

UNIVERSAL DESIGN POLICY

This document is the parent policy for any College or Divisional procedures. Questions regarding this policy are to be directed to the identified Policy Administrator.

Functional Category:	Academic
Approval Date:	May 21, 2013
Effective Date:	September 1, 2014
Policy Owner:	Vice President, College Services and Chief Financial Officer
Policy Administrator:	Dean, Student Services and Registrar

Objective:	<p>NorQuest College (college) is committed to providing access and supports for diverse learners. Universal Design (UD) will enhance accessibility of physical spaces; Universal Instructional Design (UID) will enhance accessibility for learning and teaching while maintaining alignment with the college's Mandate. Utilizing UD principles when planning for facility changes will increase physical accessibility for potential and current students, faculty, and staff. Utilizing UID, which falls under UD, will inform continued review of curriculum design, faculty and staff supports, and online course delivery. The UD policy will support and promote diversification within the college by providing an inclusive culture to advance the development of systems and processes to meet the needs of all students.</p> <p>Authority to establish this policy is derived from the NorQuest College Board of Governor's Policy No. 5, which delegates authority to the President and CEO to establish policies and procedures for the college's management and operation.</p>
Policy:	<p>Universal Design and Universal Instructional Design principles will be considered when the college designs or redesigns new or existing physical spaces, curriculum, faculty and staff supports, and online course delivery.</p>
Definitions:	<p>Diverse learners¹: are individuals who may experience learning barriers as a result of physical, emotional, cognitive, linguistic, socio-economic, or cultural conditions, or because of gender, age, religion, or geographic location.</p> <p>Universal Design Principles²</p> <p>The Seven Principles of UD describe how environments and devices should be designed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Equitable Use – The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities. 2. Flexibility in Use – The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities. 3. Simple and Intuitive Use – The design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level. 4. Perceptible Information – The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities. 5. Tolerance for Error – The design minimizes hazards and the adverse

¹ Adapted from the University of Oregon located at <http://gladstone.uoregon.edu/~asuomca/diversityinit/definition.html>

² Adapted from Center for Universal Design (CUD) at North Carolina State University located at http://www.ncsu.edu/ncsu/design/cud/about_us/about_us.htm

consequences of accidental or unintended actions.

6. Low Physical Effort – The design can be used efficiently and comfortably, and with a minimum of fatigue.
7. Size and Space for Approach and Use – Appropriate size and space are provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use, regardless of the user's body size, posture, or mobility.

Universal Instructional Design Principles³

The Seven Principles of UID describe how instructional materials and activities should fall within these guidelines:

1. Be accessible and fair
2. Be flexible
3. Be straightforward and consistent
4. Be explicit
5. Be supportive
6. Minimize unnecessary physical effort
7. Accommodate students and multiple teaching methods

Universal Design for Learning Principles⁴

- Multiple means of representation
- Multiple means of action and expression
- Multiple means of engagement

Related Information:

Brokop, F. (2008). [Accessibility to e-learning for persons with disabilities: Strategies, guidelines, and standards.](#) Edmonton, AB: NorQuest College.

Burgstahler, S.E. & Cory, R. C. (2009). *Universal design in higher education: From principles to practice.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard Press.

eCampus Alberta, [Community Tool Kit.](#) (2011).

National Center on Universal Design for Learning, at Center for Applied Special Technology ([CAST](#)).

Shimoni, R., & Barrington, G. (2010). [Meeting the needs of diverse students engaging in e-learning: Interim Report.](#) Calgary, AB: Bow Valley College, Office of Applied Research and Innovation.

Shimoni, R., Barrington, G., & Wilde, R. (2010). [Successful practices in supporting students in distributed learning.](#) Calgary, AB: Bow Valley College, Office of Applied Research and Innovation.

University of Guelph, [UID.](#) (2013).

Related Procedures:

- [Universal Design for Physical Spaces Procedure](#)
- [Universal Instruction Design Procedure](#)

Next Review Date:

March 2019

Revision History:

May 2013: New
 August 2013: update for document links and branding
 November 2014: update for document links and standards
 April 2015: reviewed as per Policy and Procedure Framework: no change

³ Adapted from UID University of Guelph located at <http://www.tss.uoguelph.ca/uid/>

⁴ Adapted from CAST located at <http://cast.org/>