
Guidance 3vii Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the Curriculum (Inclusive curriculum)

Introduction

The University is committed to ensuring that all students enjoy equality of opportunity during their studies at Middlesex and are free from any form of discriminatory practices by the institution or its members as defined in the University's [Equality and Diversity Policy and Codes of Practice \(HRPS8\)](#), specifically, code of practice 7: Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment.

Inclusion matters and Middlesex are rightly proud of the longstanding work undertaken in the area of equality, diversity and inclusion. Contributions from members of the Middlesex community (students, academics and professional service colleagues from across the campuses of London, Dubai and Mauritius) were gathered to produce an inclusive curriculum framework to provide as the foundation to the pedagogy and practice of our programmes.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the curriculum is used as an umbrella term to capture the experiences of a wide variety of student groups within our student body. The definition of **inclusive practice in learning and teaching provided by Advance HE is the one adopted within Middlesex guidance**: “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.” Hockings (2010, p. 1). This definition draws attention to the possibilities of **redressing the marginalisation** of certain groups and identities within any institution or discipline. It also notes the wider **opportunities for all students** – and the academy – in embedding inclusion in everything that we do.

This guidance outlines the approach for all modules and programmes but for all up-to-date guidance please contact CAPE (CAPE@mdx.ac.uk). Programmes and modules should actively promote a curriculum which puts at the heart of its pedagogy an inclusive curriculum, reflecting a global outlook, drawing upon theorists from both western and non-western backgrounds taking into consideration the resources used to actively promote the diversity reflected in our student and staff demographics, drawing upon issues of colour, ethnic origin, sexual orientation and disability. Adhering to the [Equality Act](#) programmes are to be designed that consider the learning and teaching methods, assessments, delivery and resources which does not discriminate against students on the grounds of age, family responsibility, marriage or civil partnership status, nationality, pregnancy, race, religion, belief and socio-economic status but instead draws out the individuals experiences as a strength within their learning embracing the development of a multi-cultural curriculum with freedom of speech and thought in the context of scholarly dialogue. Programmes are to be designed that consider the learning and teaching methods, assessments, delivery and resources which does not discriminate against students on the grounds of age, family responsibility, marriage or civil partnership status, nationality, pregnancy, race, religion, belief and socio-economic status but instead draws out the individuals experiences as a strength within their learning embracing the development of a multi-cultural curriculum with freedom of speech and thought in the context of scholarly dialogue.

Considerations for learning and teaching

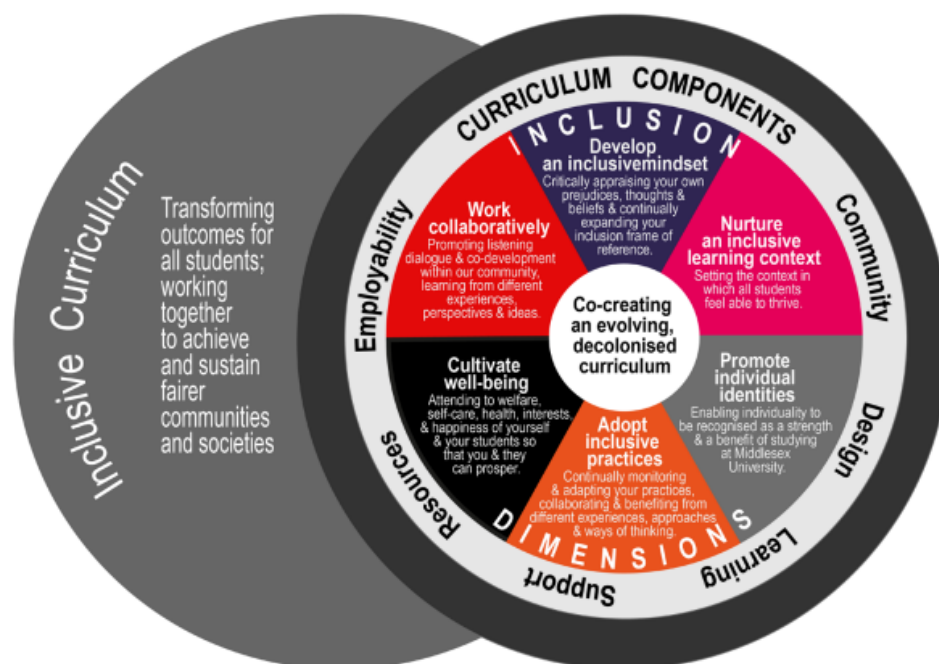
Considerations for equality, diversity and inclusion within both pedagogy, curriculum and delivery should be at the heart of curriculum design. Literature within the sector, in addition to our own internal data, point to attainment gaps between Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups in relation to White students as well as other groups such as commuter students, students entering with BTEC qualifications and White Working-Class male students.

