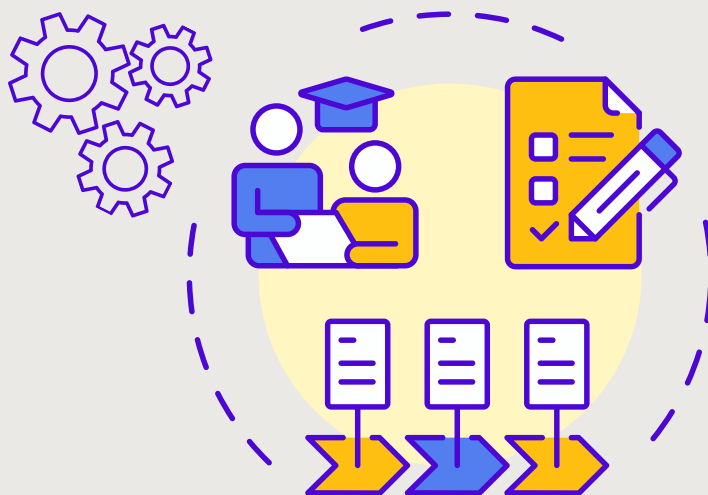


MAPPING ME:

Understanding Who I Am as a Learner

Staff Guidance:

Practical strategies, and resources
for supporting students with the
Mapping Me toolkit.



Guidance for Staff

This guide provides practical strategies for supporting students as they engage with the Mapping Me toolkit. Alongside guidance, you'll find optional reflective questions and additional resources to support your own professional development. The aim is to help you create supportive conversations, encourage learner autonomy, and build inclusive learning environments.

Note: This guide is intended for staff use. It can be accessed in the same digital folder as the student-facing toolkit or provided as a separate printed document. For further information or support, please contact creativeshift@arts.ac.uk.



Guidance for Staff

This toolkit is a student-centred resource intended to affirm identity, encourage reflection, and foster more inclusive teaching and learning environments. Staff can use this to better understand the needs and lived experiences of students - especially those with intersecting identities or neurodiverse traits.

Tip: You may find it useful completing this toolkit for your own reflections!

How to Support Students with the Toolkit

1

Encourage students to use this toolkit in their own time and share only what they are comfortable disclosing.

2

Emphasise that reflection is for self-empowerment – not to dwell on challenges or where a student thinks they're lacking.

3

Be mindful of students who may be new to articulating learning needs or who come from cultural backgrounds where this is unfamiliar.

4

Communicate using an asset-based approach, focusing on strengths, skills, cultural knowledge, and potential, rather than deficits.

5

Make time to listen actively, even if you're short on time or uncertain - because being heard can be as meaningful as any immediate problem solving.



Continue to next page for a deeper look at asset-based communication.

Examples: Deficit vs Asset-Based Phrasing

Here are some practical, student-centred examples illustrating how staff can respond in an asset-based way, especially when students voice difficulties with learning or teaching methods:

Situation	Deficit-Based Language (to Avoid)	Asset-Based Language (Recommended)
A student says they don't understand the material in lectures.	"You're not understanding this because you're not paying attention."	"I can tell you've been engaging - it sounds like this format might be challenging. Let's explore a different way that builds on how you learn best."
A student expresses frustration that tasks feel overwhelming or confusing.	"You need to catch up - you're behind."	"You've already grasped X concept—that's a solid base. How might we use that strength to tackle this part?"
A student is reluctant to participate or share due to lack of confidence.	"You're too shy; you don't speak up enough."	"You bring thoughtful insight when you do share. I'd love to understand more of your ideas, at your pace."
A student feels their perspective isn't valued, particularly experiences relevant to their cultural background.	"that view doesn't really apply here."	"That's a valuable perspective, it brings in another way of thinking that could enrich our discussion. Let's explore how it connects to the topic."

