

# Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Standard for Mohawk College

## Introduction

---

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a curriculum design, development, and delivery framework used to create inclusive, equitable and accessible learning environments in higher education. Ultimately, the goal of UDL is to advance learner agency in order to foster future ready students who are “purposeful and reflective, resourceful and authentic, strategic and action-oriented” (CAST, 2024).

[Mohawk College’s Program Quality Policy](#) outlines the college’s commitment to exemplary academic standards through quality program delivery. In addition, [Mohawk’s Equity, Diversity and Inclusion \(EDI\) Commitments and Action Plan webpages](#) outline its dedication to ensuring equitable and inclusive access to education for all learners. Research identifies UDL as a highly effective practice to meet Mohawk College’s quality standards and to support its equity and inclusion targets.

UDL requires educators and institutions acknowledge that learning barriers are created and resolved at a systems level, and not within the learner. UDL is not prescriptive; it encourages educators to design options that support student agency and minimize or eliminate learning barriers.

The employment of a UDL Standard for Mohawk College supports:

- Advancing Mohawk College’s commitment to accessibility, equity, and inclusion
- Exceeding the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) educational standards
- Facilitating a culture shift in design, development, and delivery of education and services

Based on [CAST’s UDL 3.0 Guidelines](#), the graphic organizer below offers a visual representation of the guidelines used at Mohawk College (CAST,

2024). You can also access the UDL Guidelines as text: [UDL Guidelines in Word](#)

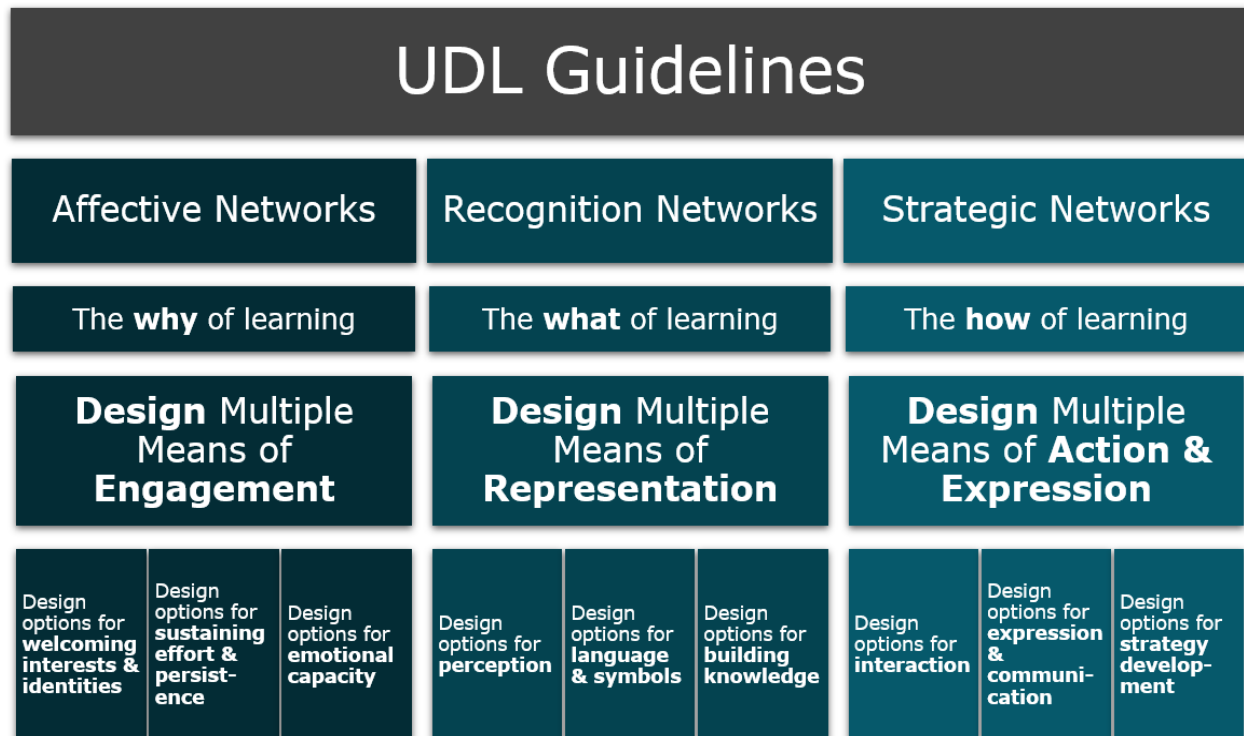


Figure 1 – UDL Guidelines

To learn more about UDL at Mohawk College, access the Centre for Teaching & Learning Innovation's [UDL webpage](#).

## UDL Standard

The initial development and later revisions of the UDL Standard for Mohawk College is:

- Based on institution specific research that includes the feedback from Mohawk College educators and learners, including:
  - [UDL for Technology-enabled Post-secondary Courses at Mohawk College](#)
  - [UDL Today: Measuring Mohawk College's Implementation](#)
- Tied to the UDL 3.0 guidelines developed by [CAST](#)
- Integrated into Mohawk College's learning management system (LMS)
- Supported by Mohawk College's Academic Operations, Program Quality Policy, EDI Action Plan, Accessible Learning Services, the Centre for

Teaching & Learning Innovation, as well as Mohawk College UDL implementers and users

The application of UDL is dependent on a variety of factors including core competencies, learning outcomes, course content, delivery method(s), learner demographics and capabilities of the LMS. Broadly, the UDL Standard recommends that:

1. All educators be encouraged to implement UDL within their context
2. Mohawk College employ UDL guidelines, wherever possible, throughout the institution
3. Mohawk College provide ongoing support for UDL education and implementation

Specifically, the UDL Standard asks educators to consider the UDL elements listed below and implement them whenever and wherever possible.

### To design for Multiple Means of Engagement, consider:

#### Options for **welcoming interests & identities**

- Ensuring instructions for assessments are presented in a way that is inclusive, accessible, and supportive
- Offering students choice regarding
  - Assignment topic(s)
  - [Assignment submission type](#)

#### Options for **sustaining effort & persistence**

- Separating large course elements (e.g., modules, assessments, etc.) into smaller segments and/or using [interim due dates](#)
- Allowing students to complete, at least some, course content at their own pace and/or in any order they wish
- Including a variety of assessment methods throughout the course

#### Options for **emotional capacity**

- Encouraging independent student responsibilities
- Including a [UDL Course Statement](#) to inform students of the UDL elements included in the course
- Granting space for personal and critical reflection

### To design for Multiple Means of Representation, consider:

#### Options for **perception**

- Drawing attention to the [customization options within the LMS](#)

- Ensuring [learning materials and presentations are explicit and uncluttered](#)
- Using multimedia resources throughout the course
- Offering untimed, or proactively including [additional time for, quizzes, tests, and/or exams](#)
- Ensuring [course materials and resources are accessible](#)
- Providing access to course content, activities, and assessments from multiple areas of the course

#### Options for **language & symbols**

- Offering a [glossary or explicit explanations](#) for new terms, symbols and/or acronyms
- Providing [note taking support](#)
- Including multimedia resources to support comprehension of new language

#### Options for **building knowledge**

- Presenting learning opportunities and assignments that draw on students' prior knowledge
- Creating assessments that:
  - Are scaffolded
  - Allow for multiple opportunities to show learning
  - Accurately evaluate the course learning outcomes/goals

### To design for Multiple Means of Action & Expression, consider:

#### Options for **interaction**

- Including [course navigation instructions](#)
- Presenting students with opportunities to work individually, in pairs or in groups
- Creating interactive learning activities
- Drawing attention to the [built-in assistive technology within the LMS](#)

#### Options for **expression & communication**

- Encouraging communication with the educator, as well as other learners
- Offering learners [multiple ways to communicate](#)
- Providing assessments that allow students to demonstrate their knowledge in multiple ways

## Options for **strategy development**

- Ensuring course learning outcomes/goals, and their relevance, are well-defined
- Inviting and supporting students to develop and share their own learning goals and expectations
- Ensuring the course learning plan is explicit and followed
- Providing assignment outlines that include clear instructions, expectations, timelines and/or [grading rubrics](#)
- Giving specific due dates and offering reminders

As UDL implementation is a dynamic process, so is Mohawk College's UDL Standard. The UDL Standard is updated as technology evolves, as UDL implementation increases, and as additional UDL research and data is obtained.

## Resources and References

---

The UDL Standard for Mohawk College was developed using:

- Research from the 2017-2018 [UDL for Technology-enabled Post-secondary Courses at Mohawk College eCampusOntario project](#), as well as the 2024 [UDL Today research study](#)
- The [Mohawk College Program Quality Policy](#)
- Mohawk College's [Mohawk College's EDI Action Plan](#)
- Research and resources from [UDL on Campus](#) by [CAST](#)
- Feedback from Mohawk College educators and learners
- A consultative approach with college stakeholders

To support the implementation of UDL within teaching and learning spaces, Mohawk College and the Centre for Teaching & Learning Innovation is committed to providing professional development, consultation opportunities, and resources to educators. The [UDL webpage](#) provides UDL implementation ideas, educator support, resources, and contact information to gain ongoing assistance. The [UDL Course Assessment](#) is also available. This self-assessment tool assists educators to determine the UDL elements they currently employ, as well as offer targeted resources for additional implementation.

CAST. (2024). *About universal design for learning*. CAST.  
<https://www.cast.org/impact/universal-design-for-learning-udl>