

Equity and Diversity Committee  
Post-Graduate Students Society  
of McGill University



# Equity and Diversity Checklist

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Committee

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# SHORT CHECKLIST

**I. The event should be accessible, so that throughout the planning, organization, and at event itself, it accommodates the needs of different groups, such as**

- Individuals using different types of mobility assistance devices,
- Individuals with assistance dogs,
- Individuals with sensory deficits (low vision, low hearing),
- Individuals with sensory sensitivities (chemical, auditory, and visual sensitivities),
- Individuals with children,
- Individuals with dietary restrictions and allergies.

**II. The event should be inclusive, so that throughout the planning, organization, and at the event itself, different groups of participants are represented and the event reaches out many different groups, such as**

- People with non-traditional gender identities or with non-heterosexual orientations,
- People from different cultural/ethnic groups,
- People from different age groups,
- People from different religious groups,
- People from racialized groups.

**III. Consider following most common practices that could improve the accessibility of the event during initial event planning, event promotion process, when arranging the space of the venue, the food, the program of the event etc.:**

- Follow a scent-free policy.
- Choose a space with gender-neutral washrooms available.
- If using flashing lights is necessary for the event, warnings should be clearly given: (a) on the event's advertising; (b) on a sign clearly visible before entering the venue; and (c) by presenters before the presentation.
- Use materials in different modalities (e.g., captioned videos).
- Use large and clear fonts in the materials.
- Label the food considering dietary preferences and restrictions.

- Allow for easy access to drinkable water (preferably water fountains, pitchers and reusable glasses).
- Ensure enough space at the event (incl., seating possibilities without chairs), as well as clear floor surface and explicit directions and signage of the pathway to the event.
- Allow for accommodation requests during event advertisement and promotion.
- Ensure that multiple breaks are scheduled during the event.
- Make sure the event planners, helpers, and speakers are aware of the accessibility and equity issues relevant for the event.
- Use an event evaluation form, which includes questions with respect to the accessibility of the event.

**IV. Please consider the content of your event, lecture, conference, etc., and assume that individuals who identify as the subject of the event will want to attend.**

- Do not put the burden on them to request accommodation.
- For instance, if an event focuses on a certain type of disabilities, it should be as accessible as possible to people having this type of disabilities.

**V. You can also consider these questions:**

- Who has power at the event? Who is heard at the event? Are the distribution of power and expression replicating the structure in our society?
- Would it be appropriate to acknowledge that the event is held on an unceded territory (if it is the case?)
- Are the activities of the event built on the assumption that one is in a romantic relationship, and/or in a romantic relationship with someone from another gender group? are the activities of the event reinforcing traditional gender roles?

# *DETAILED CHECKLIST*

## *INITIAL PLANNING*

Early mornings and late evenings might be inconvenient.

The size of the venue should be considered liberally, taking into account the number of attendees and allowing enough space for the people using wheelchairs.

Provide a quiet room for people to rest (especially during long events).

The airflow, lighting, and acoustics should be adequate considering people with sensory sensitivities (e.g., turn off light during daytime).

Clear signage of the route to the venue should be provided; the route from the nearest transit point / parking location should be clear and accessible (also for people with limited mobility).

Spaces with available gender-neutral bathrooms are preferable.

Sufficient accessible parking must be provided.

## *ADVERTISEMENT*

Promotion of the event should reach out to people of different groups; one strategy is to use different modalities of advertising (posters, flyers, internet, etc.).

To allow time for fulfillment of accommodation requests, the advertisement should be done in advance.

In the RSVP form, provide space for accommodation requests (ex: dietary and others).

Advertising materials should state that accommodation requirements can be made by contacting event planners.

The recommended text size for any promotion materials is 14 point or larger. Consider using standard fonts without italic, use highly contrasting colors of the text and the background. Note that the text in electronic messages should not be sent out as a figure as it might be inaccessible for computerized screen readers.

All video materials used for event promotion should be captioned.

