



A1.4

Inclusion at the University of Worcester



Design inclusively Being inclusive in Module and Course Design

What?

Ensure learning outcomes can be achieved by a diverse group of students

How?

Consider whether some students might be excluded from demonstrating success and whether the required skill, knowledge or attribute is genuinely linked to the discipline and is therefore a competence standard (<https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/guidance/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/student-recruitment-retention-and-attainment/inclusive-learning-and-teaching>).

Why?

We have a duty under the 2010 Equality Act to ensure all practices are non-discriminatory, whether this is direct or indirect discrimination (<http://www.ecu.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/external/equality-act-2010-briefing-revised-08-12.pdf>). If learning outcomes are likely to exclude anyone, e.g. in acquiring a certain physical skill, you must ensure that the barrier is necessary¹. All students must have equal opportunity to participate and evidence their ability.

Write learning outcomes clearly.

Assume that your cohort may include dyslexic students or students for whom English is not their first language, and write to communicate with the whole group.

If students can easily understand the learning outcomes and they are written in a way they can relate to, they are more likely to take responsibility for their learning.

Specify key learning outcomes in course and module promotional material.

Ensure this is available to prospective students in order to inform their choices.

Students need to be able to make informed choices about the suitability of the course or module for them, particularly if there are genuine competency standards which may pose specific challenges for some disabled students.



What?

Stagger assessment deadlines.

How?

Ensure that deadlines are not tightly bunched at particular times of year.

Why?

Many students' personal circumstances and learning styles mean that they struggle to manage their time and the additional impact of stress when deadlines are very tight. Some students find it difficult to work on multiple activities concurrently. Staggered deadlines help students to be more organised.

Offer different assessment options.

Consider offering students a variety of ways to demonstrate their achievement of the learning outcomes, e.g. through written or visual or verbal communication modes.

This will reduce the need to design alternative assessments as a one-off reasonable adjustment for disabled students, which may be time consuming². Allowing all students a choice will enable them to choose options that suit their skills and learning style.

Provide an overview of the course or module.

Clearly set out the overview of the course or module content and learning activities from the outset so that students know what's coming.

Linking knowledge helps students to embed their learning. Some students will benefit greatly from having a visual, linear representation of how the content fits together. This also helps students organise their revision.

Be flexible to meet student needs.

Ensure you have clear policies and procedures for students to follow if they can't attend and need to catch up on missed work and make learning materials available on the VLE so that students can catch up.

Understand that students may not be able to attend all the time and that they may sometimes be late. This could be due to a travel difficulties, medical condition or caring responsibilities, for example.

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¹Trinity College Dublin. 2016. Learning outcomes - course design - guidelines for good teaching, assessment & supervision - Trinity Inclusive Curriculum. Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin, Ireland. [Online]. [Accessed 3 August 2018]. Available from: <https://www.tcd.ie/CAPSL/TIC/guidelines/design/outcomes/index.php>

² Hockings, C. 2010. Inclusive learning and teaching in higher education: a synthesis of research. [Online]. [Accessed: 20 April 2021]. Available from: <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/inclusive-learning-and-teaching-higher-education-synthesis-research>

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<https://inclusiveteaching.leeds.ac.uk/>; <https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/your-university/teaching-and-learning/inclusivity>.

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