Respondent: {{ respondent }}

A close up of a logo

Description automatically generated

on {{ instit\_name }}

Gap Analysis report

## About

*Although digital accessibility involves technology use, it is not primarily about technology but about people and their practices.*

*What you do and how you do it - your cultural landscape - impacts on disabled student experience, engagement, retention and results.*

*Fewer barriers mean tangible benefits for everyone, disabled or not.*

*We put together this resource to help you map your own "cultural landscape" and reflect on areas you might want to improve.*

* Alistair McNaught, McNaught consulting

## Who we are

Built on an original concept developed by Alistair McNaught (TechDis 2010), the model has been extended with support from Adam Tweed and Amy Low at [AbilityNet](http://www.abilitynet.org.uk). This interactive resource helps you:

* determine where you are in the Accessibility Maturity Spectrum,
* understand risks; build on benefits
* identify support needs.

AbilityNet and McNaught Consulting have complementary skill sets. We've mapped our support services to this model - but you are under no obligation to use any particular service.

“Being able to take a snapshot of where we were as a University and having the next steps mapped out made things far less overwhelming as a project” – Accessibility Lead

# Summary

By now you are familiar with how we define 'maturity' using a range of criteria - including some you wouldn't automatically associate with accessibility. Based on the average of the answers you have given, you are at maturity level {% if 1 == matlev %}1 – Luck{% elif 2 == matlev %}2 - Tokenism{% elif 3 == matlev %}3 - Standards{% elif 4 == matlev %}4 - Ownerships{% elif 5 == matlev %}5 – Partnerships{% endif %}.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1 – Luck | 2 – Tokenism | 3 – Standards | 4 – Ownership | 5 - Partnership |
| Goals & Ambitions | {%p if driver == 1 %}  **Minimal effort / expense**  {%p else %}  Minimal effort / expense  {%p endif %} | {%p if driver == 2 %}  **Support for individuals**  {%p else %}  Support for individuals  {%p endif %} | {%p if driver == 3 %}  **Legal compliance**  {%p else %}  Legal compliance  {%p endif %} | {%p if driver == 4 %}  **Pedagogical excellence**  {%p else %}  Pedagogical excellence  {%p endif %} | {%p if driver == 5 %}  **Inclusive excellence**  {%p else %}  Inclusive excellence  {%p endif %} |
| Who has responsibility? | {%p if resp == 1 %}  **No-One**  {%p else %}  No-One  {%p endif %} | {%p if resp == 2 %}  **Disability Team**  {%p else %}  Disability Team  {%p endif %} | {%p if resp == 3 %}  **Web Teams**  {%p else %}  Web Teams  {%p endif %} | {%p if resp == 4 %}  **Whole Organisation**  {%p else %}  Whole Organisation  {%p endif %} | {%p if resp == 5 %}  **Organisation & stakeholders**  {%p else %}  Organisation & stakeholders  {%p endif %} |
| Which model of disability is in play? | {%p if dismod == 1 %}  **Invisibility**  {%p else %}  invisibility  {%p endif %} | {%p if dismod == 2 %}  **Medical**  {%p else %}  Medical  {%p endif %} | {%p if dismod == 3 %}  **Social – by compliance**  {%p else %}  Social – By Compliance  {%p endif %} | {%p if dismod == 4 %}  **Social – by conviction**  {%p else %}  Social – by conviction  {%p endif %} | {%p if dismod == 5 %}  **Social – by collaboaration**  {%p else %}  Social – by collaboration  {%p endif %} |
| What is the focus of effort? | {%p if effort == 1 %}  **Justify non action or seek exemption**  {%p else %}  Justify non action or seek exemption  {%p endif %} | {%p if effort == 2 %}  **React to barriers**  {%p else %}  React to barriers  {%p endif %} | {%p if effort == 3 %}  **Make websites inclusive**  {%p else %}  Make websites inclusive  {%p endif %} | {%p if effort == 4 %}  **Make teaching and learning inclusive**  {%p else %}  Make teaching and learning inclusive  {%p endif %} | {%p if effort == 5 %}  **Make everything inclusive**  {%p else %}  Make everything inclusive  {%p endif %} |
| Skills and expertise | {%p if skills == 1 %}  **Unidentified or existing only in a few individuals**  {%p else %}  Unidentified or existing only in a few individuals  {%p endif %} | {%p if skills == 2 %}  **Knowledge is located in specialist disability and/or assistive technology teams**  {%p else %}  Knowledge is located in specialist disability and/or assistive technology teams  {%p endif %} | {%p if skills == 3 %}  **Skills available in pockets, or certain course areas have specific skills**  {%p else %}  Skills available in pockets, or certain course areas have specific skills  {%p endif %} | {%p if skills == 4 %}  **Skills and awareness available across broader teams**  {%p else %}  Skills and awareness available across broader teams  {%p endif %} | {%p if skills == 5 %}  **Accessible practices broadly embraced as part of organisation's core professional values**  {%p else %}  Accessible practices broadly embraced as part of organisation's core professional values  {%p endif %} |
| Which policies include accessibility? | {%p if policies == 1 %}  **Not in any policies**  {%p else %}  Not in any policies  {%p endif %} | {%p if policies == 2 %}  **Disability policies**  {%p else %}  Disability policies  {%p endif %} | {%p if policies == 3 %}  **IT, procurement & disability policies**  {%p else %}  IT, procurement & disability policies  {%p endif %} | {%p if policies == 4 %}  **IT, procurement, disability & teaching/learning policies**  {%p else %}  IT, procurement, disability & teaching/learning policies  {%p endif %} | {%p if policies == 5 %}  **Wide range of policies (eg marketing etc)**  {%p else %}  Wide range of policies (eg marketing etc)  {%p endif %} |
| How does the culture of the organisation feel? | {%p if culture == 1 %}  **Disability ignorance / avoidance**  {%p else %}  Disability ignorance / avoidance  {%p endif %} | {%p if culture == 2 %}  **Silos of expertise but few opportunities for skills transfer**  {%p else %}  Silos of expertise but few opportunities for skills transfer  {%p endif %} | {%p if culture == 3 %}  **Risk aversion**  {%p else %}  Risk aversion  {%p endif %} | {%p if culture == 4 %}  **Encourages innovation. Permission to take risks**  {%p else %}  Encourages innovation. Permission to take risks  {%p endif %} | {%p if culture == 5 %}  **Partnership, creativity & embedding good practice**  {%p else %}  Partnership, creativity & embedding good practice  {%p endif %} |
| What is the student experience? | {%p if stuex == 1 %}  **Identification initiated by disabled student**  {%p else %}  Identification initiated by disabled student  {%p endif %} | {%p if stuex == 2 %}  **Proactive efforts from the disability team**  {%p else %}  Proactive efforts from the disability team  {%p endif %} | {%p if stuex == 3 %}  **Digital accessibility is evident in pockets but not joined up**  {%p else %}  Digital accessibility is evident in pockets but not joined up  {%p endif %} | {%p if stuex == 4 %}  **Digital accessibility is mainstream and referenced from multiple locations**  {%p else %}  Digital accessibility is mainstream and referenced from multiple locations  {%p endif %} | {%p if stuex == 5 %}  **Students actively involved in shaping practice**  {%p else %}  Students actively involved in shaping practice  {%p endif %} |

