Dear Professor XYZ,

I am XYZ, X-year class representative of the XYZ course at the Trinity College Dublin Students' Union. It has come to our classes' attention that this semester, as opposed to the first semester, live lecturers will not be recorded and uploaded to the Blackboard remote-learning platform.

I am writing on behalf of my class to request, for the reasons outlined below, that lectures be provided asynchronously too. With regards to:

1. Trinity College Dublin's 'Policy on Trinity Virtual Learning Environment', which governs the policies for ex situ teaching, the only teaching and learning methods currently at our disposal due to the Covid-19 crisis, and especially its clauses 5.4 ('Principles') which states that 'All content accessible by students must adhere to Accessible Information Policy & Guidelines.' and 7.2.4 ('Minimum content specifications') which states that ' All digital materials used in the teaching and learning on the programme will, where possible, be made available to the students within the VLE.'. It is already policy that lecture slides must be uploaded.
2. Trinity College Dublin's 'Accessible Information Policy & Guidelines', the policy document based on the legal framework of the Disabilities Act (2005), which sets out our college's commitment to accessible and inclusive learning for all students.
3. The Disabilities Act of 2005 and specifically its clause Section 28 (1) (a) which states that all public bodies must ensure 'that information which is orally provided to the public is provided in an accessible format, where so requested by persons with hearing impairments.'.
4. The fact that not everyone at Trinity College Dublin comes from a well-off socioeconomic background and thus it is certainly possible that situations can arise in which students of the course do not have immediate and adequate access to the Internet and electronic devices necessary to make use of the Virtual Learning Environment should lectures be only syncrhonously provided.
5. The fact that due to Covid-19, many students are staying in their home countries rather than risk travelling and the high number of cases in Ireland, therefore their time zones are different than Ireland's. This, in turn, means that they would have to wake up at times unnatural to their rhythms to attend lectures of the module discussed as their time zones can be off by multiple hours. For example, to attend the XYZ (module code) lecture on Wednesday from XYZ to XYZ, a student in New York would have to wake up at XYZ AM in the morning.
6. The fact that students with disabilities, such as hearing problems, may have difficulty engaging with a synchronous lecture.
7. The fact that Trinity College Dublin's IT services already provided ready-made solutions to record live lectures so as to make the task of lecturers easy (https://www.tcd.ie/itservices/lecture-capture/).
8. The fact that the ongoing Covid-19 crisis poses the above-outlined and many more accessibility risks to the more rigid form of synchronous learning, it is wiser to err on the side of caution.

With regards to the above outlined legislative framework, furthermore in light of the move towards remote learning and these unprecedented times, we ask that you please consider providing recorded versions of the live lectures for BlackBoard. I am copy-pasting an Intellectual Property notice that other lecturers have used to protect their videos:

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•Student Online Teaching Advice Notice  
•The materials and content presented within this session are intended solely for use in a context of teaching and learning at Trinity.   
•Any session recorded for subsequent review is made available solely for the purpose of enhancing student learning.  
•Students should not edit or modify the recording in any way, nor disseminate it for use outside of a context of teaching and learning at Trinity.  
•Please be mindful of your physical environment and conscious of what may be captured by the device camera and microphone during videoconferencing calls.  
•Recorded materials will be handled in compliance with Trinity’s statutory duties under the Universities Act, 1997 and in accordance with the University’s policies and procedures.  
•Further information on data protection and best practice when using videoconferencing software is available at https://www.tcd.ie/info\_compliance/data-protection/  
  
•© Trinity College Dublin 2020  
  
•This statement asserts copyright on the part of the author (XYZ) over the following lecture slides.

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I have put in CC XYZ, XYZ convenor. Thank you very much in advance for considering the request of our class.

Best Regards and Take Care,

XYZ

Dear Professor XYZ,

I support and reiterate the remarks by XYZ and thank him for stating this.  However, I would like to see the equality impact assessment for this decision and will be submitting a Freedom of Information Act (2014) request to see if any equality and inclusion considerations were made. Secondly, I wish to add to ’s statement by adding that 11% of homes in Northern Ireland (Ofcom Connect Nations Report 2019) and 20% of homes in the Republic of Ireland (Eir.ie National Broadband Plan website) do not have access to high quality broadband and so will be severely negatively impacted by this decision   Lack of fibre broadband makes live recordings much harder to access compared to recorded lecturers as there is not enough bandwidth for live viewing when someone else is using the internet.

I hope this can be rectified and a process of dialogue can be opened up. It is of concern to me that it appears as if faculty did not engage with the Students’ Union in making this impactful decision.

Best Regards and Take care,

XYZ