



UTM STUDENTS' UNION RECOMMENDATIONS FOR

RECORDED LECTURES

UTMSU LOBBY WEEK

2023/2024

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introduction

Accessibility is a right, not a privilege.

The University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM) Accessibility Services is committed to providing “services and programs that enable students with disabilities to maximize their educational potential” as well as “ensure that all students with disabilities can freely and actively participate in all facets of university life” (1). The University of Toronto Mississauga Students’ Union (UTMSU) is likewise committed to “providing a barrier-free environment for our members” in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005) (2).

In today’s dynamic and interconnected educational landscape, the more traditional model of attending live lectures in person is undergoing a significant transformation. With the advancement of technology and the diverse needs of modern learners, the provision of recorded lectures has emerged as a vital component of higher education. As universities strive to create inclusive and accessible learning environments, the necessity of recorded lectures for university students becomes increasingly apparent.

This document aims to begin a discussion with the ultimate goal of establishing a system to provide students with recorded lectures. Overall, the document emphasizes the importance of implementing recorded lectures as a means to support students with diverse needs and enhance their learning experiences at UTM.

Our aim is to address the concerns of our membership, be it students with accessibility needs who require special accommodations, international students from Non-English Speaking Backgrounds, or students who are forced to take long term absences from lectures due to unanticipated challenges, such as visa complications, being waitlisted, or contracting COVID.

Throughout this lobby document, insights from the survey as well as student and faculty input will be utilized as compelling evidence to support the five outlined recommendations:

summary of recommendations

1

Individualized policy for long-term lecture absences

2

Implement a system to provide recorded lectures to students

3

Increase the number of asynchronous lectures

The Education For All Survey conducted in 2022 and the Accessibility & Note takers Feedback form survey conducted in 2023 by the UTMSU provides valuable insights into the perspectives of the student body. The survey data serves as concrete evidence supporting the need for change and informs the specific recommends outlined in the lobby document.

The data collected not only reflects the current state of student perspectives but serves as a critical foundation for advocating policies that address the diverse needs of the University of Toronto Mississauga student population.

The lobby document underscores a notable incongruence between the university's efforts to attract both domestic and international students and the resources and support provided to meet the needs of these students. The document calls for a recalibration of university plans to align with the genuine needs of students, thereby fostering an inclusive and equitable educational environment.

¹ utm.utoronto.ca/accessibility/future-uoft-students/about-accessibility-services

² utmsu.ca/about-us/accessibility

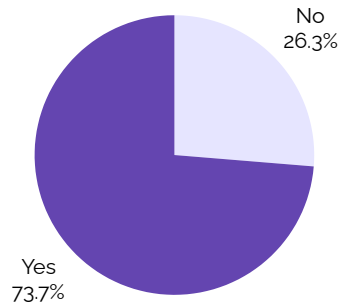


necessity

The Education for All Campaign is necessary due to several pressing reasons:

73.7% of respondents have had to miss a lecture due to an emergency (while 26.3% selected “disagree”).

Education for All Survey, 2022



01

UNFORESEEN CIRCUMSTANCES

Students who face unforeseeable circumstances, including mental health concerns, visa complications, family emergencies, severe menstrual pain, being waitlisted, etc., are oftentimes not provided with appropriate support when a lecture has been missed. Recorded lectures provide a solution for students facing unforeseen circumstances, ensuring continuity of learning and minimizing academic disruptions.

02

ACCESSIBILITY RESOURCE

Students with disabilities encounter unique challenges that can significantly impact their academic and social experiences at university. In alignment with UTM and the UTMSU's commitment to addressing these challenges, it is imperative to introduce and enhance services to support these students effectively.

Despite the existing support for students with disabilities on campus, there remains a gap in providing appropriate assistance for those facing unforeseeable circumstances like mental health concerns or family emergencies, particularly when missing lectures.

Furthermore, recorded lectures are essential for the academic success of students with accessibility needs, both registered and unregistered. A study conducted by Leadbeater et al found that a "large portion" of students who were "heavily reliant" on recorded lectures were dyslexic (3). Students with disabilities can benefit from recorded lectures as an alternative means of accessing course content, ensuring equitable access to education and supporting inclusive learning environments.

3 Wendy Leadbeater, Tom Shuttleworth, John Couperthwaite, and Karl P. Nightingale, "Evaluating the Use and Impact of Lecture Recording in Undergraduates: Evidence for Distinct Approaches by Different Groups of Students," *Computers and Education* 61 (2013): 191.