Accessibility symbols, the duration of the event, a map and text instructions (not only a link to Google maps!) regarding how to get to the event should be stated on the promotional materials.

## *SPACE*

Doors: there should be no stairs or lips to doorways; the doors should have a minimum width of 32 inches (preferably wider) and be equipped with clearly marked (and activated) automatic openers.

All materials, displays, and food at the event should be accessible for everyone comfortably, including those using wheelchairs or scooters (consider the height of the presentation panels, tables, etc.).

The emergency exits should be accessible for people with mobility and sensory disabilities.

Allow for sufficient space for comfortable navigation by wheelchairs, scooters, other mobility devices, and assistance animals.

Sufficient amount of spaces without chairs should be available; however, those should not be spaced in a single area but throughout the space (to avoid segregating people using wheelchairs and other mobility assistance devices from other individuals).

The seating opportunities must consider the full amount of people (including note-takers, interpreters, child-minders, etc.).

For people with hearing or vision difficulties, seating spaces should be provided in the front of the room.

Entrances, washrooms (incl. gender-neutral ones), telephones, and any other conveniences should have clear signage, and the pathways to them should be clearly marked and comfortably accessible for people with limited mobility.

At outdoor events, the floor surface should be relatively flat and dry, for persons using mobility assistance devices; protection from exposure to sun, rain, and wind should be provided; in winter, all ramps, sidewalks, and entrances should be cleared of snow.

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

All individuals involved in event planning and organization should be made aware of the accessibility issues, which can potentially arise during the events, and should be advised on how to deal with those in a respectful and effective manner.

Event planners should be easily identified during the event (for example, using name tags).

If children are welcome at the event, consider organizing a child play area, potentially with invited child-minders.

## *PROGRAM OF THE EVENT*

Provide sign language translation if requested. Contact the interpreters in advance to provide them with them with the necessary materials (clarifications of the technical terms used and other uncommon details). For long events, more than one interpreter may be needed.

The videos used at the event should be captioned.

If using flashing lights is necessary for the event, warnings should be clearly given: (a) on the event's advertising; (b) on a sign clearly visible before entering the venue; and (c) by presenters before the presentation.

Participation in discussions etc. should be also possible in ways other than speaking.

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

The venue should be aired out prior to the event to ensure scent-free space.

Timing of the event is important: make breaks as stated in the program and end the event at the right time (especially important for people with accommodated transportation ordered for a specific time).

Ideally, people providing services during the event should be compensated for their time (e.g., music bands, speakers etc.).

## *FOOD / DRINKS*

Make sure to accommodate dietary practices of event attendees (e.g., vegetarian, etc.) and take into account the most common food/drink allergies and sensitivities (gluten, peanuts, lactose etc.): multiple meal options should be provided and the food should be marked with respect to the dietary practices and the common dietary restrictions. In an ideal case, the list of ingredients should be provided for each dish.

Ensure the availability of drinkable water for the attendees (preferably water fountains, pitchers and reusable glasses).

If the accommodated meals are provided separately, they should be served first to avoid confusion; other meals should be then served without significant time delays.

Ensure availability of non-alcoholic drinks at the event.

If children are welcome at the event, consider having child-friendly meal options.

## *INCLUSIVITY & DIVERSITY*

Consider cultural, ethnic, and gender diversity within the attendees and the speakers at the event.

Schedule breaks to accommodate potential medical and other (e.g., religious) needs.

## *MAIN SOURCES*

<http://students.ubc.ca/about/access>

<https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/about/eo-equity-office/eo-about-us/inclusive-events.html>

<http://www.queensu.ca/equity/accessibility/accessibility-hub/accessible-event-planning>

## *ADDITIONAL INFORMATION*

Accessibility of McGill campus buildings: <https://www.mcgill.ca/osd/access/campus-access-guides>

Some tips for the accessibility of electronic materials:

<https://www.mcgill.ca/osd/access/accessible-web-pages>

On adapted transportation at McGill and in Montreal:

<http://www.mcgill.ca/transport/adapted/>

## *CONTACT INFO*

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