



Progression of Accessibility Centres in higher Education  
for Students with disabilities in North Africa (PACES)

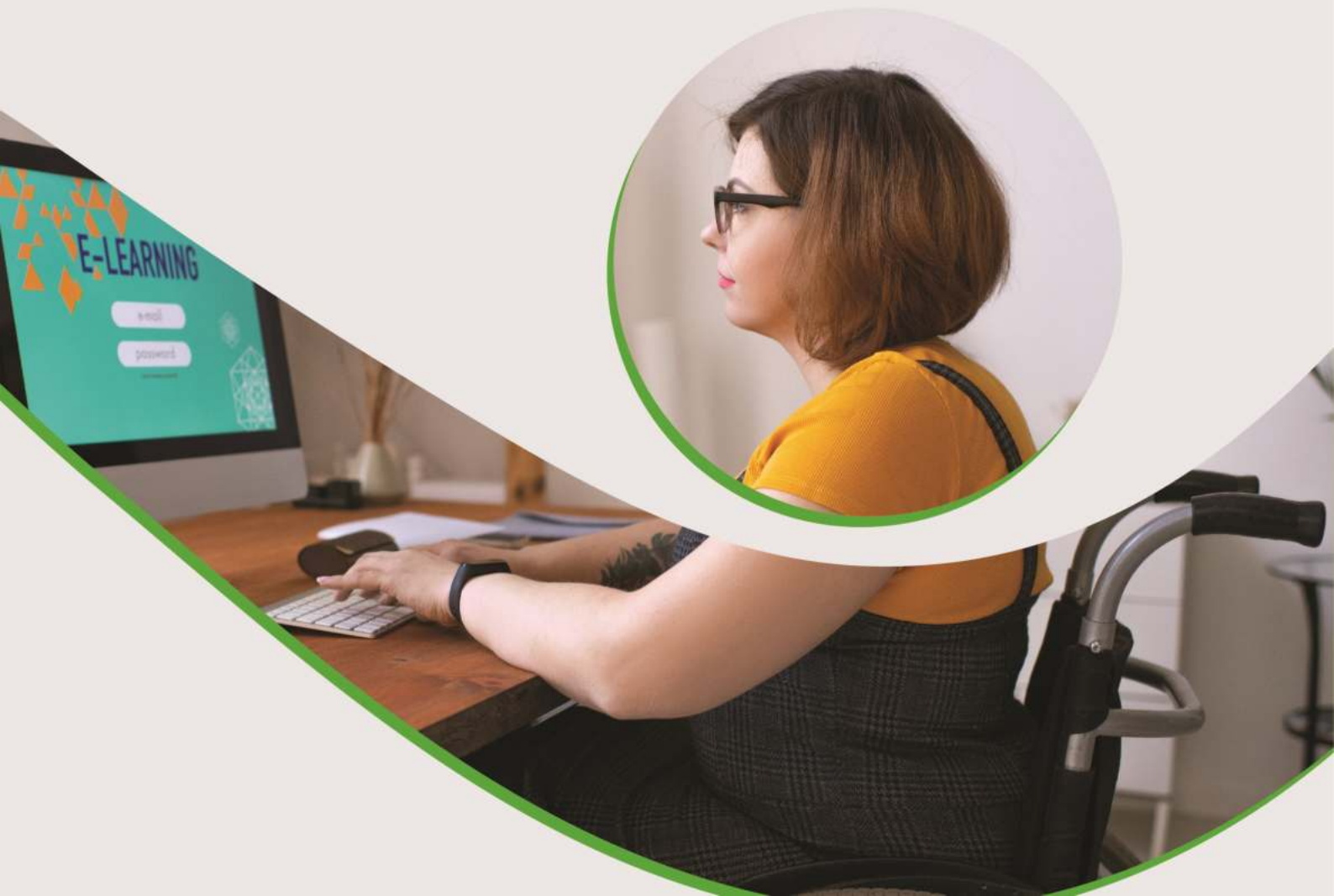
# NEEDS ANALYSIS REPORT AND EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

## INTERIM REPORT

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Co-funded by the  
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of the European Union





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Interim Report

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# PACES Partner Universities

Project Co-ordinator



Coventry University  
United Kingdom



Arab Academy for Science,  
Technology, and Maritime  
Transport  
Egypt



Université Abdelmalek Essaâdi  
Morocco



Universidad de Alicante  
Spain



Ain Shams University  
Egypt



Université Ibn Tofail Morocco



University of Macedonia  
Greece



Fayoum University  
Egypt



Université Mohammed V de  
Rabat  
Morocco



University of Maribor  
Slovenia



University of Mansoura, Egypt



Université Moulay Ismail  
Morocco

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## One: About the PACES Project

PACES (Progression of Accessibility Centres in higher Education for Students with disabilities) is an international project funded by the Erasmus+ Capacity Building in the field of Higher Education programme. It involves four partners from Europe (the UK, Greece, Spain, and Slovenia), four from Egypt, and four from Morocco.

### Aim of the Project

The overall aim of the PACES project is to progress and set up a programme of initiatives in universities in Egypt and Morocco to support the modernisation of higher education by developing Accessibility Centres (static, mobile and virtual) that will enable students with disabilities (SWD) to access assistive technology and support services such as counselling and peer support. In addition, the project seeks to develop employer/HEI networks in Egypt and Morocco, and between the centres and the networks SwD will be able to gain employability and transition skills in order to move forward into employment.

The specific objectives are carefully constructed to build upon the outputs of the Tempus SWING project and to incorporate lessons learned and good practice knowledge transferred from several Erasmus+ projects (MUSE, SINCHE and Trans2Work). They are also designed to add innovation in the form of virtual and pop-up/mobile Accessibility Centres to increase the reach and impact to more areas in North Africa. PACES will improve the study and employability chances of SwD by accomplishing the project objectives through concrete tangible outputs.

The specific objectives of the project are:

1. The transfer of good practice across EU and North Africa. Learn from the legacy of the SWING and MUSE projects and transfer that knowledge across partners.

2. To build Accessibility Centres in the partner universities which do not have them, and to expand already-established centres. To amplify the reach of the centres by establishing virtual and mobile/pop-up Accessibility Centres which can spread policy and information throughout the regions.
3. To build on the handbook and model designed in SWING using lessons learned and knowledge from new partners to formulate new training.
4. To establish a network for employers/HE institutions in the partner countries with the aim of helping employers to understand the needs and skills of persons with disabilities and at the same time train SwD to transition into employment.
5. Develop new 'Student Support Schemes' for students to work with SwD peer-to-peer so that they not only provide support but also understand the implications of what it means to have a disability.

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## Two: About this Report

This Review of Needs and Good Practice is the first output of the PACES project. It is the result of the activities undertaken as part of Work Package 1, which focuses on providing a picture of the situation in the partner institutions with regard to students with disabilities. This data will inform the subsequent work packages of the project. There are four elements to the work package, resulting in three deliverables.

- Activity 1.1: to carry out research to assess the accessibility situation and practices within each partner institution (including employability advice), including a focus group exercise for SwD to clarify their specific needs and requirements.

**Deliverable:** Needs analysis (Section Five of this report).

- Activity 1.2: two high profile visits (Vice-Rector for Students Affairs or similar) to Greece and to the UK to identify good practices that may be replicated and to provide an opportunity for new partners to network and to share experiences.
- Activity 1.3: to produce a Good Practice Guide for Disability Management Services in HEIs, which incorporates examples of good practice in each of the partner universities.

**Deliverable:** Good practice guide (Section Six of this report).

- Activity 1.4: to investigate existing HEI/employer networks involving North African partner universities and to identify where there are links, where they need strengthening, and where none exist.

**Deliverable:** HEI/employer network analysis (integrated into Work Package 4) .

This report lays the foundations for all future actions in the PACES project. It provides a snapshot of the situation for students with disabilities at the start of the project, and is instrumental in highlighting gaps in support which will be addressed during the project. This report will be used throughout the project to inform strategy, training and implementation, to improve access and learning conditions, and to develop employment opportunities for students and graduates with disabilities.

During the lifetime of the project the good practices will be updated as a result of the work undertaken as part of PACES. A final, revised version of this report will be produced towards the end of the project.

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## Three: Methodological Framework

This research uses an **appreciative inquiry** methodological framework.

### Appreciative Inquiry

In appreciative inquiry, attention is paid to “what works”, and exploring positive potential. Five principles of appreciative inquiry have been identified by Bushe (2013). These are:

1. **Constructionist principle** argues that people co-construct the organizations they inhabit
2. **Simultaneity principle** argues that discussing systems and change are essential processes in achieving change; systems move in the direction of the questions that are most actively discussed
3. **Poetic principle** argues that words chosen for inquiry invoke sentiments and understandings, and in doing so can provoke change
4. **Anticipatory principle** argues that what is done today is guided by visions of the future
5. **Positive principle** argues that sustainable change requires positive affect.

As a methodology, then, appreciative inquiry focuses upon the positive practices which need to be nurtured, and the attitudes and language of those who seek change. More importantly for this work package, it argues that the contributions of individuals as well as organizations must be acknowledged. Clouder and King (2015) identify three key factors which are essential to successful appreciative inquiry studies:

- The first factor is to involve the right people. The real world view of people who fully understand and live the experience is crucial. The right research team is vital to the success of the research; a positive attitude, unconditional positive regard, empathy and reflective capability are all necessary. Together, participants and researchers

need a commitment to the principle of co-created change; this includes people of influence, such as managers in HE, policy makers or funders.

- Secondly, the appreciative inquiry process requires rigorous attention to detail; it involves keeping a good focus, careful framing of questions and delicate management of data collection methods in order to maintain the focus on ‘what works’.
- Thirdly, well developed analytical capability is crucial. Adept analysis of all viewpoints and a high degree of reflexivity – even scepticism – on the part of the research team are needed to promote the trustworthiness of findings.

### **Appreciative inquiry within the PACES project**

An appreciative inquiry methodology means that we believe that, while we have expertise in supporting students with disabilities, project partners are experts in practices in their own institutions. We are keen to work with partners to identify best practices and improvements to those practices and to recognize the important contributions of students as well as staff.

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## Four: Needs Analysis

A needs analysis was conducted for each of the North African (NA) partner universities in order to identify and define the needs of both universities and students regarding the integration and learning experiences of students with disabilities, with a particular focus on assistive technology and employability support.

### Methods used

Two methods were used to collect data for the needs analysis. First, every partner completed an online survey (see Appendix A), which was used to capture their institutional practice at the start of the project. Second, each NA university was asked to conduct at least one focus group with current students with disabilities. As the work package lead, Coventry University provided each partner with participant information and consent documents, and with a set of questions to use in a semi-structured focus group situation (Appendices B, C, and D).

This method allowed the collection of information directly from students. It also enabled each university to adapt the method as they wished, holding the focus groups at a time and in a language which best suited their students. As a result, a varying amount of data was provided by each partner; some sent a full transcript of the focus group, while others sent a summary of the main points of discussion. The Coventry University research team was responsible for collating and editing the resulting data and ensuring consistency.

### Structure of Section

This section is organised by university, in the following order:

- Arab Academy for Science, Technology, and Maritime Transport, Egypt

- Ain Shams University, Egypt
- Fayoum University, Egypt
- University of Mansoura, Egypt
- Université Abdelmalek Essaâdi, Morocco
- Université Ibn Tofail, Morocco
- Université Mohammed V de Rabat, Morocco
- Université Moulay Ismail, Morocco.