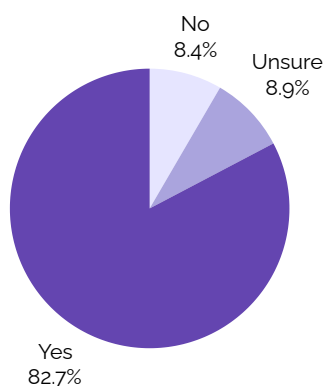
4 Zsuzsa Horvath, Jean A. O'Donnell, Lynn A. Johnson, Nadeem Y. Karimbux, Charles F. Shuler, and Heiko Spallek, "Use of Lecture Recordings in Dental Education: Assessment of Status Quo and Recommendations," *Journal of Dental Education* 77, no. 11 (2013): 1432.

03

DECREASE ANXIETY AND STRESS

There are many positive correlations between access to recorded lectures and academic performance, decreased student anxiety and stress levels, retention of content, and overall quality of learning. Access to recorded lectures can alleviate student anxiety and stress levels by providing a sense of control over their learning environment.

Numerous studies have found a link between lecture recordings and “perceived effects on student learning” including grade improvements and lower stress and anxiety amongst students (4).



82.7% of respondents agreed that they would benefit from having both virtual and in-person learning options (8.9% selected “unsure” while 8.4% selected “strongly agree”).

Education for All Survey, 2022

04

SUPPORT FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

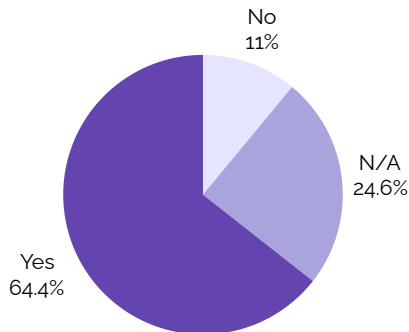
Given the substantial international student population at UTM, which increases the possibility that many students may struggle with studying in English as an ESL student, recorded lectures may be used as a supplemental learning method. Recorded lectures benefit international students, particularly those for whom English is a second language, by providing additional support in understanding complex language and academic concepts, thereby promoting academic success and integration.

Retention of content, particularly amongst international students who may struggle with a language barrier, should be a key consideration in the implementation of recorded lectures. Nordmann et al concluded that non-native speakers were more likely to use recorded lectures, perhaps due to “fast speaking rates and complicated grammar use” by instructors (5). Another study found that ESL speakers were likely to “rewatch specific parts of a recorded lecture” to better comprehend the content (6). Though there has not been a noted correlation, various studies have implied an increased retention of material by students with a language barrier and recorded lectures.

5 Emily Nordmann, Colin Calder, Paul Bishop, Amy Irwin, and Darren Comber, “Turn up, Tune in, Don’t Drop out: The Relationship between Lecture Attendance, Use of Lecture Recordings, and Achievement at Different Levels of Study,” *Higher Education* 77, no. 6 (2019): 1080-1.

6 Jill R.D. MacKay, “First Year Undergraduates Make Use of Recordings to Overcome the Barriers to Higher Education: Evidence from a Survey,” *Research in Learning Technology* 28 (2020): 13.

64.4% of respondents agreed that being unable to attend lectures due to emergencies had hindered their academic experiences and overall engagement in the course (while 24.6% selected “N/A” and 11% selected “No”).
Education for All Survey, 2022



05

IMPROVING QUALITY OF LEARNING

Numerous studies and surveys have demonstrated that students benefit from being able to access recorded lectures. In addition to the decrease in stress and anxiety, research shows that the “just in case perception”—the value placed on having recorded lectures as a backup, just in case—improves “confidence in their ability to undertake their study” and generally increases the value of “overall student experience” (7). In fact, providing recorded lectures could potentially “enhance [...] learning opportunities” and “contribute positively to overall student experience” (8).

7 Helen E. Larkin, “But They Won’t Come to Lectures...”: The Impact of Audio Recorded Lectures on Student Experience and Attendance,” *Australasian Journal Of Educational Technology* 26, no. 2 (2010): 245.

8 Larkin, “But They Won’t Come to Lectures...,” 248.





STUDENT *testimonials*

"I find it difficult due to **mood issues and depression** to focus on lectures in person and especially to maintain focus and attitude. **Providing recorded lectures would help immensely in preventing me from falling behind,** getting so anxious and falling into depressive episodes."

