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# Accessibility and Inclusion Checklist for Events at The University of Winnipeg

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Last updated: July 31, 2023

## Pre-event considerations

### Scheduling and Venue

[ ]  Avoid scheduling your event for early morning or late evening as these can be inconvenient times for some people due to transportation access and/or caregiving responsibilities.

[ ]  Ensure that your dates don’t coincide with important holidays or cultural celebrations.

[ ]  Ensure that the venue has an emergency plan that is available to the public, in accessible formats.

[ ]  Consider those who may need to use adaptive devices (i.e., electrical outlets in accessible seating areas to accommodate devices, laptops, etc.; extra space or work surface).

[ ]  Consult the Checklist for Planning Accessible Conferences (<https://www.accessiblecampus.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/A-Checklist-for-Planning-Accessible-Events-1.pdf>) for detailed considerations about accessible venue spaces, parking, dietary needs, communications, etc.

### Promotion

[ ]  Use highly readable fonts that are also scalable for all promotional texts (e.g., <https://brailleinstitute.org/freefont>).

[ ]  Use high-contrast, colour-blind-friendly colours on all promotional materials.

[ ]  Use bolding to indicate emphasis rather than italics in all promotional materials.

[ ]  Use alt text on all images in digital promotional materials.

[ ]  Event materials should be made available in advance (e.g., agendas, handouts, forms, etc.).

[ ]  All event materials should be written in plain language.

[ ]  Ensure that images and illustrations for promotional materials reflect a diverse population.

[ ]  Ensure the venue is a scent-free environment and communicate this in promotional materials.

[ ]  Provide clear, accessible instructions on how to get to the venue and find key amenities (e.g., “The Gallery is located on the main floor of Centennial Hall at 515 Portage Avenue. Accessible, street level visitor entrances with auto door openers and ramps are via Portage Avenue, Ellice Avenue and Spence Street. The gallery doors are equipped with auto-openers. There is a gender-neutral, accessible washroom less than 100 feet from the Gallery entrance.”).

[ ]  Provide contact information so guests can learn about accessibility features for the event.

[ ]  List the accommodations you can offer:

* Note-taking services
* Material in accessible formats (e.g., braille, large-print, audio, etc.)
* ASL interpretation
* Real-time video capturing
* Assistive listening devices (e.g., infrared/looping systems, etc.)
* Personal support workers
* Special diets
* Accessible accommodations
* Accessible parking
* Reimbursement for Handi-Transit, other forms of transportation, etc.
* Certain lighting requirements (some people may have challenges with bright and/or fluorescent lights)
* Other sensory needs
* Childcare

[ ]  Ensure registration for the web-conferencing component of the event is accessible.

[ ]  Use the Communication Access Symbol (<https://www.cdacanada.com/resources/communication-access-symbol/>) and any other applicable disability icons on materials/signage.

### Event Preparation

[ ]  Consider the identities of your presenter(s) and/or panels to ensure that they are diverse.

[ ]  Build a detailed agenda (program) for online/hybrid events. Include processing time/breaks into your event, such as a 10-minute break after every hour session.

[ ]  Have a backup plan in case your web-conferencing host or your speakers lose their connection.

[ ]  Ensure the technology you choose is accessible and compatible with assistive measures such as screen readers, augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), and allows for computer and phone-based audio listening/speaking.

[ ]  Provide a tip sheet for online platforms with directions so attendees will feel comfortable with online platforms. The tip sheet can include step-by-step information about how to use the platform(s) and the option to attend training sessions about the platform(s) before.

[ ]  For web-conferencing, consider a Co-Facilitator to help with alternating the very focused task of facilitating the whole event, providing a "side-kick" to watch out for technical glitches, communicating with speakers to be ready to go on the air, moderating the questions and comments in the chat room, and other supporting tasks.

[ ]  Designate a moderator to provide structure to the meeting by identifying questions, identifying speakers, and ensuring attendees are speaking in turn.

[ ]  Discuss with speakers the use of inclusive and accessible language – the avoidance of jargon, the use of appropriate terms to describe people, the framing of issues that are sensitive without being re-traumatizing, etc.

