# DCU Guidelines for Inclusive Events

## Overview

DCU's University Events team (UET) delivers a broad range of University events working in partnership with both internal and external stakeholders. The team is responsible for the planning, delivery and support of a wide range of in-person and online events. It also advises members of the DCU academic and professional community on how to successfully organise and run their university events and plays a significant role in hosting a range of external stakeholders.

Our guide on developing inclusive events is in line with DCU's 'People First' strategy and the UET is committed to enhancing diversity and promoting equality across the University.

The below guidance outlines the steps which should be taken when planning an event from the pre-planning stages through to execution. Best practice in accessibility constantly evolves and the UET will be responsible for continuously updating this guidance to ensure that all DCU managed events are open and inclusive to all.

## Pre-Planning Stages

| Item | Guidance |
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| Location | When choosing a location for your event, consider the following:<br>- Is there parking available?<br>- Are there good transport links?<br>- Have you considered those working on different DCU campuses and if this location is suitable?<br>- If hosting multiple events, consider spreading these events across each campus. |
| Venue | - Is the venue accessible?<br>- Have you installed event signage and is it clear, bright and legible?<br>- Is the space uncluttered, and free of unnecessary furniture to ensure easy flow for attendees in wheelchairs or with guide dogs?<br>- What set-up style will work best for this room?<br>- If the event is not on the ground floor, is there a lift nearby and is it working?<br>- Are there accessible toilets near to your venue and are they clearly signposted? |
| Speakers / MC | - Have you considered booking a DCU Alum as your |

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| | speaker?<br>- Consider the profile of your audience and the suitability of your speaker<br>- Ensure they are fully briefed in advance. Will they be met on arrival? Do they know where to go? Have they any specific accessibility requirements?<br>- If your speaker is addressing a panel, have they been provided with detail on who the panel are?<br>- Manage the timings of your event to ensure that speakers are not standing for too long.<br>- Does your speaker have any dietary requirements? Have you arranged water? |
| Panellists | - Is there a good gender and background mix with your panel?<br>- If early career speakers are on your panel, have they been fully briefed in advance?<br>- Have they any specific accessibility requirements?<br>- Have you arranged water? |
| Audience | - Consider the profile of your audience. Will there be a mix of ages attending?<br>- If your audience is older, have you ensured there is an adequate mix of furniture at the event? Is there a lift nearby?<br>- If your audience is external, do they know their way around campus? Have you provided an accessible campus map in advance?<br>- Are there sufficient event staff/ volunteers/ ambassadors on hand to help guide and direct your guests?<br>- Can seats be reserved for those with accessibility requirements e.g. vision impairment, use of mobility aids<br>- Is it possible to provide your audience with live transcription?<br>- Will members of your audience require Irish Sign Language interpretation? |
| Topics for discussion | - Are there any topics being covered in the event that could prove to be uncomfortable or distressing for attendees? If so, consider addressing this at the start of your event to make your guests aware.<br>- Are your speakers/ panel a balanced representation of the topic being discussed? |
| Timings | - Have you considered start/ finish times and whether these impact on those who have childcare responsibilities?<br>- If your event is taking place at night, will your attendees be comfortable accessing car parks and public transport at this time? |

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| | - Have you taken traffic implications into account? Would your guests be better served if the event took place outside of rush hour times?<br>- Does your event clash with any major religious holidays or school mid-term breaks? |
| Booking / Registration Forms | - Has the link to your form been checked before being sent?<br>- Is the form clear and easy to complete?<br>- Have you included a contact email address and phone number for guests to contact you?<br>- Have you included a question asking if anyone has any accessibility requirements?<br>- Ensure all online webpages are accessible and easy to read.<br>- For large-scale events, ensure that details regarding accessible entrances, toilets, breastfeeding spaces are readily available online - FAQs and access to the DCU Campus map are a good way of doing this. |
| Invitations | - When preparing an e-invitation for your event, check that the text is accessible. The DCU Branding team will be able to assist you with this.<br>- Has an ALT tag been included for any images used? Please try to use, where possible.<br>- Do images in your invitations reflect gender balance and other areas of diversity and representation? |
| Communications | - All written communication should include a contact number which guests can contact organisers on.<br>- When publicising the event, have you considered what methods and platforms you will use in order to capture a wide range of attendees?<br>- Have you reached out to diverse groups within/ outside of the University to encourage engagement and participation? |
| Dietary Requirements | - When an invitation is being prepared for an event that includes catering of any kind, there must be a question included asking if anyone attending has any specific dietary requirements.<br>- Once dietary requirements are received, liaise directly with the catering team to inform them<br>- Consider using a varied menu at your events and one that is reflective of the audience profile and our multicultural DCU Community. |
| Accessibility Requirements | - Have you asked people in your invitation if they have any specific accessibility requirements?<br>- For large-scale student events such as graduations, |

