

Portland State University

Inclusive Guide

Meetings, Events and Conferences



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Introduction

At Portland State University (PSU), we promote access, inclusion, and equity as pillars of excellence, and it is our mission to support a diverse community of lifelong learners. The Inclusive Guide to Meetings, Events, and Conferences is designed to support campus event coordinators, faculty, staff, and students in planning for access and inclusion to be at the core of every event. Not all of the items listed in this guide will be applicable to your specific circumstance.

For questions about accessibility and accommodations, contact the [Disability Resource Center](#) (DRC) at 503-725-4150 or drc@pdx.edu.

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The Event Coordinator's Role

When planning your meeting, event, or conference, we recommend assigning one person to coordinate accessibility and accommodations. Assigning one person to this task will streamline the planning process. Be sure to provide the coordinator's contact information and instructions for making accommodation requests on all marketing materials. The coordinator may:

- Assist with budgeting for accommodation requests. All costs for accommodation requests or proactive accessibility are the responsibility of the department(s) hosting the activity.
- Act as the main contact person for accessibility questions and requests.
- Receive, confirm, and track accommodation requests.
- [Place requests for interpreters and/or captioning](#) at least five days before the event. (Automatically request an interpreter if your event's target audience may require one.)
- [Request any needed audio/visual equipment.](#)
- Assist with venue selection and assess common accessibility features.
- Communicate accommodation arrangements with presenters and event staff.
- Coordinate event materials for accessible distribution.

Date and Time Considerations

- If the event is student focused, avoid scheduling during peak class times. (Often 10 a.m.-2 p.m. most weekdays are best, however Fridays tend to be the quietest.)
- Avoid scheduling events on [religious holidays](#) and during times of worship or prayer.
- When possible, avoid other campus or non-campus events that might conflict with the target audience.
- Use the [Portland State University Events Calendar](#) to help identify the best time for your event.
- Ask [Campus Events & Student Union](#) (CESU) and other campus partners if they are planning events that may conflict. Not all events may be on the calendar.

Venue Considerations

- Explore [conference spaces](#) available on campus. [Campus Events & Student Union](#) (CESU) can assist with this process.
- Use [PSU's buildings web page](#) to find specific information on each campus building, including all gendered restrooms, lactation spaces, and accessible restrooms, entrances, etc.
- Ensure space is large enough for the event. Consider pathways wide enough for those using mobility aids to pass through easily. Four foot clearance is ideal.
- Ensure the space has accessible entrances.
- Ensure elevators are available and in working order.

Venue Considerations, Continued

- Assess restroom accessibility (accessible stalls, automatic door openers) and the availability of an accessible [all-gender restroom](#).
- Review venue signage. Determine if it is multilingual and/or braille signage is needed.
- Consider providing a variety of seating and table options.
- Assess the audiovisual capability of the room. Will microphones, listening devices, captioning screens, etc. be needed?
- Evaluate emergency protocols and resources. [Environmental Health and Safety](#) and [Emergency Management](#) are helpful resources.
- Connect with the [Campus Public Safety Office](#) (CPSO) for public access hours to buildings.

Advertising

- Always make sure that digital materials are fully accessible. [PSU's digital accesibility](#) webpage is an excellent resource.
- All marketing materials and social media must provide accessibility information. **Include the following to let attendees know how to request accommodations: "Requests for Reasonable Accommodations may be made to [Name of Representative- Phone, and E-mail] in order to ensure that Reasonable Accommodations can be provided in time for this event, pleasemake your requests as soon as possible."**
- Use the [University Communications Marketing web page](#) to help with your event marketing strategy.
- Include [PSU's Fragrance Free Value Statement](#) on materials.
- Consider creating an accessible online request form for accommodations.
- Consider providing links for live stream options or provide a recording after the event has concluded. Add these links to social media pages and other marketing materials.

If Appropriate:

- Indicate if childcare will be available. [Little Vikings](#) has options for event childcare on campus.
- Indicate if food will be served, and include any dietary considerations provided and contact information for specific dietary requests.
- Indicate if language interpreters/translators will be available and who to contact to request interpreters/translators.
- Indicate "target" audience (students only, students, faculty, staff, community, etc.).
- Create multilingual marketing materials, event materials, and social media.

Event Materials - Accessible Media Standards

Marketing Materials

- Ensure that electronic materials are accessible. (Refer to the [Digital Accessibility Resources web page](#) for more information.)
- Use a sans serif font with 18pt. as a minimum for a standard font and 14 pt. as a minimum for a bold font.
- Use contrasting colors to make materials easily readable. (An online tool like the [WebAIM Contrast Checker](#) can assist with this.)
- Provide alternative text for all images.
- Avoid using images that include embedded text as screen readers cannot read text within images.
- Avoid elaborate backgrounds or patterns that may make print more difficult to read.
- Consider having a diverse group of people review materials before distributing.
- Ensure marketing materials reflect the diversity of our campus, both with language and images. Consider providing advertisements and other media in multiple languages.

Accommodation Requests

- Gather presentation materials early to allow for conversion to alternative formats and distribution to individuals who need accessible materials.
- Make sure videos are properly captioned. ([Professional captioning services are available.](#))
- Format slides with accessibility in mind and with text at the top for easier viewing.
- For question and answer portions, consider using multiple methods for interactions. Consider microphones, paper and pen, and [Sli.do](#) to allow for input via phones or laptops.
- Consider providing different color name tags or lanyards to distinguish those who do not wish to be filmed or photographed.

Food and Catering

For food and catering, all on-campus events are required to use our campus catering service, PSU Eats Catering service. Event planners may request a food waiver if the menu features items not offered by PSU eats. If you have any questions, please contact Campus Events & Student Union.