# What do I do now?

The goal is obviously for your institution to reach excellence across the board, but we recognise this is a journey that involves many people and potentially a shift in culture; and this isn’t always easy! The section below will explain the next steps for you.

# Risks at current level & Next steps

### Risks {{ risks }} (Raw: {{ rskchk }})

This is the risk identified from your average score across all areas.

**Stage:** {% if risks | int == 1 %}**1 – Luck**

**Risk: Student litigation**

**What this level feels like:**

This is a serious risk because the legislation makes clear that a failure to meet the accessibility requirements will be treated as a failure to make a reasonable adjustment.

The risk of litigation will be reduced if you have evidence of a serious road map for improvement with appropriate budgets put aside.

This level has very high risk. Disability issues are firmly (and solely) the responsibility of the disability team. They work 1:1 helping learners over barriers that needn’t exist in the first place. Expertise is located in a few individuals, making the organisation very vulnerable to staff changes. Disability policies don’t reference digital accessibility or teaching/learning. Nobody has responsibility for institution-wide digital accessibility and no policy covers it.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if risks | int == 2 %}**2 - Tokenism**

**Risk: Wasted resources**

**What this level feels like:**

Money is being spent on "firefighting", supporting students to overcome barriers which should not exist in the first place.

Instead of disability experts advising staff on improving their digital practice, time is spent on helping students cope with sub-optimal practice.

It is likely that existing investments in tools that could help all students be more productive (especially those with disabilities) are not being promoted, resulting in poor return on investments.

This level is about symptoms, not causes. It is characterised by policies that describe accessibility and inclusion in broad ‘value statements’ without specific commitments to practice. Disability issues are the responsibility of the disability team – perhaps with support from the library – and the focus is on 1:1 or DSA support. There is no recognition of the role of other staff in reducing barriers at source.

Training tends to be “issue based” such as correct language rather than practices that benefit independence and productivity. Policies are likely to be standalone and very generalised.

Any institution-wide digital accessibility role is likely to be delegated to people with no budget / authority to influence necessary changes.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if risks | int == 3 %}**3 - Standards**

**Risk: Unintended consequences**

**What this level feels like:**

Teaching is more than content transmission. It also involves engaging, inspiring, challenging and motivating. Sometimes the tools or techniques that achieve these aims will not be equally accessible for everyone.

If standards over-applied without regard to teaching purpose, innovation may be stifled to the detriment of students who struggle with confidence, concentration or engagement.

If digital content requires higher standards than traditional paper-based handouts, teaching staff may revert to less accessible print-based approaches.

Focusing on standards can reduce overall risks but also lead to unintended consequences. Technical accessibility standards are important, but teaching is different to other digital contexts.

Unrealistic demands on tutors uploading content to learning platforms may backfire, discouraging digital engagement.

A different kind of discrimination can result, for example, high-value resources for dyslexics may be removed because they are not accessible to screenreaders. Inappropriate focus on technical standards may force tutors back to more traditional (and less accessible) practices.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if risks | int == 4 %}**4 - Ownership**

**Risk: Uncritical adoption**

**What this level feels like:**

Where teaching staff are encouraged to be innovative and experimental in order to meet accessibility needs, there is a risk of overzealous adoption of unsuitable tools.

Whilst there can be a case for using partially accessible tools in order to achieve specific purposes with specific student groups, it is difficult to justify using highly inaccessible digital tools and resources on a recurring basis.

There is a real risk when a particular department uncritically latches onto a “favourite tool” with poor accessibility and uses it with no regard for the inherent barriers.

Digital accessibility is seen as a positive, creative force. The focus is on building staff and student digital competencies.

