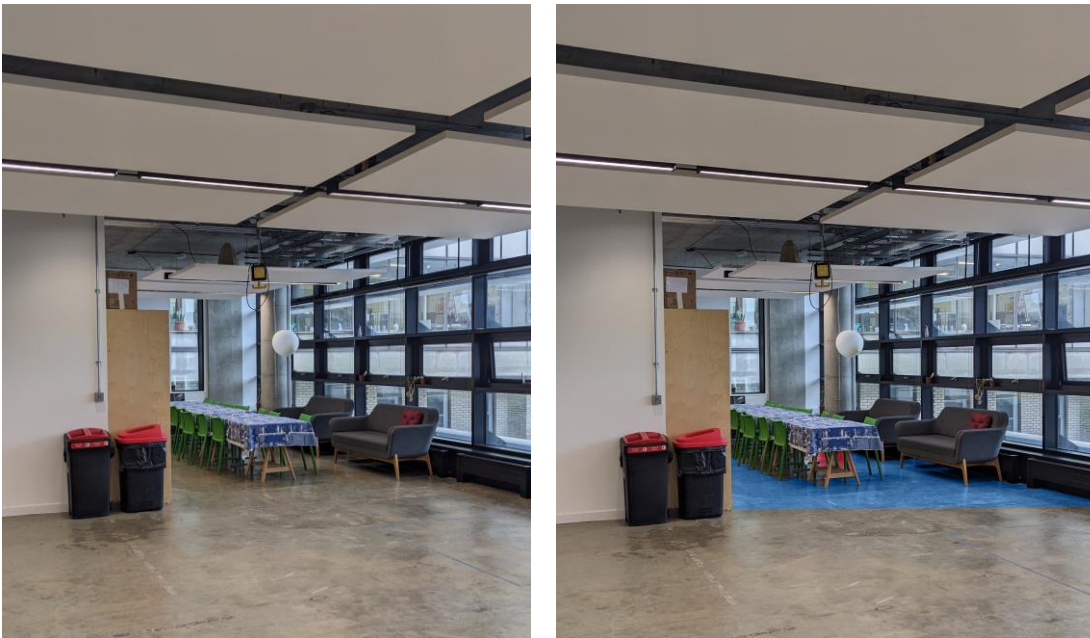


## Studio Zoning

Due to the limitations in significantly altering our studio space, the introduction of physical partitions to create internal rooms is impractical given our teaching context, the number of students, and our methods of delivery. Instead, we propose implementing studio zoning to designate specific activity areas within the open-plan space. Currently, these zones exist informally, such as the maker space and the green room for lectures, but they lack visible demarcation.

We recommend formalizing these zones by creating a detailed studio plan highlighting these areas. A soft zoning approach, such as floor markings, can be introduced to visibly distinguish these zones. This method ensures flexibility while providing structure, aiding both students and staff in navigating the studio more effectively



Before and after example of floor marking as zoning

Towards a more accessible studio:  
Next Steps

## **Studio Scheduling**

### *8.2.2 Familiarity*

*Layouts that change, such as multi-function spaces, can cause anxiety as the space might not be as remembered (or previewed) and this can be disconcerting.<sup>1</sup>*

Layouts that change frequently, such as multi-functional spaces, can cause anxiety due to the unpredictability of the environment, especially for neurodivergent users (Boys, 2010). Our studio space, used by three large year groups throughout the week, undergoes constant reconfiguration. The flexible furniture system, including moveable tables and corkboards, facilitates different learning activities but can be distracting.

To mitigate this, we propose creating a visual studio schedule accessible to students. This schedule can include information such as 'quiet hours' for focused work and social working periods for peer-to-peer interaction. By providing this information, we can reduce anxiety and encourage a studio culture where students feel comfortable using the space for independent

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.housinglin.org.uk/\\_assets/Resources/Housing/OtherOrganisation/Design-for-the-mind-Neurodiversity-and-the-built-environment-Guide.pdf](https://www.housinglin.org.uk/_assets/Resources/Housing/OtherOrganisation/Design-for-the-mind-Neurodiversity-and-the-built-environment-Guide.pdf)

## **Studio Manual**

The creation of a Studio Manual is essential to outline ground rules and user guidance, ensuring the studio's inclusive use. For instance, guidelines on bringing and eating food in the studio can address potential discomfort for some users. This manual should be developed through consultation with staff and students, incorporating their feedback and reflections.