For each university, the results of the online survey are summarised, followed by a review of the results of the focus group. These are followed by a brief needs analysis outlining the main points arising from the collected data which are relevant to the objectives of the PACES project.

## Arab Academy for Science, Technology, and Maritime Transport, Egypt

The Arab Academy for Science, Technology, and Maritime Transport (AASTMT) in Alexandria has taken part in several international projects and other research related to the support of students with disabilities, including the SWING Tempus project. The university currently has six campuses including one in Syria, and has approximately 200,000 students.

### University Survey results

As at December 2017 30 AASTMT students were registered as having a disability (less than 0.02% of the student population). Of these, 10 students had disclosed that they had a learning disability such as dyslexia or ADHD.

AASTMT provides accessibility for people with physical disabilities, such as wheelchair ramps, in some buildings. A variety of support is available to students with disabilities including official university resources such as Student Affairs Administration and the Student Union, as well as other student societies which provide academic and social activities for those with disabilities as well as those without.

There are some computers which are accessible to students with disabilities, but accessible software for visually impaired students is available including screen readers and screen magnifiers. AASTMT uses the Moodle Learning Management System (LMS), which is partially accessible to people with visual disabilities. Support and maintenance for the assistive technology is provided by the university's computer lab technicians and the Informatics Centre. Students with disabilities tend to bring their own computers and other devices to university so the university does not provide hardware.

Students with disabilities are included in the employability skills training which is provided to all students, including technical report writing, presentation skills, and interview practice. In addition, a job fair is run for all students which takes into consideration the Egyptian law which requires large employers to allocate 5% of roles to people with disabilities.

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## Student Focus Group results

AASTMT held a focus group with five students, two of whom had mobility impairments and three of whom had visual impairments. All of the students used their own devices such as mobile phones and laptops to support their studies, and did not expect the university to provide additional hardware to them, although one student noted that Apple devices have assistive features as standard and that it would be very useful if they were available from the university.

Screen reading software (JAWS) is provided on some university computers for students with visual impairments, and the students in the focus group also used NVDA screen reading software on their own computers.

One useful item of assistive technology available at AASTMT is a Braille printer. However, only students who are in the College of Management and Technology can request course materials to be printed in Braille; for other students it is only used for printing exam materials. The visually-impaired focus group participants said that they would like the university to provide more Braille printers so that more students could have access to course materials in Braille. They would also like the printer to be relocated, since it is currently located in a lab which is frequently used and since it is very loud the operator does not use it when other people are present, which means that there are sometimes delays in receiving their Braille printing. Another Braille device which was discussed was the BrailleNote (a computer with a Braille keyboard and display), which enables people with visual impairments to take notes and access the Internet.

Access to course materials was a concern for the visually impaired students; some resources are not available digitally, and where resources are available as a protected PDF they cannot be converted to Word in order to be read by a screen reader. Because of this, and the delays in receiving Braille materials, they often had very limited time to revise for exams. The students with visual impairments sometimes feel disadvantaged in terms of study materials, and by the fact that they are not able to do practical projects or exercises, and that consequently their grades may be lower than those of students who

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do not have disabilities. Two of the students also noted that they had tried to attend an externally-provided English course but that they had not been accepted because the course could not make allowance for someone who could not see the board or read the books provided.

With regard to physical accessibility on campus, the students with mobility impairments noted that not all buildings have elevators, and that the only way to access the upper floors of one building was to be carried by university janitors. Other buildings have elevators which do not stop at some floors, or which are programmed so that they cannot be summoned from upper floors. However, it was noted that the university administration makes a point to try to schedule classes in ground floor rooms for students who have mobility impairments. Another problem is that the buses from campus are not accessible for wheelchairs and that some students therefore had to miss out on class trips; visually impaired students also found the buses difficult to access.

None of the students in the focus group had had a needs assessment with a member of university staff, apart from those who were involved in the SWING project. They felt that on the occasions when they were consulted and supported regarding their needs it was done by the staff member as an individual, rather than as part of an official process. Support from teaching staff was mixed; some took students' needs into consideration while others did not make any allowances for the fact that the students were recording their lectures (by describing images or figures, for example). The students felt that, most of the time, they had to approach the administration to make requests rather than make use of an established system. One student reported that he had to make the same requests over and over again to teaching staff, although the administration could inform all relevant staff of his needs: “[Other] students spend most of their time studying or hanging out, while I spend most of my time at college asking or searching for material”.

Despite these comments, the students noted a number of positive actions that had been undertaken by the university, including the placement of ramps, relocating lectures, and the use of computers for exams instead of having to dictate to a note-taker.

Regarding involvement in university life, not all of the focus group participants were interested in taking part in activities or events. However, those who were interested faced obstacles such as a lack of accessible buses and sometimes being unable to access information about events.

All of the students want to work after graduating, but they were not aware of any training or support provided by the university regarding employment, such as internships or training in writing job applications or interview skills. All of the participants were concerned that finding work would be difficult for them because of their disabilities, and they felt that the government, as well as the university, should provide help with this.

## Needs Analysis

This analysis considers the needs of students with disabilities at the Arab Academy for Science, Technology, and Maritime Transport, with a particular focus on assistive technology, learning and social support, and employability skills.

Despite the relatively small number of students with a disclosed disability at AASTMT, some provision is made for physical access and for hardware and software to assist students with visual impairments. There are no offices or student groups specifically for those with disabilities; instead, support is provided as part of the main university administrative system.

The following needs have been identified from the survey and focus group:

- The creation of an accessibility centre for students with disabilities within AASTMT.

- Additional Braille printers, which are accessible to students from all schools of the university.
- Relocation of the existing Braille printer to a separate area where it will not disturb others.
- Increased provision of digitised and screen reader-accessible books and other learning resources.
- Carry out needs assessments with all students who disclose a disability, and have follow-up meetings.
- Support for the creation of student groups specifically for students with disabilities.
- Additional training for teaching and administrative staff on communicating with and supporting students with disabilities.
- Provision of information in accessible formats about university events and activities.
- Employability support, including training in relevant skills and access to internships.

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## Ain Shams University, Egypt

Ain Shams University (ASU) has seven campuses across Cairo, and as at December 2017 had 52,145 students.

### University Survey results

Approximately 0.6% (n=337) of ASU students have disclosed a disability, the majority of which are visual impairments (65% of disclosures, or 220 students). Only physical disabilities (visual, hearing, or mobility) are recorded by ASU; as at December 2017 no student had ever reported a learning disability such as ADHD or a mental illness. The university is aware that the number of disclosures does not accurately reflect the actual number of students who have disabilities or special needs; for example, 12 students reported having a hearing impairment but the university authorities are aware that there are far more.

ASU provides accessibility for students and staff with physical disabilities, such as wheelchair ramps. Support is available for students with disabilities from the Student Services/Undergraduate Affairs office. ASU also has a centre for the support of visually impaired students, where 10 computers are available specifically for those students, with large keyboards, speech-to-text software, as well as a Braille printer. ASU uses the Moodle LMS, but this is not accessible for students with disabilities. The maintenance of the assistive technology is provided through the university's maintenance unit, as part of the wider management of university hardware. No hardware is provided to students with disabilities.

### Student Focus Group results

Ain Shams University conducted a focus group with five students, one with a mobility impairment and four with visual impairments. It should be noted that some students who were approached to take part refused to do so because they had experience of taking part in similar interviews which were conducted for research purposes but which did not

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lead to any change in the system or services provided. The staff involved found that the students with disabilities are cautious about such interviews because they feel that they can be discriminatory.

The students stated that they used their own technology, including mobile phones, laptops, and audio recorder. The student with mobility impairment did not use any university-provided technology, but the visually impaired students used university computers during their exams. The university provides computers with Braille keyboards in the Centre for Vision of Equal Educational Opportunities for Blind Students, together with screen reading software. The assistive technology is updated regularly and the university maintains all of the equipment, and replaces it if it is broken.

There is no consistency in the way that teaching staff treat students with disabilities; some lecturers treat the students as equals, which is very much appreciated, while others do not provide the support that the students would like. They noted that the front row of seating in teaching rooms is reserved for students with disabilities.

With regard to physical accessibility, the student with mobility impairment noted that some of his lectures had been timetabled in rooms on the upper floors of buildings which do not have elevators. He noted that his only impairment is a physical one and as a result the only help he needs is for buildings to be accessible with elevators and ramps. ASU maintains the physical accessibility such as wheelchair ramps, and it was noted that if a student makes a complaint about accessibility or other issues, the university administration responds and meets their needs.

The student with mobility impairment lived in the student halls of residence. He noted that the rooms had been adapted or arranged by the students themselves; the university did not prepare the rooms to meet their needs.

None of the students had had an official needs assessment with a member of university staff, although the students with visual impairments said that they had answered questions for research purposes, for example with master's or PhD students, but that nothing had resulted from that research in terms of improvements or additional support. The university organises sports and artistic activities which students with disabilities are involved in, including contests and competitions. The students said that there were no groups within ASU specifically for students with disabilities.

All of the students said that they wanted to have job opportunities for after graduation, but that they were not aware of any employment support within ASU. The student with mobility impairment said that he has not made plans for the future in terms of employment because having a certificate of disability means that people with disabilities can only earn the minimum wage, and that companies do not like to employ them. Once again he noted that he does not need technology, he only needs to have an accessible workplace. All of the students felt that the employment market was unequal and that it would be difficult to find opportunities.

## Needs Analysis

This analysis considers the needs of students with disabilities at Ain Shams University, with a particular focus on assistive technology, learning and social support, and employability skills.

Although less than 1% of ASU students have disclosed a disability, the university are aware that there are many students who have not reported their disability. The majority of students with disabilities at ASU have visual impairments and the university has a centre for the support of these students, which provides computers with assistive software and a Braille printer.

The following needs have been identified from the survey and focus group:

- Ensure that the Moodle LMS is accessible to students with disabilities.

- Training for teaching and administrative staff on communicating with and supporting students with disabilities.
- Appropriate timetable management to ensure that students with mobility impairments can access their teaching rooms.
- Carry out needs assessments with all students who disclose a disability, and have follow-up meetings.
- Support for the creation of student groups specifically for students with disabilities.
- Employability support, including introductions to employers who have accessible workplaces.

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## Fayoum University, Egypt

Fayoum University (FU) has 35,000 students. FU works with Dar el Hanan, which is an NGO in the city of Fayoum and which seeks to support most children and young people with special needs.

### University Survey results

20 of the 35,000 students at FU have disclosed a disability to the university (0.06%). Of these, the majority (12, or 60%) have a visual impairment. FU does not collect data regarding non-physical disabilities such as learning disabilities (dyslexia, ADHD, etc) or autism/Asperger Syndrome. The university intends to survey the student population in an attempt to gather information regarding disabilities that have not yet been disclosed.

Physical accessibility for staff and students with disabilities is available in some parts of FU, but not everywhere. The university has a Centre for Disabled Students which provides support. In addition, five computers are accessible for students with disabilities, and a Braille printer is available for them to use. FU does not use a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) or LMS. The university does provide assistive hardware to students with disabilities, including desktop computers, laptops and audio records; all assistive technology is maintained by a member of university staff.

### Student Focus Group results

Fayoum University conducted a focus group with 15 students with disabilities. The students use mobile devices and laptops for their studies rather than university-supplied technology. FU has Braille printers on campus but the member of staff who operates the printers is not always available and this can cause problems for the students, particularly before the exam period.



The students felt that staff in the Centre of Special Needs were not appropriately trained and were not always able to help them when they needed assistance or support.

The focus group participants did not feel comfortable attending university activities and events; this is partly due to a lack of confidence and also to a concern that they are not truly welcome at the activities. None of the students were involved in any groups for students with disabilities.