The main risk is unwittingly embracing inaccessible tools, content or activities. This stage recognises that digital competence helps to create accessible content and mitigate less accessible experiences.

There are probably good links between teaching/learning policies, e-learning and student support / disability policies.

Increased confidence allows organisations to recognise that partially accessible resources may have a role to play. Digital accessibility is a cross institutional responsibility.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if risks | int == 5 %}**5- Partnerships**

**Risk: Bureaucratic paralysis**

**What this level feels like:**

The final stage of the accessibility maturity model brings many benefits - innovation, engagement, potentially reduced costs and improved outcomes.

Yet there remains a risk that needs to be managed. The more stakeholders have to be involved in a process, the longer the process tends to be, putting brakes on innovation and improvements.

To retain the significant benefits of working in partnership, the processes that enable partnership need to be as streamlined as possible to avoid bureaucratic paralysis.

This final level in the model recognises the value of students as co-designers of learning.

Involving disabled students in the policies/processes that impact on them reduces the chances of failure (and litigation). Compromises are easier to justify when disabled students helped make them.

At this stage, all staff recognise their role in reducing barriers. Creative engagement is the norm. Accessibility awareness is distributed, sustainable, embedded into quality assurance processes and perceivable in all policy areas.

{% else %}{% endif %}

## Potential next steps {{ matlev }} (Raw {{ matchk }})

These are some of the potential next steps for you and/or your institution.

**Level**{% if matlev | int == 1 %} **1 - Luck**

### How can we help you move from level 1

**This is about priorities.**

We can support you with:

* A half-day accessibility statement review to find key areas you need to address for compliance. This can identify your biggest gaps (knowledge? join-up? processes? training?) and highlight your next steps.
* Online training or mentoring to help teams to see the big picture and get positive synergies from accessibility improvements.
* Online or face to face presentations to leadership teams to summarise the benefits and efficiencies of accessible practice (and how to manage the very real risks of non-compliance).

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if matlev | int == 2 %} **2 - Tokenism**

### How can we help you move from level 2

**This is about mindset.**

We can support you in these ways:

* help teaching staff see the positive impact of good digital practice
* train support staff, library and study skills teams be more aware of technologies to support productivity.
* help teams break down silos by working as a trusted intermediary to identify gaps and overlaps and opportunities based on team knowledge and experience.
* work with senior management teams or steering groups to develop an institution-wide approach.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if matlev | int == 3 %} **3 - Standards**

### How can we help you move from level 3

**This is about focus.**

We can help in these ways:

* work with your internal teams to ensure that positive teaching and learning outcomes drive your approach.
* support technical teams in auditing system accessibility.
* train technical teams in doing their own audits and remediating issues identified.
* support strategic teams in identifying and managing appropriate compromises and explaining them via accessibility statements.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if matlev | int == 4 %} **4 – Ownership**

### How can we help you move from level 4

**This is about sustainability**

We can help you:

* understand the disabled student's digital journeys and how to improve them,
* explore the accessibility of course designs and course content,
* embed accessibility appropriately into institutional quality assurance processes.
* craft accessibility statements in ways that give them value and currency for all students.

Our support offers include exploring disabled student’s digital journeys, auditing digital content, staff training on good practice and support on accessibility statements and integrated policies.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if matlev | int == 5 %} **5 - Partnership**

### How can we help you stay at level 5

**This is about communication**

We can help you

* promote your accessibility credentials to potential students via
  + case studies,
  + prospectus reviews,
  + accessibility statement support,
  + verified badging that provides external validation of your internal commitments.

{% else %}{% endif %}

# Breakdown by maturity model detailed responses

## Goals and ambitions

This is what you consider to be the main driving force behind the decisions you, or your institution makes when it comes to accessibility.

{% if driver == 1 %}**Minimal effort / expense**

Budgets can be very tight but it is important to realise that accessible practices can save money on support costs, get better value from your digital investments and reduce student drop out. They can also significantly reduce the risks of costly litigation.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if driver == 2 %}**Support for individuals at point of need**

This is a traditional "learner support" approach but there are several key weaknesses:

* it can result in reactive 'firefighting' where you're wasting time supporting students over barriers that shouldn't exist in the first place.
* not all students seek help when they need it. They prefer to have the tools to be independent.
* personalised support is, by its nature, rationed. This means students with lower level struggles never get the support they need. A focus on inclusive practices and digitally independent students benefits more people, freeing learning support teams to provide higher quality support to more complex needs.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if driver == 3 %}**Legal compliance**

Legal compliance is important and is largely achieved through meeting technical standards but those technical standards can be meaningless for teaching staff unless they are translated into relevant guidance that reflects daily practice.

Digital practices in an educational environment are a complex mix of tools, resources and pedagogies. Technical accessibility is only part of the picture and technical compromises sometimes need to be made and justified in order to avoid unintended consequences - like nobody using technology any more because "it involves more hoops to jump through than chalk and talk involves".

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if driver == 4 %}**Pedagogical excellence**

This is a great driver and research by Ofsted in the UK ([Special education needs and disability review 2010](https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/1145/1/Special%20education%20needs%20and%20disability%20review.pdf)) showed that where teaching and learning were most effective, support needs were reduced, allowing support staff to be used more effectively.

However, it's important to ensure digital enthusiasm doesn't introduce new barriers. Not all digital tools or resources are accessible.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if driver == 5 %}**Inclusive excellence**

Accessible systems, inclusive resources and inclusive teaching practice lowers barriers for everyone.  Once inclusive practice is embedded in quality assurance processes it should take root as part of normal practice. At this point it should be sustainable and driven by a culture of collaboration and innovation.

