

Topic 1/5: Inclusive Learning Environment & Culture

Creating an inclusive learning environment is fundamental to ensuring that all students, regardless of their background, identity, or ability, feel valued and supported. In such an environment, diversity is not merely tolerated but celebrated as a rich source of perspectives and experiences that enhance the learning experience for everyone. This inclusivity fosters a sense of belonging, which research has shown to be crucial for student engagement, retention, and success.

Topics covered by this toolkit:

1/5 Inclusive Learning Environment & Culture

2/5 Effective Communication & Student Voice

3/5 Digital Platforms & Assistive Technologies

4/5 Successful Collaboration

5/5 Student Autonomy & Providing Choice

Topic 1/5: Inclusive Learning Environment and Culture

Checklist: Enhanced Inclusion and Diversity

Pronouns:

Actively ask and use students' pronouns to foster an inclusive environment.

Encourage Student Voice & Questions:

- Clearly communicate that questions and feedback are always welcome.
- Offer multiple channels for asking questions and feedback, such as Slido, chat functions in online classes, or in-person after lectures.

Approachability & Safety:

- Reiterate your approachability and commitment to creating a safe, respectful learning environment.
- Use language and examples in teaching that are inclusive of all genders, races, cultures, and backgrounds.

Support Networks & Resources:

Provide information about support networks and resources available for diverse groups within the university.

Subject Matter Glossary:

Provide a comprehensive glossary of terms, available on the course's online platform (e.g., Moodle), to support understanding of subject-specific language.

Multiple Material Formats:

Offer course materials in diverse formats (visual, auditory, text-based, hands-on) to cater to different learning preferences.

Facilitate Peer Learning & Respect:

Encourage collaborative learning experiences where respect and appreciation for diverse viewpoints are emphasised.

Regular Feedback Opportunities:

Create regular opportunities for students to provide feedback on the inclusivity and accessibility of the course.

Culturally Diverse Resources:

Ensure course resources reflect a variety of cultures and perspectives to promote broader understanding and inclusivity.

Additional resources

- **UNSW Teaching** - [Universal Design for Learning \(UDL\)](#)

Videos and information on curriculum development and classroom management that give all individuals equal opportunities to learn.

- **UNSW Equitable Learning Services (ELS)** - [Who Are My Learners?](#)

This UNSW Equitable Learning Services' page promotes inclusive teaching through information, links, and a video about ELS.

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Choice in Engagement & Demonstration:

Provide students with options in how they access course materials, engage with content, and demonstrate their learning (e.g., projects, presentations, written assignments).

Confidential Accessibility Communication:

Encourage students to confidentially share their accessibility needs via email or a private communication channel.

Special Consideration for Assessments/Exams:

Opt-in for the flexible deadline (short extension policy), as there are a diverse range of students who have personal, family, cultural, mental health circumstances that arise, all needing a more empathetic viewpoint and support.

Additional resources

- **UDL Guidelines - Moodle Course** - [Using Universal Design for Learning in Your Course](#) (Self-enrolment key: Student_UDL). A Moodle module introduces UDL Guidelines, a tool for inclusive learning.
- **UNSW Disability Inclusion Plan:** [The UNSW Disability Inclusion Action Plan \(DIAP\) 2022-2025](#)
This plan aims to eliminate barriers for people with disabilities in tertiary education.

Topic 2/5: Effective Communication & Student Voice

Open and effective communication channels between students and educators are vital for recognising and addressing the diverse needs and preferences of the student body. Encouraging student voice empowers learners to share their insights and challenges, contributing to a more responsive and adaptive educational experience. This dialogue ensures that educational strategies are not one-size-fits-all but are tailored to foster the success of each student.

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**Topic 2/5:
Effective Communication & Student Voice**

**Checklist:
Classroom Communications**

<p>Student Voice & Cultural Sensitivity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage student voice by incorporating culturally sensitive practices. Provide examples and support for students from diverse backgrounds to express their opinions and collaborate effectively. • Refer to the Cultural Sensitivity Guide for more details. 	<p>Support Networks & Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure students are aware of available support networks. These can be found in the UNSW Student Support Services. • Refer to the Support For Students Policy for detailed information. 	<p>Collaboration Methods & Platforms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide multiple platforms for student interaction and collaboration, including Zoom, Padlet, and Teams. • Ensure seamless integration of these tools to maintain a consistent flow for students. • Refer to the Collaboration Tools Guide for detailed instructions.
<p>Learning communications:</p> <p>Clearly communicate learning goals for each lecture and tutorial.</p>	<p>Physical Environment Control:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the classroom environment caters to all diverse sensory needs; Adjust lighting, temperature, and noise levels as needed. • Identify and communicate quiet safe spaces on campus. • Refer to the Environmental Control Guide for more details. 	<p>Inclusive Practices in Collaboration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage diverse communication methods, including anonymous feedback if suitable. • Establish measures to manage and moderate anonymous comments to prevent inappropriate content.

