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| Whole of Victorian Government Universal Design Policy |
| Summary  |
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# Introduction

Utilising universal design principles will ensure facilities, built environments, products and services can be used by everyone, to the greatest extent possible, without adaptations.

# What is universal design?

Universal design is a design philosophy that ensures that products, buildings, environments, programs, services and experiences are innately accessible to as many people as possible, regardless of age, disability, cultural background or any other differentiating factors.

# Overview of the Universal Design Policy

The purpose of Victoria’s Universal Design Policy is to support Victorian Government departments, agencies and delivery partners to incorporate universal design principles consistently across infrastructure projects. This policy provides guidance on how Victorian Government funded infrastructure can be designed and delivered to advance universal design principles and goals.

The policy takes an outcomes approach using the seven principles of universal design. To avoid confusion, the policy is separate to statutory requirements and is additional to regulatory design requirements, other policies and building codes.

# The universal design principles

The policy sets out the following seven universal design principles:

1. **Equitable use:** The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.
2. **Flexibility in use:** The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.
3. **Simple and intuitive use:** Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the person's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level.
4. **Perceptible information:** The design communicates necessary information effectively to the person, regardless of ambient conditions or the person’s sensory abilities.
5. **Tolerance for error:** The design minimises hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.
6. **Low physical effort:** The design can be used efficiently and comfortably and with a minimum of fatigue.
7. **Size and space for approach and use:** Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation and use regardless of the person’s body size, posture or mobility.

# Applying universal design across the lifecycle of a project

Universal design principles can be applied at any stage of a project. Victorian Government departments, agencies and delivery partners should consider how they can apply universal design principles at the proposal, planning and evaluation, business case, development, tender, implementation and operation stages of a project.

Departments and building agencies will have flexibility to apply universal design. This could include;

* undertaking user engagement and codesign,
* incorporating universal design principles into procurement or functional briefs and
* incorporating universal design principles into design standards.

# Summary of universal design principles and practical explanation

| Universal design principle | Practical explanation |
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| 1. Equitable useThe design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.  | * Provide the same means of use for all people: identical whenever possible; equivalent when not.
* Avoid segregating or stigmatising anyone.
* Provisions for privacy, security, and safety should be equally available to all people.
* Make the design appealing to all people.
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| 2. Flexibility in useThe design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.  | * Provide choice in methods of use.
* Accommodate right or left-handed access and use.
* Facilitate people’s accuracy and precision.
* Provide adaptability to people's pace.
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| 3. Simple and intuitive useUse of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the person's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level.  | * Eliminate unnecessary complexity.
* Be consistent with people’s expectations and intuition.
* Accommodate a wide range of literacy and language skills.
* Arrange information consistent with its importance.
* Provide effective prompting and feedback during and after task completion.
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| 4. Perceptible informationThe design communicates necessary information effectively to the person, regardless of ambient conditions or the person’s sensory abilities.  | * Use different modes (pictorial, verbal, tactile) for redundant presentation of essential information.
* Provide adequate contrast between essential information and its surroundings.
* Maximise "legibility" of essential information.
* Differentiate elements in ways that can be described (i.e. make it easy to give instructions or directions).
* Provide compatibility with a variety of techniques or devices used by people with sensory limitations.
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| 5. Tolerance for errorThe design minimises hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.  | * Arrange elements to minimise hazards and errors: most used elements, most accessible; hazardous elements eliminated, isolated, or shielded.
* Provide warnings of hazards and errors.
* Provide fail safe features.
* Discourage unconscious action in tasks that require vigilance.
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| 6. Low physical effortThe design can be used efficiently and comfortably and with a minimum of fatigue.  | * Allow people to maintain a neutral body position.
* Use reasonable operating forces.
* Minimise repetitive actions.
* Minimise sustained physical effort.
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| 7. Size and space for approach and useAppropriate size and space are provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of the person’s body size, posture, or mobility.  | * Provide a clear line of sight to important elements for any seated or standing person.
* Make reach to all components comfortable for any seated or standing person.
* Accommodate variations in hand and grip size.
* Provide adequate space for the use of assistive devices or personal assistance.
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