

## Implementing Universal Design for Learning in Course Syllabi

To assure students that you take an active role in ensuring your content delivery meets their learning ability, the following paragraph should be included in your syllabus:

*“Wayne State University is committed to providing an equal educational opportunity for all students. If you have a documented physical, psychological, or learning disability, you may be eligible for reasonable academic accommodations to help you succeed in this course. If you have a documented disability that requires an accommodation, please notify me within the first two weeks of the semester so that I may make appropriate arrangements.”*

The following syllabus design tips and examples below are from a brainstorming session between faculty and members of the Center for Applied Special Teaching (CAST) at the University of Southern Maine. The faculty met with the goal of applying Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles into their courses, and developed the syllabus redesign recommendations in the table below:

UDL Tip	Syllabus Modification
Present information in at least two formats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Include a calendar for lectures and office hours, along with a list of both.</li> <li>- Make a map of concepts and course objectives to illustrate the links between major themes of course content.</li> </ul>
Give students as many resources as possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Add a site link for an online textbook and the Canvas course website.</li> <li>- Add a link to campus map for location of lecture classroom and instructor’s office.</li> </ul>
Provide lots of background information – but be brief.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Include a photo of the instructor and short bio regarding relationship of the professor to course content.</li> </ul>
Build in flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Include face-to-face office hours after class, as well as virtual office hours (skype, etc.) or preferred hours of email/phone contact.</li> <li>- Allow online submission of homework.</li> <li>- Keep the learning outcomes of the course in mind when designing assignments. For example, if writing is not a learning outcome, allow students the option of an oral presentation instead of a written report.</li> </ul>
Go digital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Post course materials to Canvas (lectures, homework assignments, miscellaneous resources).</li> </ul>
Less is more – don’t overwhelm syllabus with details.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Trim down the text in the main document (syllabus), and place the lower priority text in a secondary document.</li> </ul>

**Reference:**

Langley-Turnbaugh S. J., Blair, M., & Whitney, J. (2013). Increasing accessibility of college STEM courses through faculty development in UDL. In S. Burgstahler (Ed.). *Universal design in higher education: Promising practices*. Seattle: DO-IT, University of Washington. Retrieved from [www.uw.edu/doi/UDHE-promising-practices/college\\_stem.html](http://www.uw.edu/doi/UDHE-promising-practices/college_stem.html)