

PLAN FOR CULTURAL DIVERSITY AWARENESS & INCLUSIVENESS IN LEARNING AND TEACHING

[This 'Plan for Cultural Awareness and Inclusiveness' was developed by the University of Sydney's Cultural Diversity Working Party (CDWP) as a resource for University staff. It was presented to the Learning & Teaching Committee in November 2006; revised in November 2007; and placed on the Institute for Teaching and Learning (ITL)'s website in 2008. The Plan should be used in conjunction with the CDWP's 'Guide for Reflective Practice'.]

Preamble

When reflecting on the concept of cultural diversity in the University of Sydney context, we recognise the unique contribution of Indigenous Australians. The University has a particular responsibility to Indigenous students and to the Indigenous community as a whole, including: commitment to the recruitment and retention of Indigenous students; recognition of the importance of Indigenous knowledge systems; inclusion of Indigenous issues relevant to all Australians within curricula (Indigenisation); and promotion of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

The University's commitment to diversity is also exemplified in its dedication to Internationalisation, which is achieved by enhancing international learning, teaching, and research supervision; developing international resources; and creating international networks and communities.

As a university community, we aspire to contribute to an environment in which diversity is valued in all its myriad attributes, such as (but not limited to):

- Indigeneity
- ethnic heritage
- country of origin
- religious beliefs and practices
- nationality
- language
- gender
- sexuality
- disability
- age
- family structure and responsibilities
- social and community responsibilities
- political views
- place of residence
- educational background
- mode of dress or appearance

Rather than concrete, fixed 'characteristics', aspects of cultural diversity coalesce and impact upon the way we all interact with the world, shaping personal values, modes of interaction, choices, expectations and aspirations. The term 'cultural diversity' reflects the unique qualities specific to each one of us.

Background to the Plan

The Plan for Cultural Diversity Awareness and Inclusiveness in Learning and Teaching has evolved from a number of policies, research projects, and reports, and embodies the University's commitment to cultivating a culturally inclusive learning environment. This commitment is being realised through learning, teaching and supervision practices; student and staff support; and the graduation of students whose scholarly and personal values enhance their contribution to local, national, and international communities. This plan attempts to bring together the findings and recommendations of these policies, projects and reports (see Works Consulted), particularly in relation to [Generic Graduate Attributes](#). The plan is guided by the University's [Strategic Directions Policy](#), specifically in terms of aiming to "cultivate cultural diversity through curriculum development" and "ensure a diverse and talented population of student peers, both undergraduate and postgraduate."

The Nature of the Plan

While this Plan outlines formal objectives, strategies, initiatives, goals, and performance indicators, we realise that achieving real outcomes involves individual reflection, action and change. We therefore suggest that the Plan be read in conjunction with our ['Guide for Reflective Practice'](#). Although the objectives and strategies target specific aspects of cultural diversity in learning, teaching and supervision, we recognise that these aspects of diversity are interrelated and interdependent, rather than separate and fixed. Colleagues are encouraged to tailor the Plan to suit their specific contexts, in line with their own personal and professional development goals.

OBJECTIVE 1: Develop and support culturally inclusive learning and teaching practices through units of study and research supervision

Strategy	Sample Initiatives	Responsibility	Targeted Outcomes	KPIs
<p>1.1 Practice inclusive learning and teaching methods, and teach in ways that value diversity rather than a presumed 'cultural norm'. [EAPS p. 3, 6]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide an early and explicit statement of learning outcomes, activities, and assessments, and invite students to comment. - Utilise teaching methods, including flexible approaches to assessment that are meaningful in a global context and recognise diverse perspectives. - Practise learning activities that maximise communication between students from diverse backgrounds. - Unit of Study Co-ordinators encourage and support tutors' engagement in professional development activities, including inclusive teaching. 	<p>Unit of Study Co-ordinator & Research Supervision Co-ordinator</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students develop shared understanding and ownership of learning processes, outcomes and evaluation. - Students engage in learning experiences that broaden their cultural awareness by working within a diverse cohort. - All students feel their culture is valued within a diverse learning community. 	<p>SCEQ #34: 'I feel I belong to the University community.' And SREQ #8: 'I feel integrated into the department / school's community.'</p> <p>Opportunities for students to engage with teachers, supervisors and / or peers to negotiate learning outcomes, activities, and assessments.</p>
<p>1.2 Teachers and supervisors role model and mentor students in graduate attributes and abilities, both within and outside the classroom environment. [GGA, Cluster 4]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teachers and supervisors utilise the 'Guide for Reflective Practice' to enhance their cultural awareness and appreciation of diversity. [GGA, Cluster 4.5] - Teachers and supervisors familiarise themselves with their faculty statement on graduate attributes: http://www.itl.usyd.edu.au/graduateattributes/statement.htm 	<p>Head of School, Unit of Study Co-Coordinator, teacher / supervisor</p>	<p>Students develop ethical, social, and professional understandings that reflect the diversity of their interactions within the University community. [GGA, Cluster 4]</p>	<p>SCEQ #37: 'My degree course is encouraging my development of relevant ethical, social, and professional perspectives.'</p>

OBJECTIVE 2: Foster an appreciation of and respect for cultural diversity through degree Program development and curriculum design. [GGA Cluster 4]

