

This work was conducted at Dalhousie University, which is located in Mi'kma'ki. Mi'kma'ki is the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq. We are all Treaty people, and are responsible to work together towards reconciliation.

THE READI RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations to develop learning and teaching interactions that are Respectful, Equitable, Accessible, supportive of Diversity, and Inclusive (READI), to foster thriving learning and teaching communities.

Prepared by the READI Group

Living document, last updated in May 2023

About this initiative

READI

Our vision:

To develop course policies that are respectful, equitable, accessible, supporting diversity of learners and inclusive.

Dalhousie University has long considered the values of Respect, and EDIA (Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility) to be at the heart of our day-to-day operations. In the new *Strategic Plan: Third Century Promise*, these values are identified to be at the core of everything we aim to do in our collective future.

This initiative was conceptualized prior to the release of the new strategic plan, and focused on identifying opportunities to develop learning and teaching interactions that uphold these values.

Our main goal was to learn from practices in courses both within and outside Dalhousie to develop recommendations for course instructors, so that they can plan to adapt their courses to be *READI* (i.e., respectful, equitable, accessible, supportive of diversity, and inclusive).

This initiative offers recommendations for course instructors with the following key objectives:

- People-centric teaching and learning policies.
- Being intentional about READI in our courses, and in our day-to-day work.
- Facilitating learner success by supporting their needs through inclusive policies.
- Facilitating educator success by clearly operationalizing values towards which Dalhousie has articulated commitment.

About this initiative

READI

This is a *living document*, which may be updated based on feedback and new lessons learned. This space will include the latest version of the recommendations.

Change log:

Version Date	Authors	Details
May 2023	Raghav V. Sampangi, M. Gabriella Mosquera	Revisions to accessibility content, general content updates to update broken web links, and inclusion of this change log.
May 2022	Raghav V. Sampangi, Carla A. Heggie, M. Gabriella Mosquera	Updated with feedback
November 2021	Raghav V. Sampangi, Carla A. Heggie, M. Gabriella Mosquera	Initial version

Our vision:

To develop course policies that are respectful, equitable, accessible, supporting diversity of learners and inclusive.

Definitions

READI

The definitions for EDIA are adapted to apply in the context of teaching and learning from the work titled *"Advancing EDIA at Dalhousie University: Faculty Perspectives and Recommendations,"* by Marion Brown, Stephanie Connidis, Lisa Goldberg, M. Ali Ülkü, and Uday Venkatadri. They completed this work as part of their Action Leadership Project towards the Dalhousie Academic Leadership Certificate program (2020).

Other definitions are adapted to apply in the context of teaching and learning from Merriam-Webster dictionary.

Diversity

Integrating a broad range of differences across ideas, perspectives, people, policies and programs.

Inclusion

An outcome where learners experience equal access to opportunities for education and success in the courses they study, and a sense of belonging and engagement in the life and work of the Faculty and the institution.

Equity

A process through which we account for differences and diversity through fair and non-discriminatory approaches and practices, to ensure inclusion.

Accessibility

Providing equitable access to all persons, independent of human ability, experience, and/or situation. The goal is to eliminate any real or perceived barriers to foster, develop and advance the talents of all.

Respect

Recognizing the worth of a person. And recognizing the worth of what a person brings to a context in terms of their contributions, i.e., their presence, perspectives, motivations and concerns, based on their lived and evolving experiences.

Our approach to develop

READI RECOMMENDATIONS

We began work on this initiative with a focus on policies of the course syllabus that are common across all courses, i.e., including policies such as communication policies, assignment submission policies, textbook policies, course accommodation/accessibility policies, course policies related to respect and inclusion, etc. Since course learning outcomes, course specific topics, schedules, etc. can be specific to courses, we did not include them within the scope of this initiative.

We contacted Tereigh Ewert from the Centre for Learning and Teaching for pointers on getting started, and simultaneously conducted an Internet search to help us with material on the topic of developing courses that include a focus on aspects of EDIA.

Lessons learned from our review of such EDIA-focused course recommendations and discussions with colleagues based on anecdotes from personal experiences as course

instructors led us to iteratively evolve our focus to include practices followed by course instructors in the course overall, and not just limit our focus on course syllabus policies. This was an important aspect to consider because practices and beliefs of course instructors are reflected in the course syllabus and therefore, any meaningful change has to be made in the wider context of the course, which could then be reflected in the course syllabus.

Our work in this initiative was divided into four phases:

Phase 1: *Learn*

Phase 2: *Understand & review*

Phase 3: *Unlearn & learn new lessons*

Phase 4: *Towards commitment & action - recommend*

Phases 1-3 required us to learn and understand practices in our institution and other institutions, and to rely on our experiences both as students and course instructors to

Our approach to develop

READI RECOMMENDATIONS

identify elements in courses and necessary changes that can help accomplish the following:

- Create opportunities for course instructors to learn, reflect, and incrementally work towards tangible and sustainable change in their practices and courses with a focus on READI values;
- Help foster truly inclusive learning environments in which learners can feel like they belong and can thrive;
- Help foster learning and teaching cultures that are accessible to all types of learners;
- Help foster learning and teaching communities that recognize the value in diversity of individuals, thoughts and approaches;
- Implement course practices that offer learners multiple modes of interacting with the content and demonstrating

their learning (UDL - Universal Design for Learning), further making courses accessible; and,

- Help foster a thriving community of educators, who collaboratively work and support each other as we iteratively unlearn practices that may not be inclusive and that may no longer apply in our classrooms, to develop ones that are supportive and truly inclusive.

The remainder of this document contains the 25 recommendations that we developed through this initiative.

We consider this document to be a *living document*, i.e., it is ever evolving as there is always an opportunity to improve the work that is done.

If you have any feedback, suggestions, or would like any clarification, please contact the READI Group via readi@dal.ca

The recommendations

READI COURSES

The READI recommendations are grouped into categories based on elements of EDIA and wellness.

We have approached this work as three settlers in this land and recognize that the recommendations may need to be updated with new lessons and advice from various communities. This is why this document is set up as a living document.

The READI recommendation categories include the following:

- Acknowledgements¹
- Accessibility
- Academic Integrity
- Communication
- READI values² (including diversity in learning)
- Respectful learning environments
- Well-being

The recommendations also include information about whether a specific recommendation was observed to be a part of inclusive course policies recommended by other institutions.

¹ Land acknowledgement and acknowledgement of contributions of communities in the region are important as we work towards reconciliation.

² This category represents a recommendation that relates to more than one READI value.

The recommendations

HOW TO USE THEM

Each recommendation in this document is organized into:

- The recommendation title (at the top of the page),
- Ways to operationalize the recommendation (on the left hand side of the page), and,
- If applicable, an example of operationalization/implementation in a course, where applicable, or, any supporting material (on the right hand side of the page).

Please also note that these are recommendations on creating courses that are more inclusive. There are 25 recommendations in this document. Do not feel pressured to use all of them, use them one at a time, as time permits, and hopefully over time, you can include more of them.

You may already have been using some of these recommendations in your courses, which is great! Some of these recommendations may apply in the courses that you may teach directly and you may consider applying them as they are described. Some of them may need to be changed or adapted to be applicable in your courses and this is fair.

We hope you can share any lessons you may learn or may have learned in your endeavours to create courses that are more inclusive with folks in your community, so that everyone can learn and benefit from your experiences.

Category: Acknowledgement

#1 Include a land acknowledgement statement in your course syllabus & in the course space on the learning management system (e.g., Brightspace)

Ways to operationalize this recommendation:

Include a statement on land acknowledgement in the front-page of the syllabus.

True acknowledgement comes from within. It is about offering a sense of gratitude towards those who have walked this land before us and to whom the land rightfully belongs. We acknowledge this aspect and make a self-commitment to not take this land for granted.

