



Inclusive Education Policy

Introduction:

Inclusive practice is at the heart of effective education. The aim is to maximise the opportunity for success for all students while simultaneously emphasising the liberation of historically under-represented or disadvantaged students. Achieving this aim requires removing systematic and cultural barriers and inequalities to participation, learning, engagement and attainment/success. In addition, some of these barriers for disabled students should be addressed through Reasonable Adjustments, a provision of the Equality Act (2010) for people living with disabilities. Reasonable Adjustments are an important mechanism and complimentary to this policy.

The UEA Inclusive Education Policy has 4 interrelated elements set out below.

1. Inclusive Curriculum – the content of what is taught and learning materials
2. Inclusive Assessment and Feedback – the way student learning and attainment is measured, communicated and enhanced
3. Inclusive Pedagogy – the way the content of the curriculum is taught
4. Inclusive Environment – the non-classroom experience

The policy was approved by Learning and Teaching Committee in Academic Year 2021/22 and will next be fully reviewed in Academic Year 2024/25.

Part 1: Inclusive Curriculum

An inclusive curriculum in an inclusive environment

In this context, we are using the word 'curriculum' to describe the content of UEA courses, in essence what the students are taught. However it is recognised in using this definition that it is not always easy to differentiate between the content of the curriculum and the way it is being delivered.

Statement of Principle

All UEA staff have the responsibility to treat their colleagues and students with respect and create a safe and inclusive learning and teaching environment for all. In line with our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and our institutional policies, the University proactively works to provide an environment where all can flourish in work and study and achieve their full potential free from prejudiced attitudes and unlawful discrimination. All taught programmes at UEA will have a curriculum which is appropriately diverse. Wherever possible, content, examples, case studies and supporting materials should reflect diversity and challenge stereotypes. Importantly, this is more justly representative of the diversity of source material, its authors/creators, and the diversity of the UEA community but also enriches everyone's learning experience through engagement with a more stimulating, thought-provoking and potentially transformative range of diverse perspectives and ideas.

Implementation

The curriculum of UEA degrees has varied drivers. Some degrees are based on the needs of the subject benchmark statements,¹ others are defined by Public and Statutory Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs). The content of many of the degrees has developed over time and is of course constantly changing to reflect new knowledge and the changing world we live in.

Within the constraints of the subject benchmarks and PSRB requirements, the content of the curriculum should be developed by the academic community in schools of study between staff and students and with the advice of subject experts such as external examiners and industry professionals where appropriate. The following prompts, adapted from Morgan and Houghton² might be useful in facilitating dialogue about the curriculum:

A requirement for all Schools of study to discuss with their students the content of the curriculum. When thinking about the curriculum content Schools must consider:

- Do the sources used in the module draw from a wide range of perspectives? (e.g. do they take in relevant contributions from a perspective which is wider than White, able-bodied, Western/European, heteronormative? Do they address the issue of decolonising?)
- Do examples used refer to a diverse range of people?
- Do examples help raise awareness of equality, challenge established stereotypes and promote respect of individual difference?

¹ <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements>

² Morgan, H and Houghton, A (2011) Inclusive curriculum design in higher education Considerations for effective practice across and within subject areas. York: The Higher Education Academy

- The University encourages Schools to take the following steps to promote discussion of the nature of the curriculum within the academic community:
- At least once a year, the Staff Student Liaison Committee in each School should discuss the questions above and specifically consider the issue of content of the curriculum and decolonising the curriculum
- At least once a year, the Teaching Committee (or sub-group of teaching committee convened with the appropriate expertise) in each School should discuss and review the matter
- All staff and students are aware of action to take (see below) if they have concerns about the breadth of representativeness of the curriculum

Consideration of the membership of these committees should take place prior to discussion and if there is a lack of diversity within the group, then representation should be invited in for that specific discussion.

Learning Resources

A diverse and inclusive curriculum should be supported by diverse and inclusive learning resources. It is important that these are regularly reviewed and consideration given to how they represent diversity. It may be that some subjects have previously been taught in ways which do not represent diversity, but this should be actively challenged and each course should consider how stereotypes can be challenged in the choice of learning resources. UEA Library continues to support the provision of diverse resources through the Decolonise UEA Library work.³

Raising an issue about the inclusive curriculum

If a student has concerns that the curriculum is insufficiently diverse, they should as a first step raise their concerns with the module organiser or course director. If the issue cannot be resolved by this route then the student may raise the issue with the Head of School or their delegate on this matter.