Being of a particular 'group' does not necessarily make a student at a disadvantage nor a given to perform less well than other groups, however as a part of the programme design and learning and teaching methods considerations need to be given to ensure students are both challenged by thinking outside of Western theorists, academics and scholars but also supported to be reflected within the curriculum. Students will often find themselves being a part of multiple groups, which may be considered additional challenge. However, the richness and wealth of diversity and experience they bring should be both recognised and valued within the curriculum.

Considerations for how different groups are represented, what value/s are attribute to different viewpoints, how global outlooks are included and cultivated in addition to a variety of assessment types offered, types of resources included and multiple ways in which these can be accessed. Key points within the curriculum should be captured and readily accessible on the virtual learning environment in order for students to access them multiple times. The intersectionality of these groups also needs to be taken into consideration.

The inclusive curriculum framework provides robust support for colleagues designing and delivering programmes. All guidance can be found on the CAPE Inclusive Curriculum pages [Inclusive Curriculum \(mdx.ac.uk\)](http://www.mdx.ac.uk/inclusive-curriculum)

Inclusive Curriculum Framework



The centre statement provides the core purpose of this work (the why), with the text in the left circle giving the vision statement (the so what).

The six coloured dimensions, circling the centre of the model, unpack what it means to be inclusive, as demonstration of our commitment to doing so. They define the actions necessary to evolve and decolonise the curriculum and shape the HE environment, highlighting the various ways that inclusion is being enhanced at Middlesex. These apply to any aspect of practice across all components of the curriculum. The prompt questions, below, draw on these dimensions throughout.

The outer ring highlights all of the areas of the curriculum in which the inclusion principles can be applied. Each section contains a series of prompt questions that can be reflected on to develop inclusive practice.

Curriculum Content

Curriculum content which connects with students' prior learning and backgrounds, supports their transition, and stretches, and enriches their learning development, incorporating the MDX integrated themes.

To what extent do you:

Ensure that the topics covered are inclusive of your students' diverse interests and/or prior learning experiences?

— Review what is taught or covered to ensure that the topics remain relevant to your students?

— Seek students' input on the topics being covered during your interactive sessions?

— Make sure that the themes covered within your subject or service area are varied in breadth and depth?

— Include different perspectives or needs in what you teach and/or support?

— Help connect key topic areas to ensure alignments are made evident and are covered robustly?

— Ensure topics are taught logically to promote clarity and a greater understanding of the subject or area of support?

— Review what is taught or covered to eliminate and address any areas of bias, assumptions or prejudice so to ensure the content is not primarily influenced by traditional beliefs or principles?

— Encourage students to critically evaluate the themes, topics or areas covered?

— Cross-reference your themes with other modules, programmes, disciplines, or services, where relevant?

Pedagogic Practice

Embracing an experiential and practice-based approach to education, encouraging connections, use of multiple modalities (both online and face to face) and selection of appropriate activities to engage students, relevant to learning outcomes, and curricular content.

To what extent do you:

Reflect on your own identity in your pedagogic/support practice in relation to equality, diversity, inclusivity?

— Seek, reflect on and constructively act on a range of feedback on your practice (from students, peers and any other stakeholder) in relation to equality, diversity, and inclusivity?

— Enable all students to express their identity within their learning environment?