Additionally, the manual should include information on adjusting the internal environment, such as sound, light, and ventilation, to accommodate sensory sensitivities. While some manual user controls are available, they are often unmarked and concealed. Simple signage on how to use and adjust these features, such as light fittings and quiet spaces, would be beneficial.

## **Quiet Space**

### *14.1.1 Recovery and adjustment*

*A single space for multi-purpose use which includes a space for recovery from sensory overload is likely to cause difficulties for users due to a conflict in requirements. For example, it might be in use as a faith or meeting space and would not be readily available to meet the reactive needs of someone experiencing anxiety, distress or sensory overload. Many people who experience anxiety or sensory overload can benefit from the provision of a quiet room or restorative space which is accessed when needed as a place to escape and recover. <sup>i</sup>*

A dedicated quiet space is crucial for recovery from sensory overload, as a multi-purpose space might not be readily available for those in need. Currently, our campus provides only one Multi-faith and Wellbeing room, which is insufficient. We propose utilizing two 'meeting pods' in our studio as quiet spaces, adapting them with softer furnishings and user controls for lighting and air quality, in line with specific guidance on creating quiet spaces (Cardiff University, 2023).

Further resources:

<https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/psychology/research/impact/sensory-room-guide-supporting-the-learning-and-wellbeing-of-autistic-children>

## **Pre-Information**

### *6.2 Preview and advance information*

*The opportunity to accurately anticipate and experience an environment virtually or through audio or visual description should be used to reduce anxiety.<sup>2</sup>*

Providing accurate anticipatory information about the studio environment can reduce anxiety. The National Autistic Society suggests methods such as sensory maps and visual journeys, which are becoming common in cultural institutions. For our degree show, we can involve students in designing these resources, encouraging them to consider inclusive exhibition design.

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<sup>2</sup> [https://www.housinglin.org.uk/\\_assets/Resources/Housing/OtherOrganisation/Design-for-the-mind-Neurodiversity-and-the-built-environment-Guide.pdf](https://www.housinglin.org.uk/_assets/Resources/Housing/OtherOrganisation/Design-for-the-mind-Neurodiversity-and-the-built-environment-Guide.pdf)

## Student Participation Opportunities

‘By engaging in creative project work in a studio context, student learning by doing is guided by discussions and exchange of ideas with peers and with tutors who are themselves creative practitioners. This is a form of creative knowledge transfer and is significant in preparing students for their future work experiences in the creative industries.’<sup>ii</sup>

Engaging students in participatory learning sessions on accessibility in design can enhance their understanding and application of inclusive practices. Below are opportunities across the three years:

**Year 1: Unit 2 – Cardboard Structures:** Focus on creating accessible modifications to the campus through 1:1 cardboard installations.

Reference: Memorial to Heroic Self-Sacrifice adaptations by Mandy Redvers-Rowe and Poppy Levison.

**Year 2: Unit 5 – Inclusive Design Workshop:** Conduct an accessibility audit of the campus, focusing on toilets.

Reference: Vanderbilt University campus accessibility map, part of the Mapping Access project by the Critical Design Lab.

**Year 3: Degree Show Design:** Integrate an accessibility team to ensure the exhibition is fully accessible.

These initiatives will prepare students for future work in creative industries by fostering a culture of inclusive design and accessibility awareness.

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.housinglin.org.uk/assets/Resources/Housing/OtherOrganisation/Design-for-the-mind-Neurodiversity-and-the-built-environment-Guide.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> Chamorro-Koc, M. & Kurimasuriyar, A. (2020) Insights from studio teaching practices in a Creative Industries Faculty in Australia, Arts and Humanities in Higher Education, Vol. 19, No. 2, pp 172-85