{% else %}{% endif %}

**Your comment(s):**

*{{ driver\_comments }}*

You currently consider your goals and ambitions to be: {% if driver == 1 %}**Minimal effort / expense**

The next stage for your institution to reach is “**Support for individuals at point of need**”. This is a traditional "learner support" approach but it suffers from several key weaknesses:

* it can result in reactive 'firefighting' where you're wasting time supporting students over barriers that shouldn't exist in the first place.
* not all students seek help when they need it. They prefer to have the tools to be independent.
* personalised support is, by its nature, rationed. This means students with lower level struggles never get the support they need. A focus on inclusive practices and digitally independent students benefits more people, freeing learning support teams to provide higher quality support to more complex needs.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if driver == 2 %}**Support for individuals at point of need**

The next stage for your institution to reach is “**Legal compliance**”.

Legal compliance is important and is largely achieved through meeting technical standards but those technical standards can be meaningless for teaching staff unless they are translated into relevant guidance that reflects daily practice.

Digital practices in an educational environment are a complex mix of tools, resources and pedagogies. Technical accessibility is only part of the picture and technical compromises sometimes need to be made and justified in order to avoid unintended consequences - like nobody using technology anymore because "it involves more hoops to jump through than chalk and talk involves".

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if driver == 3 %}**Legal compliance**

The next stage for your institution to reach is “**Pedagogical excellence**”.

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Accessible systems, inclusive resources and inclusive teaching practice lowers barriers for everyone.  Once inclusive practice is embedded in quality assurance processes it should take root as part of normal practice. At this point it should be sustainable and driven by a culture of collaboration and innovation.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if driver == 5 %}**Inclusive excellence**

This is a fantastic achievement. Well done!

Accessible systems, inclusive resources and inclusive teaching practice lowers barriers for everyone.  Once inclusive practice is embedded in quality assurance processes it should take root as part of normal practice. At this point it should be sustainable and driven by a culture of collaboration and innovation.

{% else %}{% endif %}

## Responsibility for accessibility

This is the group you have identified as having responsibility for accessibility at your institution.

{% if resp == 1 %}**No-one**

Digital accessibility often falls between different policy areas so it can be left behind.

But digital accessibility has a significant impact on disabled students - for good or bad. It is also a legal requirement and a failure to meet the accessibility requirement is considered a failure to make a reasonable adjustment. So someone needs to take responsibility.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if resp == 2 %}**Disability Team**

Learning support teams cannot be responsible for digital accessibility since they have no control over potential sources of accessibility barriers. They don't commission the learning platform or choose the teaching resources. They don't choose your ebook and journal suppliers or have any responsibility for teaching approaches.

The disability support team can be effective advisors but they cannot take responsibility for digital accessibility.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if resp == 3 %}**Web Teams**

This is a good starting point because web teams have influence over the design and implementation of big parts of your digital estate - from the website to the learning platform.

However, they cannot be solely responsible because teaching staff may independently create and use digital resources. Library staff procure digital content. Web teams and information services are very important but can only take responsibility for some of your digital accessibility.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if resp == 4 %}**Whole Organisation**

This is great - and necessary too. The web accessibility legislation refers to your whole digital estate from website to VLE, course uploads, PowerPoint, YouTube videos, HR systems, downloadable forms etc etc. From marketing to teaching staff, Human Resources to Information Services, everyone needs to be aware of digital accessibility and contributing by their practices to improved accessibility. Accessibility responsibility needs to exist at team level and individual level.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if resp == 5 %}**Organisation and stakeholders**

This is excellent. When everyone who can benefit from digital accessibility feels able to contribute to the decision making and planning, you are more likely to get constructive arguments and creative solutions! Remember, good accessibility benefits EVERYONE so explore ways digital accessibility can have creative synergies with other initiatives such as widening participation, internationalisation etc.

{% else %}{% endif %}

**Your comment(s):**

*{{ resp\_comments }}*

You currently consider the group responsible for accessibility to be: {% if resp == 1 %}**No-one**

The next stage of responsibility for your institution to reach is “**Disability team**”.

Learning support teams cannot be responsible for digital accessibility since they have no control over potential sources of accessibility barriers. They do not commission the learning platform or choose the teaching resources. They do not choose your eBook and journal suppliers or have any responsibility for teaching approaches.

The disability support team can be effective advisors, but they cannot take responsibility for digital accessibility.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if resp == 2 %}**Disability team**

The next stage of responsibility for your institution to reach is “**Web teams**”.

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{% else %}{% endif %}

## Model of disability

This is the model of disability you have identified that your institution follows.

{% if dismod == 1 %}**Invisibility**

It is crucial for this process that you are honest with where you are, so although this may be a difficult admission, this is a positive first step.   
The ‘invisibility model’ describes a view of disability where, perhaps if our day-to-day lives do not bring us into contact with disabled people, we may forget disability exists, or we may forget that not all disabilities are visible.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if dismod == 2 %}**Medical**

The medical model of disability sees disability as an issue of the disabled person that requires fixing. It does not consider a poorly designed environment or task to be the disabling factor.

The medical model can also cause offense with people who may consider their ‘disability’ as a key part of their identity and not feel they have to declare it as a "deficit".