Additional resources

- **Guide to Inclusive Communication and Events** - [How to make your communications and events more inclusive, accessible, and welcoming](#)

Includes links to resources and articles on UNSW's approaches to inclusivity.

- **UNSW Safety Working Environment** - [Working Environment](#)

Includes quantitative chart of appropriate lighting levels, and hints on creating a comfortable and effective teaching environment.

- **UNSW Support for Students Policy** – [2024 Support for Students Policy](#)

This PDF includes a link to a range of Student Support Services, including academic and non-academic services.

**Topic 2/5:
Effective Communication & Student Voice****Checklist:
Classroom Communications****Facilitation &
Confidentiality:**

- Begin each course with a slide declaring the classroom a safe space.
- Ensure confidentiality by providing clear instructions on accessibility communication and handling sensitive information.

**Create an Inclusion
Statement:**

For the course, that sets up the expectation of inclusive behaviours and fosters belonging.

Example Inclusion Statement:

“Everybody is welcome in this course. We want you to feel it is OK to be authentically yourself. Please let us know if there is anything we can do that helps to include you in the course. Everyone is welcome to use their own strategies to help them feel relaxed. If you have any suggestions or comments, please share them with us.”

Additional resources

- **UNSW's Accessibility Homepage** - [UNSW's Accessibility homepage](#)

Links to a range of resources including UNSW's Disability Inclusion Action Plan, Venue Accessibility, AUSLAN and captioning services for events, and UNSW branding templates.

- **Disability Language Guide** - [People with Disability Australia \(PWDA\) - Language Guide](#)

Includes concepts such as identity-first and person-first language, avoiding euphemisms and appropriate phrases.

Topic 3/5: Digital Platforms & Assistive Technologies

The integration of digital platforms and assistive technologies in education is essential for removing barriers to learning and participation. These tools can provide alternative access to course materials, facilitate communication, and support diverse learning styles, making education more equitable. Technology can bridge gaps, providing flexibility and support where traditional methods may fall short, ensuring that all students can access and engage with their learning materials effectively, regardless of location or physical capability.

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Topic 3/5: Digital Platforms & Assistive Technologies

Checklist: Enhanced Inclusion and Diversity

Accessibility Checks:

Regularly run accessibility checks on your documents.

Headings:

Use headings to help students navigate documents.

Captions:

Use captions for videos and online live teaching.

Image Descriptions & Alt Text:

Provide image descriptions and alt text.

Descriptive Hyperlinks:

Provide hyperlinks with descriptive text.

Accessible Fonts:

Use accessible fonts that are sans-serif, 12 point or larger and are not in all capitals.

Colour Contrast:

Ensure sufficient colour contrasts between text and background colours. Avoid colour as sole indicator of information and category differences.

Avoid Justified Text:

Avoid using justified text that gives your text straight edges on both sides of the paragraph.

Reading Order:

Check all items and objects are in a logical reading order.

Table Headers:

Accessible tables need table headers.

Additional resources

- **UNSW Business School's Digital Accessibility Guides for Learning**

(anyone with the link can view and download)

[PDF guidebook](#) addresses common accessibility issues in learning, offering instructions for creating accessible Word, PowerPoint, and PDF files, and making Moodle accessible.

Topic 4/5: Successful Collaboration

Collaboration among students with varied abilities and from different backgrounds can lead to a richer educational experience. It teaches valuable skills such as empathy, communication, and teamwork, which are essential for success in the diverse world outside the university. Encouraging collaboration also leverages the unique strengths and perspectives of each student, leading to innovative problem-solving and deeper learning.

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Topic 4/5: Successful Collaboration

Checklist: Group Dynamics & Interactions

Promote the Students as Partners Program:

- Highlight the availability of student ambassadors who can act as intermediaries between students and academics. This reduces the power dynamic and ensures student concerns and suggestions are heard and addressed in real-time, leading to immediate improvements within the current term.

Student Ambassador Collaboration:

- Work closely with student ambassadors to identify common challenges and areas for improvement. Use their insights to adapt teaching strategies, materials, and classroom practices to better meet the needs of all students, particularly those from neurodiverse and under-represented backgrounds.

