Lancaster University
Management School

THE GUIDE TO DEVELOPING A GENDER-AWARE AND INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM

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1.0 Introduction and Background to The Guide

The Guide to Developing a Gender-Aware and Inclusive Curriculum (The Guide) has been created by the Horizon 2020 TARGETED-MPI project, with the support of Lancaster University Management School's (LUMS) EDI Action Group and the Education and Student Experience Committee (ESEC). The Guide has been created for module convenors to reflect on as they develop, update, and deliver their modules. It is also useful for programme and teaching directors to consider when reviewing their undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. The Guide builds on academic research, EDI projects and relevant Higher Education reports that focus on the importance of practising gender-awareness and inclusivity in pedagogical development. It also draws on Lancaster University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusive (EDI) strategy, and specifically, LUMS' EDI initiatives.

The main purpose of The Guide is to help educators reflect on the "hidden curriculum" – known as the unwritten or unintended lessons, values, and perspectives that learners absorb while in education – often related to unconscious biases, stereotypes, and assumptions about the world. Educators are often immersed in their academic discipline and its culture or inherit and unreflectively (re)deliver established modules without realising the extent to which some students may not relate to some of the material, or share the same culture and values embedded within these modules' examples, case studies or assessments. Consequently, the hidden curriculum can affect students' sense of belonging, and their ability to equally partake in assessments or fully benefit from a module/programme's intended learning outcomes.

It is important to note that The Guide has not been created as a 'one size fits all solution'. It has been designed as a general guide for educators to reflect on social inequalities at the intersections of gender, ethnicity, race, sexuality, religion and disability.[1] It has also been designed as a guide for business and management (B&M) modules taught more broadly across LUMS' departments. It is understood that each department, programme, and module will vary in its pedagogical approach, content, and mode of delivery. That is, not every module can engage in this exercise equally across the programme.

1.1 Gender-Aware and Inclusive Curriculum Guide: Grounding in Lancaster University's EDI Strategy

The 2023 Global Gender Gap Report made a troubling revelation that it will take over a century to attain global gender equality, while Europe is projected to attain gender parity in 67 years. Increasing women's economic participation and achieving gender parity in leadership, in both business and government, are two key levers for tackling broader gender gaps in households, societies, and economies. Universities have a key role in achieving these goals by educating students about EDI. B&M schools have a responsibility towards achieving equality, as they shape and foster future business and organisational leaders, consultants and entrepreneurs.

Research since the 1990s has been calling for the development of gender-aware and inclusive curricula in B&M schools as a growing body of literature shows that historically, B&M education including entrepreneurship, marketing, economics, and accounting are (unreflectively) entrenched in "gender-neutral" or masculine, western, white and ableist norms. The adoption of these stand points as "neutral" and "universal" has profound implications on the reproduction of knowledge and on what counts as legitimate knowledge. As one of the UK's top 10 business and management schools and ranked first in the UK in terms of research power[2], we want to

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1   The additional resources section provides materials that are more focused on some of these intersections.
2   UK Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021:
      https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/lums/news/lums-ranked-1-management-school-in-uk-for-research-power

pave the way for developing gender-aware and inclusive curricula, and this requires our teaching staff to reflect on their pedagogical frameworks and practices.

A wide range of guidelines, toolkits, and good practices for raising awareness around EDI are available[3], such as LUMS' Principles of Responsible Management Education Report which build on the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals. In particular, SDGs (4) quality education, (5) gender equality, (8) decent work and economic growth, (10) reduced inequalities and (16) peace, justice and strong institutions. The Guide draws upon these valuable resources and grounds them in Lancaster University's broader EDI actions and initiatives. In September 2023, Lancaster University (LU) unveiled the key tenets of the Curriculum Transformation Program (CTP), with the primary objective of crafting a curriculum that embodies research-driven excellence, pedagogical strength, intellectual rigour, and real-world relevance. The CTP intends to achieve these goals through an inclusive design approach that informs the creation of course content, delivery methods, assessment strategies, and feedback mechanisms, while prioritising student well-being and success. The CTP closely aligns with LU's EDI Strategy, which is committed to achieving its equality objectives between 2022 and 2026. As part of this commitment LU aims to advance the integration of equality, diversity, and inclusion in all facets of the student journey through the implementation of an Access and Participation Plan, the development and delivery of an increasingly inclusive curriculum, and the enhancement of inclusive assessment practices.

LU, as a Level 2 Disability Confident Employer, is also dedicated to reimagining approaches to disability to enhance the recruitment, retention, and advancement of individuals with disabilities. Correspondingly, LU endeavours to guarantee that students have equitable access to our educational offerings by making reasonable accommodations for identified impairments in teaching and learning activities. Additionally, LU's Race Equality Charter (REC) Bronze Award underscores its dedication to enhancing the representation, progression, and success of minority ethnic staff and students within HE. The REC serves as a framework for institutions to engage in self-reflection concerning institutional and cultural barriers that may impede the progress of minority ethnic staff and students, with a specific focus on

diversity within the curriculum. It is important to recognise that the intersectionality of social identities as it holds significant implications in education. Embracing intersectionality enables educators to comprehend and cater to the diverse experiences and requirements of their students more effectively.

LU has an Institutional Athena Swan Bronze award, and is very proud to have achieved Athena Swan awards in all Departments or Faculties, recognising its commitment to advancing gender equality within higher education and research. To advance these gender equality goals, LUMS is one of the partner institutions of the TARGETED-MPI project (Transparent And Resilient Gender Equality Through Integrated Monitoring Planning and Implementation). The project is funded by the Horizon 2020 scheme and focuses on institutional changes through the development and effective implementation of Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) in B&M schools to drive more inclusive, sustainable, and transparent academic cultures. At LUMS, the TARGETED-MPI project has worked on developing GEPs by targeting key areas of interventions, including work-life balance and organisational culture, ensuring gender balance in leadership and decision-making and gender equality in recruitment and career progression. Developing The Guide is a key action in repsonse to the findings in LUMS' Gender Equality Report and the Gender Equality Plan of LUMS. This is supported by the LUMS Executive Dean as well as LUMS' EDI action plans.

2.0 The Guide to Developing a Gender-Aware and Inclusive Curriculum

It is crucial to distinguish gender-stereotypical from gender-aware content. Gender stereotypes are based on unexamined, traditional, and generalised views of the binary roles of women and men and preconceptions about their experiences and needs. For example, the "pink it and shrink it" marketing strategy for products designed for men and "scaled down" for women based on gender stereotypes. Gender awareness means, understanding that gender is socially constructed, and therefore, being conscious of the fact that men and women have different experiences and expectations in terms of their roles, responsibilities, and needs, based on their country context and surrounding environment. It also means not all people conform to the 'binary' of social gender roles, and therefore, may differ in the way they self-identify. Gender awareness also means appreciating that gender identities intersect with other identities, such as race, class, religion, disability, and sexuality, which impacts people's everyday experiences, work opportunities, and boundaries. Thus, gender-aware and inclusive teaching needs to be based on an intersectional approach. That means considering how the combination of different types of inequality (sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia and ableism) produces specific forms of discrimination. Intersectionality may be relevant in the course content (e.g. availability of healthcare to women from ethnic minorities) as well as in the class conduct (e.g. potential barriers experienced by female foreign students).

The Guide supports the development of a gender-aware and inclusive lens for the Associate Dean for Education, teaching directors, programme directors, and module convenors as they design their curriculum by outlining reflective questions in three key areas: curriculum design and pedagogical approach in the classroom, assessments, and promoting the module and programme.

2.1 Curriculum Design and Pedagogical Approach in the Classroom

Research shows that despite rising EDI awareness in B&M schools, teaching remains resolutely gendered and mainly focuses on research conducted in the West, by Western researchers and institutions. Subsequently, reading materials do not sufficiently include publications by researchers from underrepresented groups, and case studies rarely include women and minority leaders and managers, especially from contexts outside of Europe and North America. It is considered good EDI practice to regularly revitalise reading lists and diversify examples and case studies to expose students to academic perspectives from a range of researchers from different country contexts. There is a common misconception that taking a purposeful step in being gender-aware and inclusive may compromise on the quality of the journals included on the module's reading list. The opposite is true. Research has shown that diversifying readings improves the quality of the module's pedagogy, as it broadens students' minds, critical thinking abilities and provides them with a richer global perspective to grand challenges. Furthermore, it is important to create a safe space that considers diverse voices given that the traditional classroom is a place of power, privilege and hierarchy, which can silence some female students, non-native English speakers, those with disabilities, or those from more conservative cultures.

While creating/revising your module/programme, consider the following questions:

1	Is there a balance in academic readings and case studies by people from underrepresented groups in the reference list?
2	Have you included publications and case studies addressing relevant gender and EDI issues related to your subject area in the course readings?
3	Do you have an appropriate mix of case studies and examples from the global north and global south in your lecture and workshop materials?
4	Is gender-aware language used in the course materials (e.g. instead of expressions like chairman, manpower, businessman using terms such as chairperson, workforce, businessperson)?
5	Do the teaching materials contain diverse and inclusive images?
6	If your module is considered 'gender-neutral', are there aspects of it where you could incorporate gender and diversity in your discussions?
7	Do you raise your students' awareness of gender, race, sexuality, religion and disability stereotypes in your field?
8	Do you reflect on your own internalised stereotypes or unconscious biases around gender, race, sexuality, religion and disability and how they may impact the way you teach?
9	Have you reflected on the classroom setting? Is the classroom arranged in a way that facilitates the participation of disabled (visible and invisible) students?
10	Do you find some students dominate in the classroom and silence others? If so, what strategy do you have in place to mitigate this?
11	Are you inviting a balanced number of female and male academics for visiting lectures?
12	Does the module contribute to ensuring that an EDI perspective is sufficiently incorporated in the programme as a whole?
13	Have you reached out for support materials from LUMS' The Academy for Gender Equality and Social Justice Research in Organisations?
14	Have you reached out for support from the Disability Service Team for guidance and advice on how to support disabled (visible and invisible) and neurodivergent learners?
15	Have you considered making available further support and learning materials on your module's Moodle page?

2.2 Assessments

It is recommended that business and management schools review their assessments through a gender-aware and inclusive lens. It is considered good EDI practice for module convenors and programme directors to regularly review assessment questions and criteria, and any group or individual assessment activities that may not be inclusive of a particular group. It is also suggested to use a wide range of assessment methods to provide equal opportunity to students with different learning styles, disabilities, and identities. When it comes to groupwork, it is important to pay attention to the gender and diversity composition of groups, as some students may inadvertently dominate the assessment with their opinions, silence others and stifle their critical thinking process. If possible, avoid gender segregation, but also try not to have only one female among males or one international student among home students, and vice versa. Studies have shown that mixed teams, in terms of gender or culture, have positive effects on active participation and learning outcomes for all members.

While creating/revising your module/programme's assessment design consider these questions:

16	Have steps been taken to ensure a balance of male and female students in group assessments?
17	Are field trips linked to assessments - group or individual - suited for those who require extra mobility support?
18	Are fieldtrips and assessments related to them sensitive to students' religious beliefs and values? If not, are there alternative assessments for those who are unable to participate? Do the alternatives provide the same learning outcomes?
19	Are you reflecting on the way your biases about students' gender, ethnicity, race, sexuality, disability or religious beliefs may impact on the way you read, review, and possibly grade their work? And have you reflected on this issue with the other markers on the module?

B&M schools can also take a leading role in challenging gender inequalities through assessment of student-led research. This form of assessment educates students to understand, challenge and reflect on stereotypical gendered assumptions and the impact these have on everyday life and work.

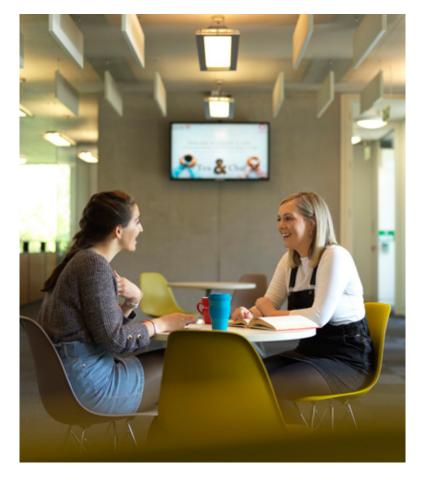**While creating/revising your module/programme's assessment content consider these questions:**

20	Can students distinguish between the effects of sex (biological) and gender (social construction) in theoretical and empirical – qualitative and quantitative – data analyses?
21	Can students identify the intersection of gender with other dimensions of inequality (age, class, caste, ethnicity, race, religion, sexuality, gender identity/expression, disability)? Do they comprehend the importance of utilising an intersectional lens to build their critical thinking abilities?
22	Do your lectures, workshops, readings, case studies, and assessments give students an opportunity to produce, compile, and interpret empirical data in a gender-aware and inclusive way?
23	Can students identify biases in the labour market (occupational segregation, pay gap, types of contracts and associated social benefits, etc.)? Can they design solutions to overcome such biases?

2.3 Promotion Materials for Modules and Programmes

The way gender and diversity are represented in the module and programme promotion materials is integral to ensuring university programmes are welcoming of students of all backgrounds, genders, and identities.

While creating/revising your module/programme consider these questions:

24	How and where is your module/programme advertised and promoted? Are the programme marketing materials and websites free from gender stereotypes? Do they use inclusive images and language?
25	Historically, what has the gender balance been in your module/programme? Are a majority of your students UK or international? How might this impact the way you promote your module/programme?
26	Do the syllabi make explicit the gender-aware and inclusive learning outcomes they included?
27	How can the marketing team support you in promoting your module in a more gender-aware and inclusive way?
28	Is gender-stereotyping avoided in presenting career pathways in programme descriptions?
29	Does the programme website contain a diverse range of alumni profiles?

3.0 References and Additional Resources

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Notes

Personal reflections on using the guide

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