The students felt that if they had a problem or a complaint, it was very difficult to arrange a meeting with university authorities. However, the College Council includes a role for a representative of the students with disabilities.

The focus group participants stated that there is no budget from the Ministry of Higher Education to support them through their undergraduate studies and that this is a problem for them, as they are reliant on donations. Some support is provided by local businessmen who sponsor the provision of technology such as laptops and a Braille printer and appropriate paper.

Asked about their plans for employment after graduation, the students mentioned the Egyptian government standard that employers with more than 50 employees should reserve 5% of their roles for people with disabilities, and stated that most companies do not do so. They wanted to have employment opportunities after they had graduated but they felt that there was little hope; they want the university to provide training and workshops in how to apply for jobs, such as CV writing, as well as other appropriate employability training.

## Needs Analysis

This analysis considers the needs of students with disabilities at Fayoum University, with a particular focus on assistive technology, learning and social support, and employability skills.

Very few students at FU have disclosed a disability; the majority of those who have are blind or visually impaired. FU has a Centre for Disabled Students which provides support, and accessible computers are available, as well as a Braille printer.

The following needs have been identified from the survey and focus group:

- Improved access to the Braille printer, particularly at busy times.
- Additional training for the support Centre staff on communicating with and supporting students with disabilities.
- Improved availability of support staff, so that students can have assistance when they require it.
- Financial support for students with disabilities during their university career.
- Employability support, including training in relevant skills.

## Mansoura University, Egypt

Mansoura University (MU) has over 110,000 students, spread across three campuses.

### University Survey results

There are currently 66 students who have disclosed disabilities within MU (0.06%). Of these, just over half (34) have visual impairments and 26 have mobility impairments.

Not all faculties have physical accessibility; there are lifts, but these are not always available for students with disabilities due to administrative and technical reasons. MU does not currently have any support clubs or societies which are specifically for students with disabilities, but the Student Affairs Office has a department which supports students with disabilities, which is called the Special Needs Students office.

None of the computers which are available for student use are specifically available or accessible to students with disabilities; since students tend to bring their own personal laptops and mobile devices, no computers are provided by the university. MU does not use a VLE or an LMS. However, a Braille keyboard and Braille printer are available, and all students with a visual impairment are provided with a digital audio recorder. The university does not provide support and maintenance for this assistive technology.

### Student Focus Group results

Mansoura University held a focus group with seven students, five of whom had visual impairments, and two had mobility impairments. All of the students use mobile phones, laptops, and audio recorders. These are provided by the students themselves, and are used to record part of the lectures (they are not allowed to record a whole lecture, and in some cases may not record at all), for taking notes and for writing assignments. Blind or visually impaired students are provided with audio recorders by the university but the students do not find them useful and would rather use their own technology. The university does not provide support or maintenance for the students' assistive technology.

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MU has one Braille printer; the students noted that this was not enough for the needs of the students with visual impairments. Access to study materials was a concern for those students, and provision of more digital versions of textbooks would assist in their studies.

The students would like the university to provide some assistive technology to them: the two mobility impaired students would like to have wheelchairs provided, and the visually impaired students suggested BrailleSense, which is a portable computer with a Braille keyboard and display.

The focus group participants had different experiences of receiving support from their lecturers. None of them had ever had a needs assessment with a member of university staff. The students were very appreciative of the support that they do receive from teaching and administrative staff, and from their fellow students. One student noted that they enjoyed being a student, and that the best support they could receive was to be treated as though they were capable of achieving as much as anyone else, and as “normal unexceptional human beings”.

Of the seven students who took part in the focus group, six were male and one was female. The female student has a mobility impairment and a speech disorder (delay in speaking). The male students felt that they were very involved in university life, and asserted that they did not “allow anyone to exclude them or treat them as if they are less than normal”. The female student did not feel involved, and said that she did not feel “welcomed enough among normal girls”.

Some of the students took part in university groups or activities, but there are no groups at MU specifically for students with disabilities; the participants suggested that the development of a special group for students with disabilities would be of significant benefit, so that they could support each other.

Two of the students were interested in going on to graduate study; the others wanted to work after graduation, in a variety of different roles including banking, broadcasting, teaching, and administration. In order to help with their ability to find employment, they suggested that the university should set up training in computer skills, as well as English language courses, specifically for students with disabilities.

## Needs Analysis

This analysis considers the needs of students with disabilities at Mansoura University, with a particular focus on assistive technology, learning and social support, and employability skills.

MU has a small number of students who have disclosed disabilities; these are either blind/visually impaired or have mobility impairments. The students with disabilities are supported by a department within the Student Affairs Office, and those with visual impairments have access to a Braille keyboard and printer, and are provided with a digital audio recorder by the university.

The following needs have been identified from the survey and focus group:

- The creation of an accessibility centre for students with disabilities within MU.
- Development of a policy to allow the recording of lectures by students with visual impairments.
- Additional Braille printers.
- Increased provision of digitised and screen reader-accessible books and other learning resources.
- Provision of BrailleSense portable computers for blind/visually impaired students.
- Support for the creation of student groups specifically for students with disabilities.
- Carry out needs assessments with all students who disclose a disability, and have follow-up meetings.

- Training for teaching and administrative staff on communicating with and supporting students with disabilities.
- Training for students who do not have disabilities to improve their understanding of those who do.
- Employability support, including training in relevant skills.

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## Université Abdelmalek Essaâdi, Morocco

Université Abdelmalek Essaâdi (UAE) in Tétouan has almost 88,500 students on three campuses. UAE has a history of collaboration with the Hanan Association for students with disabilities and with the Louis Braille Institute which supports people with visual impairments. UAE was involved in the Tempus SWING project, and as a result all staff members are aware of the needs of students with disabilities, and those staff who were trained within the SWING framework (including professors, administrators and other stakeholders) are still involved with students with disabilities, both within the university and after graduation.

### University Survey results

40 students (0.05%) have disclosed a disability to UAE. Just under half of these students (19) have visual impairments; 15 have mobility impairments, and the remaining six are deaf or hearing impaired.

The UAE campuses have some physical accessibility for people with disabilities, such as ramps, lifts, and adjusted doors. There are no specific university support services available for students with disabilities, although they are often prioritised during administrative and enrolment procedures. However, there is a club at UAE for higher education students who have disabilities.

As a result of UAE's involvement in the SWING project, an accessibility centre was developed, equipped with IT which meets the needs of the university's students. UAE uses the Moodle LMS, which can be used by students with disabilities. There is also a room in one of the faculties which is equipped with computers which are designed to facilitate research: nine computers are available to students with disabilities, as well as a number of accessibility tools and software, including:

- Large keyboard
- Joystick

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- Screen reader
- Screen magnifier
- Speech-to-text software
- Braille keyboard
- Braille printer
- Digital audio recorder
- video recorder
- Laptops with Dragon Naturally Speaking software.

UAE runs a number of employability events throughout the year, as well as seminars and workshops which train students in employability skills and provide advice on starting their own businesses. Students with disabilities are included in these events.

### **Student Meeting results**

Université Abdelmalek Essaïdi held a meeting with 26 students, all of whom were blind or visually impaired. The majority of them were new students to the university.

The students noted that the university has ramps in most of the buildings, and they have access to the accessibility centre which was created as part of the SWING project. The centre has recently changed location from the university presidency to the Faculty of Law, in order to allow students to access it more easily. There is also an audio-visual studio in the Faculty of Law which is accessible by students with disabilities so that they can record their courses or books and distribute digital copies among themselves.



## Needs Analysis

This analysis considers the needs of students with disabilities at Université Abdelmalek Essaâdi, with a particular focus on assistive technology, learning and social support, and employability skills.

UAE has identified the following further needs for their students:

- Additional Braille printers, screen readers, and recorders.
- Additional training for administrative staff on communicating with and supporting students with disabilities.
- Development of psychological support services.
- Additional employability support, including training in relevant 'soft' skills.

## Université Ibn Tofail, Morocco

Université Ibn Tofail (UIT) in Kenitra has 55,570 students on its campus. UIT is connected to the ROA association for blind and visually impaired people, based in Rabat, Morocco.

### University Survey results

Approximately 0.5% of UIT students have declared a disability (n=270). However, there is no data regarding the types of disability which have been declared.

Wheelchair ramps are available on the UIT campus, but no other physical accessibility is available. UIT has an accessibility centre which provides support for students with disabilities, and there is also an association of disabled students within the university.

UIT uses the Moodle LMS, which is partly accessible for people with disabilities. There are ten computers which are available to students with disabilities: assistive technology provided includes:

- Large keyboard
- Screen reader
- Screen magnifier
- Speech-to-text software
- Braille keyboard
- Braille printer
- Digital audio recorder
- Video recorder.

No other hardware is made available to the students. The assistive technology is supported and maintained by the university's technical staff.

UIT hosts a branch of the National Employment Agency, which provides support for all students, including those with disabilities, including assistance in choosing an appropriate job and preparation for applications.

## Student Testimonials

Université Ibn Tofail provided several testimonials from students with disabilities. UIT has a Centre for Special Needs which was set up as part of an earlier project, which provides a variety of assistive technology for students to use. One student suggested that the centre could continue to develop its psychological and practical assistance to students who have specific needs.

They also suggested that the university could assist students with disabilities to enter into employment following graduation.

## Needs Analysis

This analysis considers the needs of students with disabilities at Université Ibn Tofail, with a particular focus on assistive technology, learning and social support, and employability skills.

Although UIT does not have data on the specific impairments of its students with disabilities, it has as an accessibility centre which supports these students, and provides a variety of assistive technology, much of which is designed for people with visual impairments.

The following needs have been identified from the survey and testimonials:

- Further development of psychological and practical assistance provided by the Centre for Special needs.
- Ensure that the Moodle LMS is accessible to students with disabilities.
- Employability support, including introductions to employers.

## Université Mohammed V de Rabat, Morocco

Université Mohammed V de Rabat (UM5R) has more than 80,000 students on two campuses. UM5R is very interested in supporting the population of students with disabilities, and was involved in the Tempus RUMI project which resulted in the development of a resource centre which provides Braille equipment (3 PCs with software and a printer), and the founding of an association, IDMAJE – Insertion, Dissémination, Médiation, Accompagnement des Jeunes Etudiant(e)s (Introduction, Dissemination, Intervention, and Accompaniment of Young Students). The university is also involved with the National Monitoring Observatory for Persons with Disabilities, which was created by the Ministry of Solidarity, Women, Family and Social Development. In addition, UM5R seeks to build relationships with associations which work with different types of disability.

### University Survey results

Approximately 1% of students at UM5R have disclosed a disability (n=823). Of these, 35% (n=291) have a hearing impairment, 23% (n=192) have a mobility impairment, and 14% (n=115) have a visual impairment.

There is some physical accessibility across the university campuses, such as accessibility passages and parking spaces and the installation of additional accessible features is ongoing. UM5R has a Reception, Information, Orientation and Monitoring Centre which supports all students and manages the resource centre which was set up as part of the RUMI project; the centre welcomes students who are blind, visually impaired, and/or deaf. UM5R seeks to involve students with disabilities in many different activities, including an international book fair, communication workshops and other coaching opportunities. The university is currently in the process of setting up a student association.

The resource centre has three computers which are accessible to the students with disabilities and are set up with speech-to-text software and a Braille printer, as well as devices to assist students with hearing impairments. UM5R does not use a VLE or LMS.

