

# Inclusive teaching practices

Developed by Deakin Learning Futures in collaboration with  
Equity and Diversity, Deakin University.

## **ABSTRACT**

At Deakin University, the engagement of all students is viewed as fundamental. Inclusive teaching and learning refers to the ways in which the Deakin University community creates a meaningful and embracing environment for all its students – located or on Cloud Deakin. Inclusive teaching and learning is characterised by a positive stance towards diversity and difference as it recognises strengths and the potential for creating a significant higher education experience. It recognises multiple ways of engaging with students and the role of the University in doing so. This guide provides an overview of inclusive teaching practices to assist academics with furthering their understandings of this topic. Also, to support the development of practices that support inclusivity as a notion.

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## WHAT IS INCLUSIVE TEACHING?

Inclusive learning and teaching in higher education refers to the ways in which pedagogy, curricula and assessment are designed and delivered to engage students in learning that is meaningful, relevant and accessible to all. It embraces a view of the individual and individual difference as the source of diversity that can enrich the lives and learning of others (Hockings 2010).

The principles of inclusive teaching and learning are also informed by good teaching practice and environments that humanise the learning experience. The three common principles of inclusive teaching speak to the heart of good teaching matters:

- There is a diversity of learners and ways of learning, which need to be taken into account when designing learning activities
- Learners learn best when learning activities require them to be actively engaged
- Assessment should have a pedagogical intent, making a contribution to students' learning (Gale 2010).

Inclusive teaching practices:

- recognise that students are individuals with different strengths and needs
- apply multiple strategies to cater for differences in learning styles (Universal Design for Learning). <http://www.cast.org/udl/>

There is no one size fits all approach. There are a number of strategies that are included in this guide to assist academics with providing an inclusive environment for all students from whatever background to achieve their full potential including:

- understanding individual needs
- exploring diversity issues

Inclusive teaching strategies for academics to support students from other diverse groups can be accessed from the Creating Accessible Teaching and Support website at: [http://www.adcet.edu.au/Cats/Teaching\\_and\\_Assessment.chpx](http://www.adcet.edu.au/Cats/Teaching_and_Assessment.chpx). Other resources are also listed at the end of this document.

It is difficult for a guide to include an in depth review of all the issues, however, this guide should assist academics in reflecting on their practice and continuing to explore issues around inclusivity.

## UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING

As a facilitator of learning, it is your responsibility to not only be aware of differences amongst students, but also to incorporate activities that allow all students to share their views and experiences with dignity and respect in a safe and nurturing environment. Such an environment will enhance the students' learning experiences, instil confidence and pride and will allow diversity to be shared and celebrated. One of the ways for accomplishing this is to use Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles in the design and delivery of curriculum:

- using multiple means of representation
- using multiple means of expression and action
- using multiple means of engagement.

Students will have different learning needs – some will be young school-leavers, others will be more mature learners and they may have different learning styles, educational backgrounds and language abilities. Keep in mind that most people have one or more preferred styles of learning: visual...reading, writing, kinaesthetic.

By incorporating a range of learning activities that use a variety of media, you will be catering for different learning styles. Choice increases motivation to learn, and freedom to negotiate and select methods of delivery adding to quality learning. Whatever activity or technique you choose, you need clear goals that lead to meaningful learning.

Teaching need not always follow the same routine. By delivering our classes using different activities and media we are catering for different learning styles and helping to keep things interesting for students. For more ideas on Universal Design for Learning teaching methods and use of technologies, go to <http://www.cast.org/udl/>.