Strategy	Sample Initiatives	Responsibility	Targeted Outcomes	KPIs
2.1 Ensure that degree programs take account of local, national and international concerns and perspectives whenever relevant. [GGA, Cluster 4]	- Consider diversity of concerns and perspectives in degree reviews.	Degree Program Directors, Deans	Students develop a lifelong approach to learning, understanding, and the construction of knowledge that values diverse perspectives. [GGA 'Lifelong Learning']	Degree reviews demonstrate that diverse concerns and perspectives are increasingly considered.
2.2 Include topics relating to cultural diversity in learning outcomes, curriculum content and assessments.	- Learning outcomes, curriculum content and assessments are reviewed to ensure that topics related to cultural diversity are included.	Head of School, Unit of Study Co-Coordinator	Students demonstrate increased knowledge and understanding of diversity.	Faculties demonstrate to the Academic Board Review that cultural diversity is reflected in learning outcomes, assessments, and overall curricula.
2.3 Ensure that curriculum content is meaningful and relevant in a global context.	- Provide examples from a diverse range of social, cultural and national groups - Ensure content does not reinforce stereotypes	Head of School, Unit of Study Co-Coordinator	Students are equipped through their University experience to contribute as global citizens.	SCEQ #37: 'My degree course is encouraging my development of relevant ethical, social, and professional perspectives.'
2.4 Provide and promote opportunities to experience cultural diversity that extend beyond the traditional University learning context.	- Students engage in opportunities to expand their cultural awareness, such as study abroad, online exchange, and internships in overseas, rural, and Indigenous communities.	Dean, Head of School	Students develop a broad, global sense of cultural awareness as a result of their experiences in diverse learning communities. [GA 'Global Citizenship']	Participation in study abroad, online exchange, and internships increases.

OBJECTIVE 3: Encourage and support cultural inclusiveness within the Faculty, the University community and beyond.

Strategy	Sample Initiatives	Responsibility	Targeted Outcomes	KPIs
<p>3.1 Develop and promote Faculty initiatives to increase cultural diversity awareness and appreciation among staff and students. [GGA Cluster 4]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop and maintain an inclusive online presence, linking with websites providing support and information for students representing diversity (e.g. Koori Centre, ISSU). - Departments utilise 'Guide for Reflective Practice' in teaching & learning workshops and tutors' development programs. 	<p>Dean, Head of School, Departmental Website Co-ordinator</p>	<p>Students and staff develop a sense of Faculty community by participating in programs and activities that welcome and celebrate diversity.</p>	<p>Faculties demonstrate to the Academic Board Review that websites incorporate inclusive content and links to websites relevant to diversity (e.g. Koori Centre, ISSU).</p>
<p>3.2 Provide support programs for students representing diversity. (These may intersect with broader initiatives, but offer targeted support for students associated with difference.) [An International University, p. 6]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide effective language support for both local and international NESB/ESL students, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support for academic English literacy • subject-specific language proficiency. - Implement programs that identify and support 'at risk' students from diverse backgrounds. [Ac. Board Review, p. 13.] - Faculties work with the Library, Learning Centre and other central units to support the learning experience of students from diverse backgrounds. 	<p>Dean, Head of School</p>	<p>Students' retention rates, progression rates and learning outcomes improve as a result of their experience in a supportive, diverse faculty community.</p>	<p>Improvement in first to second year retention rates, and degree progress rates for International and NESB students.</p>
<p>3.3 Offer incentives for teachers and supervisors who incorporate good practices in inclusivity into UoS and research supervision. [Students from Asia, p.10]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teaching staff, research supervisors, and tutors are encouraged to participate in professional development programs relating to cultural diversity. - Culturally inclusive pedagogy is recognised in Faculty and University teaching awards. 	<p>Dean, Associate Deans (L&T), PVC (L&T), HoS</p>	<p>Teachers and supervisors are recognised and rewarded for practising inclusive pedagogy.</p>	<p>Issues of inclusive pedagogy incorporated in professional development programs and award criteria.</p>
<p>3.4 Recognise and support staff and students in engaging with diversity in Indigenous, local, national and international communities. [GGA Global Citizenship & Cluster 4]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop partnerships with relevant community / philanthropic / professional organisations that allow staff and students to interact with diversity in the community at large. 	<p>Dean, Head of School</p>	<p>Students recognise social, cultural, and global responsibilities through experience in a culturally inclusive learning environment.</p>	<p>Students report participation in partnership arrangements in Academic Board Review Interviews.</p>

Works Consulted

Academic Board Faculty Reviews 2001-2004: [Report on the Strengths, Weaknesses and Areas of Improvement](#). (2005). The University of Sydney.

Academic Board Resolutions: [Generic Attributes of Graduates of the University of Sydney](#). (2004).

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Clapham, K. & Kinchela, J. '[What Health Science Students Learn about Indigenous Health.](#)' (2005). Yooroang Garang School of Indigenous Health Studies in association with the School of Public Health, The University of Sydney.

[Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statement](#). (2000). The University of Sydney.

[An International University: Report of the Committee to Review Internationalisation](#). (2003). The University of Sydney.

McLisky, C. & Day, D. '[Black and White Science: Encouraging Indigenous Australian Students into University Science and Technology.](#)' (2004). The Koori Centre in association with the College of Sciences and Technology, The University of Sydney.

[Students from Asia: Issues in Learning and Teaching](#). (2004). Faculty of Education, University of Melbourne in association with Asialink.

[University Strategic Directions 2006-2010](#), (2006). The University of Sydney

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