[ ]  Encourage speakers to use a microphone, speak slowly, and describe images that are projected on the screen during a presentation.

[ ]  Provide presenters with a tip sheet on how to make presentations accessible.

[ ]  Request presentation materials in advance so that materials can be transcribed into accessible formats.

[ ]  Share presenters’ slides in advance, if possible, to allow attendees more direct control over their access to information (text and colours can be modified as needed).

[ ]  If pre-recorded videos are being shared, describe what is happening in the video and add captions using programs like Final Cut or Adobe Premiere, or apps like Clipomatic, Clips, Caption This, and AutCap.

[ ]  Ask presenter(s) to inform you when they are planning to use collaboration features (in-person or online) so that you can prepare accommodations.

[ ]  If additional language(s) interpretation/translation is needed, ensure all materials and presentations provide appropriate interpretation/translation.

[ ]  Facilitators should be prepared to mitigate the circumstances where inclusion is not upheld. If people are disruptive in a disrespectful manner, if racial slurs are used, if the content of the chat is dismissive or triggering, facilitators should be able to address issues in the moment as needed.

[ ]  Lectern heights and audio controls need to be adjustable to meet the needs of different speakers.

[ ]  Give attendees the opportunity to send in their questions ahead of time.

[ ]  Email participants any resource links being shared either before or following the session.

[ ]  Provide honoraria and/or gifts to speakers and/or panelists as appropriate.

[ ]  Create an evaluation form for attendees to indicate if their accommodation needs were met, and whether more could have been done to make the meeting more accessible and inclusive. Make sure the evaluation form is available in accessible formats.

## Event considerations

### Presentations and Communication

[ ]  Develop and use a meaningful land acknowledgement appropriate for the specific event.

[ ]  Develop and post an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Statement and/or a code of conduct for the event. List a contact for participants to report breaches of the code of conduct.

[ ]  Make clear to all attendees, speakers, and staff whether the event will be filmed and/or photographed, and provide a way for people to opt out.

[ ]  Provide ASL interpreters with the appropriate language level skills (e.g., if academic language will be used, you will need ASL interpreters with an academic language skill level).

[ ]  Provide real-time captioning for those attending via web-conferencing. Because of the complexity in producing live captions, in-house captioning generally does not meet accessibility requirements. It is recommended that a vendor be used to ensure accuracy of captions. For more information on how to enable third-party live captioning in Zoom: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/115002212983>.

[ ]  Follow accessibility standards for PowerPoint presentations, including adding alt text for visuals, avoiding the use of tables, adding underlining to hyperlinks, and making font sizes sufficiently large (<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/make-your-powerpoint-presentations-accessible-to-people-with-disabilities-6f7772b2-2f33-4bd2-8ca7-dae3b2b3ef25>).

[ ]  Provide closed captioning on any video and PowerPoint presentations.

[ ]  Use accessibility features for web-conferencing platform, including pinning the ASL interpreter to ensure they are always visible, (<https://explore.zoom.us/en/accessibility/>, <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/accessibility-tools-for-microsoft-teams-2d4009e7-1300-4766-87e8-7a217496c3d5>).

[ ]  Ensure that the oral announcements and written texts use non-binary, inclusive language (<https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/branding/editorial-style-guide.html>).

[ ]  Ask people speaking to say their name every time they speak, so captioners and attendees know who is talking.

[ ]  Ask speakers to describe the key visual content and what they are pointing at or doing physically to help those with a vision or cognitive disability, and for those attending only by phone (e.g., "*On this slide showing a graph, the central takeaway statistic I am pointing at is...*").

[ ]  Encourage speakers to describe live scenarios and images; to read any text that appears on screen; and to describe anything to which they gesture. Nothing should be said that cannot be read.

[ ]  For web-conferencing, encourage speakers to turn their videos on and to have their face clearly seen to help attendees pay attention and assist those who are reading lips.

