



MTU

Ollscoil Teicneolaíochta na Mumhan
Munster Technological University



An Inclusive Curriculum for a Sustainable Future



[mtu.ie](https://www.mtu.ie)

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1. What is a Curriculum Framework?

To achieve Munster Technological University's vision '**to lead transformation through education**' the University's *Inclusive Curriculum Framework for a Sustainable Future* forms the foundation for high-quality teaching and learning by setting out a shared vision, programme attributes and educational pillars. The inclusive curriculum framework recognises the strength of the University and builds upon previous curricula to ensure that graduates are prepared for an ever-changing future. The framework recognises the student experience and looks to their future as graduates. The framework provides an over-arching structure aligned with eight educational pillars that should be used to inform and guide the programme design

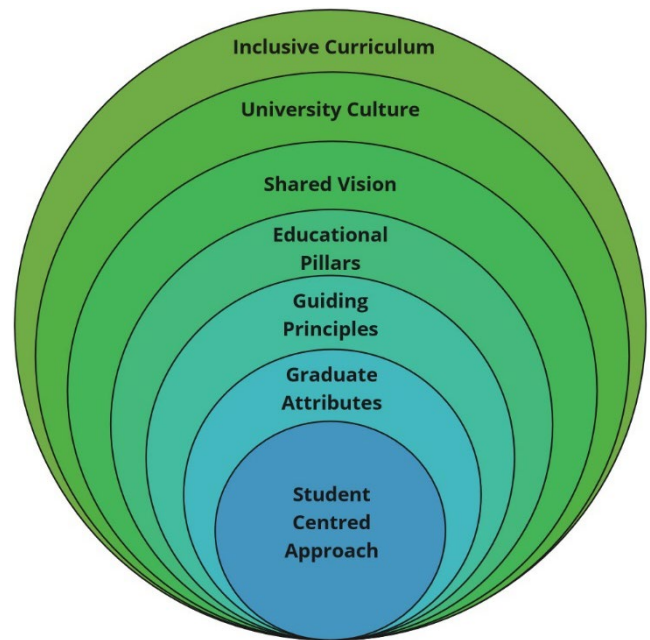
and review process. The curriculum framework's guiding principles are intended to guide programme teams in the design and delivery of programmes and modules. The University encourages programme teams to ensure a staff, student, enterprise and community-relevant curriculum through co-creation and connectedness with stakeholders for a sustainable future.

For new and existing programmes within the University, this framework will ensure equity of access to education, through an inclusive experience for students. This aligns with the University's strategic enablers of equality, diversity & inclusion, & sustainability & the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



2. What is its purpose?

The framework is designed using a student-centred approach. The overarching purpose of the inclusive curriculum framework is to provide the appropriate structures to guide students to build their capacities for life-long learning by using different pedagogical approaches in accordance with their personal interest, ability, and discipline requirements. An inclusive curriculum framework is meaningful, relevant, and accessible to all students. The framework's content and teaching materials, teaching methods and practice, theories and modes of assessment are intentionally designed and delivered in order to relate to, respect, and affirm diverse cultures, histories, identities and life circumstances among our staff and student body as well as the wider world (EDIT, 2024).



Inclusive Curriculum Framework

To build an inclusive curriculum, the University must surround its students with a positive culture and shared vision, which provides the foundation upon which we build the educational pillars. These pillars inform the guiding principles within the framework to directly support the graduates and students in their capacity for life-long learning for a sustainable future.



2.1 Why it is important?

The curriculum framework is key to ensuring the University's strategic objectives are achieved. The University will excel in teaching, learning, assessment, and engagement by designing and delivering high-quality programmes through an inclusive curriculum framework. An inclusive curriculum uses a student-centred approach and aligns with the University's Equity of Access and Participation Policy (Student) where the University outlines its commitment to social inclusion and equity of access and participation in all interactions throughout the education lifecycle. The curriculum

framework articulates the educational pillars for the teaching and learning offerings within MTU. It sets out a series of guiding principles for a shared vision and understanding of the future of education, by providing a strong foundation from which our students and graduates can excel. These guiding principles provide clarity to programme teams, while at the same time providing a flexible framework to work within. As an inclusive curriculum, it promotes and facilitates the adoption of inclusive teaching and learning methods designed to accommodate all learners.

2.2 What does it seek to achieve?

The inclusive framework provides equitable opportunities to participate in higher education and improves access to higher education by embedding universal design and inclusive practice in all functions across the University's educational offering.

The framework will ensure programme teams consider the

flexibility required to meet the needs of a broad diversity of learners when designing and delivering a programme by embedding universal design for learning principles to facilitate and enhance the learning experience of all students.



This framework also aligns with the Digital Learning Policy as it further promotes the use of digital learning to enhance and enrich the learning experience of all students.

This framework is not intended to be used in isolation. Rather, it is intended to provide an overarching structure to programme design

2.3 Scope

This inclusive curriculum framework applies to the design and approval of new and existing taught programmes for full-time / part-time learners of the University, at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

and/or review by setting out a set of guiding principles that should be used to inform the process. It is informed by a series of policies, procedures and other relevant documents. Where appropriate, programme teams should consult with specific MTU policy and procedures in addition to this framework.

While this framework policy does not apply to postgraduate research programmes, it will inform design of modules for delivery to postgraduate research students.



3. Graduate Attributes

For the University to achieve its strategic objectives it is imperative for programme teams to recognise the attributes of graduates by providing learners with relevant, inclusive, and challenging curriculum. The eight educational pillars of the curriculum framework contribute to the graduate profile. The curriculum should provide a learning environment which supports and empowers graduates to:

- Become global citizens, be inquisitive, entrepreneurial, and forward-facing in a rapidly changing world.
- Be dynamic, work and future ready and have self-reflective ability to identify lifelong learning opportunities for their personal and professional development.
- Develop practical experience, entrepreneurship and an entrepreneurial mindset and ethos.
- Have sustainability awareness and the skills to tackle complex sustainable development challenges at both a regional and global level.
- Be agile with the ability to adapt and respond to the ever-changing skills requirements of the region.
- Be prepared for the future digital workplace and challenges in a digital age.
- Excel, explore, research, innovate, collaborate, and experiment based on current and emerging trends.
- To engage with the community in an open-minded, positive, collaborative, sustainable, equitable, inclusive, and respectful way.
- Have a 'global graduate' mindset with valuable life and employment skills by internationalising the student journey.
- Recognise the importance and need for academic and research integrity ethically in the professional world.
- Apply universal design principles, ensuring inclusivity and accessibility in all aspects of their professional endeavours.



4. Programme Attributes

From embracing diversity and fostering inclusivity to nurturing holistic learner development and staying abreast of cutting-edge research and innovation, the programme attributes articulate the University's commitment to excellence in education. Each programme attribute outlined in this section reflects the University's values, priorities and strategic intent and is intended as a guide to inform the programme design process.

- 1. Cultural Integration and Distinctiveness:** The programme design process embraces and celebrates diversity across campuses, integrating varied offerings, identities, and cultures into a cohesive and distinctive university character and identity.
- 2. Progressive Pathways and Flexibility:** Design programmes that clearly articulate pathways between different qualification levels, ensuring flexibility to meet the needs of diverse learners (e.g. RPL, advanced entry).
- 3. Holistic Learner Development:** Place the holistic development of learners at the centre of each programme, nurturing knowledge, skills, personal growth, and well-being.
- 4. Universal Design for Learning:** Apply Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles in the curriculum, thus ensuring that programme development and delivery enhances the learning experience and accessibility for all students.
- 5. Engagement with Stakeholders:** Foster meaningful engagement and connectiveness with businesses, industries, public services, and community organisations to inform programme design and delivery, ensuring relevance and real-world applicability.
- 6. Integration of Graduate Attributes:** Ensure that programme outcomes are aligned with defined graduate attributes.
- 7. Research & Innovation Strengths:** Draw on the University's research and innovation strengths to enrich and inform curriculum development and teaching practice.

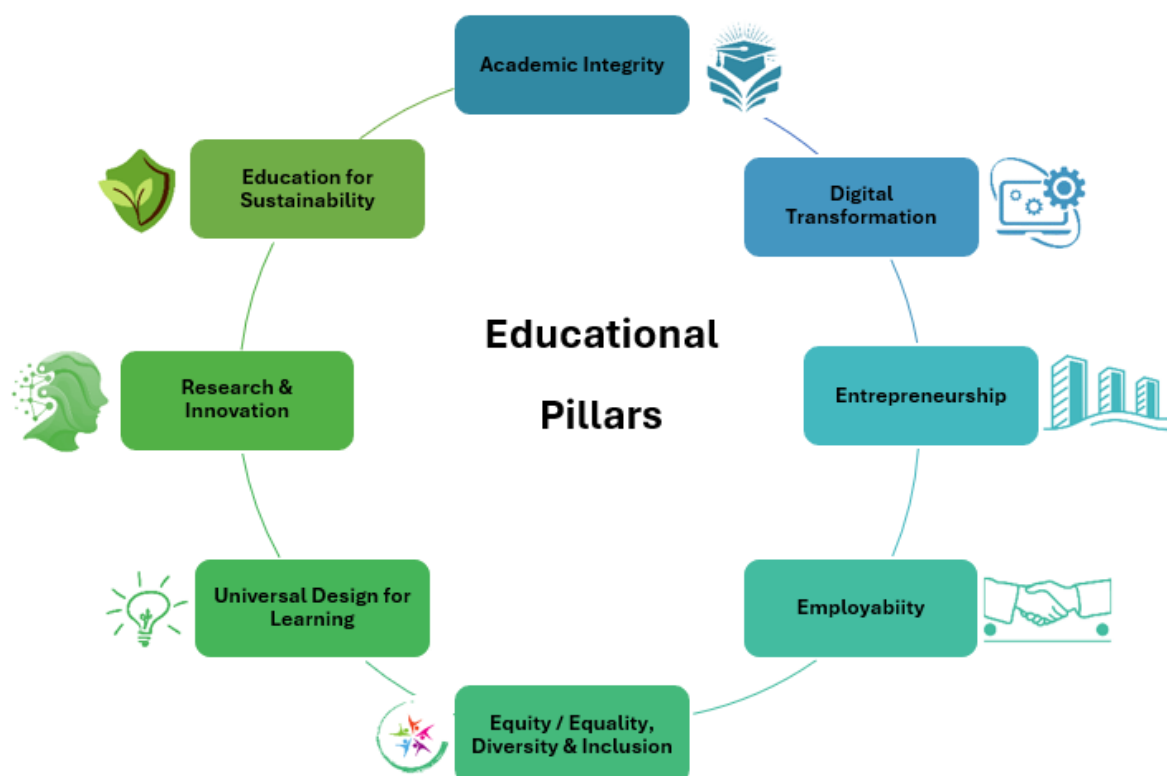
5. Educational Pillars

The programme attributes set the foundation for eight educational pillars. To ensure equitable access to education and inclusivity of programme design and delivery, the University identifies the following educational pillars for a sustainable future: Education for Sustainability, Equity / Equality Diversity & Inclusion, Universal Design for Learning, and Digital Transformation. These, coupled with Academic Integrity, Entrepreneurship, Employability, and Research & Innovation as educational pillars, ensure the

University achieves its strategic objectives.

Underpinning the eight educational pillars are the guiding principles which must be applied to the design, delivery, review, and enhancement of new and existing programmes. However, the manner in which they are applied will vary according to academic discipline and programme/module level.

The guidelines for each of the pillars are outlined in the following sections.





5.1 Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the commitment to, and demonstration of, honest and moral behaviour in an academic setting. Maintaining academic integrity is critical to the reputation of higher education and to the recognition of a graduate's academic learning and qualifications. Therefore, the following guiding principles apply:

- a) Academic integrity is integrated into curriculum design, programme/module delivery, assessment design and pedagogical approaches.
- b) Implementation of academic integrity is supported by a robust and consistently applied academic integrity policy and procedure and informed by the NAIN guidelines, which offer recommendations for maintaining academic integrity standards and for identifying, addressing, and discouraging academic dishonesty.
- c) Learners and staff are educated on the ethical use of generative artificial intelligence technologies in academic research and assignments, including the use of internet resources, software, and digital tools.
- d) Information, training, guidance, and other supports are provided to learners and staff in order to facilitate and support academic integrity.
- e) The programme ensures that learners are educated about accountability for their academic work, conducting research with integrity, and presenting findings in a clear and professional manner using appropriate and accurate citations.





5.2 Digital Transformation

As set out in its strategic plan, the University aims to provide a digital learning experience to students to increase flexibility, create new learning opportunities, and enrich their learning experience. Digital transformation is a key enabler of flexible learning opportunities. The following guiding principles apply to ensure digital transformation and digital learning approaches will:

- a) Allow educators to strategically select digital learning solutions and services tuned to the needs of the learner cohort and learning goals.
- b) Provide opportunities for learners to engage in formative

digital learning activities that enhance their learning experience.

- c) Make use of learning analytics and learner data to provide insights into the learning process and learner experience.
- d) Prepare staff and students for future learning and workplace challenges in a digital age.
- e) Provide increased flexibility and accessibility for learners through digital means.
- f) Support educators to design learning experiences that are based on reflective and evidence-based digital practices.



5.3 Education for Sustainability



Sustainability is a strategic enabler, and the University acknowledges the vast scale of the current challenges. The University embraces education for sustainable development and graduates will be ready to tackle the complex sustainable development challenges. To achieve this through curriculum content and student experience, programmes should incorporate sustainability and therefore the following principles apply:

- a) Develop student opportunities to acquire knowledge about sustainability and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), while also fostering the capacity for active citizenship.
- b) Programme teams to give due regard to UNESCO's Key Competences in Education for Sustainability and the European Sustainability Competence Framework.
- c) Encourage design thinking, critical thinking, self-awareness, collaborative and problem-solving skills to enhance comprehension of the interconnections among social, economic, and environmental factors.
- d) Promote and facilitate collaborative, experiential, and practically oriented inter- and trans-disciplinary approaches that foster creativity and transformation.
- e) Encourage the application of multiple perspectives to address sustainability challenges effectively.
- f) Provide opportunities for students to investigate the ethical aspects of sustainability, encompassing social justice, equity, and the effects of values, behaviours, and actions on both local and global communities to nurture an appreciation for the significance of responsible citizenship.



5.4 Entrepreneurship



By embedding the following principles into the curriculum, the University will ensure that students and graduate develop an entrepreneurial mindset:

- a) The curriculum should be designed to provide opportunities to understand and develop competencies along the continuum from enterprise to entrepreneurial education, supporting the development of a shared language in this area of work.
- b) Curriculum should be designed to transfer knowledge that impacts the community and enables competitive enterprise and entrepreneurship in the region and globally.
- c) Provide opportunities to reflect on professional development needs and requirements, acting as a benchmark to reflect on current practice and provision.
- d) Provide learning opportunities to develop an entrepreneurial mindset by nurturing interdisciplinarity entrepreneurship events, supporting entrepreneurial activities in the wider social and business communities through its ecosystems and demonstrating practice-led entrepreneurship ethos.
- e) Provide learning experiences through embedding work placements, practical experiences, and entrepreneurial ethos to equip learners to be active global citizens.
- f) Curriculum teams should build collaborative and connected relationships with others both within and external to the University.

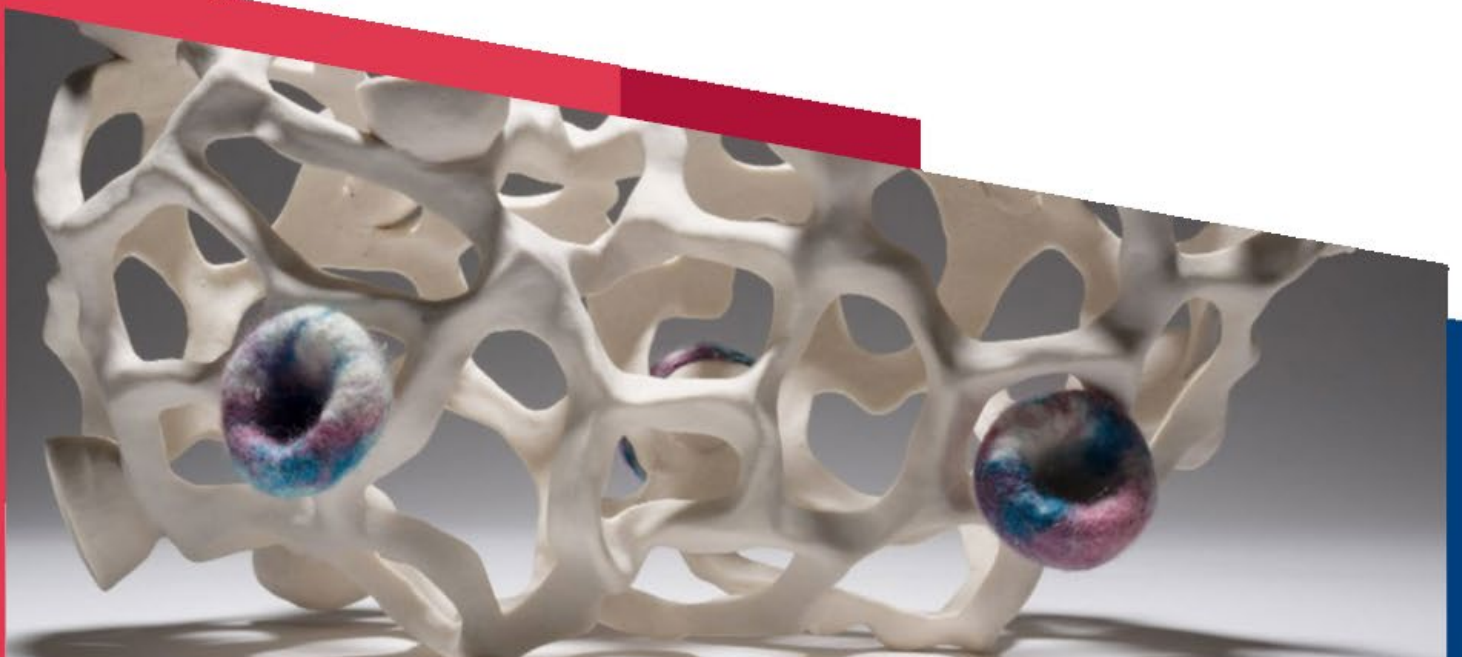


5.5 Employability



The University seeks to equip learners to succeed in the world of work and to enable them to mould their careers according to their values, achieving alignment between work and life while drawing from diverse experiences. University graduates will be poised to make impactful contributions to society and beyond. To cater for an ever-changing employment market the following guiding principles apply:

- a) Create graduates prepared for the workforce with a mindset oriented towards their careers by integrating employability and work-integrated learning programmes, while nurturing robust communication, collaboration, and professional skills.
- b) Enable students to mould their careers according to their values, achieving alignment between work and life while drawing from diverse experiences, thus cultivating graduates poised to make impactful contributions to society and beyond.
- c) Incorporate academic education alongside practical and professional experiences, guiding students towards realising their full potential and cultivating self-aware graduates ready for success.
- d) Craft curricula and assessments collaboratively with stakeholders to promote employability through innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship, while instilling a holistic learning mindset that extends beyond academia.





