

Accelerating English Language Learning in Central Asia

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# Introduction to EDI: Promoting Equality and Diversity in the Classroom

Pre-service Session 1

# By the end of this session, you will:

- Understand the fundamental principles of equality, diversity, and inclusion in the classroom.
- Recognise how the teacher's role and behaviour influence the creation of an inclusive learning environment.
- Identify practical strategies that support diverse learners, including elements of Universal Design for Learning and differentiated instruction.
- Reflect on your own practice and pinpoint actions to strengthen inclusivity in your teaching.

What barriers in the learning environment could be preventing a student from ‘blooming’?

How can teachers ‘fix the environment’ to make English learning more accessible and supportive for all students?



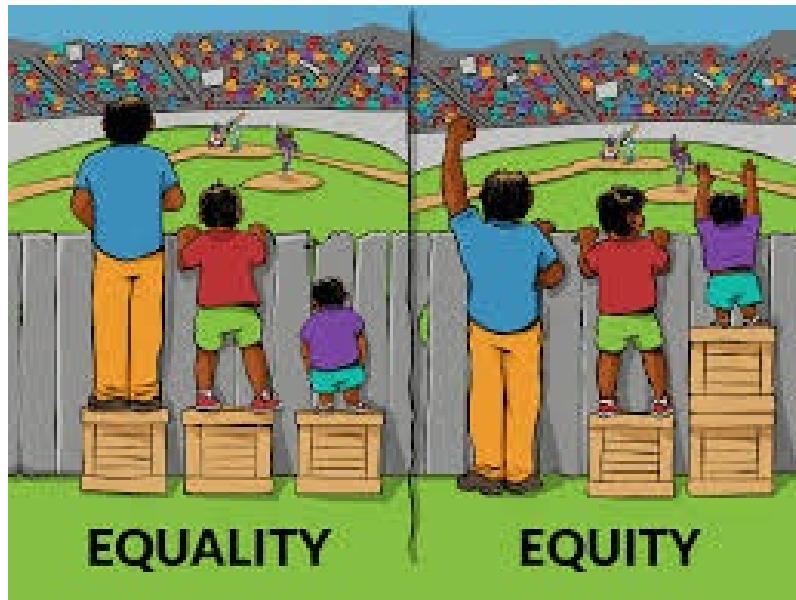
**“When a flower doesn’t bloom,  
you fix the environment in which  
it grows, not the flower.”**

– Alexander den Heijer

# Key Definitions

**Equality** is about ensuring that **everyone has the same opportunities**, and no one is treated differently or discriminated against because of their personal characteristics (‘protected characteristics’ under the Equality Act 2010).

**Equity** is about ensuring that **everyone is treated fairly by removing barriers** to resources or opportunities that some groups in society face.



<https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/what-is-edi-and-why-does-it-matter>

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**Equity** is about ensuring that **everyone is treated fairly by removing barriers** to resources or opportunities that some groups in society face.

**Diversity** is about recognising, valuing and taking account of people's different backgrounds, knowledge, skills, and experiences.

**Inclusion** is where these **differences between people and groups are seen as a benefit**, and where people feel comfortable sharing their perspectives and differences, knowing that their opinions and ideas are valued.

<https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/what-is-edi-and-why-does-it-matter>

# Key Principles of EDI

- All students are equal, but may need different support
- Differences are respected and valued - diversity is a strength
- Positive relationships are fostered across communities
- Shared sense of belonging and inclusion encouraged
- Equal opportunities for staff and students through fair policies
- High expectations for all students
- Focus on raising standards for vulnerable groups
- Challenge stereotyping and prejudice

## Activity 1: Worksheet

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Read the short classroom cases where EDI is not followed. Think about what is happening in each situation and which learners might be disadvantaged or excluded. Propose a positive, inclusive alternative for each case.

# Teachers' Goals

- Provide fair access to learning for all students
- Reflect and value diversity in teaching and materials
- Create an inclusive, respectful classroom climate
- Remove learning barriers through appropriate support and adaptation
- Challenge bias and discriminatory behaviour



The teacher's Broader Goal is to ensure all students achieve meaningful learning outcomes, develop skills.

But how can we design learning so that every student has the opportunity to reach this goal?

Read 10 Core Concepts for Inclusivity and Diversity in ELT (Task 1 in your worksheet)

# UDL

**Universal Design for Learning**, or **UDL**, provides a framework to design lessons that allow every student to succeed.