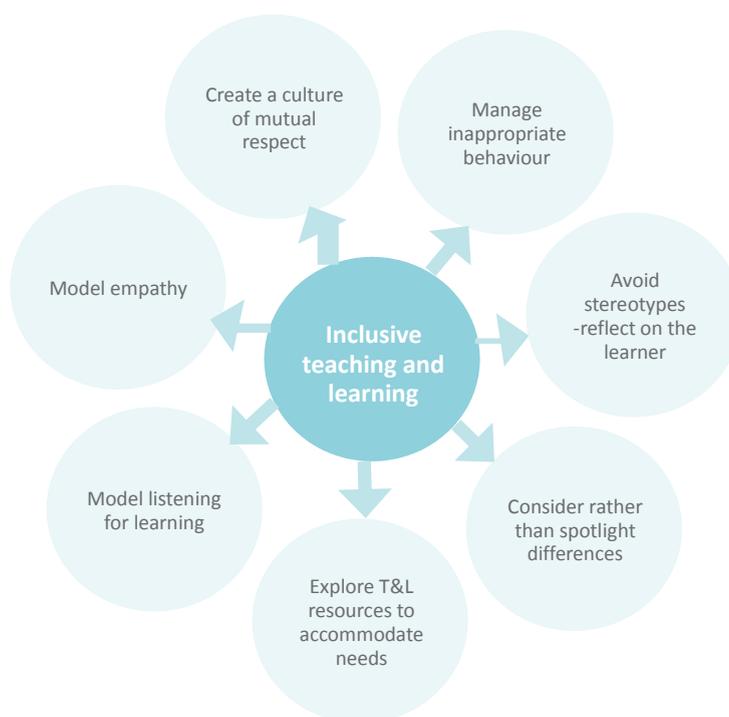
## GENERAL GOOD INCLUSIVE TEACHING STRATEGIES

Being inclusive within the higher education context requires understanding, preparedness and resources. This enables teachers to deal with an increasingly diverse set of student backgrounds, ability and attainment and larger classes whilst endeavouring to provide an excellent learning experience.

Inclusive teaching strategies are reflective of best teaching practice. They demonstrate a willingness to be flexible and responsive to student needs, for instance, field trips need to be planned carefully so that all student requirements are met – mobility, prayers time (especially Friday and during festivals etc.). Other strategies and some CloudDeakin tools and resources are outlined below.

Inclusive teaching does not mean that the academic needs to be an expert on every religion, illness, cultural group etc., but it should include a willingness to ask students, engage in discussion and make appropriate changes, and be prepared to understand and seek out information/resources. Figure 1 illustrates elements to be taken into account when creating an inclusive learning and teaching environment whilst Table 1 outlines some general strategies.

Figure 1: Creating an inclusive teaching and learning environment



(De Fazio 2013)

Table 1: General inclusive teaching strategies

Teaching feature	Details	Digital technologies
<b>Visual presentation of material</b>	Ensure students can follow demonstrations of equipment.	eSims Video capture (Echo 360 personal capture)
<b>Terminology</b>	Clarify the terminology so that students can follow the presentation easily.	Prezi presentation on terminology and how it is used appropriately
<b>Clear assessment criteria</b>	Ensure your assessment criteria are clear and reasonable.	Rubrics
<b>Assessing linguistic elements</b>	Make any requirements of English language skills explicit (vocabulary, spelling, grammar etc.) for all students.	Rubrics
<b>Adjusting the learning requirements</b>	Consider how learning requirements provide a way for students to demonstrate skills and understandings.	ePortfolio eLive
<b>Group work</b>	Mix groups for collaborative work to develop a range of graduate competencies.	ePortfolio Moviemaker
<b>Flexibility</b>	Students need to be able to grasp key concepts in their own time without the pressure of understanding each and every word.  Students might find these resources helpful as they eliminate the need to physically locate to campus, and tailor the learning experiences to meet their needs.	Cloud concepts, Podcasts of lectures, i-lectures (Echo 360 personal capture)
<b>Clarify expectations</b>	Clear expectations decreases anxiety. Use examples/models, think about delivery methods, be flexible when reasonable etc.	Cloud concepts, i-lectures (Echo 360 personal capture)
<b>Resources</b>	Direct students to important resources – don't assume, for example, that students will just work out the referencing system.	Get to know library resources <a href="http://www.deakin.edu.au/library/">http://www.deakin.edu.au/library/</a>  The Deakin University Guide to assignment writing and referencing <a href="http://www.deakin.edu.au/students/study-support/referencing">http://www.deakin.edu.au/students/study-support/referencing</a>

<b>Feedback</b>	<p>Feedback that facilitates student understanding and strategies to manage learning would be appreciated by the student.</p> <p>Consider the format of the feedback: audio? text?</p> <p>Breaking down of messages?</p> <p>How will the student process the information and how can you best facilitate this?</p> <p>Consider types of feedback that may be incorporated – self, peer feedback</p>	eLive
<b>Seek assistance</b>	<p>Deakin has a range of support services including the library, Deakin Student Life, DUSA, equity and Diversity to assist students in their transition to academic life. Consider providing students with links to these services via Cloud Deakin (e.g. course sites) or invite relevant staff in to speak to students directly if appropriate</p>	<a href="http://www.deakin.edu.au">www.deakin.edu.au</a>

## STUDENT DIVERSITY

Student diversity can incorporate difference across a number of dimensions, namely previous education, personal disposition, current circumstances and cultural backgrounds.

