

# Language Modification Guidelines for Staff

Under the Equality Act 2010, there is a requirement on Higher Education Institutions to make reasonable adjustments for disabled students in order that they can fully access their studies. Language modification of exam scripts, assignments, lecture presentations, teaching materials or other written text may be recommended for some students.

Language modification is generally recommended for (but not limited to) deaf or hearing impaired students.

Deaf or hearing impaired students may require language modification in order to fully access and understand course related materials, in particular if the student's first language is British Sign Language (BSL) or where language acquisition has been impaired.

In general, people learn a language through hearing the spoken word and being exposed to this almost constantly as a child. Those people who are born deaf or who become deaf before they begin to develop speech, will not learn language this way. Each word is usually taught individually in what can be a very time-consuming process. When learning to read a language, deaf or hearing impaired people do not have the advantage of learning something that they can already speak. Obviously deaf or hearing impaired students in higher education, have achieved the necessary academic standards to participate on their course, but this can still mean that reading, research and academic study is a difficult process.

Language modification means making the written (and spoken) word as clear as possible. The meaning of the text should not be changed, neither should any necessary technical terminology associated with or relevant to the student's studies. This generally means making the following adaptations:

- Shortening lengthy sentences
- Replacing complex vocabulary with plainer words (excluding technical/course related terms)
- Avoiding the use of passive verbs
- Removing unnecessary words and language
- Removing ambiguity
- Making use of bullet points/spacing and other formatting conventions
- Avoiding the use of 'sayings' e.g. 'stand your ground'

## **An example of language modification:**

**Unmodified sample question:**

It is understood to be likely that the World Cup will return to Europe in 2018 and the government has announced that it will throw its weight behind an FA bid to host the event in the UK. Identify the benefits to the UK within the context of sports tourism and the local economy, consider what steps would have to be taken to ensure visitors have an enjoyable experience, the local population are not inconvenienced and the infrastructure can withstand the increased pressure.

**A modified question may read:**

**Scenario 1**

The English Football Association thinks that a country in Europe will be chosen to host the World Cup in 2018. If this happens, the English Football Association will make a bid for the event to be hosted in the UK. The UK government said it will fully support this bid.

Answer all of the following questions about the scenario 1:

- a) What are the benefits to the UK for sports tourism?
- b) What are the benefits to the UK for the local economy?
- c) How would you make sure visitors have an enjoyable time during the World Cup?
- d) How would you ensure that people who live locally to the World Cup matches do not have their lives disrupted?
- e) What would you do to make sure that services and facilities could cope with the increased numbers of people?