<https://www.cast.org/what-we-do/universal-design-for-learning/>

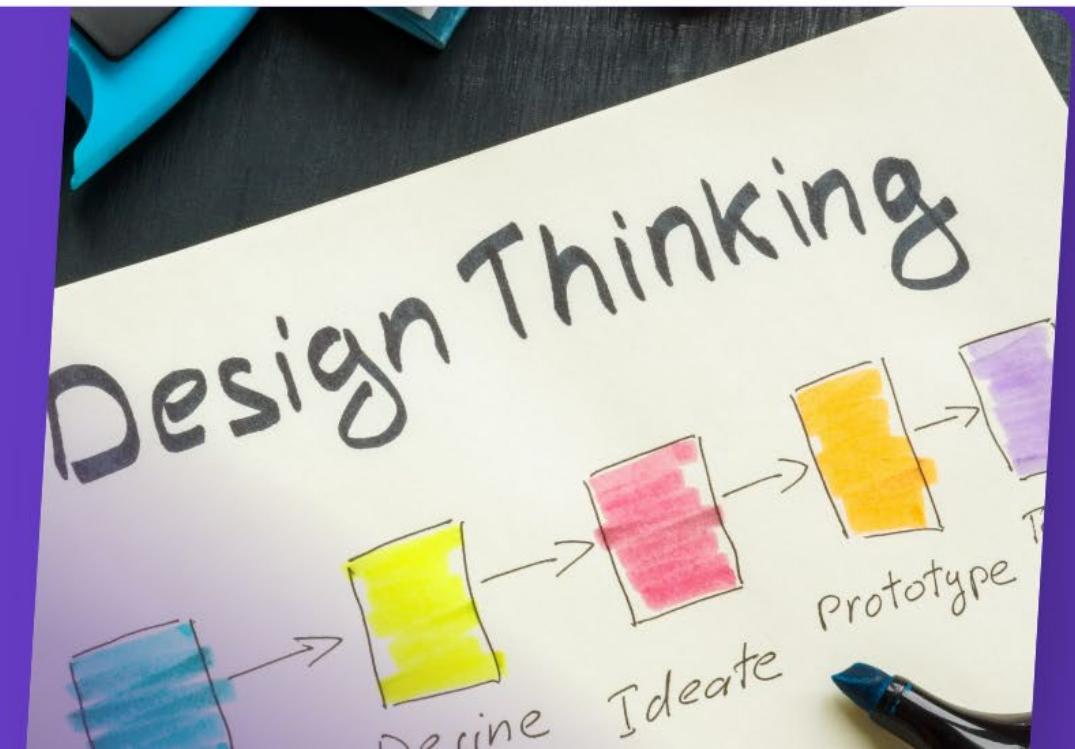
☰ Menu



[Home](#) | [What We Do](#) | [Universal Design for Learning](#)

## Universal Design for Learning

CAST created the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework so that all learning experiences in school, the workplace, and life are thoughtfully designed to elevate strengths and eliminate barriers. Because everyone deserves the opportunity to grow and thrive.



## Activity 2: Worksheet

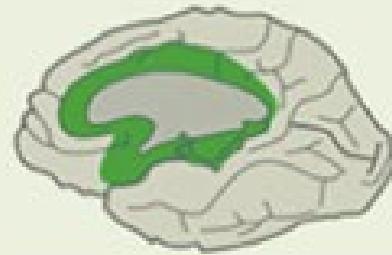
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Watch the [video](#) and take brief notes to answer the five questions about UDL, its purpose, barriers, and core principles.

# 3 core principles when designing learning experiences:

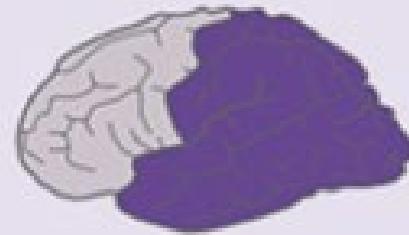
## Multiple Means of Engagement

Stimulate motivation and sustained enthusiasm for learning by promoting various ways of engaging with material.



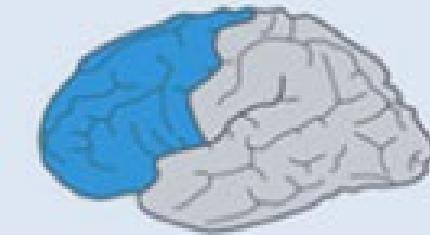
## Multiple Means of Representation

Present information and content in a variety of ways to support understanding by students with different learning styles/abilities.



