

# Additional Guidance for Universal Design

**Tool Version:** Green Star Design & As Built NZv1.0 and NZv1.1

We have seen an increasing number of projects targeting the Universal Design innovation and finding it difficult to meet the requirements, particularly with regards to the needs analysis and stakeholder engagement. In response, the NZGBC is providing the additional guidance below.

## **Guidance for Creating a Strong Needs Analysis**

*The innovations should be the result of a full needs assessment that included all four bullet points in the example methodology, e.g. innovations are specific practicable inclusions that were included to meet specifically identified user needs for this project. Ensure that your needs analysis covers all four key components:*

- 1. Review Suggested Guidelines:** Beyond generic guidelines, use consultations to identify specific needs.
  - a. While reviewing generic Universal Design (UD) guidelines (e.g. *MBIE's Buildings for Everyone* or *Auckland Council's UD Guidelines*) is a helpful starting point, ensure that you go beyond merely copying guidelines but instead tailor your analysis to the specific context of your project.
  - b. The analysis should cover more than just NZBC requirements; it should also address 'beyond code' good design practices and how they apply to your project. For example, adhering only to the NZBC minimum provisions through acceptable solutions such as NZBC D1/AS1 or NZS4121 does not constitute UD or Innovation.
- 2. Identify User Needs:** Document how user needs were identified and addressed in the project.
  - a. Avoid relying solely on generic guidelines. Instead, engage with stakeholders to gather project-specific needs: i.e. future building users, including individuals with diverse permanent and temporary disabilities such as those with disabilities, elderly persons, pregnant women and children. This can for example be done via surveys.
  - b. Document these consultations thoroughly to ensure that the needs analysis reflects real user requirements and goes beyond generic UD guidance and ensure you document and maintain records of the design review process and evaluation, with regards to evaluating the above steps.
- 3. Incorporate Specific Solutions:** Detail how the design features meet identified needs and provide evidence of their implementation.
  - a. Support your needs analysis with concrete examples and evidence:
  - b. Make sure your needs analysis clearly explains how each design feature will be implemented.
  - c. For example, if claiming enhanced wayfinding features, include plan snippets or photos showing how these features are designed.
  - d. For example, demonstrate how design elements like accessible door widths or varied seating options were chosen based on user needs rather than generic practices.

4. **Evaluate and Document:** Include a documented review process that shows how the design addresses the identified needs.
  - a. Include thorough documentation of how the design review process was conducted.
  - b. Record how the design features were evaluated against the needs identified through consultations.
  - c. Include evidence of how claims about UD features (e.g., tactile, auditory, or visual elements) are supported. For example, provide plan snippets or detailed descriptions showing how these features are incorporated
5. **Examples, Resources and Precedents:** Review international UD precedents for examples of how this INN Credit might be achieved. Just a few examples and resources include:
  - a. Canadian Museum for Human Rights, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada
  - b. Australia - <https://universaldesignaustralia.net.au/>
  - c. Canada Water Library, Southwark, London, UK.
  - d. Australia - <https://www.vhba.vic.gov.au/resources/universal-design>
  - e. Australia - <https://good-design.org/projects/inclusive-school-playground-spaces/>