarks Group is responsible for coordinating the tasks of the different teams and exchanging information. Its members will serve as liaisons for their respective administrative or academic departments. It is comprised of representatives of the administrative and teaching staff teams.

The Committee for Curricular Adaptation is tasked with handling significant curricular adaptations on a case-by-case basis for those students for whom it is deemed necessary.
The Disability Action Plan laid out here will be valid from 2013 to 2014 and builds on the work that the University has conducted to date in this area. Specifically, since 2009, several mechanisms for debate and internal coordination have been established, which have given rise to the proposed actions set out herein. Precedents for this plan thus include the reports submitted to the Governing Council in 2009 by the now defunct Accessibility Committee (replaced by the Accessibility Benchmarks Group), which analysed the current state of the university's handling of accessibility issues, and an initial action proposal (both of which were approved by the Governing Council, on 18 March and 25 November 2009, respectively). The first tangible results of this debate were the 2011 and 2012 action timetables approved by the Strategic Committee on Accessibility.

The purpose of this Disability Action Plan is to provide the university with a clear framework in which to carry out its mission and exemplify its values, establishing the necessary guidelines to achieve a more inclusive university that promotes the social and occupational integration of persons with disabilities.

Consequently, the plan is directly related to the University's Organizational and Operational Regulations (http://cv.uoc.edu/UOC/a/communitat/normes_UOC/normes_organitzacio.html#missio). Specifically, it is related to:

- The university's mission, insofar as it states that the UOC seeks to "facilitate universal access to education through an educational design that is based on personalization and comprehensive mentoring".
- The guiding principles according to which the mission is to be implemented, one of which is to provide lifelong training in accordance with personal needs.
- Art. 32, which reads, "The UOC shall ensure that all groups of students and other members of the university community with disabilities have equal opportunities, and it is committed to making the utmost effort to integrate those people who, for disability reasons of any kind, have not yet been able to access its studies."

It is also related to the UOC's Strategic Plan 2010-2014 (http://cv.uoc.edu/UOC/airtrauoc/docs/actualitat/rrhh/docs/PLA_ENG.pdf). Specifically, it is related to:

- The section on values, which states that one of the UOC's values is "Openness" and that the university is "Open to people, ideas, cultures, and the world in general. Open to the environment it operates in, to strengthening its presence in society, and to promoting well-being. The UOC is strongly in favour of open content, accessibility, mobility, and flexible programmes."
Action 3 of Operational Goal 1.3 under the strategic priority on training “To improve accessibility to the Virtual Campus and enhance the personalization and adaptation of this campus to users’ needs”.

With the approval of this disability action plan, the UOC aims to fulfill its legal obligations under current legislation: the twenty-fourth additional provision of Organic Law 6/2001, of 21 December, concerning universities (Ley Orgánica de Universidades, LOU); and the fourth and seventh additional provisions of Organic Law 4/2007, of 12 April, which amends the LOU.

Finally, it should be noted that this plan also draws on the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and on the recommendations set out by the World Health Organization in its “World Report on Disability” (http://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/en/index.html), which are detailed below:

**Recommendation 1: Enable access to all mainstream policies, systems and services**

- The UOC must adhere to universal design criteria, ensuring that all its services are generally accessible from the start.

**Recommendation 2: Invest in specific programmes and services for people with disabilities**

- Even when universal design criteria are followed, there will always be a need to offer specific services and adaptations for people with disabilities. To enable this, the necessary resources must be made available.

**Recommendation 3: Adopt a national disability strategy and plan of action**

- The UOC must have action plans to improve accessibility and sufficient institutional commitment to carry them out.

**Recommendation 4: Involve people with disabilities**

- The UOC must maintain constant and fluid contact with persons with disabilities to ensure that the university is adequately meeting their needs. This means maintaining contact with the group of UOC students, employees and temporary staff with disabilities, as well as with associations and networks in the sector.

**Recommendation 5: Improve human resource capacity**
The UOC staff must be trained to provide a suitable level of service to the members of this group.

**Recommendation 6: Provide adequate funding and improve affordability**

- The UOC must make improving accessibility and service for people with disabilities a clear priority. This can be shown by allocating sufficient resources to the issue and by ensuring that people with disabilities have equal opportunities to access the university.

**Recommendation 7: Increase public awareness and understanding of disability**

- Awareness-raising actions should be carried out to ensure that UOC staff take accessibility into account when carrying out their duties.

**Recommendation 8: Improve disability data collection**

- The processing and management of the data that the UOC has on this group must be improved to assure the quality of the service it offers them.

