

Creating an Inclusive Syllabus

This resource aims to support the development of an inclusive syllabus that is transparent and equitable for all students.

Use the “Question to Consider” to review your syllabus (or guide in the creation of new syllabus). The “Syllabus Strategies” can help you add elements to enhance the inclusivity of your course.

This is not an exhaustive list of questions or syllabus strategies. It is an intentional starting point for instructors, and we encourage you to add and adapt as you develop your syllabus.

Have questions or suggestions? Please email the Center for Teaching and Learning – ctl@msubillings.edu

Question to Consider	Syllabus Strategies
<p>Are there clear and multiple avenues for students to communicate with the instructor?</p> <p><i>Why it's important:</i> Students have competing demands on their time, including jobs, caregiving responsibilities, geography, and access to transportation. Students may be more comfortable communicating/meeting online, in-person, or in small groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Variation in office hours dates and times ❖ Options to meet in different modalities or locations ❖ Multiple avenues offered for communication (email, office phone #, online discussion boards, etc)

Question to Consider	Syllabus Strategies
<p>Are there indications of a welcoming and inclusive class environment?</p> <p><i>Why it's important:</i> Students enter a class with varying levels of preparation, lived experiences, learning needs, resiliency, and expectations. Recognition of diverse identities and backgrounds can enhance students' sense of belonging and opportunities to succeed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Includes/links to MSUB Diversity Statement and Land Acknowledgement ❖ Tone is encouraging and promotes student success ❖ Course texts/materials are accessible and reflect diversity in the field ❖ Encourages collaboration and student knowledge creation

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<p>Do students know the purpose of the course and what they will be learning?</p> <p><i>Why it's important:</i> Students who know what they will be learning and why they will be learning it can be more motivated and more connected to the course material.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Course description includes purpose and how it fits into larger curriculum (if applicable) ❖ Learning outcomes are linked to course work and assessments ❖ Assignments and assessments are purposefully described

Question to Consider	Syllabus Strategies
<p>Do students know how to succeed in the course?</p> <p><i>Why it's important:</i> Syllabi often focus on how students can fail/lose points in the course but fail to explain what success in the course looks like. This creates invisible strategies for success that students may struggle to recognize. Students are not always made aware of campus resources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Explicitly states strategies for success (how to study, how long to study, additional resources) ❖ Feedback (beyond a grade) from instructor/peers is offered ❖ Campus resources are described/linked to ❖ Grading procedures, attendance expectations, academic integrity, and other course policies are transparent

Question to Consider	Syllabus Strategies
<p>Are there multiple means of engagement available to students?</p> <p><i>Why it's important:</i> Students have different learning needs and therefore need a variety of opportunities to engage with their peers and the course content to be successful. This also includes course accommodations and accessibility.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Variation in engagement methods (verbal, written, group and individual work) ❖ Students offered choice in how to demonstrate their mastery of learning outcomes ❖ Articulates accommodations/supports for neurodiversity, learning differences, and disabilities

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<p>Are there a variety of ways students can demonstrate their learning?</p> <p><i>Why it's important:</i> Students need opportunities to demonstrate their learning as a process as well as mastery of the outcomes in order to grow and learn from their mistakes. Students have different learning needs and can benefit from demonstrating knowledge in multiple formats.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Low-stakes and high-stakes assessments ❖ Options to revise/redo assignments, quizzes, or exams ❖ Opportunities for self-assessment and/or reflection ❖ Variation in assessment methods (written, verbal, digital, group, and individual work)

Question to Consider	Syllabus Strategies
<p>Is there space for students to experience hardship and still pass the class?</p> <p><i>Why it's important:</i> Events such as illness/injury, family emergencies/loss, mental health crises, and financial hardship are outside of student's control. Courses with flexibility make it easier for students to experience crises/hardship and still pass the course.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Flexibility with deadlines and attendance ❖ Option to drop lowest quiz/test or assignment score ❖ Textbooks/course materials are Open Educational Resources (OER) or available on reserve ❖ Campus resources are described/linked to