## Multiple Means of Action/Expression

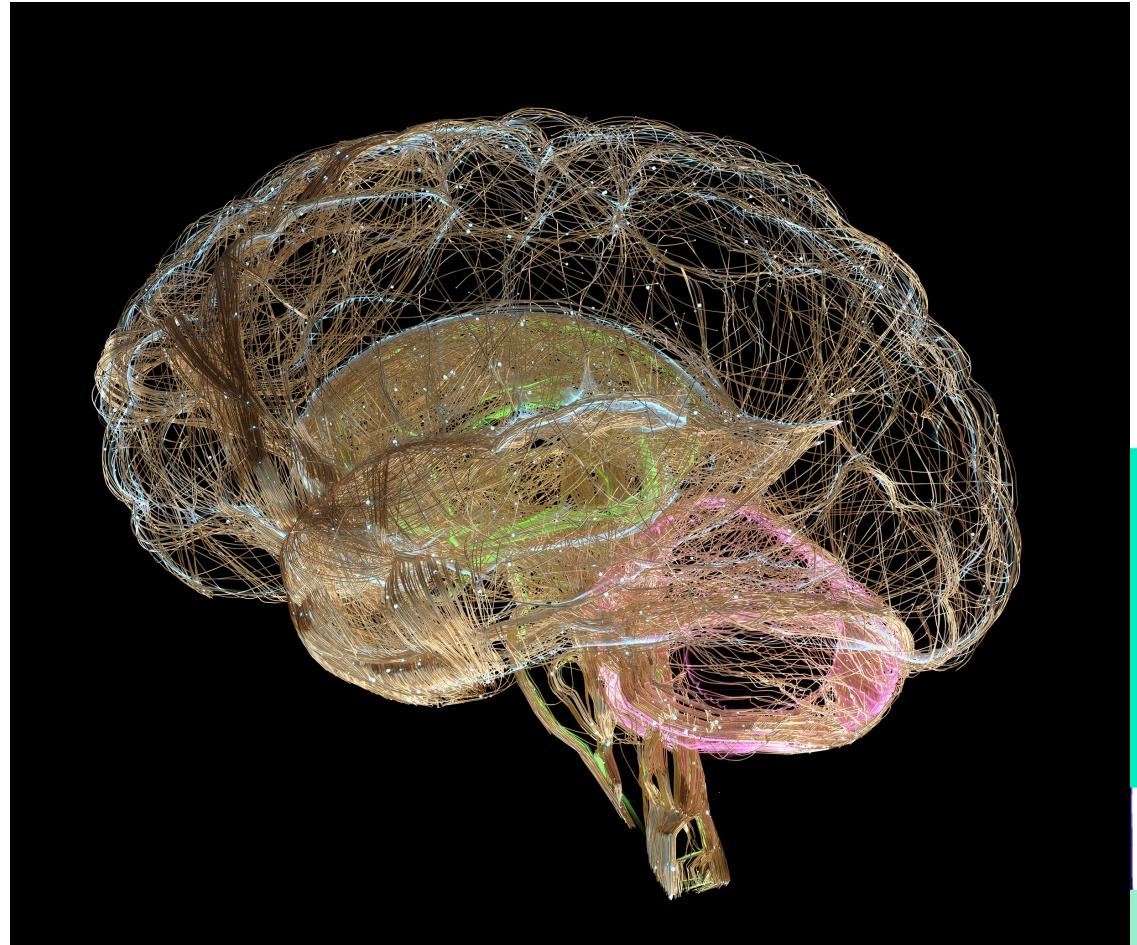
Offer options for students to demonstrate their learning in various ways (e.g. allow choice of assessment type).



# UDL Framework

UDL is based on how the brain learns.

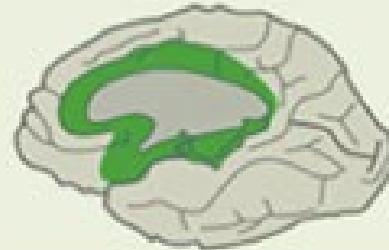
It is grounded in **neuroscience** and focuses on understanding that learners process information differently.



# 3 core principles when designing learning experiences:

## Multiple Means of Engagement

Stimulate motivation and sustained enthusiasm for learning by promoting various ways of engaging with material.