**Recommendation 9: Strengthen and support research on disability**

- The university must promote research and innovation aimed at increasing knowledge on how best to serve people with disabilities in the context of the UOC, a distance university based on the intensive use of technology.
Main action lines

Line 1. Organization and management of accessibility at the UOC
Line 2. Adaptation services
Line 3. Awareness-raising and training
Line 4. Occupational integration services
Line 5. Online accessibility
Line 6. Physical accessibility
Actions

1. Organization and management of accessibility at the UOC
   1.1. Review how the data on students with specific educational needs are processed, to ensure compliance with current data protection law.
       Responsible body: Legal Office/Information Systems department
       Deadline: December 2013
       Observations:

   1.2. Creation of an informed consent form for the use of data on disabilities.
       Responsible body: Legal Office/Information Systems department
       Deadline: December 2013
       Observations:

   1.3. Ensure that the UOC's student services are able to meet the service needs of students with disabilities in accordance with the established service levels.
       Responsible body: Student department
       Deadline: December 2014
       Observations:

   1.4. Consolidate the Accessibility Programme within the organizational structure so as to enable it to take on the functions approved by the Governing Council.
       Responsible body: Strategic Committee on Accessibility
       Deadline: December 2013
       Observations:

   1.5. Study the option of obtaining external funding to carry out different actions to improve the university's accessibility.
       Responsible body: Accessibility Programme
       Deadline: December 2013
       Observations:

   1.6. Assess the results of the actions proposed in this line.
       Responsible body: Accessibility Programme
       Deadline: December 2014
       Observations:
2. Adaptation services for students

2.1. Work with small groups of students with disabilities and students over the age of 65 in order to gain a more nuanced understanding of their needs and opinions with regard to their experience studying at the UOC.
   - Responsible body: Office of Learning Technologies
   - Deadline: First semester 2013
   - Observations: Conduct interviews to determine the needs of students over the age of 65 when interacting with the UOC's Virtual Campus.
   - Deadline: Second semester 2013
   - Observations: Interview and conduct usability tests with students with motor, hearing and cognitive disabilities.

2.2. Collect reliable data and obtain a statistical profile of students with disabilities and students over the age of 65 at the UOC. Collect data on the academic performance of this group of students.
   - Responsible body: Office for Planning and Quality
   - Deadline: December 2013
   - Observations:

2.3. Disseminate information about the services the UOC offers people with disabilities amongst the relevant associations and organizations so that they can pass it onto their members.
   - Responsible body: Accessibility Programme
   - Deadline: June 2004
   - Observations:

2.4. Submit rules of procedure for the Committee on Curricular Adaptation to the Strategic Committee on Accessibility for approval.
   - Responsible body: Committee on Curricular Adaptation
   - Deadline: November 2013
   - Observations: These rules of procedure must clearly establish when the committee will act, at whose request, how these requests will be made, how the action to be carried out by the committee will be approved, how its decisions will be communicated, the binding or non-binding nature of these decisions for the rest of the institution and how the information and documentation related to the cases handled by the committee will be managed.

2.5. Approve a case report template for the cases handled by the Committee on Curricular Adaptation.
   - Responsible body: Committee on Curricular Adaptation
Deadline: December 2013
Observations: Prepare a document for recording and informing interested parties of the actions to be carried out in relation to each case handled by the Committee for Curricular Adaptation.

2.6 Assess the results of the actions proposed in this line
Responsible body: Accessibility Programme
Deadline: December 2014
Observations:
3. **Awareness-raising and training**

3.1. Ensure that the necessary training/information on how to act with students with disabilities is provided to associated teaching staff.
   
   **Responsibility:** Academic Services department  
   **Deadline:** December 2014  
   **Observations:** Offer training throughout the duration of the plan.

3.2. Consolidate the existence of disability training actions in the catalogue for the annual internal training plan and ensure that they are followed by those members of the university's staff (administrative and teaching staff) who provide services directly to users/students.
   
   **Responsibility:** Personnel department  
   **Deadline:** December 2014  
   **Observations:** Throughout the duration of the plan.

3.3. Consolidate the existence of training actions on website accessibility in the catalogue for the annual internal training plan and ensure that they are followed by the relevant members of the university's staff.
   
   **Responsibility:** Personnel department  
   **Deadline:** December 2014  
   **Observations:** Throughout the duration of the plan.

3.4. Carry out awareness-raising actions for internal staff (administrative and teaching staff).
   
   **Responsibility:** Personnel department  
   **Deadline:** December 2014  
   **Observations:** Throughout the duration of the plan.

3.5. Promote the inclusion of the principles of universal accessibility and design for all teaching content.
   
   **Responsibility:** Office for Planning and Quality  
   **Deadline:** December 2014  
   **Observations:** Throughout the duration of the plan.

