



DIVERSITY CHECKLIST: GUIDELINES FOR COURSE PLANNING

As instructors, it is important to foster an environment that respects diversity and fosters an open environment in which all students are able participate and learn. Below is a list of issues to keep in mind when designing and leading a course:

- Consider including a diversity statement in the course syllabus (For an example, please visit <https://education.uiowa.edu/services/office-dean/policies/syllabus-checklist>). In addition, include Penn State's anti-discrimination policy, found at <http://guru.psu.edu/policies/ad42.html>.
- Create a safe classroom environment through ground rules of discussion. Establish a contract with your students that outline rules for respectful classroom conduct.
- Consider emailing all of your students before the course begins to request names (nick names, preferred name pronunciation), pronouns, and to ask about accommodations through student disability services.
- Please do not refer to students by their dead/given/birth name when they have specifically asked that you not. If that does not work for you, consider calling all students by their last name to avoid using a person's given name when they no longer use that name.
- Ask students how to pronounce their names and work hard to pronounce them correctly. Consider asking students to use the new tool [name coach](#) in their email to help you learn how to pronounce their name. Also, ask students how they would like to be addressed in class. It may be easier to ask students what their names (first and last) are on the first day of class rather than calling out names on the class roster to avoid mispronouncing names and to allow students to use nicknames or a name that is not on the class roster. You may also ask for phonetic spelling of names in an initial email to before the course begins. Please see bullet point above.
- Use gender inclusive language in lectures, presentations, assignments, and exams.
- Be aware of gender used in examples. Use a mix of male and female examples, if possible consider including gender identities outside of the traditional binary. Use examples with women and underrepresented students in desirable roles.
- Include in your syllabus procedures for making up assignments that are missed due to religious holidays, if possible.
- Choose a textbook with gender inclusive terms when possible. Check to see if examples and photographs include people of multiple genders and of various races and nationalities.
- If you do need to use materials that are not written in gender inclusive language, such as older books and articles, point this out to your students. You may use this as an opportunity to discuss how gender issues have evolved over time in your discipline.

- When assigning students tasks, each task assigned should be non-gender specific and of equal contribution. When possible avoid splitting your class by gender because there may be some in your course who are transgender, non-binary, or gender non-conforming/gender expansive, or who do not identify as either a man or a woman or they may identify as both.
- How students are evaluated should match course objectives. The evaluation procedure should be made clear through a grading rubric.
- Ensure all students are able to participate in class discussion and group activities. Consider using a talking piece or asking everyone to take turns responded with an option to pass if necessary.
- Assume that not all students in a class are heterosexual.
- Assume that some of your students are non-Christians.
- Assume that some of your students identify outside of the traditional gender binary.
- Try not to make assumptions about a student's race or ethnicity based on appearance.
- Try not single out a student to represent his/her/their social group.
- Clarify expectations for classroom activities. Stereotyping is most likely to occur when situations are ambiguous. When situations are made clear, stereotyping is avoided.
- Provide an opportunity for students to give anonymous feedback on classroom climate. A drop box in an online course management system may be used for students to submit anonymous feedback.
- Address your students consistently. If you refer to students you perceive to be male students by using their first and last names, be sure to use first and last names for students you perceive to be female or gender expansive.
- Use a random system for asking questions or encouraging class participation. A random system of participation solicitation will give every student an equal chance of participating in classroom discussion or activities. This helps with [stereotype threat](#) as well.
- Monitor class discussions to make sure that one group (or person) is not dominating classroom discussion.
- Allow students to finish their question or comment before answering or responding. In class discussions, monitor discussion to make sure each student is able to complete their question or response.
- In group presentations, require each student to speak or find a way for each student to participate if speaking is a barrier for a particular student.
- For multiple group tasks, use a rotating leader system. This allows for different members of the group to serve in a leadership position.
- Make sure small groups are composed of students from different social identity groups. However, if possible, groups should contain more than one member from each social group to avoid tokenism.

Adapted from Dawn Miller, Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence, Penn State University
<http://www.csuchico.edu/diversity/diversity-inclusive-teaching/documents/DiversityChecklist.pdf>

SYLLABI STATEMENTS

Feel free to use some of these statements in your course syllabi. **These are just examples, please feel free to edit or adapt them for your individual course.**

Inclusive Excellence Statement

UNO recognizes that our individual differences can deepen our understanding of one another and the world around us, rather than divide us. Students in this class are encouraged to speak up and participate during class meetings. Because the class will represent a diversity of individual beliefs, backgrounds, and experiences, every member of this class must show respect for every other member of this class. If you feel your differences may in some way isolate you from UNO's community or if you have a need of any specific accommodations, please speak with the instructor early in the semester about your concerns and what we can do together to help you become an active and engaged member of our class and community.

Safe Space Statement

I am part of the Safe Space community network of UNO faculty/staff/students who participated in the on campus workshop and am available to listen and support you in a (as much as possible) safe and confidential manner. As a Safe Space Ally, I can help you connect with resources on campus to address concerns you may face that interfere with your academic and social success on campus as it relates to issues surrounding sexual orientation/gender identity. My goal is to help you be successful and to maintain an accountable and equitable campus.

LGBTQIA+ Equality Statement

I am firmly committed to diversity, creating and maintaining an inclusive community, and equality in all areas of campus life, including specifically members of the LGBTQIA+ community. In this class, I will work to promote an anti-discriminatory environment where everyone feels safe and welcome. I recognize that discrimination can be direct or indirect and take place at both institutional and personal levels. I believe that such discrimination is unacceptable and I am committed to providing equality of opportunity for all by minimizing any and all discrimination, harassment, bullying, or victimization. The success of this policy relies on the support and understanding of everyone in this course. We all have a responsibility not to participate in or condone harassment and discrimination of any kind.

Preferred Name & Gender Pronouns

Course rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by a chosen name and/or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

Additional syllabi resources <https://accessiblesyllabus.tulane.edu/>