

Inclusive Assessments for Neurodivergence:

Enabling all students
to demonstrate what
they know and can
do

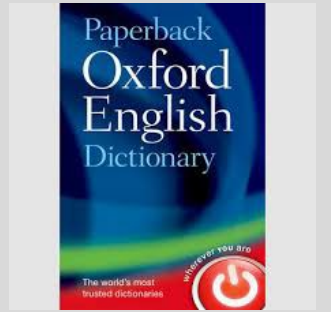


Bring a summary of your assessment and receive instant feedback on strategies for increased inclusivity!

If you have brought an example, please put into the chat when prompted at the end, along with any questions that emerge during the 15 minute presentation



Definitions



- **Neurodiversity** is the concept that brain differences are natural variations – not deficits, disorders or impairments.
- The terms **neurodivergent** and **neurodivergence** are now used to describe all people whose neurological differences mean they do not consider themselves to be neurotypical.
- Neurotypicality is used to describe people whose brain functions, ways of processing information and behaviours are seen to be standard (The Brain Charity 2022). Autism, dyslexia, dyspraxia, and ADHD are all examples of neurodivergence, although these may also fall under the definition of 'specific learning difficulty/difference'.

Student experience



“I can absorb and repeat information back to you, but not in a logical sequence”



“...we often face barriers to confidence, keeping routines, motivation, and getting top grades”



“ I feel like I can't ask, that I will seem annoying and stupid”



“When you have learning difficulties or dyslexia, you tend to judge yourself a lot more and I was quite hard on myself: I used to get very frustrated...”



“I get accused of daydreaming...but to take in what's being said, I have to read things 6 times”



Dyslexia for me means that I'm like a computer system where my brain is the computer, and my hand is a printer, but they are disconnected”

Lived experience



Findings on Inclusive assessment



HEA (2012) research suggested that in order for HE institutions to comply with the Equalities Act 2010, institutions should design assessments that are both **anticipatory** and **inclusive**.

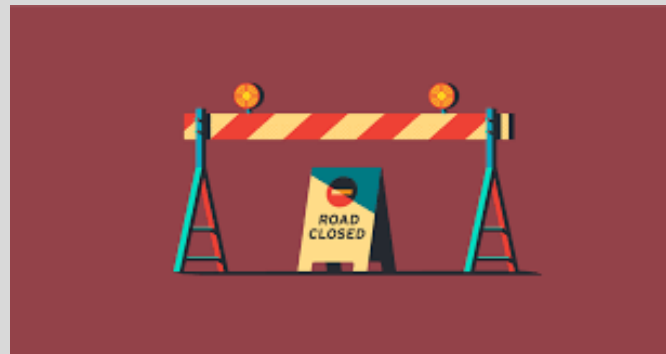
Later, Advance HE (2018) made a series of specific recommendations for the programme-level design of inclusive assessment:

- A range of assessment approaches that are accessible, non-discriminatory and timely.
- A range of feedback approaches that are accessible, interactive, ongoing and timely.
- Incorporation of student choice in assessment practices.
- Preparation, engagement and support of students throughout the assessment process that develops their assessment literacy.
- A programme-level approach to the design, development, understanding and coordination of assessment and feedback practices.

Note: Recent developments in legislation (June 2024) mean we need to clarify the key competence standards for our Programmes, as it is not expected we adapt these for neurodivergent students, but we do need to be able to justify these standards as essential to the programme.

CAST on Campus: Construct relevance

- Assessments are designed to measure knowledge, skills, and abilities. Constructs are the knowledge, skills or abilities being measured by an assessment.
- Most assessments include features that are not relevant to the construct being assessed.
- Construct-irrelevant features of assessments may pose barriers for some students, preventing an accurate measurement of the construct.



Universal Design for Learning: Multiple Means of Action and Expression



- Provide choice or flexibility in the **mode** students can demonstrate their knowledge or skills, such as written, spoken or multi-media
- Provide scaffolded support for students to enable them to demonstrate essential skills or key competence standards.

Top tips



Anticipate:

- Design your assessments to be as flexible as possible: can you offer a choice of assessment mode, such as written OR verbal presentation? Is this available to all students?
- Ensure you have clear simple instructions and marking criteria for all assessments and provide them from the outset of the programme or module
- Plan your alternative assessments from the outset, and ensure the instructions and marking criteria are available.
- Provide a module map or timetable indicating all formative and summative assessment tasks

Top Tips (continued):



Adapt:

- Ensure you are aware of the reasonable adjustments for students and that you act on these in assessments.
- Adapt your feedback to ensure it meets the needs of those with neurodivergence, and provide flexibility in mode in how this is accessed (voice and written comments, or enable recording or verbal feedback, for example).
- Support students who are assessed as needing an alternative assessment by providing the eligibility, information and marking criteria.

Reflect:

How can your newly acquired knowledge and understanding of neurodiversity inform your work practice? What changes could you make to enable you to better support neurodivergent students/colleagues?



Questions? (Add to chat):

Any examples for discussion?

Any other questions?

