

Top Ten Tips for a More Accessible and Inclusive Syllabus

1. Use a warm and welcoming tone.

Write your syllabus in the first person and use cooperative language such as “we” and “our”. Avoid using cold or harsh language that may discourage or intimidate students. For example, instead of saying “Late work will be penalized by 50%”, you can say “Late work is still eligible for 50% partial credit”.

2. Consider creating an introductory video.

An introductory video can welcome students to the course in a more personal way (especially if you are teaching an online course). In the video, explain the connections between what they will learn in the course and broader career outcomes to emphasize relevance. Share your passion for the subject and your own learning journey, including how you’ve overcome any obstacles in order to model resilience for your students.

3. Center around student learning by focusing on what the student can learn and do, rather than what the course will teach or cover.

Use specific and measurable learning objectives that describe the skills and knowledge students will acquire.

4. Use accessible design.

Make sure your syllabus is easy to read and navigate on different devices and platforms. Visit [Creating Accessible Documents on the AEM Center website](#) for additional information on creating accessible documents.

5. Anticipate and accommodate the diverse needs and circumstances of your students.

Provide options for attendance, participation, deadlines, extensions, grading, feedback, etc. that are fair and consistent for all students.

6. Include statements that encourage students to seek help from you or other resources.

You can also express your willingness to work with them to ensure their success.

7. Include an accessibility statement.

An accessibility statement explains any steps you've taken to ensure course content is more accessible. For example, explain to students how to turn on the captions in your videos, how to show the alternative text for images in presentation slides, etc.

8. Link to helpful technology resources.

Technology can help many students address challenges with reading and writing that could present barriers to their learning. An example of such a resource is the [Personalizing the Reading Experience page on the AEM Center website](#).

9. Acknowledge the diversity of your students.

Affirm their identities, experiences, perspectives, and contributions, and your commitment to creating an inclusive and respectful learning community that values diversity and equity..

10. Solicit student feedback.

Invite your students to share their thoughts and suggestions on the syllabus and the course design. You can use surveys, polls, discussions, or other methods to collect feedback from your students before or during the course. Use the feedback to revise or improve your syllabus and course design as needed.

Further Reading

- [UDL on Campus: UDL Syllabus](#)
- [CAST UDL Syllabus Considerations](#)