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UM5R does not currently provide hardware, but the university is in the process of building partnerships with organisations which can provide assistive technology to their students. The assistive technology is maintained by a blind computer engineer who is employed by the university.

UM5R provides employability support for its students, and is beginning to focus on improving that support for students with disabilities by identifying appropriate job roles and providing assistance for those who are interested in self-employment.

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## Student Focus Group results

Université Mohammed V de Rabat ran a focus group with 20 students, all of whom had visual impairments. The students use their smartphones and laptops during classes, though lecturers do not always tolerate the use of laptops during lectures. Students prefer to use audio recorders to record their classes, although only a few teaching staff allow this.

Students prefer to use Braille, but due to a lack of study materials in Braille format they tend to use an audio recorder in combination with their smartphones and laptops, which are provided by the students themselves. The students felt that the university should be able to provide computers for their use, and that having to use their own smartphones was not satisfactory for their needs.

The focus group participants felt very strongly that they are required to be self-sufficient in their studies, not only in terms of technology, but also in terms of psychological support. None of the students had had a needs assessment within the university, and they felt that there was generally a lack of interest or understanding when it comes to supporting them. They felt that without qualified staff to help them, they were abandoned among all of the other students, with support from only a few of the teaching staff.

UM5R does not have physical accessibility across the whole university, and some of the students noted that they sometimes had difficulties relating to accessibility, especially stairs.

One student reported having taken part in a theatrical performance; otherwise, the students tended to focus on their studies and did not take part in university activities or events. They did not belong to any student associations or groups, but they expressed an interest in having such a group.

The focus group participants felt that in order to assist them in being independent learners, the university should provide computer skills and multimedia training. They also requested that their individual departments or faculties should be provided with accessible PCs and rooms with appropriate equipment, and that the university should provide Braille and audio versions of their textbooks. They also felt that the teaching staff should receive training so that they were aware of the problems experienced by students with visual impairments and the measures which can be taken to help and support them in the classroom.

All of the students had plans for employment after graduation; they were divided between teaching and the law, apart from one student who was interested in entrepreneurship. However, they felt that the university did not currently provide sufficient training in order to help them to enter employment.

## Needs Analysis

This analysis considers the needs of students with disabilities at Université Mohammed V de Rabat, with a particular focus on assistive technology, learning and social support, and employability skills.

The majority of students at UM5R are deaf/hearing impaired, mobility impaired, or blind/visually impaired. As a result of its involvement in the RUMI project, UM5R has a resource centre which provides a Braille printer and software to support students who are hearing impaired or visually impaired.

The following needs have been identified from the survey and focus group:

- Ensure that the university's VLE is accessible to students with disabilities.
- Development of a policy to allow the recording of lectures and use of laptops in class by students with disabilities.

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- Increased provision of Braille and audio versions of books and other learning resources.
- Provide laptops or tablets to students with disabilities to support their studies.
- Carry out needs assessments with all students who disclose a disability, and have follow-up meetings.
- Training for teaching and administrative staff on communicating with and supporting students with disabilities.
- Qualified staff to support students with disabilities.
- Improved physical accessibility on campus (elevator access, wheelchair ramps/lifts).
- Support for the creation of student groups specifically for students with disabilities (a university association is currently being developed).
- Training in computer and multimedia skills to support the students' studies.
- Increased availability of accessible computers on campus.
- Employability support, including training in relevant skills.

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## Université Moulay Ismail, Morocco

Université Moulay Ismail (UMI) in Meknes has 64,600 students. UMI was involved in the Tempus RUMI project for inclusive education in Morocco; as a result of this a number of staff and students with disabilities or other needs within the university received training on the use of Braille printers and of equipment for people who are hearing impaired. These facilities were made available to students with disabilities in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities.

### University Survey results

There are no figures available for the number of students who have disclosed a disability within UMI, although the administration is aware that there are students with hearing impairments, visual impairments, mobility impairments and learning disabilities within the university.

There is some physical accessibility for people with disabilities within UMI but this is not the same in all of the buildings and campus areas. The Information and Orientation Service and the Tuition Service of the university provide support for all students, including those with disabilities, but no specific clubs or societies currently exist.

Currently, three computers within UMI are accessible to students with disabilities and other technology and tools are available: a Braille keyboard, a Braille printer, and a hearing aid. This assistive technology is maintained and supported by technicians who were trained as part of the RUMI project. No other hardware is made available to students with disabilities. UMI does not have a VLE or LMS.

### Student Focus Group results

Université Moulay Ismail conducted two focus groups with a total of ten students, all of whom had visual impairments. The majority of the students who participated felt that

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becoming a university student was a considerable achievement, because they had to overcome obstacles and difficulties in order to do so. However, they felt frustrated that the reality of their university experience did not meet their expectations. They felt that the teaching structure within the university did not make allowance for their needs, for example with regard to note-taking and exam preparation.

With regard to the support received from individual teaching staff, they all agreed that while some teachers understood their situation and made attempts to provide support for them, others did not do so. A significant limitation for students with visual impairments is the complete lack of study materials in Braille or audio format; lecturers provide handouts in class and therefore they have no choice but to record the lectures or to ask their classmates for help. However, most lecturers will not give permission for students to record their lectures, and they do not give reasons for that decision.

The students did not specifically discuss the technology which they used, but they noted that the university does not provide assistive technology which would support their studies. They specifically mentioned the need for a Braille printer, screen reading software, and tele-recorders.

With regard to physical accessibility, the students said that tactile and audio maps of the campus would be very helpful, and that other improvements to infrastructure (not specified) would help them to move around safely.

The focus group participants also reported that they face significant challenges with regard to the examinations. They are required to find a high school student to assist them in the exam, and finding one is very difficult. They take their exam in a separate room, but the students reported that they always receive the exam sheet very late, and that they are not given extra time to complete the exam.

The students at UMI stated that the university should have an office within the administration with responsibility for providing support for students with disabilities. They also believed that there was a need for training, workshops and conference to be arranged for staff and for students in order to improve awareness and understanding of the needs and capabilities of students with disabilities.

## Needs Analysis

This analysis considers the needs of students with disabilities at Université Moulay Ismail, with a particular focus on assistive technology, learning and social support, and employability skills.

UMI does not have data on the number of students with disabilities but, as a result of its involvement in the RUMI project, it has three accessible computers and a Braille keyboard and printer, as well as a hearing aid. Administrative support for students with disabilities is provided by the central services of the university; there is no specific support office.

The following needs have been identified from the survey and focus groups:

- The creation of an accessibility centre for students with disabilities within UMI.
- Training for teaching and administrative staff on communicating with and supporting students with disabilities.
- Training for students who do not have disabilities to improve their understanding of those who do.
- Provision of Braille and audio versions of books and other learning resources.
- Additional Braille printers, screen readers, and tele-recorders.
- Development of a policy to allow the recording of lectures by students with visual impairments.
- Tactile and audio maps of the campus.
- Appropriate arrangements for exams, including organised support and allowance for extra time.

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- Provision of exam materials in enough time to allow for revision and preparation.
- An administrative office with responsibility for supporting students with disabilities.
- Employability support, including training in relevant skills.

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## Summary of Needs

This analysis has shown that the students in the eight North African partner universities have broadly similar needs with regard to support from their institutions, whether technological or social.

While all of the partner universities are taking steps to improve physical accessibility and technological assistance for their students with disabilities, as well as social and teaching support, there are currently gaps in that provision. There may be a number of different reasons for this: a lack of established policies and procedures, a lack of qualified staff who can provide training to their colleagues, or simply the fact that not enough students who have disabilities are willing to disclose them to their university due to fear of being singled out or stigmatised.

There were several themes which were common to most of the universities which identified needs: employability support was identified as a requirement for all of the universities, and training for staff was mentioned by students at seven of the eight universities.

This summary lists the needs which were most commonly identified and which are of particular relevance to the PACES objectives of supporting accessibility centres, assistive technology, and employability.

- **Employability support** – This was the need which was most frequently mentioned by the students who took part in the focus groups; it is also reflected in the university survey results, which showed that most universities did not provide employability support or training specifically tailored for students with disabilities. Students expressed a desire for training in skills which would help them in obtaining employment and in succeeding in the workplace, as well as internship opportunities. The students at Ain Shams University suggested that their university could introduce them to employers who had accessible workplaces and were experienced in supporting employees with disabilities.

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- **Training for teaching and administrative staff, and for students** – Most of the focus groups mentioned the need for additional training for university staff; where staff are inexperienced or unsure when communicating and supporting students with disabilities, this can lead to reduced levels of confidence among those students, and concern that they are being disadvantaged due to a lack of awareness on the part of staff. This is related to the training for other students; one aim of the PACES project is to encourage peer-to-peer support among the student populations and improving awareness and confidence among the students who do not have disabilities is an important part of this.
- **Needs assessments** – None of the students who were asked had had a needs assessment done by their university. This exercise can be extremely valuable in discovering the gaps in provision within an institution, as well as understanding the individual support which each student requires.
- **Provision of accessible learning resources** – Accessible learning resources are important for students with a variety of different disabilities. The formats most frequently mentioned by students were Braille, audio, and digital (accessible by screen readers). Making transcripts available, and hosting accessible videos of lectures on the university VLE, are also very useful for students with disabilities. Related to this is the need to ensure that the university's VLE is accessible to everyone.
- **Additional Braille printers** – Although all of the universities have at least one Braille printer available for their students, there was a clear need for additional printers. Many of the students who took part in the focus groups had a visual impairment (reflecting the broader population of students with disabilities in their universities). Providing more printers and more trained staff (or students) to use them would ensure that those students are not disadvantaged by a delay in their access to accessible learning and examination materials.
- **Consistent policies on the recording of lectures** – This need was mentioned by students in three of the focus groups, and is linked to the point above. Students with

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visual disabilities often use mobile technology or laptops to record lectures, but there is inconsistency among teaching staff with regard to providing permission for this. Enabling students who are visually impaired to record lectures ensures that they are not disadvantaged when it comes to course assessment.

- **Support for the creation of social groups for students with disabilities** – Most of the universities do not currently have any student groups specifically for those with disabilities. While there is significant benefit in encourage students with disabilities to join and feel included in broader student groups, several of the focus group participants noted that having groups which are expressly for them would be of benefit, particularly in terms of providing mutual support.
- **Creation of accessibility centres** – Where universities do not have an existing accessibility centre in place, the creation of such a service is important as a focal point for the provision of support and assistive technology for students with disabilities. In the universities where such a service already exists, students mentioned a need for additional or better-trained staff, increased access to the centre and its staff, and additional technology (as mentioned above).

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## Five: Good Practices

A significant objective of Work Package 1 of PACES was to share good practice among all of the partners. Two good practice visits were scheduled during the first months of the project: the first was held at the University of Macedonia in Thessaloniki, Greece, after the kick-off meeting (December 2017), and the second was held at Coventry University in the UK, after the second project meeting (April 2018).

Although the focus of these visits was for the EU partner institutions to demonstrate their good practices, it was acknowledged that the NA partners also had existing good practices which could be shared and that a compendium of some of these practices would serve as a useful baseline to which the results of the project could be compared.

Each of the twelve partners was asked to provide one example of a good practice within their institution, using a template (Appendix E), and these are summarised in the following pages.

Please note that the practices included in this report have been contributed by all of the partners and therefore there may be some inconsistency in the terminology used.



## Employer Engagement Activity within the Careers Team

### Coventry University, UK

#### Objective of the Good Practice

Coventry University's Central Careers Team seeks to embed inclusivity and diversity into engagement activities with employers and organises events which promote inclusivity for students.

