# Realising Disability Inclusion

## Slide 1: Realising Disability Inclusion

ADCET Webinar, 24 August 2022

Professor Carol Evans: [evansc101@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:evansc101@cardiff.ac.uk)

[Inclusivehe.org](https://inclusivehe.org/)

## Slide 2: Disability Inclusion: How do we get there?

Aim:

Looking for an evidence-based and practice-informed approach to scaling disability inclusion from staff and student perspectives.

Definition:

The extent to which higher education institutions (HEIs) support students and staff with disabilities (SSwD) to have equal access to university and equal opportunities to do well compared to their peers without disabilities (Evans & Zhu, 2022).

## Slide 3: Disability: the poor relation of the inclusion agenda

The Australian Context:

* Access to higher education for students with disabilities 6.2 - 9.6% (compared to 17.7% of the population) (Netherlands 30%, UK 17%, Zambia < 0.1%)
* Student success in higher education (5-10% lower than no reported disability) (1.1% in UK)
* Retention rates in Tasmania actually higher for students with disabilities
* Students with disabilities are less satisfied with course experience
* 10% lower employment rates compared to no reported disability

## Slide 4: Disability: the poor relation of the inclusion agenda

The Australian Context:

Half of Australian managers have never hired a person with a disability, and one in ten admit they wouldn’t want to in the future

**Source:** Guardian, July 2022 – YouGov, n = 501 middle managers and HR professionals

Harpur and Szucs (2022) found no evidence of disabled status disclosure among any senior leaders of Australian universities on official employer websites.

## Slide 5: Disability: the poor relation of the inclusion agenda

The Australian Context:

What does the data look like when you disaggregate it into specific disabilities, and in interaction with other variables?

## Slide 6: Disability Inclusion: the evidence base

* A review of 11,000 peer reviewed academic papers and reports on disability inclusion (DI) revealed:

Approximately 600 articles and reports were identified as relevant, and involved lead authors from 50 countries.

* Scrutinisation of institutional data on EDI.
* Consultation with expert stakeholders in supporting the development of the Disability Inclusion Institutional Framework.

## Slide 7: Perspectives on Disability: We are disabled by our bodies and by organisational and societal constraints

The Disability Institutional Inclusion Framework (DIIF) draws on research on **interactionist perspectives** on disability (Gustavsson, 2004; Riddle, 2013; Shakespeare, 2014), and **critical social perspectives.**

The DIIF acknowledges the complex interplay of impairments with individual personal characteristics, the specific contextual and situational features students and staff with disabilities (SSwD) encounter, and their responses to this (Bustamante et al., 2020; Kruse & Oswal, 2018).

## Slide 8: Disability Inclusion Principles

1. **Disability is personal - experiences of disability are not universal.**
2. **Appreciating diversity** and its inherent value in impacting organisational effectiveness.
3. **Disability is multifaceted and fluid**, where disability may or may not frame an individual’s identity(ies).
4. **Disability is interactional involving the interaction of a person with their context.**
5. **We need to** examine structures, processes, and agents in ensuring access as part of a **social critical discourse.**
6. **Disability is intersectional,** it intersects with a whole host of individual and contextual variables.
7. **An anticipatory and intentional approach** embeds disability inclusion in all structures and processes.
8. **A** **research-informed and integrated approach** utilises research on self-regulation, agentic engagement, and neuro/cognitive sciences and individual differences to inform disability inclusion.
9. **A** **holist approach** considers **s**ocial and relational and academic dimensions.
10. **Partnership** between students and staff with disabilities (SSwD) and organisations to **support mutual accommodations** is important in supporting SSwD to use their skillsets to best effect.

## Slide 9: Disability Inclusion Institutional Framework

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This diagram shows how the DIIF framework comes together with themes 1-4 comprising one core area intersecting with themes 5-8 and themes 9-12. These three large circles and all the subthemes are surrounded by further circles representing the importance of a culture of shared understandings and how university work connects with all stakeholders in disability inclusion to include schools and colleges, transport providers, estates teams, accommodation teams, employers, specialist employability teams, professional and regulatory statutory bodies, governing bodies, alumni, family and friends, medical services, research networks, specialist enabling agencies etc. The outermost circle of the diagram represents the national and global context

More detailed information: A circle diagram is depicted showing the relationship between the various concepts, depicted in three layers.

The inner circle shows three distinct overlapping circles, each with their own four defined criteria:

1. Shared Ownership
   1. Leadership Capacity
   2. Evidence Informed
   3. Embedded Evaluation
   4. Integrated Delivery
2. Empowerment
3. Clear Communication
4. Enabling Student and Staff Voice
5. Disability Inclusion Training
6. Enabling Access
7. Independence
8. Inclusive Learning and Teaching
9. Assistive Technologies
10. Transitions Support
11. Promoting Self-advocacy

The intersection of these three circles is labelled: Disability inclusion embedded through the university and with all stakeholders.