Unfortunately, many financial decisions require black and white judgement, and this is one of the reasons the medical model persists. However, where digital resources meet accessibility standards and assistive technologies are available (and promoted) across the network, many 'individual' adjustments are no longer necessary.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if dismod == 3 %}**Social – by compliance**

This is great to shift towards considering the environment to be disabling, rather than the individual as ‘disabled’. However, approaching this from the perspective of compliance risks missing opportunities to improve your overall culture. You may also have unintended consequences if digital resources are subject to more scrutiny than traditional (and more inaccessible!) practices like chalk and talk and paper handouts.

Compliance-led rather than innovation-driven decision making can mean missed opportunities to join initiatives together.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if dismod == 4 %}**Social – by conviction**

You have embraced the social model as you believe it to be the **right** thing to do and you see the benefits of reducing barriers and increasing opportunities for all students. This 'opportunity-first' attitude will permeate everything you do within your institution. There is clear high-level leadership in promoting inclusive practice, but it does not necessarily involve the stakeholders and beneficiaries taking part in the decision making.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if dismod == 5 %}**Social – by collaboration**

Congratulations! Not only do you embrace the social model and inclusive practice but you ensure its sustainability and dissemination by empowering all stakeholders to positively contribute to the evolution of practice.

{% else %}{% endif %}

**Your comment(s):**

*{{ dismod\_comments }}*

The model of disability you currently follow you believe to be:

{% if dismod == 1 %}**Invisibility**

The next stage of model you should aim to reach is **“Medical”**.

The medical model of disability sees disability as an issue of the disabled person that requires fixing. It does not consider a poorly designed environment or task to be the disabling factor.

The medical model can also cause offense with people who may consider their ‘disability’ as a key part of their identity and not feel they have to declare it as a "deficit".

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The next stage of model you should aim to reach is **“Social – By compliance”**.

Approaching this from the perspective of compliance risks missing opportunities to improve your overall culture. You may also have unintended consequences if digital resources are subject to more scrutiny than traditional (and more inaccessible!) practices like chalk and talk and paper handouts.

Compliance-led rather than innovation-driven decision making can mean missed opportunities to join initiatives together.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if dismod == 3 %}**Social – by compliance**

The next stage of model you should aim to reach is **“Social – by conviction”**.

This 'opportunity-first' attitude will permeate everything you do within your institution. There is clear high-level leadership in promoting inclusive practice, but it does not necessarily involve the stakeholders and beneficiaries taking part in the decision making.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if dismod == 4 %}**Social – by conviction**

The next stage of model you should aim to reach is **“Social – by collaboration”**.

At this stage, you embrace the social model and inclusive practice, but you ensure its sustainability and dissemination by empowering all stakeholders to positively contribute to the evolution of practice.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if dismod == 5 %}**Social – by collaboration**

Not only do you embrace the social model and inclusive practice, but you ensure its sustainability and dissemination by empowering all stakeholders to positively contribute to the evolution of practice.

{% else %}{% endif %}

## Focus of effort

This is what you consider the focus of effort of your institution.

{% if effort == 1 %} **Justify non action or seek exemption**

Unfortunately, efforts expended in this way do nothing to reduce your risk of litigation because 'meeting the accessibility requirement' is now defined as a 'reasonable adjustment'. Diverting your effort into reducing barriers would both reduce risks and increase student experiences.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if effort == 2 %}**React to barriers**

Reacting to individual issues puts the onus on students to be active in highlighting any issues they experience. This assumes they have prior experience of barrier-free access to compare with. It also relies on them having the energy and confidence to complain and assumes you have effective mechanisms in place for reporting and resolving issues.

From a strategic perspective, this is unlikely to result in institution-wide improvements.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if effort == 3 %}**Make websites inclusive**

This is a significant and important area to focus on and a big step towards maturity. However, the student experience is impacted by a **wide range of factors** including the accessibility of the **content** uploaded by staff and the way technology is **used** to enhance teaching and learning. These wider issues also need to be addressed.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if effort == 4 %}**Make teaching and learning inclusive**

You have made the step to acknowledging the importance of accessible teaching and learning resources; digital and otherwise. This is a good level of accessibility maturity and an important step towards sustainable practice. However, digital accessibility needs to permeate the overall institutional culture – for example administration, marketing and communications.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if effort == 5 %}**Make everything inclusive**

Inclusion is considered a fundamental aspect of business as usual. At this level, you are no longer having to consider accessibility; it is something everybody does as standard 'professional good practice'.

{% else %}{% endif %}

**Your comment(s):**

*{{ effort\_comments }}*

You currently consider the focus of effort for your institution to be: {% if effort == 1 %}**Justify non action or seek exemption**

The next stage of model you should aim to reach is **“React to barriers”**

Reacting to individual barriers puts the onus on students to be active in highlighting any issues they experience. This assumes they have prior experience of barrier-free access to compare with. It also relies on them having the energy and confidence to complain and assumes you have effective mechanisms in place for reporting and resolving issues.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if effort == 2 %}**React to barriers**

The next stage of model you should aim to reach is **“Make websites inclusive”**

Your ‘digital estate’ is a significant and important area to focus on and a big step towards maturity. However, the student experience is impacted by a **wide range of factors** including the accessibility of the **content** uploaded by staff and the way technology is **used** to enhance teaching and learning. These wider issues also need to be addressed.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if effort == 3 %}**Make websites inclusive**

The next stage of model you should aim to reach is **“Make teaching and learning inclusive”**

Recognising the importance of accessible teaching and learning resources is an important step towards sustainable practice. However, digital accessibility needs to permeate the overall institutional culture – for example administration, marketing and communications.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if effort == 4 %}**Make teaching and learning inclusive**

The next stage of model you should aim to reach is **“Make everything inclusive”**

By making everything inclusive, you are no longer having to consider accessibility; it is something everybody does as standard 'professional good practice'.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if effort == 5 %}**Make everything inclusive**

Inclusion is considered a fundamental aspect of business as usual. At this level, you are no longer having to consider accessibility; it is something everybody does as standard 'professional good practice'.