#### Fast Facts

1. The employer engagement team are trained to understand diversity and inclusion across employer and student networks.
2. The employer engagement team organise key events which highlight diversity and inclusion throughout the academic year.
3. The employer engagement team utilise labour market information and legislation to provide equal opportunities and access for students to meet with employers.
4. All events are tailored to support students.

#### Focus of the Good Practice

To embed diversity and inclusion within our university careers brand, enhancing the opportunities for positive outcomes for students with disabilities, and providing employers with a platform to promote good practice.

#### Challenges for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities often face confidence issues with regard to disclosure, both within the university and when engaging with employers. Unconscious bias still exists and the students can feel increased pressure or fear of rejection.

#### Challenges for the University

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- Supporting SME (small and medium enterprises) and local business to work with students on their additional needs or other barriers they may face.
- Supporting employers to find funds that can help them and the students to be successful in the workplace.
- Utilising government initiatives to highlight diversity as a key agenda for employers and to promote hidden talents of students.

### Relevance of the Good Practice

The careers team are now in the third year of an annual diversity conference; links with employers continue to grow through this prime opportunity to network and provide opportunities for students. Each year sees an increase in attendance at this conference as well as at other events which highlight the value of inclusion within the workforce and the relevant support available from Coventry University.

### Transferable Elements

- The CU careers team works to build relationships with employers in order to improve access to employment for students with disabilities.
- Universities can help employers by introducing them to students who are potential staff members.
- Universities can also help employers to understand their responsibilities and to find the ways in which they can best support employees with disabilities.

## Employability Guidance

### University of Alicante, Spain

#### Objectives of the Good Practice

- To empower students and graduates with disabilities by developing their employability skills and providing support to find job opportunities.
- To help students to gain self-awareness of their abilities and to acquire detailed knowledge about the labour market.
- To assist graduates by working to match them with opportunities, including both employment and self-employment.

#### Fast Facts

1. Currently, in Spain, only 1.7% of higher education students are people with disabilities (PWD). The percentage is even lower with respect to postgraduate students (1.2%) and those in PhD programmes (0.9%).
2. In consequence, only between 5% and 6% of people with disabilities in Spain are graduates, although the 2020 European strategy has a goal of 40%.
3. In Spain, there is a higher rate of unemployment for PWD (28.6%), and their wages are lower (15.7% lower than the average).

#### Focus of the Good Practice

The role of the University of Alicante (UA) is, on the one hand, to provide support and guidance for PWD in order for them to develop a satisfactory professional life, equipping them with the necessary skills to foster their personal growth after their university studies. On the other hand, UA strives to keep in touch with students with disabilities (SWD) after graduation in order to promote participation in university life and potential progression in their educational or professional careers.

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As such, UA works to normalise SWD integration on campus and the transition to professional careers, providing the tools to generate independence, resilience and sustainability in their professional choices. Some of the most successful actions involved in programmes for SWD to improve employability are as follows:

- To inform students about postgraduate opportunities, both within UA and abroad.
- To inform students about funding sources.
- To boost the self-confidence of students to submit successful job applications and equip them with the skills to face job interviews.
- To forge connections with companies and disabilities NGOs.

### **Challenges for Students with Disabilities**

- Understanding of personal strengths and weaknesses when facing the job market.

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- Development of strong employability skills.
- Clear identification of opportunities and support.
- Communication with employers.



### Challenges for the University

- Improved understanding of labour market conditions.
- Improved cooperation with public and private actors.
- Better empowerment of students when facing the labour market.

### Relevance of the Good Practice

UA has developed a solid service of employment guidance and counselling which positions SWD to strengthen their employability portfolio. Drawing upon UA's network of psychosocial support, social work intervention and company partnerships, SWD improve their chances of finding a job or progressing further in their education.

UA services also devise different interventions for each individual case, adjusting approaches and providing different sets of tools and support for each student. Therefore UA counsellors build upon a combination of SWD's personal connections, the community in which they are integrated, and UA resources. This case-specific praxis is very important in order to provide the optimum service for the beneficiaries of the employability programme.

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“This employment workshop is interesting because it has helped me see my strengths and weakness to guide my search in the labour market.”

Laura Soler Azorin, student at UA.

### Transferable Elements

- UA’s employability guidance for students with disabilities focuses on the individual.
- The UA team consists of staff with a variety of experience and specialities.
- Each student’s own communities and connections, together with the broader support services which are available, are used to create an individual pathway into employment or further education.

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## Accessibility Workstation in the University Library

### University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki, Greece

#### Objectives of the Good Practice

- To provide access to study materials for students with visual disabilities.
- To provide advice and the sharing of experience to staff members of other universities and/or organisations on the usage of special equipment for students with visual disabilities.

#### Fast Facts

1. Most of the study material provided to students of the University of Macedonia (UOM) is in print format.
2. A small part of the university's student community is comprised of students with visual disabilities.
3. The hardware and software needed to support students with visual disabilities in their studies is expensive.

#### Focus of the Good Practice

The Library and Information Centre of UOM enables its users with visual disabilities to access the modern ICT tools of an academic library and seeks to make them familiar with the use of those tools. Such tools include the library catalogue, the library's digital services including the digital library repository (PSEPHEDA), databases, the e-question helpdesk service, and, most importantly, the special adaptive equipment provided in the Accessibility Workstation, which is the media used to access all of these services.

The workstation's adaptive equipment, such as the Braille printer, the ALVA Braille display, the CCTV magnification system and the two screen readers must meet all of the

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users' needs and expectations, must help users to reach their goals, and must be easily physically accessible.

### **Challenges for Students with Disabilities**

- Books and other study materials only available in hard copy.
- Difficulty in studying.
- The need for special technological equipment in order to study books in electronic format.

### **Challenges for the University**

To provide solutions and added experience on how to overcome obstacles or to enhance the current services which are provided.

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### Relevance of the Good Practice

The Library and Information Centre of the University of Macedonia is situated in the university building. The service assists students with visual disabilities as follows:

- The provision of special technological equipment for students with visual impairments within the library.
- Digitisation of books into electronic format.
- Printing in Braille.
- Providing a special collection in digital formats.
- Training staff to provide assistance to students with visual impairments so that they can navigate within the library.

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“As members of this library, it is very important to us that all members of our University have equal access to all the resources they need, in order to complete their studies. Every day we give our best effort to keep the Workstation updated both in hardware and software solutions, so that the students’ education course is not hindered – if not at all, then at least as little as possible. We hope that in the future we will continue to provide this service with the same or better quality standard to all of our students.”

### Transferable Elements

- UOM provides access to expensive hardware and software for its students with visual impairments in order to ensure educational equity among its student population.
- Provision of a digitisation service and a Braille printer and reader means that students who are blind or visually impaired can access the same study materials as their sighted colleagues and they are therefore not disadvantaged through a lack of access to resources.

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## Career Centre of the University of Maribor

University of Maribor, Slovenia

### Objectives of the Good Practice

- To assist and advise in the job search process, and to provide services aimed at the comprehensive development of the careers of high school students, university students, and graduates.
- To improve the accessibility of the University of Maribor (UM), via the Action Plan for Students with Disabilities at the university in 2015/2016 and 2016/2017.

### Fast Facts

1. In Slovenia there are a total of 80,000 university students.
2. Slovenia has three public universities, one private university, and two international higher education institutions.
3. There are approximately 400 students with disabilities in all Slovenian universities.
4. All public universities are committed to the Action Plan for Students with Disabilities.



### Focus of the Good Practice

The Career Centre of the University of Maribor (CCUM) offers career development to students and organises a wide range of cooperation opportunities with companies.

- For students: training and guidance for job applications.
- For organisations and companies: advertising vacancies and arranging interviews; publicising companies' operations and facilities involvement in careers fairs. (The services provided for organisations and companies by CCUM are free of charge.)

The CV Database, which is hosted on the CCUM website, is an online repository of CVs and other relevant documentation of UM's students and graduates.

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### Challenges for Students with Disabilities

- When and how to disclose their disability to a potential employer.
- Having less work experience, either because they focus so much on their studies or because they cannot find suitable work in their field of study due to inaccessibility, not having adapted workplaces, etc.
- Due to a lack of work experience, graduates with disabilities are more likely to have lower self-esteem and are less assertive, and consequently do worse in interviews.
- Due to stereotypes, they need to work harder and constantly prove their skills and abilities, since mistakes or slips are attributed to disability and not human nature.
- Employers, due to stereotypes, do not give people with disabilities the opportunity to prove themselves at work (they are less likely to be promoted) and may not even give them the chance of an interview.

### Challenges for the University

- Difficulties in supporting these students due to lack of knowledge or awareness.
- The need to work with specialist employers.
- Establishing fair communication with students with disabilities.
- Providing the right amount of support for students with disabilities.

### Relevance of the Good Practice

The Career Centre works with student support staff, and is situated in the Student Union building. Additional help is provided by the Centre for Students at the Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science. They provide support for students with disabilities in a variety of ways.

“In our career centre everybody are welcomed and we wish to have  
more students with disabilities who will find their power together with  
us!”

Mojca Slana, career centre coordinator

### Transferable Elements

- UM’s Career Centre provides support and training to school pupils, university students and graduates, as well as to employers.
- The Career Centre is affiliated both to support staff and to the student union.
- Support for students includes preparation for application, interviews, and for being employed.
- The Career Centre’s website provides employers with access to potential employees.
- The website also provides employers with information about disability rights and improving physical and social accessibility within their workplace.

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## Establishment of the Accessibility Centre (AC)

### Arab Academy for Science, Technology, and Maritime Transport, Egypt

#### Objectives of the Good Practice

- The AC is dedicated to facilitating access and full inclusion of students with disabilities into the university environment. This is achieved through effective collaborations, consultations, proactive advising, and the development of systemic campus change.
- The AC works to create and sustain environments that are informed by a responsive to the diverse characteristics and experiences of students with disabilities and variations of ability.

#### Fast Facts

1. In Egypt, according to the Central Agency for Public Mobilisation and Statistics, people with disabilities represent approximately 10.7% of the Egyptian population, or about 10.24 million people (2016 population).
2. Approximately 34% of those with disabilities are children and should have access to education (Central Agency for Public Mobilisation and Statistics, 2017).
3. The Arab Academy for Science, Technology, and Maritime Transport (AASTMT) has 30 existing students with disabilities. The types of disabilities disclosed by these students are blindness/visual impairment, hearing impairments, and physical impairments.

#### Focus of the Good Practice

The Accessibility Centre model at AASTMT places the student at the centre by thinking about the four major accessibility themes with regard to the student journey: access to higher education, academic study, integration and social life, and employability.

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Student Support Services is a major infrastructural investment which forms the foundation for all support and training of stakeholders. It provides a point of access for students which also functions to connect administrative, academic, IT and assistive technology systems.

- The infrastructure at AASTMT involves a core of specialist paid staff and may also involve volunteers.
- Each college has its own Learning Support Tutor who is a link to Student Services and also acts as a link between academic staff/module tutors and students.

Selected staff and administrators are fully aware of the practices and assistive technologies available to support different types of disability. This was achieved by conducting training sessions for faculty and staff from all colleges.



### Challenges for Students with Disabilities

- Lack of awareness of rights and of support process.
- Low confidence.
- Lack of engagement in social life and activities with other students.
- Faculty and staff not being aware of their responsibilities and how they can support students with disabilities.

### Challenges for the University

- Lack of a methodical way to gather information about students with disabilities.
- A tendency to act in an over-protective manner rather than help students to be independent.
- Lack of awareness and availability of appropriate assistive technologies.
- Lack of activities and events that engage students with disabilities and help them to be actively involved in the university.