The second circle encircles the above:

* Estates Design / Management Teams
* Accommodation Teams
* Employers
* Specialist Employability Services
* Professional & Statutory Regulatory Bodies
* Governing Bodies
* Alumni
* Family & Friends
* Medical Services
* Research Networks
* Specialist Enabling Agencies
* Schools, Colleges, HEIs
* Transport Providers\

The third (and final) circle encircling all:

* National / Global context

## Slide 10: What does the data tell us?

## Slide 11: Supporting Self-Advocacy: Balance of Load & Associated Costs

A diagram that illustrates the balance of individual vs organisational effort suggesting a 50:50 share of responsibilities and highlights the issue when the balance is unequal.

‘The ability to assertively state wants, needs and rights, determine and pursue needed supports and to obtain and evaluate the needed support with the ultimate goal of conducting affairs independently’ (Pfeifer et al., 2021, 20)

[Links with work on self-regulation](https://inclusivehe.org/supporting-transitions): Effective deployment of the right strategies and in the right amounts to realise goals, and

[Agentic engagement](https://inclusivehe.org/inclusive-assessment): Ability to utilise and impact the environment to realise goals

## Slide 12: 1. Leadership too removed from practice

* Under-representation of staff with disabilities in leadership positions impacts progress in DI (executive, senior research and professional roles, and in research funding).
* Only 3.6% of UK academic senior managers disclosed a disability (Advance HE, 2020).
* Essential role of senior leaders in moving disability inclusion forward and having oversight of all moving parts.
* Mechanisms to embed disability inclusion at all levels.

## Slide 13: 2. What counts as evidence?

* Appropriateness of methodologies in exploring the lived experiences of students/staff with disabilities (only 12% highest quality).
* Guidance in relation to protocols relating to implementation and evaluation of interventions to support enhancements in disability inclusion.
* Representation of staff and students with disabilities in disability inclusion research.
* Relatively little work exploring the postgraduate student experience (2%).

## Slide 14: 3. How are we interrogating data?

* Limited inferences can be made from aggregated disability data.
* Even when considering ‘disability types’ intersectionality with individual and contextual variables need consideration.
* The experience of staff and students with disabilities need to be explored within the moment.
* How are we using data to support learning?

## Slide 15: 4. Undone by a lack of an integrated approach

* Need for collaborative working across services/functions/sectors.
* Holistic - practical, social, and academic needs.
* Ownership of DI at course/unit level and by all staff and students.

## Slide 16: 5. The language of disability inclusion matters

* Valuing of diversity
* How disability is framed
* Gaps between rhetoric and reality
* Cumulative damage

## Slide 17: 6. An anticipatory approach that values SSwD voice

* Extent to which staff and students with disabilities are engaged in the design of services from the get go.
* Comprehensive approaches to capturing SSwD voice.

## Slide 18: 7. Quality and reach of training

* Training for all stakeholders.
* Awareness of resources to support.
* Embedded within all processes and systems.
* Evidence of the impact of training is limited.

## Slide 19: 8. Essentials of supports and pain of disclosure

* Accommodations make a difference.
* Disclosure is a nasty word – multiple layers of disclosure.
* Burden of disclosure.
* SSwD ownership of support process and knowing how to navigate the systems.
* Bias – not all disabilities are treated equally.
* Minimising the needs for additional supports.

## Slide 20: 9. Going back to basics around inclusive learning and teaching

* Being clear about what inclusive learning and teaching is.
* Little evidence of efficacy of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). A design issue!
* Embedding reasonable adjustments from the start.

## Slide 21: 10. Mainstreaming assistive technologies (ATs)

* Assistive technologies make a difference in many ways.
* Training in the use of ATs for staff and students.
* Time to learn how to use ATs.
* Scrutiny of the quality of ATs.

## Slide 22: 11. Maximising transitions support

* Importance of pre-university support in how to navigate the HE system impacts outcomes but there is a need to attend to students’ perceptions of themselves.
* Importance of the first semester.
* Importance of academic, social, and professional networks.
* Early and sustained access to academic and professional mentoring and internships.

