

'Accessibility as Standard' Checklist: J: Auditory / Visual

Introduction from the Disabled Members' Standing Committee

The Disabled Members' Standing Committee (DMSC) works on behalf of all our members from Further Education to Higher Education, Prisons, Adult and Continuing Education and academic-related, professional services staff and researchers.

One in four members are disabled - including members with visible or invisible disabilities and with a hearing impairment, neurodivergent and/or have lived experience of mental illness. The DMSC recognises that access barriers within our workplaces result in members facing difficulties in delivering their professional skills whilst taking an intersectional approach to equality, for all members of our union.

The Disabled Members' Standing Committee have designed this short review checklist to gather data and anecdotal information on how accessible our education institutions are. Despite there being protections in law, access and accessibility remain an issue that impacts Disabled members both individually and collectively. This checklist aims to increase accessibility in our workplaces, including within physical buildings and virtual learning environments, so that we see 'accessibility as standard'.

The checklist is especially useful for Health & Safety and Equality reps. It helps to improve accountability for accessible workplaces locally as well as providing data that feeds into UCU's national campaigns and forms a basis for branches to pressure employers to act.

The Annual Day of Action for Disability Equality in Education (which usually takes place during Disability History Month) is a cornerstone of the DMSC's work. The DMSC welcomes feedback from members and branches about how we can collectively improve access and inclusion in our workplaces: **Nothing About Us, Without Us.**

How to use the 'Accessibility as Standard' checklist:

1. Health & Safety and Equality reps may wish to conduct the review together.
2. You may complete the entire checklist or choose to undertake one or more sections.
3. Ideally, the review should be conducted at the same time every year (i.e., at the beginning of each academic year)

4. Inform the lead for Health and Safety and the Joint Negotiation and Consultation Committee (or equivalent) at your institution about this checklist so that they can assist you with completing the review.
5. Where data is missing (because reps are unable to find the required information), inform the lead for Health and Safety, and your branch committee.
6. When you have completed the checklist, discuss the results with your branch committee. You may wish to include some recommendations or priority areas for attention.
7. Please share your results and recommendations each time it's conducted with the Joint Negotiation and Consultation Committee (or equivalent) at your institution to put pressure on your employer to take action.
8. Please share the results and recommendations of the review each year with UCU including sending your completed checklists to egadmin@ucu.org.uk.

How to complete the checklist

Instructions: Please specify the location you are auditing, for example:

A. Doors and entrances including reception				
Area	Reception	Y	N	Notes / Comments
A01	Is the reception point fitted with an induction loop?	✓		Notices displayed to inform visitors

This checklist, which is not exhaustive, should be answered about how accessible your institution is concerning workers with visible and non-visible disabilities and those with a hearing impairment, neurodivergent and/or a mental health condition. The checklist is divided into the following sections and branches are encouraged to complete, it in full, or to choose an area, for example, if disabled members have raised issues around 'Information' and access, then branches should use that checklist to support engagement with employers. The checklist covers the following sections:

- A. Working conditions
- B. Information
- C. Virtual learning environment
- D. Fixtures and fittings
- E. Doors and entrances including reception
- F. Ramps, steps and floors
- G. Lavatories
- H. Evacuation routes
- I. Car parking
- J. Auditory / visual
- K. Support

This checklist is not intended to be a representative sample, it will allow branches to analyse the data to feed into local and national equality campaigns. If you have any suggestions on how this checklist can be improved, please contact the DMSC via Sharon Russell (srussell@ucu.org.uk).

‘Accessibility as Standard’ Checklist: J - Auditory / Visual

J. Relating to auditory and visual aids to support disabled workers				
Area		Y	N	Notes / Comments
J01	Are communal areas/work spaces designed to absorb and interrupt sound such as portable dividers and/or desk dividers?			
J02	Are noise-cancelling headphones provided for Disabled and Neurodivergent people who may be sensitive to sound?			
J03	If fluorescent lighting is installed, does it include variable lighting options?			
J04	Is the building equipped to assist people with hearing impairments?			
J05	Is there an ‘audio’ version of information about the building available?			
J06	Where a payphone is provided does it have a hearing aid coupler and is it height suitable for all users? <i>NB: A hearing aid coupler works like a hearing loop by making a wireless magnetic connection to the hearing aid.</i>			
J07	Are communal areas fitted with an induction loop? This includes staff work rooms, canteens, lecture halls etc.			
J08	Are all relevant locations signed?			
J09	Is any servery/counter accessible to all users, including those with hearing impairments?			

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J. Relating to auditory and visual aids to support disabled workers continued				
Area		Y	N	Notes / Comments
J10	If the door is power-operated, does it have visual and tactile information?			
J11	If the door is security protected, is the system suitable for use by and within reach of people with sensory or mobility impairments?			
J12	Are signs designed and positioned to inform those with visual and mobility impairments with reduced eye levels?			
J13	Does the lighting take account of the needs of people with visual impairments?			
J14	Is the reception point fitted with an induction loop?			
J15	For those progressing to other parts of the building is information provided by signs, supported by tactile information such as a map or model? / reword			
J16	Are the locations of toilets signed?			
J17	Is there a visible as well as audible fire alarm system?			
J18	Are car parks identifiable by visual, audible and tactile information			

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J. Relating to auditory and visual aids to support disabled workers continued				
Area		Y	N	Notes / Comments
J19	Are car parks adequately lit?			

Completed by: (Equality Rep) _____

Date: _____

(H&S Rep) _____

Date: _____