

Diversity & inclusion syllabus checklist

WHAT IS THIS RESOURCE?

A syllabus checklist that can be utilized as a tool for course review using the lens of diversity and inclusion. The listed items are highly recommended for inclusion in course syllabi and/or courses, as best practices and in support of diversity and inclusion to the benefit of all students. Many of the items are also elements of Universal Design for Learning (UDL).

HOW DO I USE IT?

This resource can be a self-reflective tool and/or a conversation starter with colleagues. Review committees may wish to use this checklist, and add school-specific items to it per their five-year plans for diversity and inclusion, when updating a single course or all courses in a program. The assumption is made that syllabi being reviewed already adhere to the [USC Curriculum Office Syllabus Template](#). For assistance, please [contact CET](#).

Relevant considerations (not to be included in the syllabus document)

- **Personal Definitions**

Identification of the many diversities present in your course and your assumptions made about students' skill level, device use, lifestyle, comfort, etc.

- **Departmental Definition**

Review of school's working definition of Diversity and Inclusion from its Five-Year Plan.

Notes:

Recommended course policy (included in the syllabus)

- **Communication**

Encouragement of students to contact instructor outside of class. Specifications of how students should contact instructor (e.g., USC email) and the time frame in which instructor will respond (e.g., within 48 hours).

- **Technology**

Instruction on how students in need of course-required technology can obtain it (e.g., loaner laptop) and training on the technology.

- **Discussion Etiquette**

Statement of required professional language/terms used in the field and expected to be used by students. Statement of behavioral expectations for online and/or classroom discussions.

Notes:

Representative content (may be included in the syllabus, referred to in the syllabus, and/or present elsewhere in the course)

- **Current events**

Inclusion of real-world events, both local and global/international, when pertinent to course learning objectives and in support of weekly topics.

- **Perspectives & voices**

Inclusion of traditionally un- or under-represented perspectives and voices woven throughout, not included as an add-on, one-off, or separate section.

- **Instructor impartiality**

Provision of instructor-created content that demonstrates fair attention to topics and issues regardless of personal beliefs and without revealing one's bias or appearing to push a personal agenda.

Notes:

Content format (may be included in the syllabus, referred to in the syllabus, and/or present elsewhere in the course)

- **Types**

Inclusion of content in multiple formats when possible, such as a video interview with an expert on the topic as well as a research article or textbook chapter.

- **Images**

Provided content containing images, such as slides and videos, is described/captioned, and reflects the diversity of students in the course/at USC.

- **Accessibility**

Linked content follows recommended best practices for access: videos are captioned and transcripts provided, documents are .pdf or .doc, documents use headings rather than individually-styled text, etc. For assistance, contact DSP.

- **OERs (Open Educational Resources)**

Inclusion of free and openly licensed course content to replace or supplement for-purchase content, such as an e-textbook. For more information, visit USC Libraries OER Guide

Notes:

Assignments/assessments (may be included in the syllabus, referred to in the syllabus, and/or present elsewhere in the course)

- **Formative assessment**

Description of formative assessments, providing students with multiple low-stakes opportunities to assess and improve their performance.

- **Summative assessment**

Description of the diverse modes of expression through a variety of assessment types (group projects, case-based role plays, partner quiz, multimodal presentations, etc.) in addition to, or instead of, traditional types (multiple choice, essay/paper, etc.).

- **Description**

Reference to assignment descriptions that will be disseminated and include the course learning objective the assignment supports, brief narrative paragraph prompt, scaffolded steps to complete the assignment, and grading rubric. See [CET Assignment Description Template](#).

Notes:

Grading (may be included in the syllabus, referred to in the syllabus, and/or present elsewhere in the course)

- **Grading rubrics**

Reference to the use of grading rubrics for all assignments/assessments to demonstrate clarity, transparency, specificity, fairness, and attempts at objectivity.

Notes:

Support resources (required for all USC syllabi. Can be copy/pasted from USC Syllabus Template)

- **Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems**

Descriptions of student support options and their contact information.

Notes:

USC resources to consider

SCampus: SCampus Part D, Section 1: [Free Expression and Dissent](#)

USC Principles of Community: [USC Principles of Community](#)

USC Diversity Resources for Students: Comprehensive [list of student resources](#) from the USC diversity website

USC Disability Services and Programs

USC Office of Religious Life: [Policy on absence for observance of religious holy days](#) and best efforts not to schedule. Major exams and due dates on holy days of observation

Center for Excellence in Teaching (CET): [Course design, instruction, and evaluation](#)