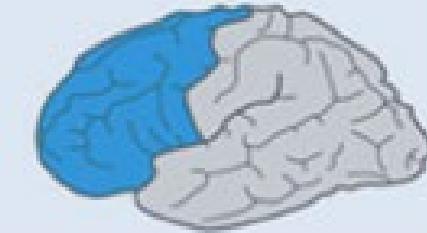
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# Multiple Means of Engagement

## Affective networks (“why” of learning)

Focus: What motivates and engages learners, and how they maintain persistence.

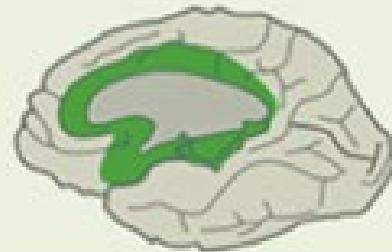
Example: Offering choices, relevant topics, challenges, or collaborative opportunities to boost motivation



# 3 core principles when designing learning experiences:

## Multiple Means of Engagement

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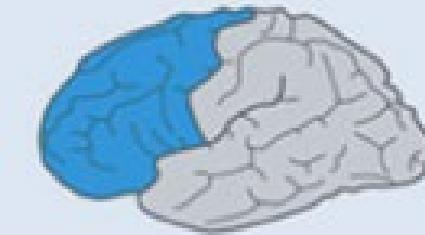
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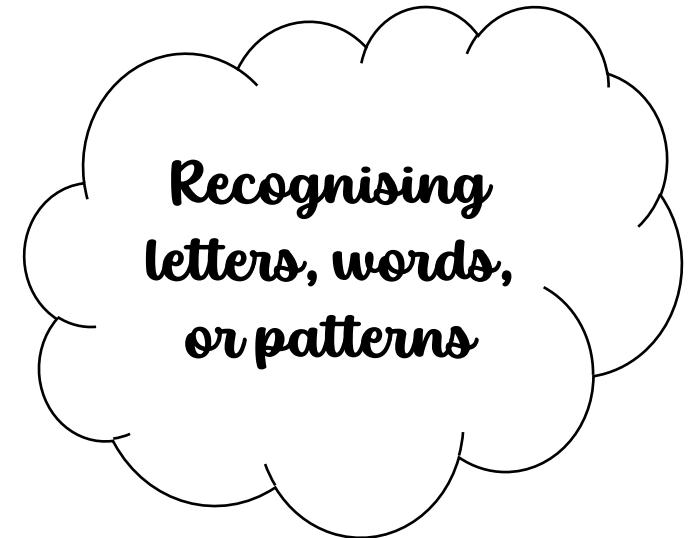


# Multiple Means of Representation

## Recognition networks (“what” of learning)

Focus: How learners perceive and understand information.

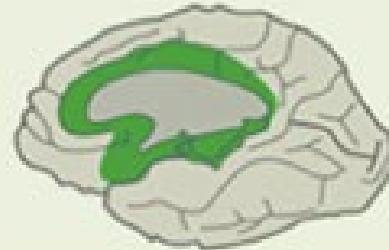
Example: Providing text, audio, visuals, or hands-on materials to support comprehension.



# 3 core principles when designing learning experiences:

## Multiple Means of Engagement

Stimulate motivation and sustained enthusiasm for learning by promoting various ways of engaging with material.



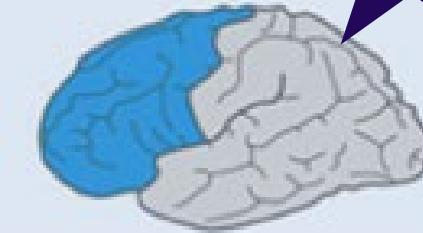
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## Multiple Means of Action/Expression

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# Multiple Means of Action and Expression

## Strategic networks (“how” of learning)

Focus: How learners plan, organise, and express what they know.

Example: Allowing students to respond via writing, speech, drawing, or digital media.