Examples of student diversity include:

- Educational: Level/type of entry qualifications; skills; ability; knowledge; educational experience; life and work experience; learning approaches.
- Dispositional: Identity including self-esteem; confidence; motivation; aspirations; expectations; preferences; attitudes; assumptions; beliefs; emotional intelligence; maturity; learning styles; perspectives; interests; self-awareness; gender; sexuality.
- Circumstantial: Age; disability; paid/voluntary employment; caring responsibilities; geographical location; access to IT and transport services; flexibility; time available; entitlements; financial background and means; marital status.
- Cultural: Language; values; cultural capital; religion and belief; country of origin/residence; ethnicity/race; social background.

Some students may find the challenge of an Australian academic culture quite daunting. Issues are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Some challenges for students

Some challenges for CALD students	Explanation
<b>Language/linguistic issues</b>	Being able to attain the high level of communication skills necessary (that is, fluency in speaking, writing, listening and reading) required for successful academic studies does not stop with an entry score (e.g. IELTS 6.5). Rather it starts at this point and students are required to develop increasing proficiency to deal with study requirements as they progress through their studies.
<b>Sociocultural issues</b>	This relates to when students do not understand the expectations and norms of interacting with those from a different culture. These might include the academic culture, the professional culture as experienced via practicums and generally when interacting with peers, academics, or even referencing conventions etc.
<b>Fear of failure</b>	Students often feel that they have many challenges and unsure about their academic success. Academic anxiety can be detrimental to academic success, particularly when dealing with a foreign academic culture. Creating a culture of risk-taking through questioning, curiosity and empathy can assist in addressing this aspect.
<b>Culture shock</b>	<p>Different environment, clothing, language, expectations, food etc. can lead to culture shock. Students often try to work through this themselves but culture shock can be quite debilitating and alienating. Student wellbeing should be a focus. Equity and Diversity can be of assistance to staff in guiding students and to students (<a href="http://www.deakin.edu.au/equity-diversity/">http://www.deakin.edu.au/equity-diversity/</a>). As part of the Deakin Student gateway there is also further information about living and studying in Australia: <a href="http://www.deakin.edu.au/current-students/international/living/index.php">http://www.deakin.edu.au/current-students/international/living/index.php</a>.</p> <p>Student Life Services offer a range of support services for students: <a href="http://www.deakin.edu.au/ike/studsupp.php">http://www.deakin.edu.au/ike/studsupp.php</a>.</p>

## INCLUSIVE TEACHING STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC PREPAREDNESS

There are specific inclusive teaching strategies that academics can utilise to assist all students, which are summarised, in Table 3.

Table 3: Inclusive teaching strategies

Teaching strategy	Details	Resources
<b>Avoid overloading the student</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When dealing with a dense and complex piece of writing or video clip, identify key concepts which they should focus on to avoid overloading students (language over meaning).</li> </ul>	<b>Cloud Concepts</b> Slides Visuals such as mind-maps
<b>Overcomplicating slides</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Don't over complicate your slides with many concepts as this can be difficult for a student to process, especially if they are trying to decipher the meaning of the concepts and listen to you at the same time</li> <li>Load slides on the LMS for students to review.</li> </ul>	Cloud Concepts Presentations made available on CloudDeakin
<b>Unpack the language</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unpack the language – specific terms, jargon, slang etc.</li> <li>Ensure that students can identify and understand terms as they are being used in context</li> <li>Use glossaries and other language tools to assist students in understanding threshold concepts and discipline-specific language.</li> </ul>	Cloud Concepts Annotated notes
<b>Exemplars</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annotated exemplars of both strong and weak assignments will assist in clarifying expectations and ideas</li> <li>Use inclusive exemplars relating to positive experiences, contributions and ideas of resources that could be used.</li> </ul>	Collaborative group work discussing exemplars (CloudDeakin or located).