"Life happens, **profs should be able to offer accommodations or have a plan** to make up for it. Not just leave us there when we're sick and desperate to catch up."

"It would push back my ability to succeed in class and I have definitely **felt a gap between my peers** who have attended the lecture."

"**Missing a lecture can really impact grades,** especially when you only have a class once per week. I have **lost participation marks due to illness/family issues** making me unable to attend, and not having lecture recordings makes it hard to catch up. I think it would be better to measure participation in some way other than attendance."

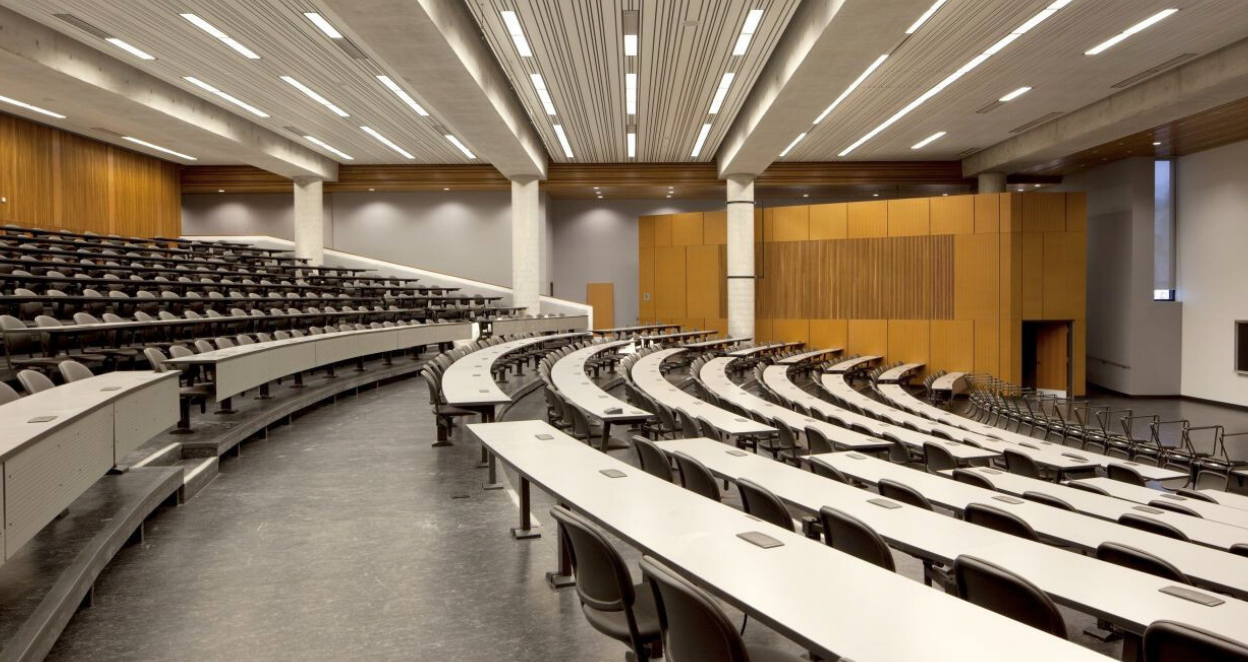
“There are some professors who don't record the lecture and give exam questions [based directly on] the lecture. One time I **was injured and couldn't attend and no one helped me at all.** Recorded lectures are always a good idea.”

“I got sick a lot one term and missed a few calculus classes. Thankfully the professor did provide detailed slides, however it was **difficult to figure out the process without the step by step.**”

“I felt like my missed absences due to medical circumstances (e.g. COVID, possible epileptic seizure aura, etc.) **negatively impacted my ability to prep** for the exam and to compensate for missed participation marks. Although I was very lucky to finish my courses with an 80, **I felt more demoralized.**”

“I find it unfair that we are in such a digital age and UofT has lots of **funding and technology available** and yet professors choose not to record because it is easier for them or they just don't want to. Additionally, a lot of professors may still have **recordings from COVID lectures that they can post as alternatives.**”





FACULTY *consultations*

UTMSU executives met with various departments to present the recommendations and ideas mentioned in this document and discuss implementation.