— Design active learning activities to engage and motivate all your students?

— Co-create an active learning environment with your students?

- Constructively align your teaching approach to meet the wide variety of needs and goals of your students?
- Make your language accessible, clear, sensitive and inclusive of all students when facilitating learning?
- Offer a breadth of learning experiences and approaches inclusive of different styles, preferences and interests?
- Integrate cultural, sensory and/or emotional intelligence into your teaching and/ or support activities?
- Keep in good standing with current and contemporary debates about inclusivity within the context of your discipline and/or institution, so as to remain critically reflective?

Assessment & Feedback

Adopting adapting assessments incorporating inclusive, real-world assessment design, recognising formative learning and multiple and dialogic feedback opportunities.

To what extent do you:

Seek out a variety of student viewpoints, experiences and/or perspectives to inform your assessment topics?

- Flexibly design your assessments to minimise the number of reasonable adjustments required for particular students?
- Create safe spaces for students to discuss the assessment process to raise queries and ideas?

- Facilitate students to explore their own perspectives and/or prejudices within assessment?
- Enable students to co-create and/ or negotiate assessment tasks, so they can demonstrate meaning and understanding for themselves?
 - Offer student choice of assessment (e.g. Approach, topic area)?
- Review your use of language within all assessment materials for terms which are inappropriate to the context and level of study (such as stereotypes, use of idiom, cultural reference or colloquialisms)?
- Set time aside for the students to discuss and/or understand feedback on their work, whichever form is given (such as verbal, written, audio-recorded)?
- Provide feedback that is timely, constructive, professionally developmental and/or supportive?
- Check in with your students to ensure that the assessment process is not impacting adversely on their health and wellbeing?

Quality assurance

- Actively seek representation of students from a range of backgrounds at validation or re-validation events.
- Ensure that the voice of students from a range of backgrounds is included at Programme Voice Groups and at other representative forums. If this is not in place then utilise specific focus groups. Ensure students with disabilities and international backgrounds feature.
- Teaching staff and programme administrators have access to Learning Support Forms in a timely manner and processes are in place to ensure that this occurs.
- Programmes embed the inclusivity guidance within their curriculum design.

Validation and review – questions to consider when reviewing or approving a new programme

- Are programmes designed to consider the diversity of the student demographics? Examples demonstrating this.
- What does role modelling look like on the programme? Staff make up, Graduate Academic Assistants, Student Learning Assistants, guest speakers, etc.
- How and where are students encouraged to draw upon their own diverse experiences and knowledge?
- Are programme specifications reviewed to ensure they include no unnecessary barriers to access for students with protected characteristics? For example, are the programme specifications considerate of age or cultural barriers, and do not adversely affect a particular gender or ethnicity group?
- Does the design of the programme, including teaching setting, ensure that equality aspects are included in the process and, where reasonable, help to promote equality of opportunity and good relations across different groups (disability, gender and ethnicity)?
- Do the resources and assessments demonstrate cultural sensitivity, drawing upon theorists from a range of backgrounds, races and global perspectives?
- Are the programme materials and resources considerate of the demographics of the students at Middlesex? For example, do the materials promote a global mind set including a wide range of cultural and global examples?
- Have resources, case studies etc. been selected to showcase a wide range of backgrounds and to demonstrate the strengths of those backgrounds?
- Are staff clear on the core elements of a programme or module and where adjustments may, or may not, be made for students with disabilities?
- Are learning and teaching activities designed and conducted in a manner to assist those that have chosen not to disclose disabilities? For example, are learning sessions or key learning points recorded and available via My Learning?
- Are learning materials available to students in advance in order for students to become familiar with them if they wish?
- Does the programme have a range of assessment types and where necessary, are alternative assessment tasks available to meet the needs of students with a range of disabilities?
- Are achievement levels monitored by ethnic group, age and gender? How are significant patterns of achievement identified and addressed?
- How do the achievement levels of disabled students compare with their peer group and how are these addressed?
- What issues concern the students in respect of diversity e.g., design, content, delivery or assessment? Do students feel represented within the viewpoints and materials included within the programme?