{% else %}{% endif %}

## Skills and expertise

This section details how you feel about your institution’s skills and expertise.

{% if skills == 1 %}**Unidentified or existing only in a few individuals**

This is not necessarily unusual.

Many organisations have skill in providing one-to-one support for disabled students as well as skill in e-learning but lack systematic awareness of digital accessibility and its benefits for disabled and non-disabled students alike.

However, this puts the organisation in a vulnerable place, be dependent on one or two individuals. You may also fail to stem the flow of inaccessible content onto your sites.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if skills == 2 %}**Knowledge is located in specialist disability and/or assistive technology teams**

Disability and assistive technology specialists are key players in an accessible organisation but only when their expertise feeds into the role-related responsibilities of others.

It is important to ensure their knowledge is directed into reducing future barriers rather than firefighting existing barriers. This involves others with different roles being trained.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if skills == 3 %}**Skills available in pockets, or certain course areas have specific skills**

When those responsible for the institution's digital systems have skills and experience in accessibility the institution takes a big step forward in terms of accessibility.

However, there will be many others loading their own content into these systems. If these people lack accessibility awareness the user experience will still be compromised.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if skills == 4 %}**Skills and awareness available across broader teams**

This is a strong position because it distributes responsibility and encourages consistent training. It also creates effective synergies – for example a Bring Your Own Device policy in Information Services facilitates a ‘mobile first’ policy for teaching resources while study-skills and disability support teams advise students on using the inbuilt text to speech and voice recognition tools on personal devices.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if policies == 5 %}**Accessible practices broadly embraced as part of organisation's core professional values**

This is excellent. Accessible practices are embraced as part of the organisation's core professional values. Accessible practices are explicit in policies, job descriptions, procurement and quality assurance.

{% else %}{% endif %}

**Your comment(s):**

*{{ skills\_comments }}*

You currently consider your skills and expertise to be: {% if skills == 1 %}**Unidentified or existing only in a few individuals**

The next stage of model you should aim to reach is “Knowledge is located in specialist disability and/or assistive technology teams”

Disability and assistive technology specialists are key players in an accessible organisation but only when their expertise feeds into the role-related responsibilities of others.

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The next stage of model you should aim to reach is “Skills and awareness available across broader teams”

This is a strong position because it distributes responsibility and encourages consistent training. It also creates effective synergies – for example a Bring Your Own Device policy in Information Services facilitates a ‘mobile first’ policy for teaching resources while study-skills and disability support teams advise students on using the inbuilt text to speech and voice recognition tools on personal devices.

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This is excellent. Accessible practices are embraced as part of the organisation's core professional values. Accessible practices are explicit in policies, job descriptions, procurement and quality assurance.

{% else %}{% endif %}

## Policy inclusion

These are the policy areas you consider to be covered by your accessibility policy.

{% if policies == 1 %}**Not in any policies**

Leaders are often surprised to discover digital accessibility is absent from any policy areas. This makes you very vulnerable in the event of legal challenges. It also means a lack of ownership and accountability for accessibility in the organisation. Existing policies can often be significantly improved by small tweaks that clarify responsibilities.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if policies == 2 %}**Disability policies**

If you only consider accessibility in terms of the direct impact on disability, you divide disabled people from non-disabled people. This mindset may result in students having to declare a disability in order to access accessible content and services - something that negatively impacts on others who would benefit like international students and those without a diagnosis. It also means other significant policy areas (IT, teaching and learning, procurement etc) are absolved from responsibility.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if policies == 3 %}**IT, procurement & disability policies**

It is good that the importance of accessibility has begun to influence other wider policies; IT and procurement should be considered in terms of accessibility and will have enormous positive impacts student experience.

However, the student experience is most directly impacted by the practices and approaches of teaching staff so these – in turn – need to be brought on board.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if policies == 4 %}**IT, procurement, disability & teaching/learning policies**

This is a strong position because it distributes responsibility and encourages consistent training. It also creates effective synergies – for example a Bring Your Own Device policy in Information Services facilitates a ‘mobile first’ policy for teaching resources while study-skills and disability support teams advise students on using the inbuilt text to speech and voice recognition tools on personal devices.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if policies == 5 %}**Policies mentioning Digital Accessibility**

Accessibility considerations are embedded in all policy areas. This ensures consistent positive experiences for students (and staff) and fosters a sense of welcome and belonging. Good practice is embedded and sustainable making organisations more resilient if key accessibility advocates leave. Working in - and understanding - a digitally inclusive environment prepares students for self-advocacy and enhances their employability.

{% else %}{% endif %}

**Your comment(s):**

*{{ policies\_comments }}*

You currently consider your accessibility policy to be: {% if policies == 1 %}**Not in any policies**

The next stage of model you should aim to reach is **“Disability policies”**

This policy divides disabled people from non-disabled people. This mindset may result in students having to declare a disability in order to access accessible content. It also means other significant policy areas (IT, teaching and learning, procurement etc) are absolved from responsibility.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if policies == 2 %}**Disability policies**

The next stage of model you should aim to reach is **“IT, procurement & disability policies”**

IT and procurement should be considered in terms of accessibility and will have enormous positive impacts student experience.