### Relevance of the Good Practice

Better student access and engagement, as a result of a variety of measures:

- The admissions system at AASTMT has been updated to gather full information about students with disabilities from the time that they first enter higher education.
- Students provide current and complete documentation of their disability, and are advised to meet with the Accessibility Centre (AC) to discuss educational and medical history, accommodation needs, and any barriers to access.
- A verbal announcement at the beginning of term helps the university to fulfil part of its obligation to ensure that students are made aware of the available support and are able to request disability-related accommodations from the university.
- Instructors incorporate strategies that are effective for a broad range of students with varying abilities and backgrounds. The majority of students with disabilities will be able

to participate fully in university life without the need for specialised adaptations or accommodations.

### Transferable Elements

- AASTMT's Accessibility Centre places the student at the centre of its services.
- The Centre focuses on and combines four important aspects of their university experience: access to higher education, academic study, integration and social life, and employability.
- The core staff who work with students with disabilities are paid specialists, and are also supported by volunteers.
- AASTMT has worked to improve levels of disclosure by students with disabilities, by improving communication at the application stage and at the start of the term.

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## Faculty-based Student Support Services

### Ain Shams University, Egypt

#### Objectives of the Good Practice

- To facilitate and support accessible education through active collaboration with students, faculty and staff.
- To facilitate access and full inclusion of students with disabilities into the university environment.

#### Fast Facts

1. The Faculty of Medicine and the Faculty of Engineering at Ain Shams University (ASU) have limited numbers of students with physical impairments, but there are some students with learning disabilities, visual impairments, and some with muscular dystrophy.
2. ASU has recently created a new student support centre in the Faculty of Medicine and an office for student support within the Faculty of Engineering.

#### Focus of the Good Practice

Drop-out rates for students in Engineering and Medicine are very high, due to the fact that students are rarely diagnosed as having learning disabilities, and that there is no structured methodology in place for assessment, verification and management of physical impairments.

- The infrastructure for supporting students with disabilities at ASU involves a core of specialist paid staff, and some volunteers.
- The head of support services supports the flow of information up to the senior management team, and down to the support service staff.

- Representatives from central support services work with schools to ensure equality and quality of service delivery across the whole university.
- Special interventions have been conducted with students who have visual impairments, and an agreement has been established between the Faculty of Engineering and the Faculty of Medicine to begin scanning students for undetected visual impairment and colour blindness.
- An additional agreement has also been established between the two schools to allow for psychiatric intervention for students who have relevant needs.
- An announcement was made on faculty websites for students with disabilities to complete an application in order to enable the university to provide appropriate support during the examination period.
- Exam papers printed using an enlarged font size are now available for students who require them.

### **Challenges for Students with Disabilities**

- A fear of stigma if they receive specific support for their learning disabilities.
- A lack of engagement in the social life of the university.
- Low levels of confidence.
- A lack of understanding of the support which is available to them, and of their rights.

### **Challenges for the University**

- A lack of knowledge about appropriate assistive technologies.
- Lack of needed equipment.
- Lack of sufficient information about students who have disabilities.

### Relevance of the Good Practice

It has been noticed that there are many students who require specific arrangements for examinations on screens. This means that there are many undiagnosed visual impairments among students.

There have also been a number of students who have left the university before completing their course due to psychiatric reasons.

“I have always needed to download apps on my phone that helped me to see better. I was very happy to see alternate paper styles made especially for students like me. This made me feel thought of and cared for.”

### Transferable Elements

- ASU has responded to specific concerns regarding its students (late diagnosis of visual impairments, and difficulty with retention due to psychiatric conditions) by setting up appropriate interventions within two faculties.
- Students who have visual impairments have the opportunity to request accessible exam papers via the university website, which facilitates disclosure.

## Career Day for Students with Disabilities

### Fayoum University, Egypt

#### Objectives of the Good Practice

- To provide career advice and training in employment skills for students with disabilities (SWD).
- To involve students in preparing themselves for work.

#### Fast Facts

1. In Egypt there are approximately 63 public and private universities, with more than 2.5 million university students in total.
2. Unemployment rates for most graduates with disabilities are high.

#### Focus of the Good Practice

The Career Day is a new event which started in 2018, focused on improving access to employment for SWD. The day includes:

- A workshop for SWD to report immediate needs and long-term needs.
- Provision of assistance in job applications, such as writing a long and short CV.
- Support for students who wish to continue to a diploma or master's course.
- Events which aim to prepare SWD for the workplace.

The intention is that Career Days will continue to be run by Fayoum University (FU) twice a year. The Career Day will be conducted on a small scale and held within the university; employers will be invited to introduce their company's visions and mission.

#### Challenges for Students with Disabilities

- Some disability legislation has not been enforced, which makes them uncertain.

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- Job opportunities are very limited.
- There is a lack of trust with some Centre employees.
- There is a lack of expendable supplies for accessible technology, such as special paper for Braille printing.
- No budget is available for them from the ministry of higher education and all of their financial support comes from donations.

### Challenges for the University

- To approach the government regarding the implementation of laws that were written into the Egyptian constitution in order to support people with disabilities; many of these laws have not been enforced.
- To approach the ministry of higher education regarding an allocation of university budget for the support of SWD.

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## Relevance of the Good Practice

The Career Day supports the needs of SWD by:

- Improving their skills for better job opportunities after graduation;
- Assistance in writing CVs and improving their confidence for job interviews;
- Ensuring that they have information to contact members of staff for any required help, support or information.

## Transferable Elements

- FU has created an event which is specifically focused on supporting SWD to enter into employment or into further study.
- There is a focus on encouraging communication between SWD and staff within the university as well as introducing SWD to employers.
- The day includes support for the development of practical skills for job searching, such as CV writing.



## First Annual Conference for Students with Disabilities

### University of Mansoura, Egypt

#### Objectives of the Good Practice

- To engage students with disabilities (SWD) in university activities.
- To make SWD feel supported, and that they are the focus of the event.
- To give higher management in Mansoura University (MU) the opportunity to meet with SWD and to see and to understand their problems and challenges.



#### Fast Facts

3. The conference lasted for three days. The first and third days were devoted to activities performed by SWD. In addition there were guests from other institutions.
4. The conference was attended by most if not all of the SWD within MU. They were invited and asked to participate in the activities.

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5. MU hosted experts in law and social work, who discussed the rights and duties of the disabled, whether MU students or not.

### Focus of the Conference

- The conference focused on SWD, with special emphasis on their problems, their challenges, their rights, and their fears.
- Blind and visually impaired students outnumber all students with other disabilities, so the conference discussed their problems concerning Braille equipment and their difficulties in printing or photocopying a document or a lecture.
- Higher management within MU were not aware of the presence of the various disabilities within the university population; it was a very good opportunity for them to meet with SWD and show them some support.
- The conference focused on sharing the experiences of different Egyptian universities and institutions regarding people with disabilities.

### Challenges for Students with Disabilities

- Blind students have problems in obtaining Braille copies of their course books. They have difficulties with studying, and also with their final written exams.
- The problems for deaf and hearing impaired students include difficulty in communicating with others and the fact that lecturers do not use sign language.
- Mobility impaired students require physical accessibility across university campuses, including access to elevators, ground floor accommodation, etc.

### Challenges for the University

- University staff have difficulty in community with SWD because they often refuse to respond to staff.
- Many of the SWD are not open about their disabilities and the hardships that they face, either because they do not feel supported enough or because they do not want to talk.

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- Financial support – the university does not assign enough budget for SWD.

### Relevance of the Good Practice

The conference helped in identifying the problems experienced by SWD in MU. It provided an opportunity to listen to the students and for them to feel supported by their university. The conference resulted in a number of recommendations regarding improved conditions for SWD.

“We are here to give enough support to the students with special needs. It is very important to provide the students, specifically freshmen, with their rights and their responsibilities towards themselves. Many of the students do not know that they can ask for help and support, whether psychologically or financially. [...] Though we are not having enough budget or enough staff or enough space, still we are working as hard as possible to help those students...”

Tarek Mabrook – Head of Students with Special Needs Office, Mansoura University

### Transferable Elements

- MU set up a new conference with a focus on the university’s students with disabilities.
- Including both SWD and senior staff meant that the university’s management gained knowledge and understanding of the current situation for SWD at MU.
- Including other Egyptian universities and relevant institutions ensured the exchange of knowledge and experience.

## Training on Learning Essential Soft Skills

### Université Abdelmalek Essaâdi, Morocco

#### Objectives of the Good Practice

- To recognise disability in the context of diversity and challenge the ideas of normality vs. disability.
- To increase access and reduce barriers to academic participation in the university for students who are blind or visually impaired.
- To offer accessible instructional material (assistive technology software and hardware).
- To train students with visual impairments on the use of soft skills.

#### Fast Facts

1. Learning disabilities affect approximately 5-7% of the population worldwide. 48% of those with learning disabilities cannot complete their university education and are excluded from work and therefore likely to be unemployed.
2. Around 45 million EU citizens of working age have a disability and 15 million children have special educational needs.
3. People with disabilities in the Arab regions are known to suffer from discrimination and marginalisation.

#### Focus of the Good Practice

Université Abdelmalek Essaâdi (UAE) has a Career Centre in the National School of Engineering (ENSAT) of Tangiers, with the support of USAID (US Agency for International Development):

“The main objective of the UAE Career Centre is to direct and manage the university career services as it assists all students, alumni, faculty, and employer clients in the development of career education, career identification and search, and the pursuit of employment opportunities commensurate with formal academic pursuits. Continually, it aims to expand the client/user base and scope of services to ensure provision of the widest array of services possible to the broadest mix of academic and corporate clients.” (Translated from French into English: UAE Career Centre website <https://vcc.careercenter.ma/vcc/region/Tangier>)

### **Challenges for Students with Disabilities**

Social practice in many Arab countries shows that students with disabilities have not been integrated into the mainstream educational system and into postgraduate programmes and scientific research areas.

### **Challenges for the University**

- Some schools and faculties lack accessibility for people with disabilities.
- Services to support people with disabilities in education are generally not systematic and are poorly funded, and there is a lack of training and guidance that could make such interventions more effective.
- The study materials used are not accessible for students with disabilities.

### **Relevance of the Good Practice**

The Career Centre provides a variety of relevant support services for students with disabilities:

- Orientation services with information on jobs and sectors provided by specialist consultants and advisers.
- Workshops to train students to enter into employment and integrate themselves into the job market.

- Training in soft skills (analytical thinking, verbal and written communication, leadership, CV writing, online job applications, problem-solving, etc.).
- Self-diagnostic services.

“Gone are the days where the mission of the career service office is ‘placement’. Instead, colleges and universities are focusing on ‘career education’ which teaches students how to manage and take responsibility for their career paths, providing experiences that foster student self-discovery and delivering programs that help students develop the personal, academic, and professional skills and relationships needed for successful transition into diverse and global communities.”

Sara Chetouani, Head of UAE Career Centre.

### Transferable elements

- UAE’s Career Centre works with students who are blind and visually impaired to improve their soft skills, which are increasingly important in the employment market and which can improve the students’ self-confidence.

## Accessibility Centre

### Université Ibn Tofail, Morocco

#### Objectives

- To provide training for students, faculty and staff.
- To facilitate the social and academic integration of students with disabilities.
- To offer associations the chance to become familiar with assistive technology.
- To organise open days for all stakeholders.
- To share knowledge on assistive technology with other Moroccan universities.

