Expectation to record lectures
Statement by the General Board’s Education Committee

This document outlines expectations with regard to recording of lectures at the University of Cambridge for the 2022-23 academic year. It represents the expected standards across the institution, and has been approved by the General Board’s Education Committee (GBEC).

This Statement sits alongside the Policy on Recording of Teaching Materials/Lectures, and all recordings should be made in line with that policy. This Statement will be reviewed by the Education Committee in the Easter Term 2023.

**Expectation**

1. Lectures should normally be given in-person, save where there is a pedagogical reason to deliver these via an alternative method. *See para 9 below*

2. Students are expected to attend lectures, as these are more effective and engaging than utilisation of recordings alone. *See para 9 below*

3. Recordings of live lectures provide a significant benefit to students, and it is expected that recordings will be made available to students as standard across the institution. *See paras 10-13 below*

4. Lecturers, or any of those with rights in a recording, retain the right to withhold consent to making a recording. However, GBEC anticipates that most sessions are suitable and desirable for capture. *See paras 14-18 below*

5. Recordings should be made available to students as soon as feasible after the live session, and remain accessible for the remainder of the academic year. *See paras 26-28 below*

6. The use of captions and transcripts on recordings is strongly encouraged. *See paras 29-32 below*

7. “Lecture” in this context is defined as a primarily didactic session in which student contributions are not normally expected. It does not encompass any form of teaching based on discourse or to which student contributions are pivotal, such as a supervision, seminar, or practical class. Recordings of such sessions may be made, but are not covered by this Statement. Throughout this Statement, the reference to “recordings” refers to recordings of live lectures; it does not presume full video capture and may refer to audio-only.

**Rationale and context**

This section contains further detail on the rationale and context which informs the expectation above.

8. Lectures, while only one part of the rich educational experience that Cambridge offers, play a foundational role in the acquisition of knowledge and learning and critical engagement with the subject. They enable students to access the deeper and more individualised...
learning provided in supervisions and discussion-based sessions, provide context for practical and field-based learning, and are a valuable part of education at Cambridge.

9. The General Board’s Education Committee (GBEC) has agreed that live, in-person lectures are generally preferable for the following reasons:
   a. they are broadly determined, by staff and students, to be more engaging and effective than recordings alone;
   b. building community and sense of belonging, institutionally and as part of a scholarly discipline; this supports cohort bonding, creates social support mechanisms, and prevents isolation;
   c. providing opportunities for peer-to-peer learning and debate;
   d. providing opportunities for ad hoc or informal learning experiences; and
   e. maintaining rhythm and structure of content, so that students are presented with material at the right time to meet the learning outcomes;
   f. Further work on the value of in-person teaching will take place during summer 2022 and will be published on the Technology-Enabled Learning website in due course.

10. However, lecture capture recordings offer significant value to students, by:
    a. promoting an inclusive learning experience for all students;
    b. enabling revision and reinforcement of key concepts and complex topics, both between lectures to support supervisions and independent study, and in preparation for assessment;
    c. supporting a range of learning styles and enabling new students to successfully transition to the demands of study;
    d. reducing pressure on note-taking, and enabling students to develop note-taking skills throughout their studies; and
    e. providing timely access to foundational content if a student is unable to attend a lecture due to illness.
    f. Further work on the benefit of recordings will take place during summer 2022 and will be published on the Technology-Enabled Learning website in due course.

11. Providing recordings of lectures has been recommended by the Office for Students, the Department for Education, the Office of the Independent Adjudicator, and the Disabled Students Commission as an example of inclusive practice and is also in line with the University’s Code of Practice: Access and Inclusion for Disabled Students.

12. Provision of recordings also provides a significant benefit to the institution, by reducing reliance on notetakers for disabled students; this will release significant financial and administrative constraints on the Disability Resource Centre.

13. GBEC has therefore agreed that, while in-person lectures are the preferred model of delivery, recordings of lectures are expected to be made available to students as standard across the institution, to complement the live lecture experience and support student learning.

14. In setting this expectation, GBEC wishes to reiterate that no individual is required or compelled to record lectures. No aspect of this expectation may override a lecturer’s right not to consent to their lecture being recorded.
15. Further, GBEC recognises that not all sessions will be suitable for recording; in particular, teaching which contains ethically- or commercially-sensitive material may be excluded from this expectation. However, the majority of sessions will be suitable for capture.

16. Staff may choose to record only portions of a session, where there may be interactive or sensitive elements not suitable for recording. Alternatively, they may choose to employ an alternative to a recording of the live session if this is more appropriate, for example providing pre-recorded content which addresses the main learning outcomes and so delivers the same value to students as outlined above.