The purpose of equalities legislation is to ensure equality of access to learning opportunities for diverse groups and ensuring students with protected characteristics are not disadvantaged. In achieving this it is not expected that academic standards should in any way be compromised. Programme leaders and programme developers need, therefore, to be precise on what is, and what is not, a core element or aspect of a programme, so that they can assess where adjustments to teaching practices may be introduced. Wherever possible courses and teaching practices should be accessible by design, so that only minimal adaptations need to be made for individuals. This will also help in complying with the 'anticipatory' aspect of the Act and adhere to the inclusivity threshold standards at Middlesex. For example, a

programme specification required students to show 'competence in handling particular chemicals'. This was an unnecessary barrier to students with manual dexterity problems who used assistants to undertake practical work under instruction. The specification was changed to refer to 'understand how to handle particular chemicals'.

Institutional approval

Consideration of the Equalities Act 2010 and guidance around building an inclusive curriculum will form parts of the institutional approval process and partners will be required to agree to take responsibility in accordance with this Act for any programmes delivered with the partner. Examples of how programmes are addressing aspects of imbalance of achievement and actively promoting equality, diversity and inclusion is expected.

Contacts on issues of diversity

Disability and Dyslexia Manager
[CAPE](mailto:CAPE@mdx.ac.uk) (contact CAPE@mdx.ac.uk)

Assessment

The style of assessment and the topics covered should also be considered by the panel.

Work placements, field trips and study abroad

Study beyond the confines of the institution is increasingly important for programmes in order to support the development of key employability skills as well as provide opportunities for active practice-based learning. Such opportunities are a requirement for some programmes. There are many issues to consider in relation to diversity and inclusivity when planning these.

- Have work placements, field trips and overseas partner institutions been audited for accessibility? Are tutors aware of the barriers that particular venues or activities may pose for students with disabilities? Have the Disability and Diversity Service been consulted for advice?
- Where possible are field trips or trips abroad organised to places that are accessible?
- Have work placement providers or overseas partner institutions received training in disability equality/inclusion?
- Are students given a further opportunity to disclose a disability as trips and placements are being organised? Are they asked about any particular needs?
- Are disabled students supported in finding placements that meet their requirements?
- Are arrangements made to ensure that disabled people can take personal assistants or assistive technology with them where necessary?
- Are placement providers or overseas partners clear on who will take responsibility for making adjustments?
- Do tutors keep in touch with disabled students on placements or overseas so that they can take action if problems arise?
- Where placements and trips cannot be made accessible, what alternative learning opportunities are available (for example, virtual field trips)? How will the students be enabled to meet the learning outcomes?
- When planning trips, consideration should be given as to whether students from ethnic minority backgrounds will be made welcome.

- Care should be taken to plan a range of social activities that do not always include alcohol or are not at times that students with different needs (family responsibilities) may find difficult to attend.
- Opportunities should be built in for religious observance.
- Consideration should be given to meeting dietary requirements based on religious or health grounds.

Collaborative programmes

At validation or review, issues in relation to the Equalities Act must be considered at a programme-specific level. Programmes should be designed according to the Middlesex inclusivity threshold standards. In terms of responsibility for discrimination in relation to collaborative partners Memorandums of Collaboration will reflect the following:

- Validated programmes – the partner institution is primarily responsible for meeting the requirements of the Act.
- Franchised and joint programmes – joint responsibility for meeting the requirements of the Act.
- With joint or franchised programmes the specific responsibility will depend on the issue which occurs.

Professional, statutory and/or regulatory bodies (PSRBs)

PSRBs are also included under the Equalities Act and therefore have a responsibility not to discriminate.

References

[Equality Act 2010, Chapter 2](#)

Hockings, C. (2010) Inclusive learning and teaching in higher education: a synthesis of research. Higher Education Academy

Useful resources

[Inclusive curriculum](#) (contact CAPE@mdx.ac.uk)

Higher Education Academy. [Embedding Equality and Diversity in the curriculum](#)