[ ]  For web-conferencing, use multiple mediums to take questions. In many web conferencing platforms, attendees can ask questions by raising their virtual hands, unmuting themselves, or posting questions in the chat box.

[ ]  For web-conferencing, designate one staff person to mind the chat room, the waiting room, and muting all attendees but those speaking to keep distraction and background noise to a minimum.

[ ]  For web-conferencing, read aloud links posted in the chat. Attendees using assistive technology may not be able to copy or activate the links.

[ ]  Ensure that any images and illustrations in event materials reflect a diverse population.

[ ]  All printed materials should be on matte or non-glossy paper.

[ ]  All printed materials should be in a highly readable, sans-serif font between 12 and 18 points with sufficient space between lines of text (should be at least 25-30 per cent of the point size).

[ ]  All printed materials should be available on white or pale yellow backgrounds with black text.

[ ]  Signs should be large and clear and at a comfortable height for people who use wheelchairs or scooters.

[ ]  Provide the UWinnipeg Accessibility Map in various formats, including oral announcements (<https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/maps/docs/accessibility-map.pdf>).

### Discussion Facilitation

[ ]  Ensure that moderator is prepared to handle sometimes sensitive subjects (related to related to race, gender, orientation, ability, etc.) that may arise as part of these discussions. Plan to talk through specific processes to make sure the conversation is posed in an educational and respectful manner.

[ ]  Invite people to take breaks as needed. In the same way attendees would excuse themselves for a restroom break, normalize the idea of neurodiverse participants (or anyone else) taking a mental break at their discretion.

[ ]  Explicitly provide an option of passing on active participation in activities.

[ ]  For web-conferencing, give clear instructions to participants before sending them into breakout rooms. Using one slide and also verbally, tell participants:

* what they are expected to do in a breakout room
* how long the breakout session will last
* whether the host will be joining any of the groups

[ ]  For web-conferencing, provide clear instructions about how to ask questions or seek help from their breakout rooms.

[ ]  If an attendee has requested live captioning for web-conferencing, be sure to assign that attendee with the person who is typing the captions in the same breakout room.

[ ]  Consider providing attendees the option to not participate in breakout rooms. Breakout rooms might not constitute safe spaces for everyone, and forcing them into situations where they need to share can be traumatizing.

### Event Support

[ ]  Make sure that venue staff who will be assisting with the event have been trained on serving people with disabilities (i.e., they should know the locations of elevators, accessible washrooms, service animal areas, etc.).

[ ]  Designate event staff to assist individuals who may need assistance and ensure that these staff are identifiable.

[ ]  Ensure that staff and volunteers are treated with respect and have avenues for support, should something happen during the event that would result in their harm.

### Venue Spaces and Food

[ ]  Have designated spaces for individuals that require prayer rooms/spiritual support/smudging, quiet/sensory retreat spaces for neurodivergent people, and nursing spaces. Notify individuals if there are any childcare options available.

[ ]  Have all food labeled so people can identify their allergies/restrictions.

[ ]  Provide sugar-free beverages and bendable straws.

[ ]  Provide face masks and hand sanitizer for those who need them.

[ ]  Reserved seating should be located at the front of the room for attendees who are deaf, hard of hearing, or visually impaired.

[ ]  Cover electrical cables or cords on the floor, so that people using mobility aids can move safely.

## Post-event considerations

[ ]  Provide a transcript of presentations, discussions, etc. to participants

[ ]  Allow people to contribute to discussions (anonymously if they choose) after the event.

[ ]  Understanding the meaning of the content of any post-event materials must not depend on being able to perceive colours, sounds, object size, etc.

[ ]  Debrief staff, volunteers, and presenters (e.g., ask for ideas on how to make the future meetings more accessible for people with disabilities, ask the staff if they felt they were fully prepared to assist participants with disabilities or needed further training, etc.).

[ ]  Provide an evaluation form for attendees to indicate if their accommodation needs were met, and whether more could have been done to make the meeting more accessible and inclusive. Make sure the evaluation form is available in accessible formats.

[ ]  Send thank-you notes to presenters, panelists, etc.