17. Individual staff are best placed to decide on the sensitivity and suitability of recordings. Nonetheless, staff are expected to appropriately weigh their concerns about recording against the benefits to students, and to ensure that lecture recordings are not unduly prohibited.

18. However, where a student has a Student Support Document indicating that recording of lectures is a reasonable adjustment, consent should not be withheld save for the most exceptional reasons, in which case the Faculty or Department will need to put in place alternative measures to provide notetaking assistance if this is not available centrally. See appendix A for more information.

19. Lecture recordings will be promoted to students by the University as a complement or supplement to the live lecture experience, and not an alternative to attending lectures. In addition, it will be made clear that the intended role of recordings is not to provide a “source of truth” for verbatim learning.

20. Staff are not responsible for technical failure of lecture capture equipment, and are not obligated to replace or repeat any recording which fails.

21. In line with, and to underscore, the complementary role of recordings, staff are not expected to adapt or amend their teaching style, although it may be beneficial to consider the following:
   a. Recordings are unlikely to pick up questions raised by the audience, so it may be helpful to repeat any questions before further explanatory guidance is given or for the recording to be stopped whilst there is engagement with the lecture audience.
   b. Editing tools are available, but editing is not expected or required.
   c. Consideration should be given to sound quality in the rooms, and ensuring appropriate use of lapel microphones where available. This will enable students to supplement their notes most effectively, and can increase caption accuracy.
   d. Staff may wish, but are not obliged, to consider the potential in using recordings as re-usable learning objects in a ‘flipped classroom’ model; this would change the balance of blended learning on the module or course, and so should be considered in the round with regard to the overall student experience. Further guidance on blended learning and flipped classroom models is available from the Technology-Enabled Learning Service.
Process and implementation
The following information is given to support staff in putting this expectation into practice.

Making recordings

22. The University is continually developing its formal lecture capture installations, and is working to increase the number and consistency of sites. This work will be ongoing throughout the next few years before full consistency can be achieved. The Lecture Capture website contains a list of rooms offering lecture capture which will be continually updated.

23. All staff with a Raven account are able to access the Panopto desktop recording software, whether or not the relevant room has been installed with formal lecture capture equipment. It is not anticipated that lack of installed capture equipment will significantly interfere with staff’s ability to implement the expectations in this Statement; however, GBEC appreciate that available workarounds may not be feasible or desirable in all cases. The speed and consistency of rollout will be kept under review.

24. Recordings should normally be made with Panopto, the University’s platform for lecture capture. Panopto is only available for use in teaching and learning, and is integrated with Moodle to enable ease of access by the relevant student cohort. Staff can access the Panopto user guide or seek help by contacting lecturecapturehelp@uis.cam.ac.uk.

25. Recordings made in other platforms are discouraged, but if they take place it is recommended that they are subsequently uploaded to Panopto by the relevant Faculty or Department, in order to take advantage of access rights through the integration with Moodle, as well as editing, bookmarking, searching, automatic captioning and other pedagogical features that Panopto offers. Recordings cannot be uploaded directly to Moodle. Staff can access more information about making and uploading recordings.

Access to recordings

26. Recordings should be made accessible to all students in the relevant cohort as soon as possible after the live session. In this context, GBEC defines ‘cohort’ as those students who are registered for the relevant course of study; access may be granted more widely at the discretion of the relevant lecturer.

27. It is not acceptable to withhold recordings for a later release date, or to restrict viewing only to certain groups of students, for the following reasons:
   a. Limiting access to recordings can disadvantage learners, and particularly some types of learners over others.
   b. Some students will want to access recordings between lectures to revisit complex topics, or to complete missed notes taken during the live session. Prohibiting access until an end-of-year or end-of-term revision point would negatively impact student understanding and engagement in-year.
   c. Students should be expected, and supported, to engage with recordings appropriately throughout the year.
   d. Applying viewing restrictions may represent a failure to make a reasonable adjustment, to which there is no legal defence. It may also cause students, who would otherwise not need to, to disclose a disability in order to access support,
which in turn places an unnecessary and costly burden on University resources, and
an additional time penalty for students.
e. Setting and maintaining appropriate viewing restrictions is complex and
administratively time-consuming.