3.6. Assess the results of the actions proposed in this line.
   
   **Responsibility:** Accessibility Programme  
   **Deadline:** December 2014  
   **Observations:**
4. **Occupational integration services**

4.1. Work to ensure the accessibility of the content in the "Join our team" space.
   Responsible body: Personnel department
   Deadline: December 2014
   Observations:

4.2. Ensure the accessibility of the Intrauco for the UOC's own staff.
   Responsible body: Communication department
   Deadline: December 2014
   Observations:

4.3. Include accessibility criteria in the design and creation of the management tools used by the university's own staff.
   Responsible body: Information Systems department
   Deadline: December 2014
   Observations: In 2012, specifications and contracts were amended to include the requirement for UOC projects involving management tools for internal use to conform to Level Double-A of the W3C's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. Guides were also provided listing the tools to be used to ensure that applications achieve this conformance. In 2013, processes must be introduced that ensure that the university's providers take accessibility criteria into account when developing.

4.4. Assess the results of the actions proposed in this line.
   Responsible body: Accessibility Programme
   Deadline: December 2014
   Observations:
5. **Web accessibility**

5.1. Draft general rules for the content editors used by content managers. A different version should be drafted for each editing tool used, so as to facilitate the accessible use of each one.

     Responsible body: Office of Learning Technologies
     Deadline: first draft of the guide, March 2013; final version, December 2013
     Observations: The university should first determine which content management systems are used at the UOC. It should then create a guide to one of these CMSs, to be followed by guides to the others later.

5.2. Compile a list of and select automatic tools to allow project managers to conduct a minimum review of the accessibility of front ends sent by providers, placing emphasis on ease of use and clarity of the results obtained.

     Responsible body: Office of Learning Technologies
     Deadline: compilation of tools, 2013; proposal of tools to be used, December 2014
     Observations: In 2013, the tools will be sought and tested with pilot projects. This study will yield a proposed list of tools that can be used to conduct this analysis.

5.3. Draft general rules for editing videos and any other multimedia content in general. Criteria must be established for determining when it will not be necessary to make this content entirely accessible.

     Responsible body: Office of Learning Technologies
     Deadline: Final document, March 2014
     Observations: In 2013, existing guides will be sought out and studied. They will be used to propose the criteria to be followed by the UOC. As of 31 December 2014, all new multimedia content must meet the accessibility criteria set out in the UOC's own guide.

5.4. Make recommendations on filetypes and their accessibility.

     Responsible body: Office of Learning Technologies
     Observations: There are many kinds of files. The UOC should thus first determine which ones are currently being used in the classroom. Based on this analysis, the necessary guides for creating accessible documents in each format can be drafted. At present, there is already a guide that covers various formats, such as Word, etc. (http://www.udl.cat/serveis/seu/UdLxtothomifrecursos/gui es.html).
5.5. Define a method for analysing accessibility.
Responsible body: Office of Learning Technologies
Deadline: Defined method, March 2014
Observations: In 2013, the methods that might be used to analyse a project will be studied and a single method to be followed will be proposed. As of 31 December 2014, all new projects must follow this method.

5.6. Define a process for reviewing accessibility.
Responsible body: Office of Learning Technologies
Deadline: Defined process, 2014
Observations: Once the methods and tools have been determined, a process can be defined to analyse the environment.

5.7. Make specific improvements to those informational areas of the Virtual Campus related to the enrolment process so as to ensure better accessibility.
Responsible body: Student department
Deadline: December 2014
Observations:

5.8. Improve accessibility in the classroom.
Responsible body: Office of Learning Technologies
Deadline: December 2013
Observations:

5.9. Improve the accessibility of the Query Service within the framework of the Service System Upgrade project.
Responsible body: Student department
Deadline: December 2013
Observations:

5.10. Review of the website’s accessibility and correction of the most serious problems.
Responsible body: Information Systems department
Deadline: December 2013
Observations: The formal aspects of the content of the website’s different elements (except for “Study at the UOC” and independent websites) will be reviewed to ensure maximum Level Double-A Conformance. This includes reviewing the HTML and CSS, the use of accessible elements, images, links, colour patterns and accessible editors (CKEditor), and a guide with recommendations for user editors using OpenCMS.

5.11. Assess the results of the actions proposed in this line.
Responsible body: Accessibility Programme
6. **Physical accessibility**

6.1. Ensure the continuous improvement of the accessibility of the UOC's buildings and facilities, in accordance with current legislation.

  Responsible body: Deputy Manager for Administration
  Deadline: December 2014
  Observations: Conduct an ongoing monitoring process throughout the 2013-2014 period.

6.2. Assess the results of the actions proposed in this line

  Responsible body: Accessibility Programme
  Deadline: December 2014
  Observations: