KPU Events – Accessibility Checklist

Introduction

When it comes to virtual, hybrid, and in person events, programming, workshops, and meetings, it is always important to center accessibility.

Accessibility at an event means having a place, environment, or space that is set up from the start to include people with a wide range of disabilities.

Inclusion is the creation of an environment where everyone shares a sense of belonging, is treated with respect, and is able to fully participate.

Universal Design is an approach to design and creation that prioritizes accessibility, equity, and inclusion from the outset rather than relying on adaptation or retrofitting to accommodate some groups or individuals. Universal design ensures that any environment (and any physical structure, product, or service offered) can be used and understood by all people, inclusive of all abilities, and other forms of diversity. To many proponents, universal design is simply good design.

Below is a checklist created to help guide organizers to make a more accessible event.

Preparation & Planning

Before any event consider doing the following:

- ✓ Plan your event as far ahead as possible, preferably 6 months to a year for large events, to book the correct services.
- ✓ Think about the timing and date of the event: Is the event held at a time where the greatest number of people can attend? Are there any competing events occurring at the same time across campuses that could create issues with staffing or support?
- ✓ Involve individuals with visible and invisible disabilities in the early stages of your event planning and compensate them for their time and expertise.
- ✓ Consider requested supports that are often asked for: lighting, captioning, quiet room, proper seating, etc.
- ✓ Be prepared to set up physical space using Universal Design methods.
- ✓ Review the emergency evacuation procedures by clicking here and familiarize yourself with them.

Choosing an Accessible Venue

Note: Some of the items below involve infrastructure at KPU. Contact HR-EDI@kpu.ca if you notice any infrastructure is inaccessible and could be addressed long term.

If your event is in person or hybrid, is the venue accessible:

- ✓ Conduct an on-site visit before you reserve the venue. Connect with facilities if you need access to a certain area.
- ✓ Invite individuals with various needs, such as mobility and sensory needs, in your on-site visit and compensate them for their time and expertise.

Doors
- ✓ Ensure automatic door openers are activated (contact facilities if not activated).

Elevators
- ✓ Minimum 36-inch opening.
- ✓ Large enough to accommodate a person with motorized wheelchair or scooter, and an attendant or assistance dog.

Lighting
- ✓ Avoid too dark or too bright venues.
- ✓ Ensure adequate lighting in parking locations, venue, and so on.
- ✓ Avoid use of strobe lighting.
- ✓ Request for any lights that are flashing or flickering to be fixed.
- ✓ Check if the lights can be turned off or dimmed if necessary.

Ventilation
- ✓ Ensure ventilation of fresh outside or filtered air.
- ✓ Be aware of any ongoing construction or remodeling that could impact the circulation of air-borne allergens such as dust, paint fumes.

Acoustics
- ✓ Consider the impact of ambient noise.
- ✓ Limit external noise.

Washrooms
- ✓ Scent-free soap.
- ✓ Signage asking attendees to not use scented products.
- ✓ Washrooms and change rooms are all inclusive.
- ✓ At least one universal and accessible washroom in close proximity to event space.

Surfaces
- ✓ Level and smooth.
- ✓ Concrete, asphalt, compacted crushed granite or limestone, linoleum, and tight-weave carpets without underlay.
  - o Grass is not accessible when wet
  - o Wood chips or bark mulch are not accessible surfaces
  - o Drain rock is not an accessible surface
- ✓ Avoid slopes where possible.
- ✓ No more than 5% slope.

✓ For outdoor events, provide wheelchair-accessible portable toilets.

Stages
✓ Stage entrance must be level, gently sloping, ramped, with railings.
✓ Provide a stand-alone microphone (wireless or with an adjustable stand).
✓ Have people positioned in the audience as mic runners.
✓ Podiums are at least one meter away from the stage edge.
✓ Railings are added at the back of the stage.
✓ Lecterns can adjust to different heights.

Pathways
✓ Pathways to displays, stages, speaker's podium should be minimum 39 inches wide, and include turning circle space with a diameter of 6 feet.
✓ Consider tripping hazards, obstacles, stairs, curbs, and bumps.

Parking and pick-up/drop-off
✓ Minimum 6% of total parking available should be accessible and at least 4 spaces more than anticipated.
✓ Spaces should be at least 8.5 feet wide with adjacent side and rear access of at least 6.6 feet wide.
✓ Two accessible parking spaces may share a common access aisle.
✓ Designate accessible parking close to the venue.
✓ Ensure accessible pathway to venue from parking.

Set Up

Entrances, exits, pathways, hallways, corridors
✓ Clearly marked.
✓ Free of any barriers or tripping hazards.
✓ Well-marked paths at entrances with information about accessibility throughout the trail or path (for example, identify any interruptions of the accessible surface, such as steps, steep slopes, and so on).
✓ Set ups cannot occur in primary egress' .
✓ [Review emergency evacuation plans by clicking here.](#)

Seating
✓ Provide sufficient place with no seats for people in wheelchairs or scooters to use throughout venue. Avoid designating a single area "for wheelchair use" – this segregates and stigmatizes individuals using wheelchairs, prevents them from having the same choices as other attendees, and prevents them from being seated with friends and colleagues.

- ✓ Where seats are movable, provide areas by the aisles with no chairs so people can maneuver into these spaces.
- ✓ Ensure aisles between seating rows are wide enough– a minimum 36 inches of clear space.
- ✓ Provide seats near the front of the room available upon request.
- ✓ Ensure there are chairs reserved directly in front of the real-time captioning screen for individuals who request this.
- ✓ Ensure there are a variety of chairs. Example chair with arm rests, or without, or that feel sturdier, without wheels, height adjustable, etc.
- ✓ Allow options for both sitting and standing.

Tables
- ✓ Provide sufficient space between tables for people to go between.
- ✓ Ensure the space between occupied chairs from adjacent tables is at minimum 36 inches.
- ✓ Have one chair missing from each table.
- ✓ Ensure that there are multiple table heights throughout venue or tables which height can be adjusted.

Counters, reception desks, and registration tables
- ✓ Ensure desks are 29 to 34 inches from the floor.

Signage and displays

- ✓ Fully accessible signage that marks entrances, parking, washrooms, emergency and security, transit points, and other conveniences.
- ✓ Install standard universal signage in single-user washrooms, change booths, and other spaces.
- ✓ Translate existing signage with multiple languages to increase understanding and avoiding confusion among users.
- ✓ Avoid using gender symbols of bodies and focus on function symbols.
- ✓ Use high contrast colours – light text on dark background or dark text on light background.
- ✓ Use a text size of at least 36 point and sans serif font, such as Arial for directional signage.
- ✓ Consider text size and font to allow displays to be accessible.
- ✓ Provide signage and displays in three formats – tactile graphics, tactile lettering, and Braille.
- ✓ Place signage and displays at various heights.
- ✓ Include wayfinding and signage on the floor.
- ✓ Ensure signage and displays do not block sidewalks or create a trip hazard.

✓ Consider using a QR code to access maps for wayfinding and access to audios for displays.

Food and beverage
✓ Ensure buffets are accessible and can be utilized by all attendees.
✓ Label accommodated meals.
✓ If food is served buffet-style, ensure that food ingredients are well labelled.
✓ Have an attendant available to tell people what food is available, to help serve food and drinks if requested, and to list off ingredients upon request.
✓ Accommodate food sensitivities and dietary requests.
✓ Ensure there is enough food available for all dietary and food needs.
✓ Offer non-plastic containers and bendable straws.

Booths

✓ Ensure that all wires and cords are covered and/or removed from the walking area.
✓ Consider creating activities that can be accessible to all attendees.

On-site Assistance & Services

✓ At the beginning of the gathering take the time to mention the accessibility features available.
✓ Ensure you book any external services long in advance. Ex. Interpreters, graphic recording, etc.
✓ Provide any contractors with a copy of these accessibility guidelines and clearly communicate that you expect that contractors will adhere to the guidelines wherever possible.
✓ Provide sign language interpreters and/or real-time captioning if indicated by an individual, or for all major events.
✓ Ensure your site has technology to support any accommodation requests.
✓ Provide interpreters and real-time captioning with prior information on program content and length, copies of speaker notes, and PowerPoint presentations, titles, and any technical language or unique features.
✓ Make sure there is space at the front for interpreters and personal support.
✓ Consider language translation.
✓ Consider providing assistive hearing devices, click here for examples.
✓ Consider providing noise cancelling headphones upon request.
✓ Consider Vocal Eye described audio, click here to learn more.
✓ Consider providing fidget devices.

Interpreters, Typewell or CART

▪ Hire registered sign language interpreters.

- Ensure you have the budget to hire support persons.
- When hiring an interpreter ensure they are a Registered Sign Language Interpreter.
- If the event is longer than an hour you will need to hire more than 1 Interpreter.
- Pause in-between questions to provide time for the interpreter to catch up.

Assistance dogs
- ✓ Designate an outdoor toilet space.
- ✓ Provide a waste bin and book a service to dispose of.
- ✓ Provide water bowls.

Staff and volunteer training

- ✓ Designate a person trained on accessibility issues as a resource to staff, volunteers, and attendees for any questions, issues, or emergencies both before and during the event.
- ✓ Provide orientation to all staff and volunteers, including ushers on accessibility features of the event venue.
- ✓ Provide training for staff on how to provide support to anyone who requests assistance.

Marketing, Promotions, & Registration

- ✓ Have participants complete a brief accessibility questionnaire prior to the event or include a section within registration for attendees to request specific accessibility requirements. Ensure to follow up.
    - o Accessibility Statement Example: KPU is committed to providing universal access to all our events. Please contact email@kpu.ca to request any support you may require. You will not be required to disclose any personal or medical information other than the accommodation itself. Advance notice is necessary to arrange for some accessibility supports. At least six weeks' notice is needed for certain supports.
    - o Accessibility Registration Question: If you have any accessibility needs and may require accommodations to fully participate, please indicate here what you need _____.
    - o Include question about dietary needs and allergies if food being served
- ✓ Include a message during registration that provides information regarding recording.
- ✓ Communicate your event broadly using multiple methods, such as email, radio, website, social media, direct mail, posters at public buildings, and circulation to specific groups such as seniors and disability groups.
- ✓ Website conforms to the most recent WCAG accessibility standards.
- ✓ Use a text size of at least 14 point and sans serif font, such as Arial.
- ✓ Include information on accessibility features, such as sign language interpreters, real-time captioning, closed loop audio systems, dietary accommodation, non-toxic materials

and accessible entrances and parking, as well as a map on how to get to the event with pick-up/drop-off locations.
- ✓ Notify attendees at least four weeks in advance so they can arrange for transportation and attendants.
- ✓ Ask attendees to not wear chemically scented products.
    - o For example, you could say: We encourage everyone to help maintain a scent-free environment (no chemical based scents e.g. no perfumes or colognes, deodorants, scented soaps, or scented lotions)
- ✓ Avoid embedding essential information in graphic formats because they can't be read out to people using assistive technology such as screen readers.
- ✓ Use captions and audio descriptions for video promotions.
- ✓ Offer materials and agendas in advance, in digital, large print or Braille formats if requested.
- ✓ Use non-toxic materials, such as unscented markers and reusable name badges. Use large font for name badges. Provide a variety of accessible markers if asking people to create their own.

Speakers & Guests

- ✓ Representation matters. Consider the diversity of the speakers, emcee, panelists, etc.
- ✓ Take the time to do background research on potential speakers to ensure they meet the needs and are aligned with the messaging and values of the organization.
- ✓ Make and take time at the beginning of all sessions to outline how everything works.
- ✓ Visually describe yourself when first introducing yourself.
- ✓ Ask speakers and presenters to verbally describe any visual content in their presentations.
- ✓ Ask speakers and attendees to identify themselves by name each time they speak.

