

Inclusive-Uni:
*Promoting Inclusive
Campuses for Equity
and Diversity*

Reference Number:
2024-1-TR01-KA220-HED-000254836

Duration:
01.12.2024-31.07.2027

Module 2 – Unit 3 Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

UNIT 3

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

Designing inclusive environments from the outset.



UNIT 3

Definition first: what is UDL?

UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING

UDL is a proactive framework for designing learning and working environments that offer multiple ways to engage, access information and demonstrate understanding or participation.
(CAST, 2024)

UDL does not remove all need for individual reasonable adjustments. It reduces avoidable barriers from the beginning.



Evidence says: UDL is a proactive framework, but reviews caution that implementation quality and context matter. [Source: CAST, 2024; Zhang et al., 2024; Ren et al., 2026 71](#)

UNIT 3

The three UDL principles

ENGAGEMENT

WHY of learning

Choice, relevance, motivation and belonging.
(CAST, 2024)

REPRESENTATION

WHAT of learning

Information in clear, accessible, multiple forms.
(CAST, 2024)

ACTION & EXPRESSION

HOW of learning

Different ways to act, contribute and demonstrate. (CAST, 2024)

Core question: How can we preserve the outcome while widening participation?

H5P 2 · Accordion**Designing for Diversity from the Start**

Moment: after introducing the three UDL principles · 6–8 min

Evidence says: Engagement, representation and action/expression should be translated into concrete design decisions. [Source: CAST UDL Guidelines 3.0 ↗](#)

H5P 2 · UDL Principles · Accordion: EXPLORE · Open the three UDL principles and connect them to your role.

UNIT 3

Multiple Means of Engagement

What trainers should teach

- Offer meaningful choices where possible.
- Connect activities to participants' roles.
- Support motivation and persistence.
- Create psychologically safe participation.



UNIT 3

Multiple Means of Representation

Information should be findable, understandable and accessible.

- Use clear headings and short sections.
- Avoid dense text without structure.
- Provide captions/transcripts for video or audio.
- Use readable formats and accessible PDFs.
- Explain key terms and acronyms.



SHORT DEMONSTRATION VIDEO 1 · Accessible information: 2–3 min demonstration of making information easier to find, understand and revisit.

UNIT 3

Multiple Means of Action and Expression

Participants may be able to achieve the same outcome through different routes.

- Oral contribution / written synthesis
- Live participation / recorded input
- Individual reflection / group artefact
- Form / guided interview / assisted submission



Use equivalent routes when the route is not the outcome.

UNIT 3

UDL beyond the classroom

STAFF TRAINING

MEETINGS

INFORMATION MATERIALS

WEBSITES & COMMUNICATION

SERVICES & PROCEDURES

UDL is a design mindset: it can inform classes, service pathways, onboarding, internal training and institutional communication.

Evidence says: UDL principles can inform staff training, meetings, websites, services and institutional communication. [Source: Lomellini et al., 2025 ↗](#)

DOWNLOADABLE GUIDE 1 · UDL quick-reference guide: One-page guide: Engagement · Representation · Action & Expression.

Review & evidence — UDL: promise, evidence and caution

EVIDENCE SYNTHESIS

UDL is best used as a proactive design framework, but recent reviews also caution against presenting it as a simple recipe: implementation quality, theoretical alignment and context matter.

What the evidence adds

- A 2026 scoping review maps 113 empirical higher-education studies and notes both growing adoption and continuing questions about applicability.
- A 2025 review of accessible and inclusive online higher education reports benefits associated with flexibility and multiple formats, while also identifying workload and evidence limitations.
- A 2024 systematic review highlights inconsistent implementation of UDL checkpoints and the need for stronger theoretical alignment.

FOR ACADEMIC STAFF

Ren et al. (2026), scoping review: use as an up-to-date evidence map for UDL in higher education.

[Open source / report ↗](#)

FOR SERVICES / HR

Lomellini et al. (2025), review of accessible and inclusive online learning: useful for staff training, digital communication, online services and course design.

[Open source / report ↗](#)