

Inclusive Curriculum Design: A Self-Assessment Toolkit

How to Use This Toolkit

In university, students learn in many different ways. Some students may have specific learning differences (like autism or dyslexia), physical disabilities, or mental health conditions. Instead of waiting for these students to struggle and ask for special help, we can design our courses to be supportive from the very first day. Use this self-assessment toolkit to check if your teaching is accessible and friendly for all types of learners. You can use the "Status" column to track your progress.

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Course Phase	Self-Assessment Checklist	Why it is Important	Status
1. Planning the Course	Did I collaborate with others? Have I worked with other teachers, department heads, or past students to get different ideas?	Brings in diverse viewpoints and ensures you do not repeat topics that students already cover in other classes.	<input type="checkbox"/> Done <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> To Do
	Are my learning goals set first? Have I decided exactly what skills students should gain before writing my lectures?	Helps you build a structured course where the expectations are clear to all students from day one.	<input type="checkbox"/> Done <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> To Do
	Did I partner with students? Have I asked current students to read my course handbooks to see if the language is easy to understand?	Students can tell you if the rules are clear, helping you remove any "hidden" confusing expectations.	<input type="checkbox"/> Done <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> To Do
2. Choosing Materials	Are diverse voices included? Do my reading lists and case studies feature authors and perspectives from different backgrounds?	Helps every student feel represented and teaches them how to work in a diverse, global society.	<input type="checkbox"/> Done <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> To Do
	Have I checked my assumptions? Am I avoiding basing my lessons only on my own specific cultural background or social experiences?	Prevents students from rural areas or different educational backgrounds from feeling left out or confused.	<input type="checkbox"/> Done <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> To Do
	Are my materials accessible and shared early?	Gives students who need extra time—or whose first	<input type="checkbox"/> Done <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> To Do

	Do I give out notes early, use simple words, and include a list of definitions (glossary)?	language is not English—a fair chance to prepare.	
	Do I have a plan for hard topics? Do I keep a list of difficult topics that students struggle with every year to spend extra time on them?	Ensures that complex ideas do not become permanent roadblocks for your students' success.	<input type="checkbox"/> Done <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> To Do
3. Teaching in Class	Is my classroom a welcoming space? Have I built an environment where students feel personally accepted, supported, and safe to share ideas?	A strong sense of "belonging" is one of the main reasons students stay in university and get good grades.	<input type="checkbox"/> Done <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> To Do
	Do I encourage students to help each other? Do I let students explain confusing topics to their classmates instead of just lecturing the whole time?	Builds students' confidence and communication skills, making them rely less on the teacher and more on themselves.	<input type="checkbox"/> Done <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> To Do
	Do I mix up my teaching style? Do I use different methods (like short videos, reading assignments, and group work)?	Not everyone learns the same way; this makes sure no single learning style is left behind.	<input type="checkbox"/> Done <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> To Do
4. Assignments & Exams	Is my exam language simple? When writing exam questions, do I only use vocabulary words that I clearly explained during my lectures?	Ensures you are testing the student's knowledge of the subject, not just their English vocabulary skills.	<input type="checkbox"/> Done <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> To Do
	Do I give students choices? Do I use a mix of different assignments (like presentations, group projects, and written essays)?	Allows students to show what they know using their own personal strengths.	<input type="checkbox"/> Done <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> To Do
	Is it easy for shy students to ask for help? Do I let students attach a written note to their assignment asking for specific feedback?	Helps shy students, who might be afraid to ask questions in person, get the exact help they need.	<input type="checkbox"/> Done <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> To Do
5. Review & Improve	Do I check the grading data? Do I look at my students' results to see if specific groups of students are struggling more than others?	Helps you identify if your exams or teaching methods are accidentally unfair to certain groups.	<input type="checkbox"/> Done <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> To Do

	Do I use student feedback? Do I read the end-of-semester feedback forms carefully and use the comments to update the course?	Keeps the course continuously improving and responsive to the actual needs of the students.	<input type="checkbox"/> Done <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> To Do
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References

Durham Centre for Academic Development (2026) *Inclusive learning design*. Durham University. Available at: <https://dcad-resourcebank.webspace.durham.ac.uk/category/inclusive-learning/> (Accessed: 27 April 2026).

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