

Sheridan Inclusive Course Design Guide

A Practical UDL-Informed Checklist for Teaching and Learning

This guide supports faculty in creating inclusive, accessible, and learner-centered courses by applying principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL).

It supports faculty in reducing barriers to learning, providing flexible pathways for engagement, and creating clear opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning.

Rather than focusing on accommodations after barriers arise, UDL encourages proactive course design that benefits all learners.

Course Site and Learning Environment	
Course Organization	☐ Course materials are organized using a clear and consistent SLATE structure. ☐ Students can easily locate course content, assessments, and important information. ☐ Navigation is predictable throughout the course.
Student Support	☐ Information about Accessible Learning Services, Library Services, Tutoring, and other key supports is included within the course.
Expectations	☐ Expectations for communication, participation, assignments, and assessments are clearly communicated. ☐ Rubrics, grading criteria, and timelines are available where appropriate.
Accessibility	☐ Learning materials meet accessibility requirements. ☐ Videos include captions where appropriate. ☐ Documents are screen-reader friendly. ☐ Materials do not create unnecessary access barriers.
Course Content and Learning Materials	

Representation	☐ Terminology and concepts are explained using clear language and discipline-relevant examples. ☐ Content is presented using multiple formats where appropriate (text, visuals, audio, demonstrations, media). ☐ Visual supports such as diagrams, charts, or examples are included to enhance understanding. ☐ Expectations regarding technology use, participation, and potential distractions are clearly communicated.
Diversity and Inclusion	☐ Examples, case studies, and learning materials reflect diverse perspectives and experiences. ☐ Content avoids stereotypes and deficit-based assumptions. ☐ Students can see themselves and their experiences reflected in the learning materials.
Relevance	☐ Learning activities connect to real-world applications, professional practice, or authentic contexts. ☐ Students have opportunities to contribute examples, perspectives, or applications from their own experiences and contexts.
Learning Activities and Student Engagement	

Purpose and Motivation	☐ Students understand why learning activities matter and how they connect to course outcomes. ☐ Learning goals are clearly communicated.
Participation	☐ Opportunities exist for both individual and collaborative learning. ☐ Participation expectations are clearly explained. ☐ Low-stakes opportunities for engagement are incorporated (e.g., polls, discussions, check-ins, surveys). ☐ Students have opportunities to demonstrate learning through authentic, meaningful, and sustainable assessment activities.
Well-Being and Belonging	☐ Learning activities consider student workload and cognitive demands. ☐ Long classes, learning activities, or intensive learning experiences include opportunities for breaks and transitions. ☐ Course schedules, due dates, and expectations are communicated early and consistently. ☐ A respectful and inclusive learning environment is intentionally fostered and communicated.
Assessment and Demonstration of Learning	
Transparency	☐ Assessment expectations are clear and easy to understand. ☐ Success criteria are communicated in advance. ☐ Students understand how assessments connect to learning outcomes.
Flexibility	☐ Multiple methods of demonstrating learning are provided where appropriate and where learning outcomes allow. ☐ Students are provided with appropriate time and flexibility, where possible, to engage with learning activities and demonstrate their learning without unnecessary time-related barriers. ☐ Assessments focus on achievement of outcomes rather than a single mode of expression.
Scaffolding	☐ Assessments are structured to support skill development over time. ☐ Larger assignments are broken into manageable stages where appropriate. ☐ Opportunities for feedback are incorporated throughout the learning process.
Workload	☐ Assessment timing and workload have been considered from a student perspective. ☐ Assessment demands are balanced within the course and, where possible, across the program.

Supporting Learner Success and Self-Regulation	
Executive Function and Strategy Development	☐ Students are encouraged to set learning goals. ☐ Opportunities exist for students to monitor their progress and evaluate their own work. ☐ Reflection activities support awareness of learning processes. ☐ Learning supports help students plan, organize, and manage complex tasks.
Reflection and Growth	☐ Students have opportunities to reflect on their learning and progress. ☐ Feedback supports ongoing improvement and growth. ☐ Learning activities encourage students to become increasingly independent learners.

Final Reflection

Before the start of the semester, ask:

Would a student new to Sheridan be able to understand, navigate, and succeed in this course?

If not, identify one area that could be made clearer, more accessible, or more inclusive.

Remember

Inclusive course design is not about creating separate pathways for different learners.

It is about designing learning experiences that reduce barriers, increase flexibility, and support success for as many learners as possible from the outset.