Presentations, Workshops, AV

Work with presenters and send them this information in advance.

Pre Workshop

- ✓ Send out materials (slide deck or handouts) at least 24 hours in advance (the more in advance the better).
- ✓ Always include the call-in info when sending information about a virtual or hybrid event.
- ✓ If possible, use platforms that folks are familiar with and avoid downloads. When using new platforms provide time for guests to join in early to ask questions and learn how to navigate in advance.

Presentations

- ✓ [Learn how to make presentations accessible by clicking here](.).

Appearance

- ✓ Blur background setting and selectable background image to allow for less distractions. Describe any photos or images on the slides.
- ✓ Structure document using paragraph styles or heading tags for webpages.
- ✓ Avoid flashing or strobing content.
- ✓ Use tables only for tabular data.
- ✓ Use high contrast colours – light text on dark background or dark text on light background.
- ✓ Use large, Sans Serif, fonts throughout presentation, including invitations, and documents sent out in advance.
- ✓ Create alt text for all images and video throughout presentation.

Background & Distracting Noise

- Some background noise can be over stimulating.
- Eliminate or move away from background noise: close windows, move away from air vents, go to less noisy rooms, close applications that are causing your laptop's fans to whirr, move your microphone farther away from your mouth so other people can't hear your breathing, and generally think about how you can avoid noises.
- If able, consider trading out that noisy mechanical keyboard for something quieter while on calls.
- Consider muting yourself on the call while you're not speaking, too.
- Disable notification noises that might distract from the presentation.

Closed Captioning

- Incorporate closed captioning for all events and live captions for larger events
- Know which programs offer closed captioning, and which programs need a separate program that can generate closed captioning.
- Even with a qualified interpreter, still include closed captioning. *Note: closed captioning in English does not necessarily make it accessible, as Sign Language is its own language and not every deaf or hard of hearing person might read English.*
- Post event, if recorded and shared, ensure that closed captioning is accurate and update if necessary.

Colour Accessibility

- Colour accessibility enables people with visual impairments or colour vision deficiencies to interact with digital experiences.
- [Details on how to check that the right colours and text are being used can be found by clicking here](#).
- Check colour contrast between foreground and background on every document, slide, and web page shared.

Graphic Recording

- Graphic recording is another tool or option for notetaking.
- Book graphic recorders long in advance.
- Provide graphic recordings to all participants post event.
- [Click here to see an example of graphic recording](#).

Interactive Activities

- If you use pop-up windows, ensure they are accessible.
- Make links concise and descriptive.
- If providing reading materials logical heading structure & reading order should be the same as visual order.

Language

- See if language translation features are available through the various transcripts.
- Recommend that presenters slow down when speaking.
- Avoid acronyms or use complete words the first time. Kwantlen Polytechnic University (KPU) is famous for acronyms. Ensure these are explained.
- Avoid jargon or culturally specific sayings or phrases.
- Remove Non-ableist language. E.g., avoid words like lame, crazy.

Transcription

- At beginning of meeting mention that transcription is available.
- Provide audio transcripts and note taking programs. [Click here to see an example](#).
- Transcription is available via Microsoft Teams.
- Attendees can hide their identities if they like.

Any questions or feedback about this document. Email the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion team in Human Resources at HR-EDI@kpu.ca.

References

All references are hyperlinked below.

- https://vancouver.ca/people-programs/accessible-events-checklist-and-resources.aspx

- https://www.ryerson.ca/accessibility/guides-resources/events-meetings/
- https://research.utoronto.ca/equity-diversity-inclusion/equity-diversity-inclusion
- https://inclusionlens.yorku.ca/
- https://support.office.com/en-us/article/accessibility-overview-of-microsoft-teams-2d4009e7-1300-4766-87e8-7a217496c3d5
- https://sbctc.instructure.com/courses/1578604/pages/accessible-webinars-2?module_item_id=26673462
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- https://www.ubc.ca/accessibility/
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- https://www.uvic.ca/home/about/accessibility/index.php
- https://otter.ai/edu