## Design Multiple Means of Engagement



### Design Options for Welcoming Interests & Identities <sup>(7)</sup>

- Optimize choice and autonomy (7.1)
- Optimize relevance, value, and authenticity (7.2)
- Nurture joy and play (7.3)
- Address biases, threats, and distractions (7.4)

### Design Options for Sustaining Effort & Persistence <sup>(8)</sup>

- Clarify the meaning and purpose of goals (8.1)
- Optimize challenge and support (8.2)
- Foster collaboration, interdependence, and collective learning (8.3)
- Foster belonging and community (8.4)
- Offer action-oriented feedback (8.5)

### Design Options for Emotional Capacity <sup>(9)</sup>

- Recognize expectations, beliefs, and motivations (9.1)
- Develop awareness of self and others (9.2)
- Promote individual and collective reflection (9.3)
- Cultivate empathy and restorative practices (9.4)

## Design Multiple Means of Representation



### Design Options for Perception <sup>(1)</sup>

- Support opportunities to customize the display of information (1.1)
- Support multiple ways to perceive information (1.2)
- Represent a diversity of perspectives and identities in authentic ways (1.3)

### Design Options for Language & Symbols <sup>(2)</sup>

- Clarify vocabulary, symbols, and language structures (2.1)
- Support decoding of text, mathematical notation, and symbols (2.2)
- Cultivate understanding and respect across languages and dialects (2.3)
- Address biases in the use of language and symbols (2.4)
- Illustrate through multiple media (2.5)

### Design Options for Building Knowledge <sup>(3)</sup>

- Connect prior knowledge to new learning (3.1)
- Highlight and explore patterns, critical features, big ideas, and relationships (3.2)
- Cultivate multiple ways of knowing and making meaning (3.3)
- Maximize transfer and generalization (3.4)

## Design Multiple Means of Action & Expression



### Design Options for Interaction <sup>(4)</sup>

- Vary and honor the methods for response, navigation, and movement (4.1)
- Optimize access to accessible materials and assistive and accessible technologies and tools (4.2)

### Design Options for Expression & Communication <sup>(5)</sup>

- Use multiple media for communication (5.1)
- Use multiple tools for construction, composition, and creativity (5.2)
- Build fluencies with graduated support for practice and performance (5.3)
- Address biases related to modes of expression and communication (5.4)

### Design Options for Strategy Development <sup>(6)</sup>

- Set meaningful goals (6.1)
- Anticipate and plan for challenges (6.2)
- Organize information and resources (6.3)
- Enhance capacity for monitoring progress (6.4)
- Challenge exclusionary practices (6.5)

Access

Support

Executive Function

## Activity 3

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Watch the [video](#) and take brief notes to answer the following questions:

1. How does planning for everyone from the start in UDL differ from changing lessons for certain groups in DI?
2. How is offering choices to all learners in UDL different from creating separate tasks for different learners in DI?

Aspect	Universal Design for Learning (UDL)	Differentiated Instruction (DI)
Approach	Proactive – planned at the design stage	Reactive – adapted during instruction
Focus	Designing curriculum to be flexible for all learners	Adjusting teaching for specific learners/groups
Goal	Remove barriers and increase access from the start	Meet individual needs once they are identified
Philosophy	One design for all → built-in flexibility	Different paths for different learners
Example in ELT	Offering a story in text, audio, and video so all learners can access it in different ways	Giving stronger learners an extended reading, while supporting others with vocabulary scaffolds
Strength	Inclusive from the beginning, reduces need for retroactive accommodations	Personalised and responsive to learner diversity in real time
Limitation	Requires strong planning and resources upfront	Can be time-consuming and harder to manage in large classes

# Practical strategies

- Challenge negative attitudes (avoid stereotypes)
- Avoid stereotypes in materials (review resources regularly)
- Treat everyone fairly and equally (use non-discriminatory language)
- Use multicultural themes in lessons
- Ensure accessibility for all (audio, braille, large print)
- Adapt teaching and assessment methods
- Incorporate varied learning styles
- Provide inclusive environments
- Ensure equal participation opportunities



# Some Current UK Stats

Around 16 million people in the UK live with a disability — that's nearly 1 in 4 of the population (ONS, 2024; DWP, 2024).

