WHAT IS THE AUTISM SPECTRUM?

The autism spectrum is a neurological variation which affects, among other things, the way an individual relates to his or her environment and their interaction with other people.

How the information is presented on the course site will impact on how much students on the autism spectrum engage with the material.

Students found the way the information was presented online could be confusing and overwhelming.

Students on the autism spectrum preferred it when it was made clear which tasks were the most important and therefore needing more of their attention and focus.

**Insights from students on the autism spectrum:**
- provide a description
- tell me why the information is here
- tell me what to do with the information
- use short sentences
- summarise using dot points
- emphasise key points (bold, italics or underline. Avoid highlighter tool)

Students on the autism spectrum told us they prefer clear pathways to navigate through the course content. They find it helpful if a consistent format is used.

**Tip:** Check your course site for consistency in:
- use of headings
- contrast levels (high preferred)
- font (large default font, Serif type)
- labelling visual icons (labels preferred)
- embed videos
- punctuation and grammar (e.g. a misplaced colon can detract from learning)

Employing good principles of online design will aid student engagement. For students on the autism spectrum the visual presentation of the information can make the difference between engaging and disengaging with the course.