

# **Sessional staff: inclusive teaching ideas**

'Inclusive learning and teaching in higher education refers to the ways in which pedagogy, curricula and assessment are designed and delivered to engage students in learning that is meaningful, relevant and accessible to all. It embraces a view of the individual and individual difference as the source of diversity that can enrich the lives and learning of others'.

(Reference: Inclusive learning and teaching in higher education: a synthesis of research, Professor Christine Hockings, April 2010)

Deakin has a very diverse community of students and staff that spans axes of difference including nationality, language, culture, gender, sexuality, religion, and socio-economic status. Inclusive teaching means rethinking the ways in which we teach, design and deliver curriculum and assessment in order that learning is engaging, meaningful, relevant and accessible to all students.

To teach inclusively is not just an aspirational goal: all Australian higher education providers are obliged under the Australian Higher Education Standards Framework (2015) to use inclusive teaching and learning approaches and practices:

[T]o accommodate student diversity, including the under-representation and/or disadvantage experienced by identified groups, and create equivalent opportunities for academic success regardless of students’ backgrounds.

# **Checklist: is your teaching inclusive?**

## **Design and content**

* In what ways do your session/unit’s content acknowledge diverse values, perspectives?
  + For example, do your images, written resources, videos present a variety of cultures and perspectives on the subject?
* Does the session/unit’s content build on diverse prior learning, diverse experiences and goals?
  + For example, can you build in a range of starting points or extension activities for students with different levels of pre-existing expertise?
* How does the content challenge a uniform view of knowledge?
  + For example, can you introduce students to a range of alternative ways of thinking around a subject?
* Is ‘assumed knowledge’ made explicit in the content of the session/unit?
  + For example, do you define unusual terms, avoid jargon, explain university procedures, and demystify academic culture?
* Are opportunities provided for all students to access knowledge and skills that are assumed in the session/unit?
  + For example, can you point students to a good glossary or FAQs?

## **Resources and materials**

* Will all students be able to use and access the resources with ease?
  + For example, do you provide transcripts of videos, text explanations of videos, recordings of lectures, or alternative formats such as written descriptions of infographics?
* Are different perspectives and cultural and social groups visible in materials?
* Are different perspectives represented in a positive manner?
* How are issues of age, race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, faith, disability, gender addressed?

## **Teaching and learning**

* How will your teaching be responsive to the diverse needs of learners who study this session/unit?
  + For example, can you build in flexibility to your lesson plan to provide students with choices around things they research, ways they work, and ways they present their findings?
* In what ways will your teaching facilitate equal and diverse participation of all students in the required learning activities?
  + For example, do you encourage students to rotate roles and tasks in group work activities?
* In what ways will learning and teaching build upon student diversity as an educational resource?
  + For example, can you encourage students to research and present on diverse interests and areas of knowledge, and support these with a safe and respectful classroom discussion?
* How do the specified teaching methods encourage collaborative work between students?
  + For example, set up activities to complete in pairs, threes or fours, and aim to establish diverse group membership where possible.
* How does teaching support the development of all students’ skills to meet the session/unit requirements?

(Adapted from: Teaching for Inclusion in Higher Education: A Guide to Practice, S. Griffiths, 2010)

Inclusive pedagogy requires us to plan and design for our diverse learners. It is also useful after a teaching session, to reflect on how inclusive our teaching has been.

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**For further information**: refer to theICCB [Inclusive Teaching Toolkit](https://blogs.deakin.edu.au/iccb/inclusive-teaching-toolkit/).

### **Good luck!**

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