5.6 Equity / Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

An inclusive curriculum is meaningful, relevant, and accessible to all students. The curriculum is intentionally designed and delivered in order to relate to, respect and affirm diverse cultures, histories, identities, and life circumstances. The guiding principles are:

- a) Ensure the curriculum content is inclusive and that students see themselves reflected in it, diversifying the range of content and perspectives included.
- b) Ensure the learning outcomes and graduate attributes do not rest on stereotypes and assumptions about students which act as barriers to participation.
- c) Provide an inclusive and accessible range of modes and methods of teaching assessment.
- d) Create a curriculum that is inclusive and caters to all students by developing their educational experience appropriately.
- e) Create a learning environment where all students feel that their differences and values are respected, have equitable access to learning and other educational opportunities.





5.7 Research & Innovation

Research and Innovation informs teaching and learning, ultimately contributing positively to the wider society. To ensure research and innovation informs teaching and learning the following guiding principles apply:

- a. Provide experiential learning opportunities by designing the curriculum to include hands-on research experiences, internships, or stakeholder collaborations.
- b. Emphasise academic integrity, ethical implications and the social and inclusive responsibilities of research and innovation within the teaching and learning sphere.
- c. Ensure that research and innovation informs teaching and learning by ensuring the curriculum reflects the latest research findings and methodologies relevant to the discipline.
- d. Foster critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills by challenging students to analyse complex issues, evaluate evidence, and develop innovative solutions.
- e. Incorporate inter and multi-disciplinary perspectives by integrating concepts, methods, and insights from multiple disciplines and stakeholders into the curriculum.



5.8 Universal Design for Learning



This pillar acknowledges that UDL is just one element of the wider Universal Design approach as articulated by ALTITUDE, The National Charter for Universal Design In Tertiary Education which sets out to “Reduce barriers to learning by building more flexibility, accessibility, clarity, learner voice and choice into how programmes are designed and delivered” (AHEAD, 2024). The guidelines are drawn from the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) ‘Guidelines for Universal Design for Learning (UDL)’ and the ‘7 Principles of Universal Design’ (adapted from the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design n.d.):

- a) Provide multiple means of engagement by nurturing interest, motivation, and perseverance.
- b) Offer various means for action and expression involves providing diverse methods for students to interact with information and content and to showcase their learning progress.
- c) Offer multiple means of representation entails presenting information and content in various formats and establishing connections between them.
- d) Design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.
- e) Design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level.
- f) Design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.



6 Further Reading

6.2 Internal resources

- Digital Learning Policy
- Equity of Access and Participation Policy (Student)
- MTU Interim Research and Innovation Statement
- MTU Equality Statement 27-04-2021
- MTU - Universal Design for Learning
<https://tlu.cit.ie/universal-design-for-learning>
- UDL@MTU Project Available at: <https://tlu.cit.ie/udl-mtu-towards-embedding-udl-practice-and-principles-at-mtu>
- Our Shared Vision, Strategic Plan 2022-2027
- Plagiarism,
https://library.cit.ie/contentfiles/PDFs/Plagiarism_Mar2021.pdf
- Policy for the Design and Approval of Programmes Leading to Major Awards
- Procedure for the Design and Approval of Programmes Leading to Major Awards

6.3 External resources

- [Academic Integrity Guidelines](#)
- [Academic Integrity National Principles and Lexicon of Common Terms](#)
- Advance HE [Embedding Equality and Diversity in the Curriculum](#)
- Advance HE Essential Frameworks for Enhancing Student Success, Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Education
- AHEAD: Guidelines - The Principles in Practice Available at: <https://www.ahead.ie/udl-practice>
- Allea.org. EUROPEAN CODE OF CONDUCT FOR RESEARCH INTEGRITY, Available at <https://allea.org/portfolio-item/european-code-of-conduct-2023/>
- ALTITUDE Project. ALTITUDE - The National Charter for Universal Design in Tertiary Education. AHEAD Educational Press.

