Inclusive Education Policy

Inclusive practice is at the heart of effective education. The aim is to maximise the opportunity for success for all students. The UEA Inclusive Education Policy has 4 interrelated elements:

1. Inclusive Curriculum – the content of what is taught and learning materials
2. Inclusive Assessment – the way student attainment is measured and qualified
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 2019/20 and will be reviewed earlier than usual in Academic Year 2021/22.

The policy has a related implementation plan.

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.

All teaching staff also 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 staff, including academics, must undertake mandatory equality training once every two years and are strongly recommended to attend more detailed training sessions on a range of equality-related topics. These can be found in the CSED Training Programme.
A statement of principle – an inclusive curriculum at UEA

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.

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 Houghton\(^2\) might be useful in facilitating dialogue about the curriculum:

When thinking about the curriculum content:

- Do the sources used in the module draw from a wide range of perspectives? (E.g. does it take in relevant contributions from a perspective which is wider than White, able-bodied, Western/European, heteronormative?)
- 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?

It is recommended that the following steps are taken to promote a discussion of the nature of the curriculum within the academic community:

- At least once a year, the Staff Student Liaison Committee in each school discuss the matter
- At least once a year, the Teaching Committee (or subgroup of teaching committee convened with the appropriate expertise) in each school should discuss the matter
- All staff and students are aware of action to take (see below) if they are concerned that the curriculum does not meet with the statement of principle outlined above.

Consideration of the membership of these committees should take place prior to discussion and if there is a lack of diversity within the group (e.g. no disabled person, no person from a Black or minority ethnic background, no person from a WP background), then representation should be invited in for that specific discussion.

\(^1\) 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
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.

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.

It is important to differentiate between the content of the curriculum and the way it is being taught. If a staff member or student believes that someone is behaving in a discriminatory way towards them, a colleague or a student they can raise the issue via the HR Manager for the area (for staff issues) or with the Head of School (for student or staff to student issues). In either instance an informal discussion may be helpful before deciding whether to raise the issue as part of a formal process.
**Inclusive Education Policy (Assessment)**

**Inclusive assessment as part of inclusive education**

Assessment is an integral and important part of the teaching and learning experience of students in Higher Education. Transforming assessment 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.³

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, three things should be taken into account:

- Student feedback on their experience of assessment
- 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.
- 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.

**Features of inclusive assessment**

- 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. Therefore markers should restrict themselves to identifying a representative selection of errors in syntax, spelling, grammar or presentation, and giving advice about where to seek help if needed. The focus of the marking and feedback should be on the content.

• 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.
• An approach to practical examinations which gives all students a chance to succeed in practice based assessments though 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 design and practice on modules and courses within reasonable timescales.

Policy and Practice
The inclusive practice working group considered how existing policies and related procedures could be changed to reflect a more inclusive approach to teaching and learning. In relation to assessment, this involved reviewing the existing Yellow Sticker Policy (last reviewed formally in 2008) in the context of the need to develop a more strategic and embedded approach to inclusive practice.

Students with specific learning difficulties
UEA currently has a policy that any student with a diagnosed specific learning difficulty (Dyslexia, Dysgraphia, Dyspraxia, Dyscalculia, Attention Deficit Disorder or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD or ADHD), and Autism Spectrum Conditions including Asperger Syndrome) can choose to use a 'yellow sticker' on examinations and course tests. The practice has also been applied to coursework, although this practice does not match the policy. The policy is intended to indicate to markers that they should not penalise the work for errors which may be related to the student’s disability and provides helpful marking guidance. However, in practice it is unclear how the policy is implemented by markers, and it can compromise anonymous marking if academics know which students in their classes have received permission to use this adjustment. Furthermore, a HEFCE report on support for students with SpLDs\(^4\) indicates that some institutions who took part in the study felt a sticker system added further confusion to their marking systems.

Inclusive practice aims to give opportunities for all with as few adjustments for individuals as possible, making the approach to assessment and feedback proactive and anticipatory. Recent guidance from the Disabled Students Sector Leadership Group suggests that in order to enhance support for disabled students, higher education providers will need to move from providing “a support service to students deemed entitled to it by virtue of a diagnosis to one

which empowers the learner and is accessible to and benefits all students.\textsuperscript{5} The Inclusive Assessment Policy and accompanying implementation plan will replace the Yellow Sticker Policy (2008), embedding inclusive practice in assessment across the institution and incorporating much of the good practice in feedback that the Yellow Sticker policy previously applied only to some students, to all. Students will no longer attach a yellow sticker to coursework or exam scripts from the start of academic year 2021. A review of the Inclusive Assessment policy should be undertaken in the first two years of implementation, considering evidence such as attainment gaps, student experience measures and feedback from key stakeholder

Inclusive marking practice

All staff marking student work should note the features of inclusive assessment above and ensure that:
Marking of work constitutes all of the following: comments on feedback sheets, rubrics, annotations on scripts and audio and face to face feedback.
In all of the above, markers comments should be clear and accessible
The focus of the marking and feedback should be on the content of the work and to what extent it meets assessment criteria.
Feedback should indicate where marks have been gained and where students have met the assessment criteria
Where comments focus on aspects of work which contain mistakes or inaccuracies, problems or areas for development, there is an emphasis on how improvements could be made and on signposting to appropriate sources of guidance and support.
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.
Comments should be focussed on both the justification of marks and on helping students improve their understanding.

\textsuperscript{5} Department for Education (2017) \textit{Inclusive Teaching and Learning in Higher Education as a route to Excellence} p.11
Part 3: Inclusive Pedagogy

Introduction and definitions
Inclusive pedagogy in higher education means designing and delivering a teaching and learning experience that is meaningful, relevant, personalised and accessible to the entire student body.

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.
- 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. These may include but are not limited to: a module outline in the correct format, lecture/seminar slides and/or notes and/or a recording of lectures, an interactive reading list with useful learner signposting, and assessment briefs, where appropriate.
- 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, through mid module evaluations and the ALTER quality assurance process.
Part 4: Inclusive Environment

Introduction and definitions

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\(^\text{vii}\) 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 learning environment:

- An organisational culture that promotes learning and reflection alongside dignity and respect.
- 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 support for individual wellbeing and learning development for example through the advisor system and Wellbeing and Learning Enhancement services
- 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
- The removal of cultural, financial and physical barriers to access to activities that support employability, for example internships, paid work experience and study abroad
- The removal of cultural, financial and physical barriers to participation in extra curricular clubs and societies
- An approach to monitoring participation in extra curricular activities which promotes understanding of barriers to participation
- 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 at this university