<b>Student groups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider groups to: facilitate social-cultural and linguistic understandings or to provide certain cultural perspectives on a discipline topic</li> <li>• The whole group might undertake a broad task of comparing different cultural perspectives</li> <li>• Consider incorporating group assessment tasks into assessment</li> </ul> <p>Note: No one student can represent a whole culture, but it does help to capitalise and honour diversity – and, what might turn out as sameness.</p>	Mediawiki assignments  Group discussion based on eSimulations  ePortfolios that include group presentations (using e.g. Prezi)
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## ACCESSIBLE FROM THE START – INCLUSIVE BY DESIGN

Planning to be accessible will save you time and allow students to focus on enjoying the learning process. Positive feedback from students will reflect back to the academic, and the university as a whole.

There are some simple steps to accessible planning which have been synthesised from the University of Sheffield Manual (see: References).

### 1. Think about the learning outcomes of your course.

- Do your course learning outcomes represent what you would like your students to gain from your course? The course learning outcomes should incorporate and contextualise the Deakin Graduate Learning Outcomes (and requirements of the Australian Qualifications Framework plus any professional accreditation requirements).
- Can students with different learning styles meet those course learning outcomes?
- What skills will your course help students to develop?
- Are those skills important in developing ‘The Deakin Graduate’?

### 2. Think about your students

- What background knowledge do you expect your students to have?
- Think about the support services and resources you can recommend to students that don’t have the specific pre-requisite knowledge you have in mind.
- Can you make your teaching more flexible to adapt to changing student needs?

### 3. Designing course content

- Do your PowerPoint slides and handouts follow basic accessibility guidelines?
- Have you considered how to make your learning content more accessible through technology and publishing online?
- Have you thought about how students can engage and interact with learning content?
- Plan opportunities for students to have discussions and ask questions.

## 4. Check

- Communicate with colleagues, especially those who will be teaching on the course.
- Work together to ensure that your course is accessible.
- Think about how to make assessments accessible. What reasonable adjustments can be made to assist students?

Student Services will be more than happy to assist.

### Example:

A student with a hearing impairment may have certain requirements depending on the nature of their hearing loss. Some students will lip-read, some will require specialist equipment, others will require a note-taker or an Auslan interpreter. Some students will use a variety of strategies to deal with different situations e.g. classes (lip-read), exams, online (subtitles) etc. Table 4 provides some teaching strategies to assist in catering for diverse needs.

Table 4: Teaching hints and tips

Strategy	Explanation
<b>Speaking clearly and at a moderate speed</b>	Ensure that students are able to decipher what you are saying. Speaking without covering the mouth or looking down at notes is preferable. Don't over-exaggerate either, this can distort the communication.
<b>Communicating with the student</b>	Ensure that any conversation is directed to the student who is the instigator of the conversation, not to the learning assistant.
<b>Facilitating note-taking</b>	Some students write down everything that is said so keep a normal pace when speaking.  Providing students with a handout of key points will assist in providing the student with an appropriate record of the class. Developing Cloud Concepts available through CloudDeakin assists students to understand the key points you are trying to get across about the topic.
<b>Allowing time to process information</b>	Be aware there may be a time lag between a question being asked and the student's ability to respond.
<b>Access to class notes</b>	Provide notes and handouts to all students early (prior to class). Allow early access to online class notes when appropriate.
<b>Physical aspects</b>	All students should be accommodated comfortably in classrooms e.g. do not marginalise students (for example, requiring a student in a wheelchair to sit near the door).
<b>Script functions on video material</b>	Videos may have a script function that can be turned on via a caption reader. Librarians can assist with ascertaining if this function exists with the film you wish to use as a resource, and how it should be used.

<b>Using voice boards</b>	A voice board is like a discussion board but also has audio so that all students can enter into discussion verbally, such as Blackboard.
<b>Avoid background noise</b>	Limiting background noise assists in focusing on communication without distractions for students.
<b>Clarify expectations of the student with mental illness</b>	Some students may find it difficult to make decisions. It is important that they be given all necessary information as well as time and opportunities to make important decisions.
<b>Do not make assumptions about students' skills and abilities</b>	Many students will have a number of issues that may affect their study. Assumptions should not be made about what students deem as important or see as issues. Students welcome being consulted about their education and being actively involved in shaping their learning experiences. Therefore a consultative, inclusive approach is best to get the student's opinion if they are happy to discuss.
<b>Promote a positive view of diversity and difference</b>	Through lecture notes, language and attitudes to students to promote a positive view of diversity, that is disability without deficit.

## RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL CONSIDERATIONS

Multi-ethnic and multi-faith groups make up our Deakin University student cohort. Where reasonable, taking into account a number of factors may contribute to providing a comfortable and inclusive learning and teaching environment. Most aspects outlined in this guide on inclusive teaching practices are also relevant when considering other cultural factors. However, some specific aspects have been outlined in Table 5.

Table 5: Inclusive teaching strategies that take into account cultural considerations

Aspect	Teaching strategy
<b>Religious observance times, e.g. Friday Prayer time for Muslim or Jewish students.</b>	Allow a class break to coincide with prayer times or be tolerant of students needing to leave class. Cloud Concepts on key points can assist catching up on any missed key information.
<b>Faith related festivities, e.g. Ramadan, Yom Kippur</b>	Noting festivities respectfully to provide an inclusive culture. Provision of extensions on assignments if appropriate. Cloud Concepts or Echo 360 Personal Capture to assist recapping on any missed information.

<b>Specific foods and food preparation (etc. Halal, kosher, vegan)</b>	Cater appropriately
<b>Interactions based on gender (implications for group work)</b>	Where appropriate, consider if gender specific groups might be formed. This is particularly important when the work will include close contact, e.g. some health practicals  Web-based group work
<b>Content of the unit which may be considered topical/counter to religious beliefs</b>	Provide respectful consideration of topics, how these are presented, model questioning and listening with empathy  Cloud concepts on aspects that might require unpacking of cultural understandings/interpretations/explanations  eSims that demonstrate cultural expectations, for instance, the sort of 'small talk' a financial planner might make to make a client feel comfortable.

## CONCLUSION

Inclusive teaching practices create a positive learning and working environment for all. The best way to teach it is to model it: through language, openness and a personal commitment to this aspect of teaching.

## RESOURCES AND READINGS

### Readings on International students

Hellstén, M & Prescott, A 2004, 'Learning at University: the international student experience', *International Education Journal*, vol. 5, no. 3, pp. 344–51.

Smailes, J & Gannon-Leary, P 2008, 'Have we got it right? A case study on international student views of inclusive teaching and learning at Northumbria', *International Journal of Management Education*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 51–60.

[http://www.researchgate.net/publication/242577396\\_Have\\_we\\_got\\_it\\_right\\_A\\_case\\_study\\_on\\_international\\_student\\_views\\_of\\_inclusive\\_teaching\\_and\\_learning\\_at\\_Northumbria](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/242577396_Have_we_got_it_right_A_case_study_on_international_student_views_of_inclusive_teaching_and_learning_at_Northumbria)

### Inclusive teaching

Arizona State University 2010, Arizona State University, Phoenix, Arizona.

<http://www.asu.edu/provost/intergroup/resources/dialogue-guidelines.pdf>

(Discussion from Arizona State University offering guidelines for creating an inclusive and positive climate in the classroom).

CATS, *Teaching & assessment* – CATS, Creating Accessible Teaching & Support (CATS), retrieved 17 June 2013. [http://www.adcet.edu.au/Cats/Teaching\\_and\\_Assessment.chpx](http://www.adcet.edu.au/Cats/Teaching_and_Assessment.chpx)

Center for Teaching & Learning, University of Washington 2013.

<http://www.washington.edu/teaching>

Gale, T 2010, 'Putting social inclusion in its place: three principles for pedagogic work', *Pathways 10 Conference: 'Creating Space for People with Disabilities in Tertiary Education'*, Southbank Institute of Technology, Brisbane, 2 December, pp. 1–15.

<http://dro.deakin.edu.au/eserv/DU:30040886/gale-puttingsocial-2010.pdf>

Gale, T 2010, 'Towards socially inclusive teaching and learning in higher education', *Occasional Papers on Learning and Teaching at UniSA*, Paper 2, National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education, University of South Australia, pp. 1–7. [http://](http://w3.unisa.edu.au/academicdevelopment/what/documents/2010/Gale.pdf)

[w3.unisa.edu.au/academicdevelopment/what/documents/2010/Gale.pdf](http://w3.unisa.edu.au/academicdevelopment/what/documents/2010/Gale.pdf)

Griffiths, S 2010, *Teaching for inclusion in higher education: a guide to practice*, Higher Education Academy, August, pp. 1–69. <http://www.aishe.org/resources/griffiths-2010>

Hockings, C (n.d.), *Learning to teach inclusively*, JISC and The Higher Education Academy. <http://www.wlv.ac.uk/Default.aspx?page=24685>

La Trobe University, *Teaching into practice strategies*.