However, the student experience is most directly impacted by the practices and approaches of teaching staff so these – in turn – need to be brought on board.

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{% else %}{% endif %}{% if policies == 4 %}**IT, procurement, disability & teaching/learning policies**

The next stage of model you should aim to reach is **“Wide range of policies (eg marketing etc)”**

Accessibility considerations are embedded in all policy areas. This ensures consistent positive experiences for students (and staff) and fosters a sense of welcome and belonging. Good practice is embedded and sustainable making organisations more resilient if key accessibility advocates leave. Working in - and understanding - a digitally inclusive environment prepares students for self-advocacy and enhances their employability.

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Accessibility considerations are embedded in all policy areas. This ensures consistent positive experiences for students (and staff) and fosters a sense of welcome and belonging. Good practice is embedded and sustainable making organisations more resilient if key accessibility advocates leave. Working in - and understanding - a digitally inclusive environment prepares students for self-advocacy and enhances their employability.

{% else %}{% endif %}

## Organisational culture

This is how you consider your institution to feel culturally

{% if culture == 1 %}**Disability ignorance / avoidance**

There is minimal anticipation of disability barriers and a reliance on affected individuals pointing out difficulties. Most people see digital accessibility as someone else’s responsibility. This is isolating for disabled students (and disabled staff) and results in wasted talent, high dropout rates among disabled students and a measurable achievement gap.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if culture == 2 %}**Silos of expertise but few opportunities for skills transfer**

Key individuals or groups within the organisation have expertise, but a lack of communication stops effective practice developing. This can result in disjointed and inconsistent advice. It also makes institutions vulnerable to staff turnover when an 'accessibility expert' leaves and their expertise leaves with them.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if culture == 3 %}**Risk aversion**

Recognising risks and mitigating them is a good move forward but it is not the end goal. Although some risks are reduced (eg your learning platform may be more accessible) a narrow, standards-based approach to inclusive practice can have unintended consequences...

If digital content gets more scrutiny than photocopies of textbook pages then teaching staff may be discouraged from using digital content at all. If teaching staff revert to traditional 'chalk, talk and handout' practices, disabled students will face many more barriers.

An exclusive emphasis on web standards and document templates can also limit creativity and stifle innovation.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if culture == 4 %}**Encourages innovation. Permission to take risks**

Accessibility is not a binary concept. The resources and activities that demolish barriers for one group my create barriers for another group. Not every new approach works but the cost/benefit balance can only be discovered by trial and error and feedback from students. Encouraging experimentation in a supportive environment can lead to innovative practice and improved efficiencies for all.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if culture == 5 %}**Partnership, creativity & embedding good practice**

Risks are reduced and innovation encouraged where disabled students are contributors and collaborators in improving practice.

Accessibility is most sustainable where good practice is openly shared across the institution and accessibility regarded as a cultural norm.

{% else %}{% endif %}

**Your comment(s):**

*{{ culture\_comments }}*

You currently consider your organisational culture to be one of: {% if culture == 1 %}**Disability ignorance / avoidance**

The next stage of model you should aim to reach is **“Silos of expertise but few opportunities for skills transfer”**

Key individuals or groups within the organisation will have expertise, but a lack of communication stops effective practice developing. This can result in disjointed and inconsistent advice. It also makes institutions vulnerable to staff turnover when an 'accessibility expert' leaves and their expertise leaves with them.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if culture == 2 %}**Silos of expertise but few opportunities for skills transfer**

The next stage of model you should aim to reach is **“Risk aversion”**

At this stage, although some risks are reduced (eg your learning platform may be more accessible) a narrow, standards-based approach to inclusive practice can have unintended consequences...

If digital content gets more scrutiny than photocopies of textbook pages then teaching staff may be discouraged from using digital content at all. If teaching staff revert to traditional 'chalk, talk and handout' practices, disabled students will face many more barriers.

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{% else %}{% endif %}

## Student experience

This is what you perceive the student experience to be at your institution

{% if stuex == 1 %}**Identification initiated by disabled student**

This results in inconsistent practices. Where responses are reactive, dependent on who made the request, it is possible create new problems since nobody has a top-level overview of good practice. It is likely to result in accessibility barriers perpetuating if students are unaware of what level of accessibility they should expect - or lack confidence in complaining. This is a costly approach.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if stuex == 2 %}**Proactive efforts from the disability team**

Although this approach can result in positive experiences for students in terms of advocacy and human-mediated support, it depends on a student:

* knowing they have disability,
* being happy to identify as 'disabled' (many neurodiverse people would not agree that their difference was a 'disability'),
* hitting the right 'level' of disability to qualify for support

From a digital accessibility perspective many students would benefit more from signposting to the tools and resources that would help them study more productively without necessarily having to declare a disability.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if stuex == 3 %}**Digital accessibility is evident in pockets but not joined up**

In this case, excellent guidance on digital inclusion exists but lack of cross referencing makes it easy to miss. For example, the library website may have some guidance on tools/techniques for reading accessible content, but this won't be referenced from Study Skills pages on academic reading - or vice versa.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if stuex == 4 %}**Digital accessibility is mainstream and referenced from multiple locations**

Inclusive digital practice means it is difficult for any student to lack awareness of digital accessibility. It is likely to be included in inductions, embedded in study skills, referenced in course introductions and explicit in library support areas.