## Slide 23: 12. Promoting Self and Shared Advocacy

Key concepts centred around:

independence, knowledge of self and context, and capacity to effect change – implicated in student success

* self-determination: to make decisions for oneself – also related to notions of competence, connection /relatedness, and autonomy
* self-awareness
* self-efficacy
* agentic engagement
* self-regulation

## Slide 24: Promoting Self and Shared Advocacy

An image of a wheel that is divided into 3 sections: Individual, Organisation, and Discipline in supporting shared advocacy:

Individual aspects highlight the important of SSWD knowing their needs, their context, their roles and their rights, and having clear goals in being able to advocate for themselves and others. Organisation responsibilities include valuing diversity, preparing SSWD for entry, providing a clear map of supports, timely training, the basics of physical access to technologies and buildings and support with networking. At the discipline level - providing SSWD with a clear route map of requirements of their role / course, embedding supports, providing mentoring and self-advocacy training and promoting inclusive cultures are highlighted.

More detailed information:

Individual:

* Understanding my needs
* Understanding my context
* Understanding my roles
* Understanding my rights
* Realising Goals

Organisation

* Valuing diversity
* Training to support entry
* Clear map of support
* Focused skills training
* Physical access / ATs mainstreamed
* Support with networking

Discipline

* Clear programme route-map
* Adjustments embedded
* Mentoring embedded
* Self-advocacy supported
* Inclusive culture

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## Slide 25:

**Self Advocacy Model Mediators**: Societal, Organisation, Discipline, Family, Individual, Time

### Knowledge of Self

* Awareness of strengths and limitations
* View of disability
* Self-esteem
* Perceptions of how other perceive disability
* Perceived agency and autonomy
* Self-efficacy and confidence

### Self-Advocacy Confidence in Managing Context

Knowledge of:

* Affordances and limitation of environment
* Supports/accommodations
* Rights
* Disciplinary/professional requirements

Ability to:

* Advocate for and obtain supports
* Manage emotional labour of advocacy
* Collaborate confidently with others
* Balance competing needs

### Agentic Behaviours in Context

Self-regulation

* Knowing where, when, and how to apply efforts (planning, goals, persistence, flexibility etc.)
* Discernment in choice and use of resource including networks of support

Agentic Engagement

* Ability to leverage resource and modify environment to support needs
* Address gaps in provision

### Supporting Sense of Self

* Valuing of diversity
* Prioritising activities to enhance understanding of affordances and barriers to access to learning for SSwD
* Shared language of disability inclusion
* Central engagement of SSwD in policy and practice
* Maximising the potential of mentoring

### Enabling Self-Advocacy

* Clarity around roles and responsibilities as part of an interactional approach to disability
* Making the route map of supports explicit
* Holistic in ensuring academic and social supports
* Integrated and seamless approach across function
* Ensuring the basics of access (physical & virtual)
* Mainstreaming access e.g. embedding reasonable adjustments in the curriculum
* Consistency in quality of supports across stakeholders
* Investment in training for staff and students and ongoing evaluation of impact on disability inclusion

### Supporting Student Independence in Learning

Designing learning environments that enable learner autonomy:

* Cognitive: making task requirements explicit - reducing cognitive load; Clear study blueprints available in advance
* Metacognitive - focusing activities on core skills development (modelling, repeated practice etc.)
* Affective - promoting sense of belonging through enabling equal access to academic / social / enterprise opportunities

## Slide 26: Simple, Sophisticated & Choreographed

This picture denotes a circle with one dot in it to ask you to think about if there was one thing you needed to focus on that would have a domino effect in moving disability inclusion forward, what would it be?

What is the core question?

Image of a large circle containing a small dot inside:

* Circle: What is the one thing I can do such that by doing it everything else will become easier or unnecessary? (Keller & Papasan, 2019, 107-8)
* Dot: What is my one thing right now?

## Slide 27: Big ticket items

* Leadership: Embedded in performance review of all
* Evidence: Centralised resource base that brings all information together
* Evaluation: Analysis of DI at the unit/course level as expectation of course leads
* Integrated: Team based design – academic and professional teams
* Communication: Explicit about how disability is valued - consistent comms strategy
* Student and Staff Voice: Programs designed with SSwD from outset and checked for all rate limiting steps
* Training: DI training embedded within CPD for all- evaluation of quality of it
* Enabling access: SSwD ownership of supports process – clear route map of supports available
* Inclusive learning and teaching: Clarity and focus as to what this is
* Assistive technologies: Mainstreamed
* Transitions: Pre access support and early opportunities for internships
* Self-advocacy: Training in self advocacy embedded within programmes

## Slide 28: Questions to ask moving forwards

How can we work together to effect meaningful change?

Where should we focus our efforts?

The DIIF checklist supporting analysis of disability inclusion

## Slide 29: Thank you

Professor Carol Evans: [evansc101@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:evansc101@cardiff.ac.uk)

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