#### Fast Facts

1. According to the Ministry of Family and Solidarity there are 1.7 million people with disabilities in Morocco.
2. The government has called on all institutions to integrate disability as part of public policies.
3. Equal educational opportunities for all is one of the capstones of the socio-educational policy of UIT.

#### Focus of the Good Practice

The Accessibility Centre offers students with disabilities the chance to integrate both academic and professional spheres. As for the former, students take training courses on how to use assistive technology in their studies. The centre has started training students on how to start careers as teachers or office workers. In fact, the employment agency located at the heart of the university has started helping students prepare employment documents (CV, cover letters) and interview techniques. It has also briefed students on the types of jobs that suit their disability.

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### Challenges for Students with Disabilities

- Choice of their subject of study.
- Problems with registration.
- Lack of knowledge of assistive technology.

### Challenges for the University

- Provision of accessible facilities.
- Helping with finding internships.
- Involvement of more stakeholders.

### Particular Relevance of the Good Practice

- The university seeks to improve the life and destiny of students with disabilities through the work of the Accessibility Centre and ongoing projects.

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- UIT is using the work of the Accessibility Centre to learn how to raise funds for a better integration of students with disabilities into academia and the job market.

“The accessibility centre has changed the way I study.”

Arfoun, student

### Transferable Elements

- UIT’s Accessibility Centre trains students in the use of the assistive technology which can facilitate their studies.
- The Accessibility Centre also provides employability training.
- The training is focused on the needs and abilities of each individual student.

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## The International Book and Publishing Fair, Casablanca

### Université Mohammed V de Rabat, Morocco

#### Objectives of the Practice

- To join in the framework of a real strategy of insertion of all the student populations in the academic curriculum while respecting the principle of equal opportunities.
- To work to reduce the drop-out rate among students.
- To assist students with disabilities to participate in international cultural events.
- To encourage students with disabilities to develop skills for their working life.

#### Fast Facts

1. The International Book and Publishing Fair has been organised annually since 1987 by the Ministry of Culture.
2. The Université Mohammed V de Rabat (UM5R) participates by preparing a large cultural programme including conferences, workshops, and book signings.
3. UM5R reserves a room for a day, for use by students with disabilities.

#### Focus of the Practice

UM5R organises visits to the Fair by students during the event; students with disabilities receive support (transportation, catering and assistance) so that they can attend the Fair and participate in the cultural programme.

The students have the opportunity to purchase documents in Braille from exhibitors, and attend workshops which have been arranged for them:

- Audio lecture/debate: a session in which they listen to an expressive reading of a document and then take part in a debate which allows them to express themselves easily in a cultural context.

- Workshop “Active Listening – soft skills, or behavioural, human, and relational qualities”: a lively workshop run by a professional coach.

### **Challenges for Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities overcome many difficulties on several levels:

- the distance they must travel due to a lack of accessibility in some institutions.
- as part of their studies, relating to classes, exams, etc.
- at the relational level, their disabilities can make them vulnerable and so they are often defensive, which can make it difficult for those who support them.

However, with regular coaching and support, and with involvement in cultural programmes and events, they feel valued. This motivates them to take up a major challenge, namely to seek to benefit from their rights.

### **Challenges for the University**

- Finding ways to offer students with disabilities the opportunity for easy integration into the academic curriculum as well as into that of active life.
- Having the capability of transforming all individuals with disabilities into independent actors.

### **Particular relevance of the Practice**

- All students with disabilities from UM5R are included in the annual event.
- The journey to Casablanca from Rabat is an enjoyable one, which has a positive impact on the students’ psychological wellbeing.
- As a regular event, it gives students something to plan for and look forward to.



“Involving students with special needs in an international event such as the International Book and Publishing Fair is a remarkable experience in that it will encourage them to develop their abilities to assert themselves in the cultural landscape.”

Professor/Researcher

“The Book Fair allows me to value myself and therefore to exist.”

Student

### Transferable Elements

- UM5R regularly involves students with disabilities in an international event, held in a different city.
- Students with disabilities are encouraged to participate in cultural activities, and to take part in various activities which might not be available to them otherwise.

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- Travelling together to the event bonds the students together as a social group.
- Involvement in the event increases students' self-confidence and sense of worth.

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## Support Arising from the RUMI Project

### Université Moulay Ismail, Morocco

#### Objectives

- To provide assistance to students with disabilities so that they can approach their studies with confidence.
- To provide assistance to students with disabilities so that they are integrated into the university community.

#### Fast Facts

- Université Moulay Ismail (UMI) has 46 students with disabilities (May 2018), the majority of whom (39) are blind or visually impaired; the others have hearing impairments or mobility impairments.
- The Moroccan government has adopted a National Action Plan to promote the Rights and Status of People with Disabilities during 2017-2021.

#### Focus of the Practice

UMI was involved in the RUMI (Network of Moroccan Universities for Inclusive Education) project which aimed to improve inclusive education and facilitate access for students with physical disabilities. As a result of the university's involvement in this project UMI has improved levels of accessible technology for students with disabilities, including:

- Improved access to computers.
- Adaptive software.
- Access to libraries and media libraries.
- Open access to online resources.

Accessibility tools are available to students with disabilities in a separate lab.

### Challenges for Students with Disabilities

- Lack of awareness of rights and support.
- Low confidence and low motivation.
- Concerns about being able to use ICT in the workplace.
- A lack of awareness on the part of employers about their responsibilities.

### Challenges for the University

- Lack of experts in inclusive education.
- Lack of employers who are interested in employing graduates with disabilities.



### Particular Relevance of the Good Practice

- Students have become more aware of the equipment which is available to them to enhance their learning skills.

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- Students have a positive attitude towards the support programme and towards the people who are involved in it.

As a result of involvement in the RUMI project, the University has taken measures to become an integrated and distinguished university through a variety of activities, including organising scientific and cultural activities which seek to upgrade the status of students with disabilities and to increase their abilities in the same way as the rest of their classmates.

The university also works to liaise with non-governmental organisations and associations in order to strengthen the university's strategy and support its openness, and to improve coordination and communication with stakeholders involved in the field of disability.

**“It is also worth noting that Moulay Ismail University is involved in all international, national, and local initiatives aimed at supporting students with disabilities in both educational and social aspects.”**

President of Moulay Ismail University, Meknes, Morocco.

### Transferable Elements

- UMI has improved its levels of assistive technology for use by students with disabilities as a result of involvement in the RUMI project.
- Integrating students with disabilities into the broader university population is done by organising events which are aimed at including everyone, whether they have disabilities or not.
- UMI provides alternative means of accessing higher education for students with disabilities (e-learning and distance education).



## Six: Summary and Conclusions

This report provides a picture of the situation in PACES partner universities at the start of the project, with regard to their support systems for students with disabilities. It has gathered together data collected both at an institutional level and directly from students themselves, and has shown a significant crossover between the gaps in support identified by the universities and the needs identified by the students.

The results of the focus groups highlighted the needs and concerns of students with disabilities in the Egyptian and Moroccan universities involved in the PACES project. The university surveys and the good practices provided by those universities showed that a lot of work has been done to integrate students with disabilities into university life and to enable them to have a successful university career. However, it is clear that sustaining a high level of support can be difficult, particularly when there are no established policies and procedures in place to sustain those practices.

The following recommendations are based on the needs analysis and take into account the ongoing good practices which are detailed in this report. These are the areas on which the future work packages of the project will focus.

### 1. Employability Skills

The needs analysis illustrates the importance of employability skills to the students who took part in the focus groups; this need was also reflected in the survey results, which showed that most of the North African universities did not have employability training set up specifically for students with disabilities, and that building relationships with employers can be difficult. Employability has become increasingly important for European universities over the past few years, which is reflected in their good practices, and that knowledge will be shared among partners throughout the project.

## 2. Staff and Student Training

Training for staff (both teaching and administrative) and for students without disabilities on disability awareness and how to communicate and support students who have disabilities is a vital need. Several of the NA universities have been involved in previous projects which seek to improve the experience of higher education for students with disabilities: however, it is important to keep training updated and to ensure that new staff are included in the training programme. This is particularly true when there are relatively few students with disabilities within a university.

## 3. Development of Accessibility Centres

The example of accessibility centres as good practice in Egyptian and Moroccan universities shows that these centres have a significant positive impact on the university experience of students with disabilities. There is always more that can be done within these centres, whether that is increased access to support, more assistive technology, or additional services, and where they do not exist there is an acknowledged need for them, both on an institutional and a student level.

## 4. Accessible Learning Resources and Assistive Technology

Increased provision of accessible learning resources, as well as hardware such as Braille printers, is something which all of the partners are working to achieve; as more students with disabilities enter higher education, more of these resources are required. It is also important to ensure that there are adequate resources available at the busiest times of the academic year, such as the end of term and examination time.

## 5. Needs Assessments

Conducting needs assessments with all students who disclose disabilities would contribute to an improved level of support and of academic achievement. Every student with a disability is an individual, and their requirements for assistive technology, learning and social support, and physical assistance are different. Setting up a system of needs assessment after disclosure, with follow-up meetings, will

ensure that no student with a disability is disadvantaged. This can lead to the establishment of individual learning plans which will ensure that, for example, the recording of lectures is permitted for all students for whom this would be useful.

The above recommendations will form the basis of future PACES work packages and training module design. The good practices will be updated and extended at the end of the project, as a result of the sharing of knowledge and good practice throughout the life of the project.

## Appendix A – Survey questions

### Erasmus+ project: PACES

#### Initial survey questions

This questionnaire is part of Work Package 1 of the PACES project. The overall objective of PACES is to set up a programme of initiatives in universities in Egypt and Morocco in order to enable higher education students with disabilities to access assistive technology and support services, and to build networks of employers and HE institutions within the partner countries in order to assist employers to understand the needs and skills of people with disabilities.

This questionnaire asks about the current situation and practices in your university. Please make sure you have read the Work Package 1 Research Design and Methodological Framework document, which has been emailed to all of you.

If you have any questions, please contact Jacqueline Cawston at [j.cawston@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:j.cawston@coventry.ac.uk) or Sarah Kate Merry at [sarah.merry@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:sarah.merry@coventry.ac.uk).

#### Your Institution

1. What is the name of your university?
2. How many students attend your university?
3. How many campuses does your university have? [1 / 2 / 3 / 4 or more]

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4. Does your university have physical accessibility for students or staff with disabilities? (for example lifts, wheelchair ramps, widened doors) [Yes / No / Don't know]
  - a. Please add any additional information below.
5. Does your university have any connection with projects or organisations which support staff or students with disabilities? (for example regional or national societies for people with disabilities) [Yes / No / Don't know]
  - a. If Yes, please give details.

### Students with Disabilities

6. How many students attending your university have disclosed a disability? (If you do not know, please type 'dk' in the box.)
  - a. Of the students who have disclosed a disability, how many are:
    - men
    - women
    - unknown

Any additional comments:
7. Please indicate the different types of disabilities that have been disclosed across the student population, with numbers if available.
  - Hearing impairment
  - Visual impairment
  - Mobility impairment
  - Autism
  - Learning disability (dyslexia, dysgraphia, ADHD, etc)
  - Other

If Other, please provide details.

Any additional information:
8. If your university has any support clubs or societies specifically for students with disabilities, please list them below.

### Support for Students with Disabilities

9. Please list any departments or offices within the university with responsibility for supporting students with disabilities (for example Student Services).
10. Please list any staff members who have specific responsibility for supporting students with disabilities or who are actively involved with them.

