

# SUPPORTING NEURODIVERSE LEARNERS

Around 40% of the population are neurodiverse, but what does the term mean and how could it impact your role as a lecturer?

40%



## What does it mean?

Neurodiversity is a viewpoint that brain differences are normal, rather than deficits. Neurodivergent people experience, interact with, and interpret the world in unique ways. This concept can help reduce stigma around learning and thinking differences.



## Challenges

A neurodiverse person may feel disassociated from education owing to negative experiences created when the teacher/facilitator, the environment and the learning aren't flexible or aren't aware of what the person is experiencing.



## Perceptions vs understanding

Our perceptions/assumptions affect how we interact with people; it's important to know the person, their story and have an understanding of their neurodiversities so that we can make reasonable adjustments and adaptations to ensure they feel supported throughout their college experience.



## Overload of news!

Being in a new place with new people, taking on a new daily routine can be daunting for anyone, for a neurodiverse person this can often be heightened to the max. Be mindful of this and give space, time and opportunity for your students to settle in; it'll stand them all in good stead.



## Unique and wonderful talents

Neurodiversity brings with it a wide range of unique perspectives on the world and wonderful talents; opportunities where they can use their creativity, ideas and innovative ways of approaching challenges within their learning will not only empower them, but their peers (and you!)

## TOP FIVE tips to support neurodiverse learners

- In the learning environment, is there anything in the room (audio/ visual) that's distracting? Change what you're able to – it'll make a huge difference.
- Are your resources clear, well planned and is there flexibility in your approaches? Doing so will support a wider range of cognitive processes.
- Ask your students what helps them to focus; if they're multitaskers, encourage doodling as you speak. If they feel confined behind a desk – remove it!
- After a question wait at least 10 seconds for an answer; this helps with monoprocessing and gives time for students to develop responses confidently.
- Listen to, learn and utilise their skills, diverse ideas and needs – in doing so, you'll open up more opportunities for your full cohort of students.