

Reimagining Biosciences: Diversifying, Decolonising and Integrating Global Perspectives through Inclusive Curriculum Planning



University of Exeter

Dr Yusra Siddiqui

Lecturer in Biology, Academic Lead for Student Support (Racial, Equality & Inclusion), Department of Biosciences

The Department of Biosciences at Exeter University is committed to fostering **inclusivity** through innovative **curriculum planning** that ensures all students, regardless of background or ability, can engage meaningfully with their studies. By introducing **inclusive curriculum planning**, the department tailors course content and teaching methods to accommodate diverse learning styles and needs, promoting **equal access** to educational opportunities. Additionally, the **integration of global perspectives** into the curriculum enhances students' understanding of biosciences within an international context, enriching their learning experience. This approach not only broadens academic horizons but also prepares students to address **global challenges** in biosciences with a culturally and scientifically informed outlook.

Enhancing Inclusivity through Annual Module Review

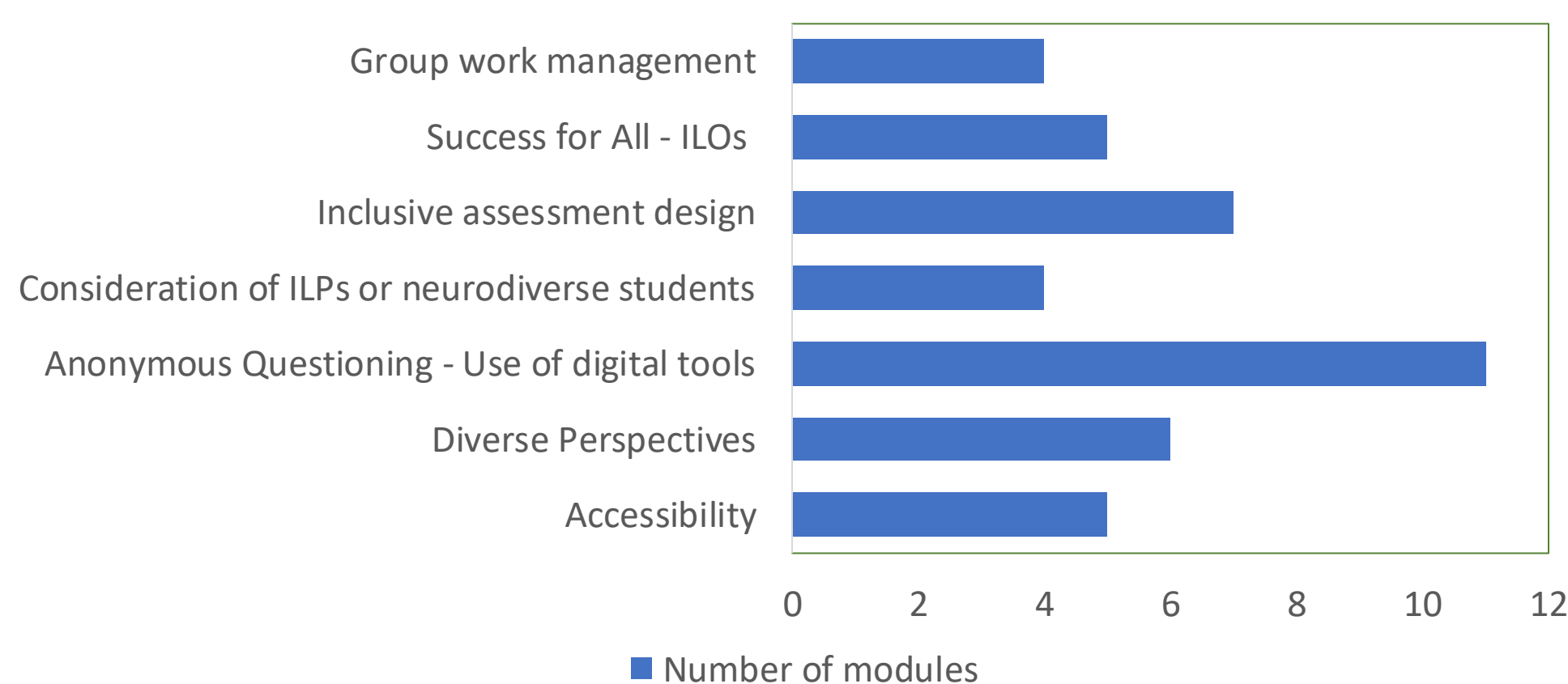


Figure 1 – Thematic analysis of Annual module Review forms inclusivity question to identify areas in which Biosciences staff are working for inclusivity.

Annual Module Review form: Key tool for refining and enhancing inclusivity in the curriculum.

Inclusivity Question for Module Convenors: "Please outline steps you have taken to increase the inclusivity of this module?"

Purpose: Encourages continuous reflection on inclusivity in teaching practices, and prompts staff to implement strategies that address barriers to student engagement.

Dynamic and Evolving Process:

Ensures inclusivity is regularly updated and adapted within each module.

Accountability:

Fosters active engagement in creating learning environments where all students can thrive.

Cultural Engagement with Diverse People and Global Perspectives

Several modules incorporate international perspectives and broaden diversity by integrating content related to the Global South, different racial groups, and under-represented populations.

- BIO2093: Modern theories of Evolution
- BIO3098: Biology of Marine Vertebrates
- BIO2076: Ecology and Environment
- BIO2091: Bioinorganic Chemistry
- BIO3082: Science communication
- BIO3092: Bioinformatics
- BIOM568: Blue Planet



Figure 2 – Bioscience Skills Framework with one of the skills we focus on is how to create 'Globally Engaged' individuals.

Inclusive assessments

- Connected curriculum and assessment redesign – introduction of a new assessment menu with focus on student and staff load, authenticity, adoption of AI and AI resilience.
- Standardised assessment briefs for all summative assessments in 2024/25 – with clear and written instructions for all assessments

Future Work plans

By utilizing emerging frameworks such as the **Curriculum for Change model** and the **Transformative Education Framework (TrEF)**, which promote inclusive, equitable, and culturally relevant learning, this project aims **to decolonise and diversify** several undergraduate modules (BIO1334 Genetics, BIO2066 Forensic Science) and postgraduate programmes.

The goal is to identify and rectify outdated or biased content, ensuring a more inclusive curriculum. We also aim to create Bioscience specific sample resources across the various themes.



Figure 3 – inclusive Education: a principle of the Transformative Education Framework – education innovation strategy introduced in 2021 - as part of the 'Success for All' strategy.