- ALTITUDE: The National Charter for Universal Design in Tertiary Education <https://www.ahead.ie/altitude>
- [Athena Swan Ireland EDI Literacy Glossary](#)
- Banks, J., Burke, K., Cooney, R., Haran, M., Healy, R., Kennedy, A., McHugh, D., Neenan, C., Northridge, J., O'Shaughnessy, T., Plunkett, N., Reale, J., Ryder, D., & Tierney, C. (2024). ALTITUDE The National Charter for Universal Design in Tertiary Education: Technical Report. AHEAD Educational Press
- Centre for Excellence in Universal Design (n.d.) the 7 Principles [online] available from: <https://universaldesign.ie/about-universal-design/the-7-principles>
- Defining and developing your approach to employability [hea-employabilityframework_coletibby_2013.pdf \(ed.ac.uk\)](#)
- Digital Competence Framework for Educators (DigCompEdu)
- Ec.Europe.eu. Guidelines on the responsible use of generative AI in research developed by the European Research Area Forum, [Directorate-General for Research and Innovation](#), March 20, 2024, available at https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/news/all-research-and-innovation-news/guidelines-responsible-use-generative-ai-research-developed-european-research-area-forum-2024-03-20_en
- Ehlers, U.D., 2020. *Future skills: The future of learning and higher education*. BoD–Books on Demand. [\(PDF\) Future Skills - The Future of Learning and Higher Education \(researchgate.net\)](#)
- Engage in Employability [Assessment – Curriculum Framework \(reading.ac.uk\)](#)
- Essential Frameworks for Enhancing Student Success [Embedding Employability in Higher Education Framework.pdf \(advance-he.ac.uk\)](#)
- [Equity and Inclusion in Education: Finding Strength Through Diversity](#) OECD (2023)
- EU, Artificial Intelligence Act
- EU Green Competencies Framework <https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC128040>
- Future-ready: improving graduate employability skills. <https://www.ibec.ie/-/media/documents/ibec-campaigns/campaign---smarter-world/future-ready-improving-graduate-employability-skills.pdf>
- Gender Equality Action Plan
- JISC Employability toolkit [Employability toolkit - Jisc](#)
- Learning from UDL Leaders: UCD University for All Faculty Partner Case Studies Available at:

- [https://www.ucd.ie/universityforall/t4media/UCD Case Studies digital.pdf](https://www.ucd.ie/universityforall/t4media/UCD_Case_Studies_digital.pdf)
- [NAIN Generative AI Guidelines for educators](#)
 - [NAIN Framework for Academic Misconduct Investigation and Case Management](#)
 - National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development, <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/02952d-national-strategy-on-education-for-sustainable-development-in-irelan/>
 - QQI.ie. National Academic Integrity Network, <https://www.qqi.ie/what-we-do/engagement-insights-and-knowledge-sharing/national-academic-integrity-network>
 - Reflecting for Employability [Reflectors' Toolkit | The University of Edinburgh](#)
 - [Safe, Respectful, Supportive and Positive. Ending Sexual Violence and Harassment in Irish Higher Education Institutions](#)
 - The Digital Competence Framework (DigComp)
 - The EDIT Inclusive Curriculum Toolkit, Embedding Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the Curriculum of the Technological University Sector, 202, Advance HE, MTU, ATU, TUS, SETU
 - UNESCO Education for Sustainable Development Goals – Learning Objective, <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/education-sustainable-development-goals-learning-objectives>
 - [UNESCO Guidance for Generative AI in Education and Research](#)
 - UNESCO Key Competencies, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000261802>
 - United Nations (2006) Convention of the Rights of People with Disabilities <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/article-2-definitions.html#:~:text=%E2%80%9CUniversal%20design%E2%80%9D%20means%20the%20design,for%20adaptation%20or%20specialized%20design.>