Report and Support

It is important to differentiate between the content of the curriculum and the way it is being taught. If any member of staff or student witnesses discriminatory behaviour or is the victim of discriminatory behaviour, they should use Report and Support.⁴

³ [Home - Decolonisation - LibGuides at University of East Anglia](#)

⁴ [Report + Support - University of East Anglia \(uea.ac.uk\)](#)

Part 2: Inclusive Assessment and Feedback

Inclusive assessment and feedback as part of inclusive education

Assessment and feedback is an integral and important part of the teaching and learning experience of students in Higher Education. Transforming assessment and feedback policy and practice can lead to improved potential for student learning and increased student satisfaction, as well as promoting consideration of the ways in which assessment can enhance inclusivity.⁵

It is important that the principles of inclusive practice are considered in the design and implementation of assessment and feedback on all courses. Teaching teams should consider the assessment design and feedback practice in their courses as part of the regular cycles of reviews of modules and courses. When doing this, four things should be taken into account:

- 1) Student feedback on their experience of assessment and feedback
- 2) Student participation on formative assessment activity and the distribution of student marks, with particular reference to considering whether there are any patterns in the attainment of students from underrepresented groups or students with protected characteristics.
- 3) The extent to which the features of inclusive assessment (below) inform current practice and the ways in which they might be used to further improve student experience and learning.
- 4) Student participation in assessment and feedback design and implementation.

Key features of inclusive assessment and feedback

The following features should be interpreted in the context of each subject and assessment. This list is not intended to be exhaustive:

- Assessment design which gives students an opportunity to build on existing knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Assessment design that requires student and staff effort proportional to the amount of credit, the subject and in line with professional body requirements where appropriate.
- Where possible, opportunities for students to choose topics and approaches that are meaningful and of interest to them.
- An overall approach to assessment at course level that gives an opportunity for a diverse range of activities and, where appropriate, the ability for students to make choices in their assessments.
- Opportunities for students to actively develop their assessment literacy, including their understanding of assessment criteria, standards and processes, and skills of self- and peer assessment.
- An approach to feedback practices that promotes the regular use of formative assessments and dialogue between staff and students, and among students.
- Marking practice should be shaped by marking criteria, with the secretarial aspects of writing appropriately weighted in terms of marks awarded.
- An approach to marking and feedback which is informed by clear and accessible marking criteria and focussed on helping students to understand their performance, reflect and improve on it, and build confidence and motivation. Comments should support student learning, pointing students to online resources where appropriate.

⁵ Higher Education Academy (2016) *Framework for transforming assessment in higher education*.

- An approach to practical examinations which gives all students a chance to succeed in practice based assessments through careful assessment design, for example, restricting the word counts on instructions or giving students extra support before the assessment starts. This needs to be done in the context of PSRB requirements.

This policy recognises that assessment design and implementation is driven by a number of factors, including existing subject specific practice and the requirements of Professional and Statutory Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs). However neither of these factors prevent academics from reviewing the assessment and feedback design and practice on modules and courses within reasonable timescales.

Inclusive marking and feedback practice

Inclusive marking and feedback practice is guided by 3 key sets of principles and practices which should be applied when assessing and giving feedback on all students work:

1. Marking and feedback practice should be informed by clear and accessible assessment criteria. Feedback comments should justify the marks given and focus on helping students to understand their performance, reflect and improve on it, and build confidence and motivation. To help do this, feedback should indicate where marks have been gained and where students have met the assessment criteria.

2. The focus of marking and feedback should be on the 'substantive' intellectual content of the work (e.g. the ideas and reasoning) and the extent to which it meets assessment criteria, as opposed to an inappropriate/disproportionate emphasis on, for instance, the 'secretarial' aspects of a written piece of work. So, markers should restrict themselves to identifying a representative selection of errors in syntax, spelling, grammar or presentation, even if there are such problems throughout the work, and students should not be unduly penalised for these errors.

3. Feedback comments should be clear and accessible, and support student learning. Where comments focus on aspects of work which contain mistakes or inaccuracies, problems or areas for development, there should be an emphasis on how improvements could be made and on signposting to appropriate sources of guidance to support the development of future work.

The '3 key sets of inclusive assessment and feedback principles and practices' above are supplemented and complimented by Feedback Adjustments (FA).

Feedback Adjustments⁶

Following consultation from the Inclusive Practice Working Group, Feedback Adjustments replaced the Yellow Sticker scheme in September 2020. The scope of student eligibility for Feedback Adjustments has been widened from students with specific learning difficulties to all students eligible for Reasonable Adjustments, including those with a wide range of disabilities and long-term health conditions. The move from yellow stickers to Feedback Adjustments can be understood in this context as a stepping-stone in a transition towards more inclusive assessment and feedback for all students, including the widespread embedding of the '3 key sets of inclusive assessment and feedback principles and practices'.

Feedback Adjustments can also be understood as a safety-net mechanism for students which reminds markers of the '3 key sets of inclusive assessment and feedback principles

⁶ [UEA Student Services – Reasonable Adjustments](#)

and practices' and indicates to markers that a student with Feedback Adjustments would be disproportionately disadvantaged should their work not be assessed in line with them. Feedback Adjustments apply to all forms of assessment (with some possible exceptions, such as assessments that are regulated by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies).

Part 3: Inclusive Pedagogy

Embedding inclusive pedagogy

Inclusive pedagogy in higher education means designing and delivering a teaching and learning experience that is meaningful, relevant, personalised and accessible to all students.⁷

The features of this part of the policy underpin the planning principles issued to schools, and are used to influence other policies and practices, for example the Timetabling Policy. Inclusive Practice should be embedded throughout our policy landscape.