Group Dynamics:

- Ensure clear guidelines for group work that emphasises respect, inclusion and the value of diverse perspectives.
- Implement peer support systems, such as study groups or buddy systems, to foster collaboration outside of the classroom.

Ways to Collaborate:

- Offer multiple ways for students to collaborate.
- Encourage students to share their preferred methods of communication and collaboration.
- Allow students to choose who they collaborate with, or survey them about their collaboration preferences and match them according to their responses.

Collaboration Using Strength-Based Strategies:

- Have students discuss their strengths and interests, and assign roles and accommodations based on their capabilities. Faculty can assist with enabling accommodations such as recorded meetings and transcripts.

Additional resources

- **UNSW Current Students:** [Guide to Group Work](#)

This guide outlines group work expectations for students, including teacher expectations and the nature of group collaboration.

- **UNSW Teaching:** [Assessable Team Work](#)

Video examples/starter resources to support collaboration.

- **Student Disclosure of Disability:** [ADCET: Sharing Your Disability While Studying](#)

This resource from ADCET outlines the student's rights and advises on student disclosure of disability.

**Topic 4/5:
Successful Collaboration****Checklist:
Group Dynamics & Interactions****Prepare Students
for Collaboration
by Acknowledging
Neurodiversity &
Disability:**

- Normalising neurodiversity and disabilities early in the term through open discussion normalises concepts like stimming and sensory issues, making students more comfortable in class and when collaborating.
- Icebreaker activities celebrating diverse learning styles and perspectives, whether done individually or in groups using tools like Padlet or Slido, foster connections and friendships in a low-pressure setting.

Additional resources

- **UNSW Teaching:** [Assessing by Group Work](#)

This section of UNSW's Teaching web page provides instructors with information about group assessments, when to use them, the benefits and disadvantages, as well as how to plan and grade group assessments.

- **UNSW Teaching:** [Assessing by Discussion Board](#)

The UNSW Teaching web-page guides instructors on using discussion boards for student engagement and collaboration, including design and assessment.

Topic 5/5: Student Autonomy & Providing Choice

Offering students autonomy and choices in their learning acknowledges their individuality and respects their capability to make decisions about their education. This empowerment can lead to increased motivation, engagement, and a sense of ownership over their learning journey. When students can choose how they learn best, whether through the selection of topics, the format of assessments, or the modes of study, they are more likely to succeed and value their educational experience.

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Topic 5/5: Student Autonomy & Providing Choice

Checklist: How to Provide Students With Choice in Your Course

Allow for Choice of Topic:

Allow students to choose the topic for their project or paper, or provide a list of approved topics to choose from.

- Try limit the list to a few choices to avoid overwhelming your students.

Provide Varied Materials & Formats:

Provide students with a variety of materials in different formats that meet the weekly learning outcomes. Allow them to choose the format they are most comfortable engaging with.

Allow students to choose the format of their assessments:

Examples:

- Oral presentation or video recorded presentation
- Recorded podcast
- Written document
- Art or poetry (if appropriate)

This can be fairly marked by employing rubrics that match the learning outcomes you are assessing.

Design assessments with boundaries and criteria, to limit overwhelm and direct focus:

- Explicitly state which learning objectives are being assessed.
- Provide a detailed rubric to students ahead of time, which will help them know if they are addressing all of the assessment criteria.
- Provide exemplars for each format of assessment offered.

Additional resources

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- **UNSW Equitable Learning Services (ELS)** - [Who Are My Learners?](#)

This UNSW Equitable Learning Services' page promotes inclusive teaching through information, links, and a video about ELS.

- **UDL On Campus - Ways to Provide Students with Choice** - [UDL On Campus](#)

A comprehensive guide to using UDL on campus, with suggestions on how to use choice in representation, engagement, and action/evaluation (assessment).

Appendix: Appendix of Additional Resources

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[Using Universal Design for Learning in Your Course](#)

(Self-enrolment key: Student_UDL)

A Moodle module introduces UDL Guidelines, a tool for inclusive learning.

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- **UNSW Equitable Learning Services (ELS) Home Page**

[Who Are My Learners?](#)

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- **UNSW Teaching - UDL Curriculum Development**

[Universal Design for Learning \(UDL\)](#)

Videos and information on curriculum development and classroom management that give all individuals equal opportunities to learn.

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Topic 4/5:

Successful Collaboration

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[ADCET: Sharing Your Disability While Studying](#)

Disclosure of disability is at the discretion of the student, and this resource from ADCET outlines the student's rights and advises on student disclosure.

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- [UDL On Campus](#)

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