

Equality and diversity: providing an inclusive educational environment

The University of Aberdeen is committed to equality of opportunity for its students and employees and expects all staff to contribute to creating an inclusive learning and working environment. The Equality Act 2010 has harmonised and streamlined pre-existing legislation, providing increased protection from discrimination to more people. The 2010 Act impacts on staff involved in Learning and Teaching in the following areas:

Curriculum design

- The design stages of any course are the ideal time to consider its accessibility and inclusivity; whilst academic standards should not be compromised, consider alternative modes of delivery and/or assessment which give all students the opportunity to attain the intended learning outcomes of the course.

Flexibility in course provision

- Inbuilt flexibility, in a programme or course, benefits all students, but particularly those from overseas, with a disability or responsibilities outwith their studies, for instance working and family responsibilities. It is advantageous to any programme to develop flexible aspects where appropriate.

Induction and orientation

- If planning student induction events, think about the best time to stage these, and the activities which are included, aiming to make these as flexible and all-encompassing as possible. It's also worth considering orientation activities for those who may not be able to attend the events themselves, e.g. direct entrants or international students who have not yet arrived.

Assessment and examinations

- When planning assessments or examinations consider constructing them to be as accessible as possible for students from diverse linguistic or cultural backgrounds, or with disabilities. Plan ahead of assessments for students who may require additional time or alternative arrangements in order to complete these successfully.

Outwith the classroom

- All students should be encouraged to undertake the broadest possible University experience, including field trips, excursions, and placements wherever possible. Ensure arrangements made for those students who may require support in order to participate successfully in these.

The University has also developed two e-Training modules, Diversity in the Workplace and Diversity in Teaching and Learning, which staff are encouraged to complete; these can be found on <https://abdn.marshallacmtraining.co.uk/>.

Further support and advice can be obtained from Lucy Foley, Head of Student Support (l.foley@abdn.ac.uk) and Janine Chalmers, Equality and Diversity Adviser (janine.chalmers@abdn.ac.uk).