If you would like to explore which land acknowledgement applies to us at Dalhousie, consider exploring this web page:

- <https://www.dal.ca/about-dal/indigenous-connection.html>

We recommend that you **consider including a self-reflection** on the land acknowledgement as well, because we are all responsible to uphold our commitments to the Treaties that have been signed by those who came before us.

The following is a guide by CAUT (Canadian Association of University Teachers) on land and Indigenous community acknowledgement:

- <https://www.caut.ca/content/guide-acknowledging-first-peoples-traditional-territory>

Land acknowledgement statement used by Dalhousie:

"Dalhousie University is located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq. We are all Treaty people."

Land acknowledgement statement, with reflection:

"Our University and province sit on Traditional Mi'kmaq Territory. The Mi'kmaq, though they signed a series of treaties with the British Colonists (The Covenant Chain of Peace and Friendship Treaties), never gave up their land. It is important for all of us here to understand this aspect, learn from their struggle and experiences, and show respect to the land that we are in because we are all in and of this land."

Category: Acknowledgement

#2 Situate the land acknowledgement and diversity in the context of the course, i.e., state how the students will be respected in the course

Ways to operationalize this recommendation:

In your syllabus, include a summary statement based on the personalized message under a section titled "Diverse Ways of Learning & Knowing"

Include a personal video message in the course learning management system (e.g., Brightspace) in which you talk about why the land acknowledgement, culture, and diversity are important in your course. Acknowledge this aspect in the first day of classes, and if you are able to, offer this acknowledgement periodically during the academic term.

Acknowledge that traditional and Mi'kmaq or other ways of knowing/learning may influence how students or TAs or instructors may interact with the course material and how they may learn. To be truly inclusive, we begin with this acknowledgement and accommodate all ways of knowing.

A question for all of us to reflect on is the following: *How do we ensure that the land acknowledgement isn't just a statement that gets dropped in the syllabus/presentation/etc.?*

Example scenario:

Suppose you are teaching a course on web development or mobile application development or HCI, in which there is a focus on user-centric development, you could talk about *how the diverse and evolving experiences of people will inform how they will interact with the product*, or about *how the lived experiences and traumas may influence whether someone chooses to interact with an aspect of the product*.

#3 Include an acknowledgement of the history and contributions of African Nova Scotian communities to our province

Ways to operationalize this recommendation:

Include a statement in the front page of your course syllabus to acknowledge the history and contributions of African Nova Scotian communities.

Reflect on why this is important to acknowledge and include a reflection in your course discussions as well.

As with the land acknowledgement, recognize that acknowledgement of the history and contributions of the African Nova Scotian communities provides us an opportunity to empathize with the experiences of people from these communities and how they may interact with our courses and programs.

Acknowledgement statement used by Dalhousie:

"Dalhousie acknowledges the histories, contributions, and legacies of the African Nova Scotian people and communities who have been here for over 400 years."

#4 Alternate text for both text and images in syllabi for accessibility

Ways to operationalize this recommendation:

Include alternate (alt)/descriptive text for all text, tables, images, etc., that you may include in your syllabi so that accessibility tools like screen readers are able to describe the content to the person accessing the syllabi.

Consider the best practice recommendations available in these links to web sites that focus on accessibility:

- Web accessibility initiative quick reference - <https://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG21/quickref/>
- Web accessibility initiative presentations - <https://www.w3.org/WAI/teach-advocate/accessible-presentations/>
- Alt tags/image descriptions/etc. - <https://www.americananthro.org/ImageDescriptions#difference>

Example scenario:

Suppose you are teaching the course on Mobile Computing and you include an image of an iPhone in your syllabus that has a few apps on the home screen, to illustrate the scope of the course.

The alt text for this image could be the following: *"The image shows a black-coloured iPhone with its home screen containing a few applications. The phone has a home screen background showing a yellow-coloured smiley face."*

This alt text goes to describe the image to people who cannot see the image or interact with the image as everyone else.