Reflective Questions for Staff

It's understandable to feel that there isn't enough time to give additional attention to individual students. But inclusive practice doesn't always require extra workload - small shifts in how we listen, affirm strengths, and adapt existing approaches can have a big impact. Even brief moments of acknowledgement or signposting to support can make students feel valued, and the adjustments you make for one learner often benefit the whole group.

1

How might you signal to students that their lived experiences are welcomed and valued in your classroom?

2

In what ways can you create space for students to exercise choice and agency in how they learn or demonstrate understanding?

3

Are there patterns in who participates most/least in your sessions? What might that reveal about accessibility or inclusion?

4

How do you currently acknowledge and celebrate the diverse strengths students bring (e.g., multilingualism, community knowledge, creativity, resilience)?

5

When students share challenges, do you balance empathy with clear pathways to support?

6

How might you model vulnerability or reflection to normalise these practices for students?

7

Do you check in with students about whether adjustments are working, rather than assuming?

8

How might you ensure that feedback highlights growth and progress as well as areas for development?

9

In moments of tension or misunderstanding, how can you respond in a way that de-escalates and affirms students' dignity?

10

How are you engaging with your own ongoing learning about equity, inclusion, and neurodiversity?

UAL Support and Resources for Staff

Conflict in Learning Spaces Resource library

UAL and sector resources and material around conflict and arranged in 3 themed layouts:

- [Engaging Positionality, Power and Institutional Dynamics](#)
- [Tools and Reflections Grounded in Student Experience](#)
- [Practising Care, Compassion and Critical Engagement](#)

artslondon.padlet.org/schow/conflict-in-learning-spaces-2jj4h5tdj111sa4a

UAL student learning and engagement

The Student Learning and Engagement Team supports undergraduates at risk of disengagement by reaching out, understanding their needs, and connecting them with courses and services to help them succeed and stay on track.

Get in touch with the SLE Project Coordinators if:

- you would like to talk about learning and engagement support on your course
- you would like to find out more about the SLE work.

canvas.arts.ac.uk/sites/explore/SitePage/231581/ual-student-learning-and-engagement-pilot

Disabled and Neurodiverse Staff Network (DSN)

The Disabled and Neurodiverse Staff Network (DSN) is an independent group for disabled and neurodiverse staff, allies, parents, and carers. It provides peer support, shares experiences, runs events, raises concerns, highlights good practice, and contributes to UAL policies to improve inclusion.

canvas.arts.ac.uk/sites/explore/SitePage/46456/disabled-and-neurodiverse-staff-network-dsn

Support and Networks for Staff

Education Support

A UK charity supporting the mental health and wellbeing of all education staff (including HE). Offers a 24/7 helpline, counselling, and grants.

www.educationsupport.org.uk

London Higher

This forum provides an active discussion space for staff who support Racial Equity learners into and through HE, to share best practice and collaborate on practical projects.

londonhigher.ac.uk/

BAMed

A UK charity supporting greater representation and career progression for Black, Asian and minority ethnic educators through networks, events, and coaching.

www.bameednetwork.com/

Disability Rights UK

A national pan-disability charity offering resources on workplace rights, accessibility, and inclusive practices. Useful for university staff navigating disability or long-term health conditions.

www.disabilityrightsuk.org/

Neurodiversity in Business (NiB)

A business-led forum that promotes workplace inclusion for neurodivergent staff. Offers resources, events, and best-practice sharing.

www.neurodiversityinbusiness.org/

Advance HE – Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)

Runs national programmes, research, and resources on race equality, including the Race Equality Charter for universities. Staff can engage via events and professional development opportunities.

www.advance-he.ac.uk/equality-charters/race-equality-charter

References

Scan the QR code or [click here](#) to explore the sources to the Mapping Me Toolkit. You might find them inspiring or use them for your own exploration.



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shaping
diversity
in the
creative
industries



arts.ac.uk/creativeshift



[@ual_creativeshift](https://www.instagram.com/ual_creativeshift)



[UAL Creative Shift](https://www.linkedin.com/company/ual-creative-shift)



creativeshift@arts.ac.uk



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