### Technology and Assistive Technology

11. How many computers in your university are accessible to students with disabilities? (for example have large keyboards, screen readers, joysticks or trackballs)
12. Please use the list below to show the accessibility tools which are available to your students:
  - Large keyboard
  - Joystick
  - Screen reader
  - Screen magnifier
  - Speech-to-text input software
  - Braille keyboard
  - Braille terminal
  - Braille printer
  - Digital audio recorder
  - Video recorder
  - Other
  - a. If you selected Other, please give details
13. Do you provide assistive hardware to students with disabilities? (for example joysticks, laptops, tablets/iPads, mobile phones)  
Any additional information:
14. Who provides support and maintenance for the assistive technology at your university?
15. Does your university use a LMS (Learning Management System) or VLE (Virtual Learning Environment) such as Moodle or Blackboard?
  - a. Is your LMS/VLE accessible for students with disabilities? (for example can a student change the font size or colours on screen, can it be used with a screen reader)

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### Employability Support

16. What sort of employability support and employability skills training do you provide to your students as a whole? Please give details.
17. Is employability support and training available specifically for students with disabilities? If so please provide details.

### Relationships with Employers

18. Does your university partner with employers in order to provide work experience or internships for students during or immediately after their studies? If so, please provide details.
  - a. If you work with companies to provide employment for students, does this also include students with disabilities? [Yes / No / Don't know]
19. Who is the person responsible for dealing with these relationships? Please provide a contact email.
20. Please provide the names of the employers/companies you work with most often (maximum of ten).

### Thank You!

Thank you very much for completing the survey.

If you have any questions or concerns, or if you would like to discuss your answers to the survey, please contact Jacqueline Cawston at [j.cawston@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:j.cawston@coventry.ac.uk) or Sarah Kate Merry at [sarah.merry@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:sarah.merry@coventry.ac.uk).

## Appendix B – Focus group participant information

### PACES Project: Participant Information

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important to understand why the research is taking place and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully, and ask **[name of researcher at university]** if you have any questions. The PACES project is a collaborative project between universities in Egypt, Morocco, the UK, Spain, Greece, and Slovenia. This project is designed to increase accessibility to higher education and employment for students with disabilities at **[name of university]** and others in Egypt and Morocco. It will do so by working with universities to identify current practices, which is why you are being invited to participate in this project.

#### Why have I been chosen?

You have been approached because you are a student with a disability at **[name of university]**. We would like to find out what you think is working well and what you think can be improved.

#### Do I have to take part?

No, it is voluntary.

#### What do I have to do?

We would like to run a focus group, which is an interview with you and some of your fellow students. We will be talking about your experiences of the support available to students with disabilities at your

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university, about the assistive technology that you use, and about your plans after you finish your current course. With your permission, it will be audio-recorded and written up for our records. You have a right to review the recording and the written record, and you can withdraw your permission for your data to be used if you wish. If you would prefer to participate in an individual interview with the researcher, then we can arrange that instead.

### **Data protection and confidentiality**

Any private information, such as your contact details, will be kept confidential, meaning that no-one other than **[name of researcher at institution]** will have access to it, and it will be deleted at the end of the project in October 2020. It is up to you whether your name is used with any quotes from the focus group. We can either acknowledge you by using your name, or use a pseudonym, which means that we will use a fake name. The results of the focus group, when they have been written up, will be shared in a variety of places, including (but not restricted to): the project website, project reports available on the project website, Facebook, and Twitter.

### **What are the risks involved in this project?**

It is important to know that if you choose to allow us to use your data from the focus groups this will be available online to anyone and cannot be deleted after it has been made public.

We are able to use a different name for your focus group data, which means that you cannot be identified, but deciding whether or not you are going to allow this is an important decision.

### **What are the benefits of taking part?**

The main benefits of taking part are that you will be playing an important role in improving support for students with disabilities at **[name of university]**. It is likely that these improvements will then lead to

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progress across the region and possibly internationally. Your contribution to this project is essential in ensuring the success of the PACES project.

### **What if I decide I don't want to participate, or want to withdraw my data?**

If you decide you want to withdraw your permission for the focus group data to be used, then you may do so for up to two days after the data has been collected. You can do this by contacting **[name and contact details of researcher at institution]**.

### **What will happen with the results of the study?**

The findings from this study will be published in the final project report and further publications in order to distribute what we have learned more widely. These will be shared online, so anyone with an internet connection will be able to view them, and may also be published in a printed form.

### **Who is organising and funding the research?**

The PACES project has been funded by the European Commission funding agency Erasmus+. The coordinators of the project are Coventry University, UK, who are also responsible for the research aspect of this project.

### **Who has reviewed this study?**

This study has been reviewed and approved by Coventry University Ethics Committee, UK. It has also been approved by **[insert partner university ethics details]**.

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### Contact and complaint details

We hope that you will enjoy taking part in this project. However, if you have any concerns and you want to complain, please contact **[name and contact details of researcher and PACES project coordinator at university]**.

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## Appendix C – Focus group consent form

### Participant Consent Form

#### PACES Project

Name:

\_\_\_\_\_

Date:

\_\_\_\_\_

1. I have read the participant information sheet about the PACES project.
2. I understand what the project is about.
3. I am happy to take part in a focus group interview as part of the data collection for this project.
4. I understand that the interview will be recorded and I know that this will only be listened to by the researchers.

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5. I understand that I can change my mind about taking part at any point during the project.

I give permission for my personal information to be used to identify me in any write-ups of the focus group.

OR

I wish to remain anonymous in any write-ups of the focus group.

Participant Signature ..... Date .....

Name of Researcher ..... Date .....

Researcher Signature .....

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## Appendix D – Focus group schedule

### Approach to focus groups

We will be using a semi-structured approach to the focus groups. This means that you should ask all of the questions included in this document, but if you think that anything should be added or if you would like to explore the students' answers in more detail, please ask additional questions.

### Before the focus group

- Recruit at least five students for the focus group. If any of them would prefer to meet in smaller groups, or to be interviewed alone, please do your best to accommodate this.
- Adapt the participant information form for your own university.
- Provide the participant information form to the students 2-3 days in advance of the focus group, and read through it with participants if necessary.
- Decide whether it is better to use video-recording or audio-recording for your focus group. It is always best to have a back-up if possible. If you are audio-recording, please try to use two different devices such as a digital recorder and a phone. If you are video-recording, we recommend that you also take an audio-recording as a back-up.
- Read through the questions contained in this document and decide if anything needs to be added, or if it is not relevant to your institution. If you amend the focus group questions, please send the updated version to Sarah at [sarah.merry@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:sarah.merry@coventry.ac.uk).
- Read through the information that was submitted to Coventry University about the assistive technology available at your institution, and the support for students with disabilities, so that you are familiar with the details. If you do not have access to this information, please contact Sarah.
- You should have two researchers present in the focus group. The first person should ask the questions, and the second should take notes and identify key issues as they emerge. You can then discuss these issues with the students at the end of the focus group, if appropriate.

### Beginning the focus group

- Tell the participants if and how the focus group is going to be recorded.
- Let participants know that the focus group could take up to an hour, and tell them that they can request breaks at any time, or can ask to be interviewed alone instead.
- Make sure that all participants have read and understood the participant information form and that they agree to participate.
- Make sure that all participants have read, understood and signed the focus group consent form. Students can provide verbal consent instead if this is recorded, or someone else can sign the consent form on their behalf, as long as there is some evidence of the student's consent.
- Make sure that you have all of the information requested in the Student Focus Group Participants document.

### Asking the questions

- Questions in **bold** are the essential questions that you must ask the students.
- Questions in *italics* are additional questions – please think about these before the focus group. Depending on your institutional context and the student answers to the bolded questions, it may not be necessary to ask all of these questions.

If you wish to follow up on students' answers by asking additional questions which are not listed here, please do so. As mentioned above, if you think some of the questions are not appropriate for your university and you want to change them, please let Sarah know as soon as possible.

## FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

- **What kinds of technology do you use to help you when you are studying at the university? (for example mobile phone, iPad, laptop, audio recorder, digital texts)**
- **What do you use this technology for? (for example recording lectures, making notes, writing assignments)**
  - *Is this technology provided by the university, or do you bring it yourself?*
  - *How and where do you use it? For example, in a lecture or when studying in the library?*
  - *Do you use the same technology when you are at home?*
  - *Is there any technology which the university provides but that you definitely do not use?*
- **What kind of support, if any, do you get as a student with a disability?**
  - *Do you feel supported by your lecturers? Is there any difference between the support from different lecturers?*
- **If you use assistive technology, does the university provide technical support? Where do you go to if there is a problem or something breaks?**
- **Has anyone ever done a needs assessment with you? This means that they look at your particular needs and work with you to understand how the university can support you.**
- **How involved in university life do you feel, as a student with a disability?**
- **Do you live in halls of residence with other students, or do you live at home? Or somewhere else?**
- **Are you a member of any student groups?**
- **Are there any groups specifically for students with disabilities that you know of? If so, do you attend them?**

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- *If there are groups for students with disabilities, are these formal (created and supported by the university) or informal, student-organised groups?*
  
- **Is there anything that is particularly good about your experience as a student with a disability at this university?**  
If they do not know how to respond to this, you can ask them to consider any support they get from lecturers, physical accessibility, the assistive technology available, support from technicians, administrative staff, or other students. However, try not to direct them too much!
  
- **What would make your university experience ideal?**  
If they do not know how to respond to this, you can ask them to consider physical accessibility, institutional support, their interactions with lecturers, other staff, and other students. However, try not to direct them too much!
  
- **Are you interested in going on to further study?**
  
- **Do you know what you would like to do as a job after you graduate?**
  - *What sort of employment do you think that your course prepares you for?*
  - *Do you think that the technology that you currently use will enable you to confidently go into employment in this field?*
  - *What other types of support do you think would help you to make the transition from university to employment? (for example training in CV construction and interview technique, or work experience opportunities)*
  
- **Is there anything that we haven't discussed that you would like to mention?**

**The person who was taking notes should summarise the most important points that they identified throughout the focus group. Ask the participants if they agree that these are the most important points, and see if they agree on the most important issues.**

### Ending the focus group

- Thank the participants for taking part in the focus group.
- Remind the students of the details of participant consent and let them know that they can withdraw their permission for their data to be used, if they wish.
- Both researchers should then take some time to write about their experience of running the focus group and the most important points from the discussion. These should be **written in English (or translated)** and then sent to Sarah at [sarah.merry@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:sarah.merry@coventry.ac.uk) **within 2 days of the focus group.**

## Appendix E – Good practice template

Please complete details of **one good practice** within your university (in English, please) and return to [sarah.merry@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:sarah.merry@coventry.ac.uk) by **Friday 6 April 2018**.

Please also be prepared to **present your good practice at the project meeting in Coventry** on 18 April.  
Thank you!

### Good Practice

[title of project/activity]

University

Country

Target Groups

**Objectives of the project/activity** (maximum 4)

1.

**Fast Facts about the Project/Activity:** (maximum 5)

[brief information about the project/activity]

**Focus of the Project/Activity:** (maximum 300 words)

**Challenges for Students with Disabilities:** (maximum 150 words)

[barriers for students which this project helps to overcome]

**Challenges for the University:** (maximum 150 words)

[difficulties in supporting students with disabilities, which this project can help to overcome]

**Particular relevance of the Good Practice for Students with Disabilities:** (max. 300 words)

**Quote:** (please include a quote from staff or students about the good practice)

**Photograph:** (please include a photograph which illustrates the good practice)

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**Progression of Accessibility Centres in higher Education  
for Students with disabilities in North Africa**

**Project Number: 585901-EPP-1-2017-1-UK-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP**

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