You can add descriptive alt text such as above by selecting image options in tools such as Word/Powerpoint. Such text can be read by accessibility software or accessibility options enabled on a student's device.

#5 Include support for multi-modal learning

Ways to operationalize this recommendation:

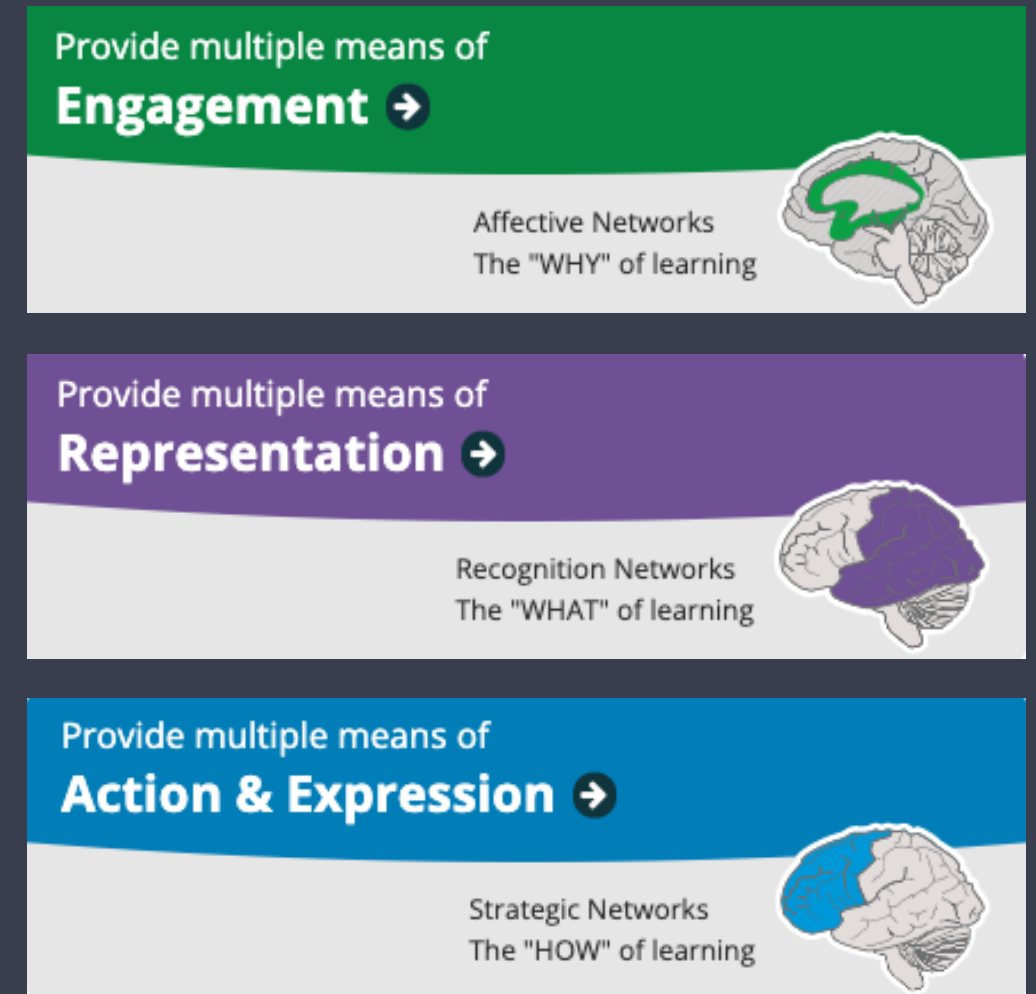
Multi-modal learning allows learners to interact with the course material in multiple ways. It is used with the basic principle that supports be provided for learners to interact with the learning based on their learning preferences. This also takes into account any disabilities, which may necessitate different modes of interacting with the material. This way of teaching, therefore, allows us to engage all students in the class.

Include supports for learners to interact with the course material in multiple modes, i.e., consider principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) when designing or updating your course.

Follow best practice recommendations available in these links:

- Universal design for learning (UDL, from CAST - Center for Applied Special Technology): <https://udlguidelines.cast.org/>
- Accessibility & UDL in higher education: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=twNlFKLPdzY>
- UDL information and learning module offered by Vanderbilt University: <https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/udl/>

UDL Guidelines



Illustrations used from the CAST website: <https://udlguidelines.cast.org/>

#6 Clear assignment submission policy and expectations around late submissions

Ways to operationalize this recommendation:

Explicitly acknowledge and be aware of the fact that students may need additional time to submit assignments and/or assessments (like quizzes, exams, etc.), depending on accommodations (plan defined by the accessibility centre) and on extenuating circumstances.

Also acknowledge the diversity in learning/learning preferences that may necessitate possible accommodations. Contact your Associate Dean (Academic) if unsure.

We recommend a compassionate approach when it comes to managing expectations around assignment submissions and late submissions. Be aware of the fact that our learners may be facing life challenges beyond the confines of the classroom, which may interact with their interactions and participation in the courses we teach. Note that some such life challenges may impact students from equity-deserving groups and those who are international students more than some of the other students in a course.

Example scenario:

Suppose you are teaching a course that requires weekly assignment submissions. Consider a submission policy that accommodates for students who may be working one or two jobs and may have their work shifts interact with the deadline times.

Consider offering an X hour “grace period” for the assignment submissions, which allows students to submit within X hours of the deadline without penalty. You may substitute “X” to be any number you deem reasonable, the higher the better and more inclusive.

#7 Include clear expectations on academic integrity

Ways to operationalize this recommendation:

Use plain language to explain why academic integrity is important, how students can learn about academic integrity, and link out to the University's academic integrity policy.

Explain the possible consequences of violating academic integrity rules in plain language as well. Include any department/Faculty-level resources (e.g., videos, PDF documents, etc.) that explain how academic integrity works within the department/Faculty as well.

Refer to the University Academic Integrity Policy and discuss with the Faculty academic integrity officer(s) to gain clarity on elements of academic integrity as applicable to your course.

Remember that expectations on use of external reference materials may change for each course, so include clear expectations on what students are expected to do in terms of collaboration, using external material, etc., in your course.

Providing such “just-in-time” information reduces stress for students and places an emphasis on student learning.

Example scenario:

Suppose you are teaching the course on Software Development, and one of the assignments expects students to work with external/standard software libraries.

Consider including instructions on:

- A. What is meant by an external software library,
- B. What amounts to an acceptable use of an external software library, and,
- C. How the student is expected to cite the external library.

The more clarity you can provide, the better.

#8 Be reachable

Ways to operationalize this recommendation:

Be available to answer students (messages/emails/office hours/etc.) and support student learning.

Office hours may be at a recurring time each week or by appointment or drop-in: ensure that these times are outside of your class times (i.e., lecture/lab/tutorial). Include your office hour policy in the syllabus.

Remember that being reachable does not mean that you have to be available 24x7; your well-being is important, too.

Being reachable just means that you allow students to contact you when they can, and you can set your own expectations with the students on the reasonable period of time that it might take you to respond to their questions or messages.

Strive to create a psychologically safe environment for learning and communication for everyone. Strive to create an environment in which students feel safe to contact you.

Example scenario:

Suppose you are teaching two courses during a term and managing large classes.

You may consider offering either an open-door office hour policy or a “by appointment” office hour policy in either or both of the courses.

You may also consider offering a policy of responding to student messages within 48-72 hours, or assigning a dedicated TA to answer student questions.

#9 Include a commitment to the values of equity, diversity, inclusion, accessibility and respect in your course and course syllabus

Ways to operationalize this recommendation:

In your syllabi, include a statement in the front page of the syllabus that acknowledges commitment to EDI, respect and accessibility.

Commit to learn about EDI, respect and accessibility, and empathy.

Approach each student request and course element that you design with a people-centric view, i.e., let the guiding question for decisions be "how will this <change> impact or support learners in this class?"

Example statements:

"The professor is committed to creating a respectful, inclusive and supportive learning environment for everyone."

OR

"I am committed to creating a respectful, inclusive learning environment, that is supportive for everyone in this course. This is important to me because... <<include your personal reflection here>>."

#10 Use gender-inclusive language

Ways to operationalize this recommendation:

In course material and interactions with your students, strive to use gender-inclusive language.

Consider the following resources for further learning:

- Guidelines for gender-inclusive language in English, developed by the UN under the United Nations System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity - <https://www.un.org/en/gender-inclusive-language/guidelines.shtml>
- United Nations gender-inclusive language in English, toolbox - <https://www.un.org/en/gender-inclusive-language/toolbox.shtml>
- "Creating a Gender-inclusive Classroom," by Sarah McKibben (2018) - <https://www.ascd.org/el/articles/creating-a-gender-inclusive-classroom>

Example scenarios:

(1) If you are used to greeting your students as "good morning, ladies and gentlemen," consider switching to "good morning, everyone," or something else more inclusive.

(2) Consider using more inclusive examples in courses, instead of limiting to the gender binary.

#11 Include a pronoun, gender expression policy

Ways to operationalize this recommendation:

Consider including pronouns in the front-page of the syllabus when you include your name.

*Include your pronouns in the introductory message in your classes.
When you address students in the first lecture, introduce yourself with your pronouns.*

Respect students'/TAs' pronouns and encourage everyone in the class to respect others' pronouns.

Remember that encouragement does not mean requirement. People may share their pronouns if they feel safe, and part of fostering a safe culture within classes or other discussions is to share our pronouns, if we feel comfortable and safe.

Consider the following resources for further learning:

- Resources on personal pronouns - <https://www.mypronouns.org/what-and-why>

Examples of pronoun use with name:

Dr. Jane Foster (she/her), PhD

Dr. T'Challa (he/him), PhD

Bruce Banner (he/him), PhD

Loki Laufeyson (he/they)

Sylvie Laufeydottir (she/they)

Angel Jose (they/them)

#12 Include a class participation policy

Ways to operationalize this recommendation:

Acknowledge that different students learn and participate in courses in different ways.

In addition to their personal learning preferences, they may have diagnosed or undiagnosed disabilities. Sometimes, such disabilities can impact whether or not someone can participate in certain class activities, e.g., group work or in-class discussions or other such activities.

This will not be the same for everyone. People with the same disabilities may interact differently with different course elements.

Acknowledge individual differences and adapt as needed. Be mindful of UDL or multi-modal teaching practices to accommodate different modes of engagement.

#13 Accommodate diversity in language communication styles

Ways to operationalize this recommendation:

Acknowledge that there are different dialects of the English language.

Students may have different ways of expressing the same idea/concept.

Unless you are teaching a course on communication skills, do not penalize students for grammatical/spelling errors in their submissions, as long as you are able to understand the idea/concept they are communicating.

Consider the following resource for further reading:

- "Tower Of Babble: Nonnative Speakers Navigate The World Of 'Good' And 'Bad' English," Carolyn McCusker and Rhaina Cohen (2021) - <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2021/04/25/989765565/tower-of-babble-non-native-speakers-navigate-the-world-of-good-and-bad-english>

#14 Support different ways of learning and knowing

Ways to operationalize this recommendation:

Acknowledge within yourself and in course syllabus & in course implementation that there are more ways of learning and knowing than through what is currently acknowledged as formal learning through degree-granting institutions/certificates (a.k.a. colonial way of learning).

This is a section in which you must include a connection to the traditional ways of learning/knowing as well, e.g., the Mi'kmaw ways of knowing, and histories of the land & people.

#15 Acknowledge diversity of learners & different points of view

Ways to operationalize this recommendation:

Reflect on your learning experience, on what worked and what did not work for you in your schooling.

Strive to understand that your learning experience may be many times better than the experiences of some in other parts of the world, or people belonging to other races, genders in your own part of the world. Make a commitment to respect this diversity when responding to student requests or student questions in class discussions.

Include a diversity statement in the syllabus, and include why this is important - in your own words. Consider making it personal and including a 1-2 line reflection of why diversity is important to you in your classes and for learning in general..

Consider the following resource for further reading:

- Yale University diversity statement examples - <https://poorvucenter.yale.edu/DiversityStatements>

#16 Acknowledge the diversity of cultures and recognize that there may be different holidays in different cultures & religions

Ways to operationalize this recommendation:

Try not to schedule assignment due dates or quizzes or exams on cultural/religious holidays, try not to schedule classes for cultural/religious holidays.

Try to offer reasonable accommodations to students who may need to take time for their cultural/religious/spiritual practices.

This allows us to truly acknowledge the diversity in our classes and encourages our students to express themselves and ask for help or time when they need, instead of suppressing who they are. This also goes to support the creation of a psychologically safe culture in our courses.

Consider referring to the following resource for further exploration:

- Interfaith calendar - <https://www.interfaith-calendar.org/index.htm>

Example scenario:

Consider offering an explicit accommodation policy in your course in addition to what is available to the students from the university, and include a link to the university accommodation policy in this as well.

This allows students to seek appropriate supports for any cultural/religious/spiritual needs from either you as the instructor or from other resources available to them through the student union or the university.

#17 Acknowledge the diversity of cultures and recognize that there may be different holidays in different cultures & religions

***** This is an item referred to the Faculty and/or University for further action**

Create a common calendar with important religious and cultural holidays for most cultures.

Try to keep this updated with input from the community, recognize that it may not be up to date and can be updated with community input.

Consider referring to the following resource for further exploration:

- Interfaith calendar - <https://www.interfaith-calendar.org/index.htm>

#18 *Encourage & acknowledge, in annual workload, faculty participation in training on UDL and elements of inclusive teaching*

***** This is an item referred to the Faculty and/or University for further action**

In the annual workload, recognize faculty involvement in professional development activities that facilitate training in aspects of UDL and other elements of inclusive teaching and learning.

As teaching is the primary responsibility for faculty members in both teaching and research streams, and sessional lecturers, the provisions are made in the Collective Agreement to support such professional development as well, as seen in Clause 17.22:

(17.21) "Subject to Clause 17.22, Members have the right, and in some cases the responsibility, to participate in the activities of appropriate professional associations, learned societies or other bodies whose work is supportive of research, scholarship, artistic creation and/or professional development, insofar as such participation is consistent with their primary responsibilities within Dalhousie University or as may be provided elsewhere in this Collective Agreement."

- The DFA - Dalhousie Collective Agreement

#19 Provide supports for faculty about aspects of respect, accessibility and EDI

***** This is an item referred to the Faculty and/or University for further action**

Create a common space (internal website on MyDal) with information about READI, which can allow professors to learn and implement READI strategies in courses.

This could be links to other/external resources, or links to internal Dalhousie or Faculty-specific resources. Availability of such on-demand and just-in-time supportive resources will support faculty in ongoing professional development activities.

#20 Acknowledge triggers in your course content

Ways to operationalize this recommendation:

As and when applicable, acknowledge that there may be some content in your courses that may trigger past experiences or traumas in your students.

This is a reflective exercise that requires you to iteratively learn and improve. It allows us to empathize with our students as they bring in their diverse experiences to our classrooms.

Keep an open communication channel with your students so that they can point out any triggers that they may have experienced in your course. Learn from it and try to include a trigger warning in your course introduction.

This creates a more welcoming learning space for students.

Consider the following resource for further reading and for examples of trigger warnings:

- Triggers and trigger warnings, University of Waterloo, Centre for Teaching Excellence - <https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/trigger>

Example:

An example trigger warning from the website of the Centre for Teaching Excellence, University of Waterloo:

"Our classroom provides an open space for the critical and civil exchange of ideas. Some readings and other content in this course will include topics that some students may find offensive and/or traumatizing. I'll aim to forewarn students about potentially disturbing content and I ask all students to help to create an atmosphere of mutual respect and sensitivity."