28. The default expectation is that recordings will remain available until the end of the relevant
academic year. Where Faculties or Departments have identified a pedagogical reason to
limit access, this may be done under the following conditions:
a. Any such restriction must be no shorter than the Term in which the teaching takes
place, plus two weeks.
b. It must be a course-level decision supported and minuted by the Faculty Board, and
not one made by individual lecturers.
c. Faculties or Departments must show clear consultation with, and communication to,
students when developing such a policy.
d. Faculties or Departments must provide advice and guidance to students about how
to engage with online material in ways which are appropriate to their education and
their circumstances; for example, a suggested timeline for watching recordings, or to
identify when supervisors can reasonably expect them to have engaged with certain
topics or elements.

Captions
29. A caption or transcript is strongly encouraged and should be provided wherever possible. In
some cases, the University is required to provide either captions or transcripts in order to
support its statutory anticipatory duty under the Equality Act 2010.

30. Panopto offers automatic captioning and transcripts of every recording. This is currently not
enabled by default and requires manual intervention, although it is possible to set automatic
captioning by default at the folder level (this is normally the course level, but may vary; for
more information on default captioning please see the Panopto support hub).

31. Accuracy in automatically-generated captions can vary and depends on a number of factors.
The level of accuracy may impact on staff’s desire to employ captions on their recordings.
GBEC accepts that individual staff may choose whether or not to employ captions, but
strongly encourages their use for the following reasons:
a. enabling the University to uphold its commitment to voluntarily comply with the
Accessibility Regulations 2018;
b. for students who have hearing impairments or who are deaf, the provision of
accurate captions or transcripts represents a legally required reasonable
adjustment; this may also apply to students with other impairments;
c. supporting students with processing or memory difficulties, by reinforcing verbal
content;
d. making searching within recordings easier, reinforcing appropriate use of recordings;
e. supporting students whose first language is not English.

32. Where captioning is provided, GBEC has agreed that:
a. Staff are neither required nor expected to regularly check and edit captions or
transcripts, and will not be held responsible for inaccuracies or errors in text. Where
particularly misrepresentative or inappropriate text is brought to their attention they are encouraged to take action, but this is not required.

b. Students should be aware that captions or transcripts generated cannot be relied upon for accuracy, and that staff will not be checking or editing as standard. More information about captioning is available on the Lecture Capture website.

c. Use of captions or transcripts is deemed complementary to the recorded session, and should not be viewed or used in isolation of the accompanying recording.
Appendix A

Impact of not providing lecture recordings in respect of the provision of notetaking support for disabled students

Since 2016, when the regulations on Disabled Students’ Allowances (DSAs) were revised by the Government, Universities have been responsible for the provision of note-takers where this support task has been identified as a reasonable adjustment. Whilst the provision of lecture recordings has led to a decrease in the requirement for note-taking (i.e. the availability of recordings negated the need for the note-taking support) there are still currently 21 disabled students in receipt of this support (usually as a result of students with multiple impairments or with physical and sensory impairments).

The number of students receiving note-taking support has declined by 49% since the introduction of the lecture capture pilot in 2015-16; because numbers of disabled students rise by 12% per year, this decline is even more striking. Students who previously would have required note-taking support are now more likely to be able to support themselves with recording. This reduction has saved nearly £43,000\(^1\) annually in note-taking support since 2015-16.

The provision, management and administration of note-taking is complex and labour intensive, and represents a disproportionate draw on stretched DRC administrative resources when compared to the management of the provision of other support tasks. All note-takers have to complete mandatory training run by the DRC before they can start to support students. Access to, availability of and changes to timetables can also be complicated and time-consuming for a central support service with no direct access to that information. Also, as the pool of possible note-takers in some disciplines (mostly STEMM where the note-taker needs to have the requisite knowledge of the discipline and the required vocabulary or the ability to accurately note mathematical formulae), the pool of possible support workers is finite. In these cases it can be very difficult to find sufficient note-takers with the requisite skills and availability, particularly if the support worker is required to attend in person. Due to demand during the pandemic the DRC was able to recruit support workers who were able to deliver this support remotely to increase capacity.

If lectures are not recorded it becomes necessary to find support workers who are able to attend lectures in person, at the scheduled time of the lecture. This is becoming increasingly difficult and the institution risks significant financial and reputational risk, as well as compromising a disabled student’s access to their teaching and learning. If note-takers can work remotely with access to recordings this significantly increases availability and capacity as note-takers do not need to be in Cambridge, or to be available at the exact time of the lecture.

\(^1\) Mean hours spent per student is around 100 hours, at a cost (with on-costs) of £21.18 per hour.
In light of this, it is proposed that in cases where there is an evidenced requirement for a disabled student to have a note-taker to take notes for them as a reasonable adjustment, and no recording is made, it will be the responsibility of the department/faculty to manage and fund note-taking for the student, not the DRC.