

Ensure Your Syllabus Sets the Tone for Diversity and Inclusion

Creating an inclusive classroom or online environment means making an intentional and ongoing effort to ensure that all students feel they belong and can thrive in the learning environment. One step you can take right at the beginning of your course is to set the tone for diversity and inclusion through your syllabus by including the following:

1. **Diversity Statement.** Including a statement that explains why diversity and inclusion are important to the educational process in general, and the course specifically. Writing a diversity statement is a self-reflective process. To develop your own diversity statement, consider your own background, your students' backgrounds, and the importance of diversity for the educational process. For examples of diversity statements, visit <https://poorvucenter.yale.edu/DiversityStatements>.
2. **Expectations for respectful dialogue.** Be explicit about your expectations for respectful dialogue by including a statement such as:

We all come to the table with differing experiences and viewpoints, which means that we have so much to learn from each other! In order to get the most out of this opportunity, it is important that we don't shy away from differences. Rather, we should show respect for differences by seeking to understand, asking questions, clarifying our understanding, and/or respectfully explaining our own perspective. This way, everybody comes away with new perspectives on the issue and respecting others with different values or beliefs.

If someone says something that bothers you for any reason, assume that your peer did not mean to be offensive and ask your peer to clarify what they meant. Then explain the impact it had on you. If your classmates tell you that something you said or wrote bothered them, assume that they are not attacking you, but rather that they are sharing something that might be important for you to know.

For additional information on setting expectations for respectful dialogue see 2G Online PG_HotMoments.

3. **Inclusive resources.** In addition to the subject matter content in your curriculum, the topics and texts you select communicate to your students the ideas and types of knowledge that are considered important, as well as who are considered legitimate producers of such knowledge. Take an inventory of the texts, films, and articles that you include in your current curriculum and ask yourself the following questions:
 - Who is being represented, studied, or discussed? Whom is the knowledge about?
 - Whom is the information directed toward?
 - What type of knowledge is considered important?
 - Who is the producer of the knowledge?
 - Are there other perspectives (e.g., racial, gender, geographic, socioeconomic, ability, etc.) that could be offered on this topic?

For additional information on including diverse resources see 2G Online PG_Curriculum.

4. **Policies, statements, and/or resource information that address the needs and concerns of all of your students.** Including information in your syllabus that supports students from different identity groups communicates to them that you are aware and that you care. It is important to try to address the concerns of all students who may need additional support by providing them with relevant information and resources.

Examples of Information and Resources to Add to Syllabus

Students with disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Americans with Disabilities Act [ADA] policy • Location of disability services • Invitation to speak to you about accommodations
Students who have mental health issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location of on-campus mental health services • Online mental health resources • Helpline information
Students who celebrate religious holidays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledgement of major holidays (avoid scheduling exams or presentations on major Muslim or Jewish holidays) • Religious accommodations policy
Transgender students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preferred name policy • Usage of preferred pronouns • Locations of gender-neutral bathrooms
Students with financial challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designated workspaces on campus • Food pantry or other assistance available on campus or in the community • Open-source or other free resources • Options to buy equipment from previous students or through a financial assistance program • List of resources on campus or online that help students with financial aid
Underrepresented Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on campus affinity groups