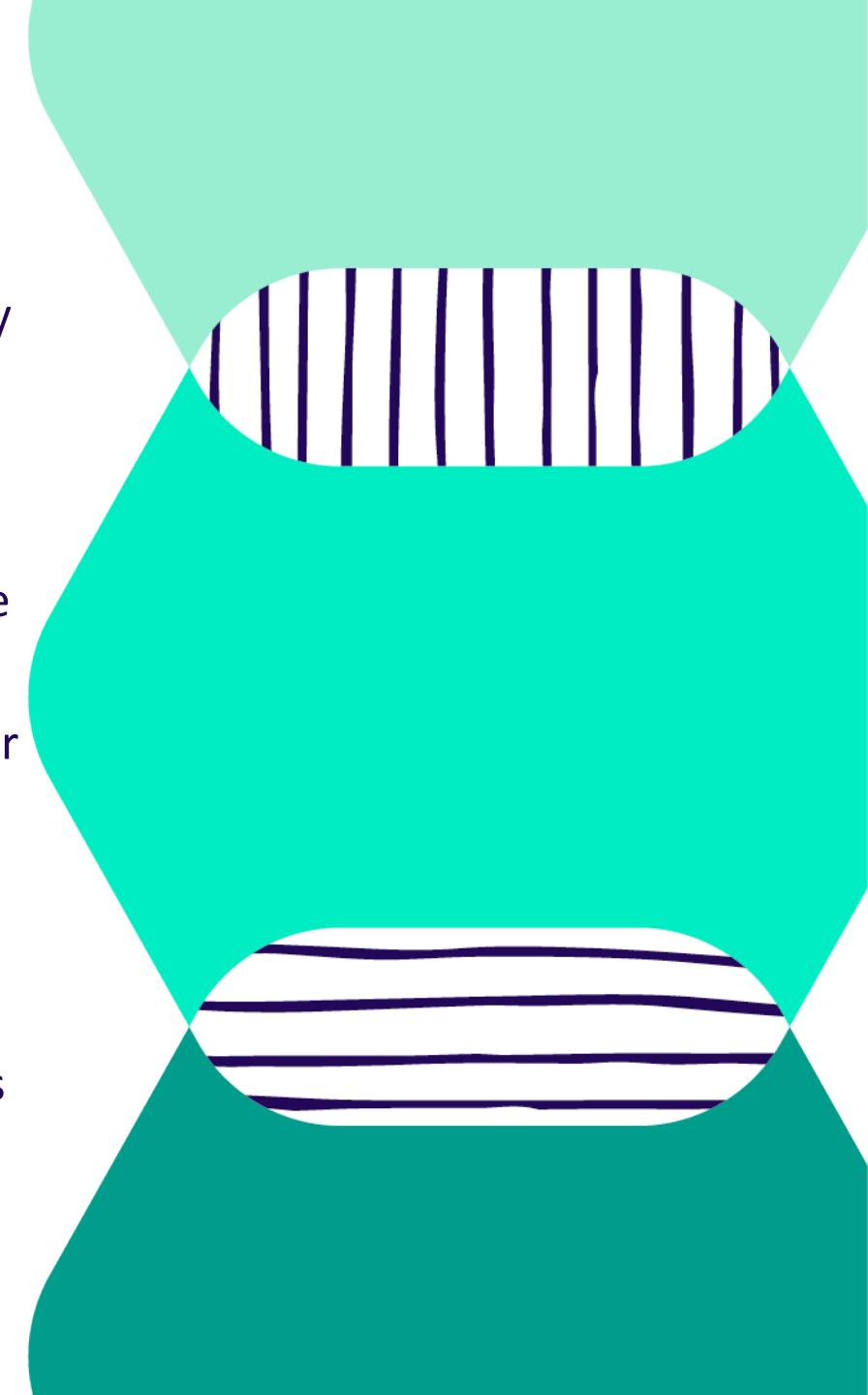
Approximately 1.8 million children (aged up to 19) have a disability or long-term health condition (Contact, 2023–24).

The UK's population includes about 9.5 million people born outside the UK, representing roughly 14% of the total population (ONS, 2024).

Around 6 million residents hold non-British nationalities, accounting for about 9% of the UK population (ONS, 2024).

Eight main religions are practised across Britain: Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Judaism, Buddhism, “Other religions”, and “No religion” (ONS Census, 2021).

The UK Government's official classification recognises 19 ethnic groups in England and Wales (Cabinet Office, 2024).



## UoW's EDI Strategy

<https://www.westminster.ac.uk/sites/default/public-files/general-documents/EDI-strategy-2025-2030.pdf>



# EDI Policy at the University of Westminster

UoW is dedicated to creating a safe, supportive, fair and respectful environment for students, staff, applicants, visitors and stakeholders. Discrimination and harassment are not tolerated.

Guided by the *Equality Act 2010* and *Education Act 1986*, the UoW has duties to protect against discrimination, advance equality, support freedom of speech, and publish annual equality data and objectives. Breaches may lead to legal or disciplinary action.

The policy is publicly available online and in alternative formats, and is widely shared within the UoW community.

Further advice and guidance are available through advisory services, the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer, Student and Academic Services, colleague networks, and staff/student unions.

# Conclusion

*Today is just the beginning!  
What matters is how we use this  
awareness in our daily choices  
and practice.*