While we were met with positive responses to our other recommendations for improvements to accessibility services, our proposal to implement a recorded lecture system was met with several concerns, primarily over infringement of intellectual property, an increased faculty workload, and decline in classroom engagement.

The UTMSU values the input of the university departments and has taken into consideration the input and feedback provided by a member of the departments we consulted.

the state of affairs IN OTHER INSTITUTIONS

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Sloan Technology Services (the recording system used by MIT) automatically records all class lectures “upon request by the teaching team.” Recordings are accessible through Canvas but are hidden from students by default. They can be accessed through a form, submitted to the instructor, with details of the reason for the absence (including but not limited to being waitlisted or having an excused absence) (9).

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Harvard employs Panopto to record lectures automatically in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, as well as several other class locations. Classes are prioritised according to demand, including factors such as simultaneous enrolment in courses, courses that request accommodation for religious observances, and courses that are held in rooms with installed lecture capture equipment (10).

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY

Based on the understanding that recorded lectures are key in meeting the needs of students registered with Accessibility Services, Cambridge University has a system in place to record lectures and make them available to students (11).

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON

University College London operates an automatic recording system called Lecturecast. The university states that the recorded lecture system supports students in their ability to learn “complex, unusual, or subject specific terminology (especially useful for overseas students) and view lectures missed due to illness or unforeseen circumstances (12).

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

The University of Michigan maintains an automatic recording system to provide students with recordings of lectures, citing that research demonstrates that students use recordings to improve their class notes and study for exams. The university likewise states that “lecture recordings support inclusive and equitable teaching practices by offering flexibility and access for students” (13).

ETH ZURICH

ETH Zurich maintains approximately 80 lecture halls and some seminar rooms with recording equipment. Instructors are able to record the “projection area” and audio, and videos are “usually” made available to students on the following business day (14).

9 mitsloanedtech.mit.edu/teaching-spaces/live-streaming-and-classroom-recordings

10 fatg.fas.harvard.edu/panopto

11 cctl.cam.ac.uk/technology-enabled-learning/guidance-recording

12 ucldata.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/LecturecastResourceCentre/pages/32804532/Lecturecast+FAQs

13 caennews.engin.umich.edu/f22-lecture-recording

14 ethz.ch/staffnet/en/it-services/catalogue/multimedia/lecture-recording/hinweise_vorlesungsaufzeichnung/studierende.html

RECOMMENDATIONS & *implementation*

Based on research, discussions with students and faculty, the following suggestions would improve access to education for students.

RECOMMENDATION 1

INDIVIDUALIZED POLICY FOR LONG-TERM LECTURE ABSENCES

According to the UTM Academic Handbook 2023-24, instructors are required to include key policies in the course syllabus, including Assignment Submission Policies and Late Penalties, Tests Schedules Outside of Regular Class Times, and Missed Tests and Regrading. The UTMSU recommends that faculty include a policy on accommodations for students with valid long term absences. In consideration of instructors' concerns over the breach of individual choices and teaching styles, we propose the inclusion of a highly individualized policy simply to provide students with some indication of how they may proceed if they are forced to take a long-term absence.



RECOMMENDATION 2

IMPLEMENT A SYSTEM TO PROVIDE RECORDED LECTURES TO STUDENTS

Numerous higher education institutions employ automatic recording services to make content more readily available as a part of their accessibility accommodations. Software such as Ponopto is easily integrated into existing software used by UofT like Canvas. Using this software, instructors will be able to control the viewing accessibility of videos, and be able to edit videos once they have been uploaded, thus allowing instructors more control over what is published. Likewise, lectures can be shared through secure that expire within a certain timeframe, which will reduce the risk of violating intellectual property significantly.

Likewise, videos will have a built in discussion board, content bookmarking ability and time-stamped notes, as well as automatic ASR (Automatic Speech Recognition) and OCR (Optical Character Recognition)—all of which will undoubtedly improve the quality of education (15).



To alleviate the possible burden placed on instructors to record while teaching, the UTMSU proposes several options for recording lectures without requiring extra effort from the instructor.

- *Recording done by the instructional staff in your course*
- *Recording done by a student in your course with your permission*
 - *This option may have the added benefit of providing employment opportunities to students*
- *Automated lecture capture*
 - *As mentioned above, the UTMSU strongly encourages exploring the possibility of establishing an automated recording system, such as that employed by MIT, which would provide the automatically recorded lectures to students on a case by case basis, at the discretion of the instructor.*

¹⁵ Nordmann et al. "Turn up, Tune in, Don't Drop out," 1067.