Features of inclusive pedagogy

These features may be applied differently across different subjects, but they should all be considered in the planning, resourcing and delivery of teaching:

- A timetable of taught events that allows all students time to get to their events and rooms which are suitably equipped to meet their needs.
- The use of a blended approach to teaching and learning that makes best use of online tools where appropriate.
- Clear and available planning – students need to know how, when and where they are expected to attend and participate in teaching sessions well in advance. This includes: the timely publication of a module outline containing brief details of taught sessions. Clearly articulated formative and summative assessment briefs are also part of this planning.
- Teaching that is varied and can be personalised, within the appropriate approaches for that subject discipline. These allow students time to listen, think, talk, question, participate and create in partnership with staff and other students as well as vary pace where appropriate.
- The consistent availability of good quality digital resources that are accessible to all. Digital tools to identify accessibility issues should be used in the preparation of materials.
- Accessible materials may include but are not limited to: a module outline, lecture/seminar slides and/or notes, an interactive reading list with useful learner signposting, and assessment briefs, where appropriate.
- Wherever possible lectures are recorded using the institution lecture capture service and shared with students.
- Students may make personal audio recordings of teaching events, under the following conditions:
 - Personal audio recordings of lectures can be made by all students without permission of a staff member.
 - Personal audio recordings of other teaching events can be made with the permission of the staff member.

Note, disabled students with the Reasonable Adjustment 'Allow personal recordings' do not need permission to record other teaching events.

⁷ Definition developed from: Plymouth University (2017) *Inclusive Teaching and Learning FAQs* [Inclusive Teaching and Learning FAQs - University of Plymouth](#) [accessed 27.6.17]

- Subject specific terms are explicitly explained both in teaching and in supporting materials.

- The consistent availability of materials that help students prepare for their taught sessions for example lecture notes or slides, at least 48 hours before the taught event.
- Help for students about effective learning, including online and in blended approaches.
- An open and ongoing dialogue with students about the expected preparation and follow up from taught events.
- An open and ongoing dialogue with students about their experience of teaching and learning for example about the content of the curriculum, the modes of delivery, and the selections of learning material. This includes through mid module evaluations, the quality assurance process and the Pulse student survey, but could also involve other means such as, for instance, regular session feedback

Part 4: Inclusive Environment

Definition

An inclusive university environment is committed to the removal of barriers to perception and success in all non-classroom based activities, including placements, study abroad, on campus sport and social activity and other elements of the wider curriculum and student opportunities.

Embedding an inclusive environment

HEFCE's 2015 report into differential student outcomes identifies social, cultural and economic capital as one of the 4 explanatory factors in their large scale study^{vii} noting that: *"Recurring differences in how students experience HE, how they network and how they draw on external support were noted. Students' financial situation also affects their student experience and their engagement with learning"*.

The study demonstrates that factors outside the classroom influence student success at every stage, and that shortcomings in the overall educational environment are amongst the causes of differential outcomes between students from different groups. For that reason the inclusive education policy seeks to address non-curriculum and non-classroom aspects of the student experience with the aim of creating an inclusive learning environment.

Features of an inclusive university environment:

- An approach to admissions recruitments and marketing that removes barriers to access to higher education, including a contextual admissions policy.
- An organisational culture that promotes learning and reflection alongside dignity and respect, in line with the commitment to the UEA Respect work.
- An approach to communications which is accessible and inclusive, including making the UEA brand and all communications across the student journey (enquirer to alumni) accessible and inclusive.
- A campus built environment that is accessible to all students and effective communication about short term accessibility issues and alternative arrangements.
- Accessible and sustainable transport to and from the campus.
- Good access to appropriate and effective financial support for students.
- Good access to help, for example through the advisor system and student services, including for wellbeing, learning enhancement and student life support.
- Regular meetings with an academic advisor/pastoral care staff to ensure students make the best of the opportunities the university offers.
- Information to students about their learning behaviour that gives them actionable insight.
- Transparency and clarity about appeals, complaints and disciplinary procedures.

- The benefits of extra curricular activities are made clear with diverse relevant examples and role models. Extra curricular activities are inclusive in the way that they are designed and delivered.
- The removal of cultural, financial and physical barriers to access to activities that support employability, for example experiential learning opportunities including internships, paid work experience and study abroad.
- The removal of cultural, financial and physical barriers to participation in extra curricular clubs and societies and other opportunities.
- An approach to monitoring participation in extra curricular activities which promotes understanding of barriers to participation for all students including those from underrepresented and/or disadvantaged backgrounds.
- A commitment to developing and promoting a range of peer-led learning initiatives, including opportunities for students to benefit from and provide mentoring for their peers.
- The promotion of inclusive attitudes and behaviours through opportunities such as welcome events, clubs and societies and the curriculum as appropriate.
- A commitment to developing a sense of belonging for all students at this university, irrespective of their background that reflects individual identity rather than assimilation. Key aspects of strong sense of belonging include providing equality of opportunity, supporting student agency over their experience, ensuring safety and security, actively valuing diversity and providing the conditions to meet and find areas of shared identity across the student experience.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Key Information	
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