

Why is Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Important in Maynooth University?

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is important for everyone at Maynooth University (MU) because it embeds MU's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), and social justice strategic goals *into the classroom*.

UDL meaningfully builds equity into MU's learning environments, and thus is instrumental in advancing EDI actions by seeking to effectively and practically minimise barriers to learning because of race, ethnicity, class, language, neurodiversity, being physically or otherwise disabled, gender, sexuality or any other obstacles.

UDL actions also support the **HEA National Access Plan**, to develop and support a more inclusive learning environment for a diverse student population in higher education.

Through its principles and guidelines, UDL provides a way of thinking about and designing an inclusive learning environment. As such it is a support for both educators and students and is especially important in the context of Maynooth University's unique environment.

A UDL approach supports life-long learning and building community partnerships, both of which are key values at MU. UDL involves considering at design stage the diversity of the student population. This requires an understanding of the university community as a whole and an openness to working collaboratively and in partnership across units and departments, staff and students, in order to put inclusion at the heart of planning and practice. UDL contributes to the ongoing development of a culture of inclusion on campus and an enactment of inclusive education through increased student engagement and more impactful learning experiences, which significantly contribute towards better student educational outcomes.



References

Higher Education Authority (2022). *National Access Plan. A Strategic Action Plan for Equity of Access, Participation and Success in Higher Education 2022–2028*. Accessible at: <https://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2022/12/National-Access-Plan-2022-2028-FINAL.pdf>

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