{% else %}{% endif %}{% if stuex == 5 %}**Students actively involved in shaping practice**

Disabled students may be actively encouraged to contribute digital hints and tips via blogs, skill-swaps etc. They may have formally recognised support roles in working with lecturers to advise on course resources, activities and assessments.

{% else %}{% endif %}

**Your comment(s):**

*{{ stuex\_comments }}*

You currently consider the student experience at your institution to be one of: {% if stuex == 1 %} **Identification initiated by disabled student**

The next stage of model you should aim to reach is **“Proactive efforts from the disability team”**

Although this approach can result in positive experiences for students in terms of advocacy and human-mediated support, it depends on a student:

* knowing they have disability,
* being happy to identify as 'disabled' (many neurodiverse people would not agree that their difference was a 'disability'),
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{% else %}{% endif %}

# Appendix

## Where did these themes come from?

These criteria are developed from years of working with institutions across the UK. The Jisc TechDis service delivered action research based on interviews and surveys across dozens of organisations, resulting in summary reports - for example:

* [Simon Ball's Briefing for Senior Managers in Higher Education](https://core.ac.uk/display/24073902) "Technology Change for Inclusion - 12 steps towards Embedding Inclusive Practice with Technology as a Whole Institution Culture in UK Higher Education".
  + Alistair McNaught's parallel research and delivery of
  + 5 Senior Manager Briefings for Further Education for Jisc TechDis
  + co-developing and delivering 29 institutional Accessibility Snapshots for Jisc and related online training courses for HE and FE institutions.

## Useful Links

### Build your community and resources

#### Self-access / DIY

Subscribe to the [Digital Accessibility Regulations Jiscmail list.](https://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/webadmin?A0=DIGITALACCESSIBILITYREGULATIONS) Explore the [LexDis Accessibility toolkit](https://www.lexdis.org.uk/digital-accessibility/). Join the [Jisc Accessibility Teams](mailto:Kellie.Mote@jisc.ac.uk?subject=Joining%20the%20Accessibility%20Teams%20site) site.

#### Supported services

Sign up  [for our newsletter and webinars](https://www.abilitynet.org.uk/sign-up-for-our-newsletter). Purchase [our accessible component library and accessibility guidelines](https://abilitynet.org.uk/accessibility-services/products-and-services)

### Planning and prioritisation activities

#### Self-access / DIY

Identify stakeholders and form working group. Collate all sites in scope/project plan. Identify strengths and development areas with self-serve maturity model.

#### Supported services

[Guided maturity model planning session](https://abilitynet.org.uk/accessibility-services/he-and-fe-accessibility-maturity-model) and report. Accessibility statement mapper service. [Digital accessibility consultancy](https://abilitynet.org.uk/accessibility-services/digital-accessibility-he-and-fe), [McNaught mentoring](https://www.learningapps.co.uk/moodle/xertetoolkits/play.php?template_id=2196#page1) services.

### Benchmarking and auditing

#### Self-access / DIY

Conduct automated and manual testing on your sites with [WAVE](https://wave.webaim.org/) tool or [Accessibility Insights](https://accessibilityinsights.io/) etc. Evaluate accessibility of Word documents and PDFs. Map student journeys / pain points in your digital estate.

#### Supported services

Use our [HE/FE Digital Accessibility bundle](https://abilitynet.org.uk/accessibility-services/digital-accessibility-he-and-fe) of services to create a benchmark of accessibility and roadmap for inclusive journeys. Procure [our automated & manual testing services and website accreditation service.](https://abilitynet.org.uk/accessibility-services)

### Team training and skills development

#### Self-access / DIY

[Future Teacher resources](https://xot.futureteacher.eu/play.php?template_id=4#home). ETF ENHANCE modues on [Accessibility](https://enhance.etfoundation.co.uk/category/accessibility) and [Difference and diversity](https://enhance.etfoundation.co.uk/category/difference-diversity). AbilityNet free webinar services.

#### Supported services

Per seat training courses. 1-1 / group mentoring sessions. [McNaught bespoke training courses](https://www.learningapps.co.uk/moodle/xertetoolkits/play.php?template_id=2196#page1) (inclusive practice; inclusive policies; student support services). Enquire about [AbilityNet bespoke training courses](https://abilitynet.org.uk/accessibility-services/speak-to-our-experts) (technical and lived experience of disability)

### Student self-help tools

#### Self-access / DIY

Link from your site to [My Study My Way on demand](https://mystudymyway.com/), [My Computer My Way](https://mcmw.abilitynet.org.uk/) and our range of [factsheets](https://abilitynet.org.uk/free-resources/abilitynet-factsheets) . [LexDis strategies](https://www.lexdis.org.uk/strategies/). University of Kent [Tools collection](https://www.kent.ac.uk/tools).

#### Supported services

Institution specific [My Study My Way](https://abilitynet.org.uk/HE-services/my-study-my-way). Branded [My Computer My Way](https://mcmw.abilitynet.org.uk/)

### Culture & strategy

#### Self-access / DIY

Clear communications and endorsement of accessibility. Whole institution from senior sponsor to student voice.

#### Supported services

Global Accessibility Awareness days (support and/or content). Accessibility Policy & QA Support. [Case Studies](https://abilitynet.org.uk/accessibility-services/meet-our-clients) and badging. [Guided maturity model planning session](https://abilitynet.org.uk/accessibility-services/he-and-fe-accessibility-maturity-model) and report

### Contact Us

Contact us at [enquiries@abilitynet.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@abilitynet.org.uk) to arrange a 30 minute call to discuss where you are now and the steps you can take to move forward.