

TOP 7 TIPS FOR INCLUSIVE MODULE DESIGN

1. Understand your student profile

UCD has an active Widening Participation plan so we hope to further increase the diversity of our student population. This means that we will see increasing numbers of students with disabilities, mature students, students from low-income backgrounds, part-time students and international students. Understanding the needs of this diverse group of students can be a challenge but thinking about those needs at the planning stage can reduce the need for making changes throughout the semester. Each programme board has a Widening Participation Representative who can provide you with the overall picture in your programme of this diverse student population.

Module coordinators can learn the support requirements of students with disabilities within their modules by checking their InfoHub class lists. Follow these steps to view the list:

- Login to UCD Connect
- Click on the Administrative Services tab
- Under applications click on InfoHub
- Click on School Class Lists
- The number of students with a disability will appear in the “Students with Disability” column.
- Click on the digit to see the list of students with a disability and their academic and exam supports.

2. Provide an Inclusivity Statement

Many students find it difficult to approach academic staff to discuss their learning needs. To help facilitate disclosure you can include a Statement of Inclusivity in your module descriptor and course materials. Discussing this statement in your first class and giving students clear instructions on the best ways to contact you can be very encouraging. A statement of inclusivity should encourage tolerance of diversity in the classroom and should reassure those who would like to disclose information about their learning needs that this information will be treated with confidentiality and respect.

SAMPLE STATEMENT OF INCLUSIVITY

This School strives to be a model of inclusion. We respect and value student diversity in all of the modules we offer. Our learning environment is designed inclusively, so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible, removing all barriers. Students are provided with equal opportunities to access, participate and succeed, regardless of background, personal circumstances, age, disability, or pace of study. UCD is a University for all where diversity and inclusion is woven in to the fabric of our institution at every level. Students are encouraged to approach staff to discuss their learning needs. Any information disclosed will be treated with confidentiality and respect.

3. Incorporate Inclusivity/Accessibility at the Design Stage

Keeping in mind the importance of universal access and inclusivity at the design stage of a module or programme means there will be less work in the long term.

For practical advice on embedding inclusivity at design or redesign stage please see our [University for All Publications](#) including Universal Design for Curriculum Design: Case Studies from University College Dublin (Padden, O'Connor & Barrett, 2017).

4. Embed Academic Skills Training

With a diverse student population we cannot assume that all students come to a module with the same core academic skills. It is highly beneficial if some time is spent in each module ensuring that students have the skills required to complete the module. These skills may include academic writing, oral presentations, reading techniques or research abilities. Setting aside at least one hour in each module to review these skills, as well as providing resources through Blackboard, will help to ensure that no student is left at a disadvantage. This can be particularly useful for visiting international students.

5. Produce an Assessment Timeline

An assessment timeline provided to students at the start of the semester with all relevant assessment deadlines and details helps to set students up for success! This also will help reduce the number of queries you receive throughout the semester regarding assessments.

6. Attend Staff Development Training

Workshops on Universal Design, Inclusive Practice and Disability Awareness are advertised directly and you can also request a bespoke training session for your School or unit. We would encourage all academic staff to undertake the Digital Badge in Universal Design for Teaching & Learning which is part of the National Forum's Professional Development Framework. Please contact Dr Lisa Padden, Inclusive Education Coordinator (Lisa.padden@ucd.ie 01 716 7072) to enquire about training options.

7. Contact UCD Access & Lifelong Learning for Support and Guidance

UCD Access & Lifelong Learning staff welcome all queries from staff members. We aim to support staff in their work with students and offer practical advice.

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