<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/students/equity/cdip/tips>

(A brief discussion of theory of inclusivity and some practical suggestions for the classroom).

Rodriguez-Falcon, E, Evans, M, Allam, C, Barrett, J & Forrest, D 2010, *The inclusive learning and teaching handbook*, Inclusive Learning and Teaching Project, University of Sheffield, pp. 1–69. [https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly\\_fs/1.18989!/file/The-inclusive-learning-and-teaching-handbook.pdf](https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.18989!/file/The-inclusive-learning-and-teaching-handbook.pdf)

University of California, Berkeley, Centre for Teaching and Learning, Office of the Vice Provost for Teaching, Learning, Academic Planning and Facilities.

<http://teaching.berkeley.edu/bgd/diversity.html>

(Many practical ideas from Barbara Gross Davis on how to base your teaching on consideration of race, ethnicity and gender).

University of Wolverhampton, *Learning to teach Inclusively*, Jointly supported by JISC and The Higher Education Academy (HEA), University of Wolverhampton, UK.

<http://www.wlv.ac.uk/Default.aspx?page=24685>

<http://www.yorku.ca/srowley/tahomepage/incldiv.htm> - contains many useful strategies to use such as assisting painfully shy students, using small group work, involving students in identifying the reasons for some students feeling marginalised. *TERESA: This url no longer works and I can't find it anywhere.*

## Multi-faith resources

Victorian Multicultural Commission's Interfaith Calendar.

<http://www.multicultural.vic.gov.au/resources/interfaith-calendar>

## Chaplaincy

Deakin University, *Multifaith Chaplains*.

<http://www.deakin.edu.au/studentlife/chaplains/index.php>

Deakin University, *Religions – definition and resources*.

<http://www.deakin.edu.au/life-at-deakin/health-wellbeing-safety/chaplains/religions-definition-and-resources> (Overview of different faiths)

## Examples of Cloud Concepts at Deakin University

Deakin University, *From lectures to cloud concepts*, Deakin Learning Futures.

[http://www.deakin.edu.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0010/68158/Intro-to-cloud-concepts.pdf](http://www.deakin.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/68158/Intro-to-cloud-concepts.pdf)

## Using eLive

Deakin University, *eLive*, Deakin Learning Futures.

[http://www.deakin.edu.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/223762/Blackboard-Collaborate-Factsheet.pdf](http://www.deakin.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/223762/Blackboard-Collaborate-Factsheet.pdf)

## ePortfolio

Deakin University, *ePortfolio overview*, Deakin Learning Futures, Deakin University.

<http://www.deakin.edu.au/learning/cloud-learning/clouddeakin/guides/eportfolio/eportfolio-overview>

## Rubrics

Creating a rubric

Deakin University, *Rubrics*, Learning@Deakin, Deakin University.

<http://www.deakin.edu.au/learning/cloud-learning/clouddeakin/guides/assessment/rubrics>

## eSims

Deakin University, *Simulation assessment*, Deakin Learning Futures, Deakin University.

<http://www.deakin.edu.au/learning/designing-assessing-and-evaluating-learning/assessing-for-learning/simulated-assessment>

(Examples of eSimulations at Deakin University)

## Echo360 Personal Capture

How to use this tool

Deakin University, *Echo recordings*, Learning@Deakin, Deakin University.

<http://www.deakin.edu.au/learning/cloud-learning/clouddeakin/guides/video-and-audio/echo>

## OTHER REFERENCES

CAST, *About UDL*, National Center on Accessible Instructional Materials and National Center on Universal Design for Learning, Massachusetts. <http://www.cast.org/udl/>

Deakin University, *Deakin University Library*.

<http://www.deakin.edu.au/library/>

Deakin University, *Equity and diversity*.

<http://www.deakin.edu.au/equity-diversity/>

Deakin University, *Guide to assignment writing and referencing*.

<http://www.deakin.edu.au/students/study-support/referencing>

Deakin University, *Living and studying in Australia*.

<http://www.deakin.edu.au/current-students/international/living/index.php>.

Deakin University, *Student support*.

<http://www.deakin.edu.au/ike/studsupp.php>

## **DEVELOPMENT OF THE INCLUSIVE TEACHING PRACTICES RESOURCE**

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