| | contact the DCU Disability and Learning Support Service to request a list of students graduating who have registered with the service. Contact them in advance of graduation to see if they would like/ require any additional support on their graduation day.<br>- Allow for an amount of approximately €100 per hour in your event budget to cover the cost of an ISL Interpreter should one be required. |
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| DCU Support | - Have you contacted teams at DCU who could help support your event?<br>e.g. Security, University Events, Communications, Branding, DCU Disability and Learning Support Service, Estates, Student Support and Development, DCU Chaplaincy? |

**Event Day**

| Accessibility | - Ensure that the needs of anyone who has contacted you in advance of your event regarding their accessibility requirements have been met.<br>- For large-scale events such as graduations, ensure that the operations and planning team are fully briefed in advance and a plan is in place to assist guests as required.<br>- In a case where no requests or notifications have been received in advance, always ensure that there is an accessible seat or space available should someone with additional requirements attend.<br>- Liaise with the relevant external teams where required, e.g. Irish Sign Language interpreters.<br>- If your event is online, ensure that live captions are enabled for those who need it. |
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| Signage | - If you are installing event signage, is it clear and easy to read?<br>- Does your signage need to be in multiple languages?<br>- Does it follow DCU branding guidelines? |
| **Technology**<br><br>Presentations | - Please ensure all digital content adheres to the National Disability Authority's guidelines for digital accessibility, based on the European Union (Accessibility of Websites and Mobile Applications of Public Sector Bodies) Regulations 2020, which came into force on 23 September 2020.<br>- Review presentations being supplied by panel/ speakers in advance. Are they clear and easy to see and read? Are |

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| | the photos used within the presentation reflective of the gender and cultural mix within the university?<br>- Have you reviewed this useful guide for creating accessible content? |
| Screens | - If screens are being used, are they working in advance? Is the resolution high enough? Can they be seen from all angles within the room? |
| Audio Levels | - Is there an in-house PA where your event is taking place? If not, and you have multiple speakers/ a panel - consider sourcing a PA to ensure all guests can clearly hear and speakers don't have to strain to be heard.<br>- Make sure to test the audio levels in advance, ensuring not too high/low. |
| **Room Set-up** | |
| Furniture | - Ensure that furniture being used at your event is suitable.<br>- Are there sufficient chairs?<br>- If it is a standing event, ensure there are stools/ chairs on hand in case they are required.<br>- If you are using a stage, are steps required? Is there sufficient space for the number of people who need to stand there?<br>- Is your podium of an adequate height?<br>- Are microphone stands/ podium mics at the right height for speakers using them?<br>- Where possible, ensure any furniture not being used is removed from your venue. |
| Lighting | - Is access to your event space (i.e. corridors) well lit?<br>- If your event is taking place at nighttime, is access to car parks, etc, adequately lit for the guests leaving your event?<br>- In the event space, is the stage and surroundings well lit? Does your lighting impact the visibility of any screens being used?<br>- Can the lighting in the room/space be adjusted as required? |
| Housekeeping | - Where possible, ensure that all guests at your event are made aware of the emergency exits and access to WC.<br>- Work with the host/MC on their welcome - avoid saying 'ladies and gentlemen'.<br>- As an alternative to asking people to stand, say 'For those who are able, please stand'. |
| Catering | - Ensure any specific catering requirements have been sufficiently addressed by the catering team. |

| | - Where possible, indicate where the vegetarian/ vegan options are and ensure they are displayed separately. Ideally they would be easily identifiable by signage provided by you/ the caterer. |
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| Filming and Photography | - If there is filming or photography taking place at your event, guests must be made aware of this. Signage is the most effective way of doing this, either at the check-in/ registration desk or both. |
| Breastfeeding Space | - Consider your audience profile and if a breastfeeding space will be required at your event. |
| Quiet Space | - Liaise with the DCU Autism Friendly service regarding creating quiet, sensory spaces, particularly at events to which children are invited. |
| First Aid Space | - If there is a paramedic at your event, ensure that the space provided for them allows for privacy for anyone that needs to see them. |
| Health & Safety | - Have you assessed your event and event space for all and any potential risks?<br>- Contact universityevents@dcu.ie to discuss further. |

**Post Event**

| Review | - Consider contacting your audience post-event to seek feedback and if there were any changes you could make to your event to make it more accessible. |
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If you have any questions on the above guide or there are any areas you feel have not been covered, please contact universityevents@dcu.ie