¹⁶ Sebnem Cilesiz, "Undergraduate Students' Experiences with Recorded Lectures: Towards a Theory of Acculturation," *Higher Education* 69, no. 3 (2015):

In the event that implementing a system to record all lectures in all years may present an understandable logistical challenge, the UTMSU requests that the University consider implementing a pilot program for higher-volume first year classes. Students in first year may need more support, particularly since they are in an unfamiliar environment with new challenges. Nordmann et al argues that first year students are "less likely to attend lectures" due in part to either educational immaturity or "the introductory nature of course content" (15).

RECOMMENDATION 3
**INCREASE THE
NUMBER OF
ASYNCHRONOUS
LECTURES**

Particularly in first year classes, where there are far more students than in upper year classes, it would be beneficial to make more classes asynchronous or include an asynchronous component as a hybrid option.

Studies show that implementing more asynchronous classes can be beneficial both to students and the university, as they often reduce costs, reduce the necessity of multiple instructors and physical classrooms, and allow for larger enrolment of students, thus increasing efficiency (16).

ADDRESSING INSTRUCTOR *concerns*

During our discussions with faculty, valid concerns arose regarding intellectual property and classroom engagement. We hope to address these concerns in this documents.

01

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY CONCERNS

The concerns over intellectual property are completely justified and we are grateful that the departments we consulted took the time to impress upon us how complex the situation can be. However, in the post-COVID academic sphere, the argument that establishing a system to provide students with recorded lectures is unfeasible due to intellectual property rights has become less convincing, particularly considering there was a relatively seamless transition from in-person to online at the very beginning of the pandemic. The UTMSU asks that the University incorporate elements of this online learning system into our current academic structure to provide students with a better learning environment, more flexibility and accommodations, and help alleviate the stresses that many students still experience in the post-COVID space.

¹⁷ Horvath et al., "Use of Lecture Recordings in Dental Education," 1440.

To circumvent the complex issues relating to intellectual property, the UTMSU requests that administrators consider the following options (recommended by Horvath et al as “Recommendations for Best Practices”) (17).

- Consider different delivery options: password-protected environment available only to a class (e.g., LMS, iTunesU), school, university (e.g., iTunesU), or the public (e.g., iTunesU) versus public websites (YouTube)
- If the recordings are posted publicly, obtain copy-right clearance, signed consent, and release forms according to your school policy
- Only record the lecturer and try to omit students.
- Establish a policy that prohibits students from sharing recordings with anyone else
- Keep all recordings in password-protected area to retain Fair Use status

Likewise, the UTMSU recommends establishing stronger guidelines aimed at students regarding the sharing of lectures, and establishing a system to impose sanctions to deter students from violating the University and instructors' intellectual property rights. This could be in the form of an amendment to the Academic Code of Behaviour and the University's Intellectual Property Rights policy.





02 **DECLINE IN CLASSROOM ENGAGEMENT**

The aim of implementing a recorded lecture system is not to replace the existing learning format, i.e. in-person lectures, but to provide a) alternatives to students who may not be able to attend lectures due to unforeseen circumstances, b) a consistent accommodation for students registered with Accessibility Services and students from Non-English Speaking Backgrounds, and c) a supplementary learning method to provide students with a form of revision during exam times, easier access to content to write more comprehensive notes, or a possible backup to reduce students' stress and anxiety.

In fact, some studies have suggested that creating recorded lectures may increase class engagement, with students using recorded lectures as an opportunity to "review" material, rather than as an excuse to skip attending lectures. This study succinctly concluded that "the use of lecture recordings does not impact on attendance at lectures."

Nevertheless, if instructors are concerned about student engagement, incorporating a graded engagement component into the syllabus (which is already common practice in most courses at UTM) may encourage students to attend lectures in person.

The UTMSU's aim is to support those students who will benefit the most from increased accessibility to recorded lectures—including students registered with Accessibility Services and students who may be undergoing challenging circumstances, such as an inability to attend in-person classes due to visa restrictions or complications, or students suffering from COVID. We believe our recommendations are feasible and warrant further discussion

¹⁸ Larkin, "But They Won't Come to Lectures...", 245.

¹⁹ Larkin, "But They Won't Come to Lectures...", 247.



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**UTMSU LOBBY DOCUMENT
2023/2024**