# PG An Inclusive Environment (Emotional Engagement)

**An inclusive environment is one that is (i) non-discriminatory, appropriate, and transparent to each student we recruit; (ii) respects and values the perspectives and experiences each individual can offer; (iii) promotes values and practices associated with inclusive attitudes and behaviours in others.**

**Overview**

An inclusive environment involves tutors behaving in a non-discriminatory way and being respectful of others and it encourages students to do the same.

The legal obligations upon the University, and on individuals, (e.g. [The Equality Act, 2010](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents)) taken alone offer a very reductive understanding of an ‘inclusive’ environment. A truly inclusive environment presents a community in which everybody can choose to be visible and is valued and respected for their unique individuality. It encourages and enables students to be curious about others and engage in respectful discussion, debate, collaborative work and research, with other people and to explore their ways of viewing the world.

Inclusive teaching within an inclusive learning environment means recognising, accommodating and meeting the learning needs of all our students. Flexible approaches to learning can enhance this ([Devitt-Jones, 2017](https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/essential-frameworks-enhancing-student-success-flexible-learning)). Blended learning approaches, for example, have been shown to improve retention and engagement ([Holley & Dobson, 2008](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17439880802097683)), but it is important to remember that vulnerable students can feel even more vulnerable in an online environment and it is important to build in opportunities for engagement, kindness, community building and a social presence into online learning environments ([Hockings, 2010](https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/inclusive-learning-and-teaching-higher-education-synthesis-research)).

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| **Course teams could ask:*** Do we ensure that all **students feel welcomed** into the course and do we work, as part of induction, to ensure that **all** students are welcoming towards ‘others’ on the course? How will you foster course identity and sense of belonging if delivery is **not** on campus?

There are digital tools that can help support online induction. A course level [MyBeckett](https://my.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/webapps/login/) group for activities can be useful, or [MS Teams](https://teachlearn.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/guides/mybeckett-and-digital-learning-guides/microsoft-teams/) where chat and sharing can take place, or by using social media channels to interact with students. Be consistent and simple with your use of tools to avoid overwhelming students. The [preferred tool is MS Teams](https://teachlearn.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/guides/mybeckett-and-digital-learning-guides/microsoft-teams/).* How do course materials and activities represent a range of **cultural, global and social perspectives and/or practices**, and allow all students to draw on prior experience and learning?
* Are you considering how to make remote/online learning as accessible and inclusive as possible, and what **reasonable adjustments** there might be where it is not fully accessible?Are you, as a course team, familiar with “reasonable adjustment” for field trips, session planning, delivery and assessment? Are all your students able to access a range of opportunities? Can the activities be embedded within the daily standard timetable? Is there alternative provision? Support and advice is available from the [Disability Advice Service](https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/staffsite/services/student-services/supporting-our-students/disability-advice/).
* Do we include pedagogies that contribute to **learner empowerment** such as co-creation, student choice within assessment and the decolonising of the dominant western-focused discourses ([Ryan and Tilbury, 2013](https://sustainability.glos.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/New-Pedagogical-Ideas.pdf))?
* There is some evidence ([Yan Yang et al, 2015](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/327142567_Classroom_Motivational_Climate_in_Online_and_Face-to-Face_Undergraduate_Courses_The_Interplay_of_Gender_and_Course_Format)) that **different genders** perceive and experience the physical and online learning environment differently. Think about how you design your courses to appeal to all genders.
* **Lightbulb and gear to indicate digital tools that can be used to support learning.**How do you organise your large and small group activities to **enhance social mixing and learning** and expose them/students to culturally challenging views, opinions and contexts? Can you develop online action learning sets? If you are using digital tools to help you, you could use [MyBeckett sub-groups](https://teachlearn.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/guides/mybeckett-and-digital-learning-guides/mybeckett/create-sub-groups/) or [MS Teams](https://teachlearn.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/guides/mybeckett-and-digital-learning-guides/microsoft-teams/).
* When students are asked to work alone or in groups outside the classroom are the tasks clear and the students **made aware exactly what is required of them**? How do you ensure this works?
* Lightbulb and gear to indicate digital tools that can be used to support learning.How do you manage interaction, paired activity, **discussion and student participation** both online and physically to optimise engagement and inclusion? If online only, how to you adapt your delivery models? Can you restructure large and small group work over different weeks to optimise contact hours and engagement and make sure those not engaging synchronously are supported? [Discussion boards](https://teachlearn.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/guides/mybeckett-and-digital-learning-guides/mybeckett/create-a-discussion-board/) can be used for students to post questions or respond to a discussion point. Channels within an [MS Teams](https://teachlearn.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/guides/mybeckett-and-digital-learning-guides/microsoft-teams/) can be used in the same way.
* Students want to connect with a learning experience that resonates with their stories and histories and they want to feel they belong at Leeds Beckett University. The curriculum is an important artefact in their achievement of this sense of ‘belonging’. “**Decolonising**” is about us rethinking, reframing and reconstructing current curricula in order to make them better and more inclusive. Do your [reading lists](https://beckett.rl.talis.com/index.html) and resources reflect a diverse cultural range of authors which reflect a range of perspectives about issues discussed as part of the module content? This will help students feel that they are important, **belong to the learning community** and have a contribution to make?
* Do your postgraduate students have access to staff and external experts from a **range of communities and cultures**?
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| **Have you looked at the LBU** [**Inclusive Course Design Tool**](https://teachlearn.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/teaching-and-learning/inclusive-practice/the-inclusive-course-design-tool/)**?** This Tool will support you and your team to reflect on the design of your course and how to best support all students with opportunities to achieve their very best. It covers many of the questions addressed below and is a holistic way to address multiple areas relating to inclusive course design.You may also want to refer to our pages on [inclusive practice](https://teachlearn.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/teaching-and-learning/inclusive-practice/).  |

## **Admissions**

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| **Do your admissions criteria:*** Reflect the needs and **diversity** of potential students?
* Approach any requirement of the progression concerned positively with a view, wherever possible, of making suitable **alternative provision**?
* Ensure no section of the student community is automatically deselected by **particular requirements**?
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## **Assessment**

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| **Is your student assessment:*** **Varied** in its method and written in a way that avoids jargon and is easily understood by a diverse group of students?
* Free of cultural and gender-biased assumptions, reflecting social and cultural **diversity** where possible?
* Able to take account of different learning **preferences**, and **disabilities** when designing how a module/course is delivered, offered with a **choice** of titles/options if appropriate?
* **Scheduled and timetabled sessions** to consider, for example, part-time students, students with caring responsibilities, and religious calendars?
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**References**

References and further reading for this section can be found in the [An Inclusive Environment](https://rl.talis.com/3/beckett/lists/086BF37E-85D6-9E4A-D3A6-B7EA51D08C98.html?lang=en-US&login=1#CA937AB6-C788-10C6-E07B-47E75FBAE223) section of the [Course Development Principles reading list](https://beckett.rl.talis.com/lists/086BF37E-85D6-9E4A-D3A6-B7EA51D08C98.html) on Talis Aspire.