

Inclusivity in Practice

What

Inclusivity means ensuring equity of provision for all students at all stages of the student lifecycle, regardless of their social background, country of origin, ethnicity, gender, age, previous educational experience, disability or preferred learning style.

Why

The University aims to ensure that all students have good quality learning experiences, but there are many factors that impact on the quality of students' experiences including their previous educational background, expectations of university life, cultural differences and so on. The design of the curriculum also impacts on students' experiences and performance; a course team needs to take active steps to ensure that the curriculum is inclusive and does not disadvantage any individual student or group of students.

In addition to the University's mission to ensure that our curriculum is inclusive, there are also legal requirements to consider. The Equality Act (2010) brings together previous legislations relating to discrimination on the grounds of gender, race, age, religion or belief, disability and sexual orientation.

How

We can take steps to ensure inclusivity at three levels:

- Institutional level – strategy and policy.
- Curriculum level – design and delivery.
- Individual level – awareness, practice, personal responsibility, familiarisation with support services.

This Briefing Note concentrates on the curriculum level.

Practical solutions

A course team should ensure that the curriculum does not disadvantage any groups of students including the following:

- Black and ethnic minority.
- Widening participation.
- International students.
- Students with disabilities.
- Mature and/or part-time students.

The first step is to make certain that the team are aware of the different groups of students who have registered for their courses – statistics are available in Jupiter. Following this the course team should consider possible barriers to inclusive practice as follows:

- Curriculum design principles for inclusive practice include:
 - Adopting a range of teaching and assessment methods that will accommodate different learning needs (for example, lectures, seminars, group work, presentations, project work, portfolio submissions and so on).
 - Clear articulation regarding assessment methods and criteria.
 - Adequate opportunities for informal feedback to and from all students.
 - Necessary assessment adjustments for students with disabilities; ASDAC can advise.
 - Considering if the curriculum allows for different points of view or cultural differences. For example, are case studies or examples accessible and easily understood by all groups of students?
- At a personal level lecturers/tutors should seek to ensure that:
 - Students know how to address them.
 - Any student concerns are articulated and addressed at the beginning of the course.
 - Expectations regarding student learning and assessment activities (e.g. presentations, group reports) are made clear.
 - Verbal feedback is encouraged and any problem areas resolved without delay.
 - Activities encourage different groups of students to work together.

Further advice

In addition to the suggestions above, there is a comprehensive range of student support provision at the University. Further advice is available from:

Academic Skills Unit (ASK), which provides support for essay writing, note making, time management, critical thinking, presentation skills, referencing, working in groups, exam preparation, reflective writing and so on. Retrieved 20 May 2010, from: www.port.ac.uk/departments/studentssupports/ask/resources

Additional Support and Disability Advice (ASDAC), which takes a proactive approach in ensuring that disability-related issues do not prevent students from fully demonstrating their potential. Retrieved 20 May 2010, from: www.port.ac.uk/departments/studentssupport/asdac

English for Academic Purposes (EAP) programme, which offers academic English classes free of charge to all students for whom English is not their first language. Retrieved 20 May 2010, from: www.port.ac.uk/departments/academic/slas/courses/eap

The Maths Café provides a friendly, open environment where students can come for assistance with any maths or stats problems they encounter in their studies. Retrieved 20 May 2010, from: www.port.ac.uk/departments/academic/maths/mathscafe

Further advice and guidance is available from the Academic Development Consultancy service (acdev@port.ac.uk).
