# Students' learning needs

Within the Higher Education context, inclusivity examines the diversity and difference within the student population in order to understand, and meet, students’ learning needs (Hockings, 2010). This diversity includes:

* [Students who identify with any of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act](#_Protected_characteristics_under)
* [Students from a background that is under-represented in Higher Education](#_BACKGROUNDS_UNDER-REPRESENTED_IN)

Students may identify with any number of the protected characteristics or backgrounds and experience multiple challenges with accessing learning opportunities or experience no difficulties at all. An inclusive approach does not supercede the need to support the individual but in many instances will eliminate the need to make adjustments for individuals.

The resources given here relate to learning and teaching and were developed using research into the needs of students with dyslexia and other specific learning difficulties as a means of identifying guidance to reduce barriers to learning for all students, for example:

* Students with specific learning difficulties.
* Students with mental health conditions including anxiety.
* Students with Autistic Spectrum Conditions, e.g. Asperger’s.
* Students with physical difficulties such as Arthritis.
* Students with visual or hearing impairments.
* Students who have not disclosed that they are disabled.
* Mature students.
* International students.
* Care leavers.

Specific information in relation to reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities and specific learning difficulties is given as part of their Disability Equality Memo (DEM).

## Protected characteristics under the equality act

* Age.
* Being or becoming a transsexual person.
* Being married or in a civil partnership.
* Being pregnant or on maternity leave.
* Being disabled.
* Race including colour.
* Nationality.
* Ethnic or national origin.
* Religion.
* Belief or lack of religion/belief.
* Sex.
* Sexual orientation.

## BACKGROUNDS UNDER-REPRESENTED IN HIGHER EDUCATION

* People from lower socio-economic groups or from neighbourhoods where higher education participation is low.
* People from low income backgrounds.
* Some ethnic groups or sub-groups, including white males from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.
* Disabled people.
* Mature and part-time learners.
* Care leavers.
* Carers.
* People estranged from their families.
* People from gypsy and traveller communities.
* Refugees.