#21 Commit to fostering a respectful learning environment

Ways to operationalize this recommendation:

Commit to an expectation of a respectful learning environment, allowing for respectful sharing of ideas, and expect commitment to learning from each other.

By setting and stating clear and consistent expectations from everyone in the class on creating a respectful environment, we can highlight that the responsibility to foster a respectful environment rests with all of us. We are each responsible through our words and action to commit to these values and share a respectful learning environment.

Example scenario:

In your syllabi and in your course discussions, explicitly state to the students the following or a message that conveys the following meaning:

"Since this is a learning environment, we will learn from each other. If someone is not aware of something, gently make them aware for they may be operating from a less informed space. We will learn together and help each other learn respectfully. We will make a commitment to not shout down others."

#22 Provide links to resources for reporting issues & seeking help

Ways to operationalize this recommendation:

Include resources in course syllabi and in learning management systems (e.g., Brightspace) for reporting, and/or seeking help for, disrespectful behaviour, sexual harassment, etc.

Have an explicit statement in the syllabus and a separate section on learning management system (e.g., Brightspace, in the homepage) through which you give students links to resources for seeking help and reporting disrespectful behaviour. If students approach you (because they may trust you), help the student contact the appropriate person.

For your consideration:

Consider taking an online/in-person course/training that can help develop skills such as active/reflective listening. This may help understand how to listen empathetically and refer students to appropriate support, if they approach you.

Remember that simply directing any student who may approach you with such issues to someone else could lead the student to feel that they are being sent from one person to another and that their experiences may not be valid. This could lead them to lose trust in the ability of the university to support them in navigating their experiences and work towards success in the course/program.

#23 Resources for reporting issues & seeking help

***** This is an item referred to the Faculty and/or University for further action**

Have a central website with policies & processes for all faculty to access and follow.

Likewise, have a safe website with the same/similar process resources for students.

This may be a Dalhousie central EDIA page or a Faculty/unit specific EDIA page.

#24 Include supports and links to mental and physical health resources

Ways to operationalize this recommendation:

Include supports and links to mental and physical health resources on campus and online, and why this is important in learning and teaching.

If you have a student who is experiencing with mental or physical health struggles/challenges/issues, remember the following:

1. It is not your role to "fix" the student. It is your role to adapt the course to support the student's needs.
2. Be compassionate and open to changing, or working, with the student to help them navigate their experiences and your course successfully.
3. Respect student boundaries. A boundary could simply be a definition of what's okay and what's not. This could include the student saying that they may not need help from you in that context or stating that they may approach you for help later or that they are okay.
4. If the student approaches you to talk about their issues/concerns/struggles, do not send them away - listen to them. Then guide them towards appropriate resources such as Dalhousie Student Health or Student Accommodations. The student may approach you because they trust you.
5. Consult resources, such as Mental Health 101 workshop organized by Dalhousie Student Health and Wellness, or the Mental Health First Aid course offered by the Mental Health Commission of Canada, or the Psychological First-Aid course on Coursera, to learn skills like active/reflective listening to help you with a situation such as the one described in item #3 above.

Note - taking these course DOES NOT mean that you are now a specialist in supporting people with mental health struggles, nor does that make you a psychologist/counsellor. It helps by being a first step in understanding mental health issues and being supportive when someone with a mental health struggle approaches you.

#25 Be respectful of specific university policies and recommendations around submissions and student self declaration of absence

Ways to operationalize this recommendation:

Use student self declaration policy (SDA) in your course.

For self declaration of absence (or for any other extensions or other aspects in your course), you cannot ask for any personal medical information from the student. Doing so would be contrary to privacy legislation.

If a student proactively provides personal information/personal health information, you are accountable under the law to maintain the privacy of that information.