PSU Eats Contact Information

[PSU Eats Website](#)

T: 971-930-5855

E: kim.dinardo@compass-usa.com

Menu Considerations

Consider how the menu choices may impact different groups of people:

- Include considerations for various dietary needs. Gluten-free, lactose-free, vegetarian, vegan, [kosher](#), halal, etc.
- Provide lightweight dishware.
- For events with under 75 attendees, check out Campus Sustainability's [Green Party Kit](#).

Considerations for Buffet-Style Service

Consider access needs for attendees when planning for buffet-style catering:

- Place a menu at the beginning of the line with food items and dietary restriction information.
- Clearly mark common allergens on the dishes and keep specialized options separate.
- Consider having multiple lines for better flow and access.
- Have a volunteer available to assist attendees to access the buffet line when needed.

Presenter Considerations

- Consider having diverse representation on panel(s).
- Inquire about any accessibility needs of the presenter(s).

Presentation Practices

- Always use a microphone.
- Have presenters introduce themselves by name and pronouns.
- Repeat audience questions before answering them.
- If possible, provide digital copies of all presentation materials in advance.
- Describe images and explain visual presentation content.
- Avoid abbreviations and jargon.
- Consider audience members and their diverse experiences.
- Be mindful of who is represented in the presentation. Is it diverse and inclusive?

Online Presentation Practices

- Consider your presentation setting and ensure that your space is not visually noisy or that virtual backgrounds are not distracting.
- Provide verbal cues to indicate who is talking.
- Provide time for feedback.
- If possible, provide digital copies of all presentation materials in advance.

Final Planning Considerations

- Confirm audio/visual equipment request.
- Confirm interpreter/captioning requests. Requests need to be made at least five business days before an event.
- Confirm accessible furniture needs (ramp to the stage, various seating, and table options, etc.).
- Review presentation/event materials and provide accessible formats to participants before the event, if needed.
- Review agenda and distribute to participants, if needed. If applicable, consider listing the amount of walking/physical activity anticipated.

The Day of the Event

Space Preparation

- Ensure any necessary accessibility features are operational (power door buttons, elevators, accessible bathroom stalls, etc.).
- Post signs to direct guests to event and venue facilities. Consider multilingual signs and avoid abbreviations.
- Post signs indicating if the event will be photographed or recorded. Consider providing a visible option for opting out, such as different colored name tags.
- Check that decorations do not block pathways. Consider potential health risks of decorations like strobe lights, fog machines, latex balloons, etc.
- Consider crowd flow to check-in area, food table, or other event activities. Where do the lines begin and end? Will other areas be blocked?
- Ensure check-in process is accessible. Consider potential amount of noise, the number of staff, and table height.
- Be flexible with background music. Loud music can impact ability to communicate.
- Reserve and clearly label seats for those requiring American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters or captioning with a clear line of sight to captions or interpreters (often at the front).
- Consider having volunteers posted at entrances to direct guests and provide accessibility and accommodation information.
- Ensure that any necessary accessible furniture is in place (ramp to stage, seating options and table heights, etc.).

Event Announcements

- As part of the welcome statement, include the [PSU Land Acknowledgment](#).
- Ask guests to include their name and pronouns on name tags.
- Announce if the event will be recorded, photographed, taped, or live streamed and provide instructions for opting out.
- Provide clear directions to emergency exits and discuss relevant protocols.
- Provide clear directions to accessible and all-gender restrooms.
- Discuss any content warnings and encourage guests to take breaks for self-care.
- Invite people with specific dietary needs to get their food first (if applicable).

Creating an Event Kit

- First aid kit with latex free supplies and ear plugs.
- Extra event supplies (unscented markers, blank name tags, presentation items, etc.).
- Use unscented bathroom and cleaning products.
- Bike tire pump and patch kit for bike or wheelchair tires.
- Garbage bags and bins.
- Water bowl for service dogs.
- Door stops. Do not use for fire doors.
- Extra phone chargers.

Virtual Meetings, Events and Conferences

A lot of the considerations provided in the event guide also apply to online events. However, here are some additional considerations for hosting a virtual event.

Choosing Your Platform

There are many online platforms to host your event, and the process of choosing one should depend on your specific purpose and audience. Whatever platform you choose, be sure to share that information and a web link to the event ahead of time so that attendees can prepare their devices. Commonly used platforms include: Google Meet, Zoom, YouTube Live, and Facebook Live.

Presenter Considerations for Online Events

- Consider your presentation setting and ensure that your space is not visually noisy or that virtual backgrounds are not distracting.
- Provide verbal cues to indicate who is talking.
- Provide time for feedback.
- If possible, provide digital copies of all presentation materials in advance.

Final Planning Considerations

- Mute everyone on entry to reduce background noise if applicable.
- Provide time for self-care or a brief break during large online events.

Online Event Technology Considerations

- If you are having a hybrid event, coordinate in advance with CESU and CAVET to be sure the meeting space has the necessary equipment to support live streaming or recording.
- Ensure that all of your hosting technology is functioning properly prior to the event.
- Provide a list of contacts to assist others with technology before and during the event.
- Record the event for others to watch at a later date. After the event, provide accurate captions and transcripts with event recordings.
- Distribute an agenda and accessible presentation slides/materials prior to the event.
- Consider providing individual links for break out rooms before the event. If you have a service provider for a particular attendee, make sure they are always assigned to the same event sub-group (breakout room, channel, etc.).
- Enable chat or Q+A features, with clear instructions on how to ask questions during the event.
- If you have ASL interpreting or Real Time Captioning services, confirm current best practices for accessibility with the service provider. Assign captioners within the platform, and “pin” interpreters on screen.

Contacts and Resources

Disability Resource Center (DRC)

Have questions? Reach out the DRC and the office will be able to assist you with inquiries regarding accessibility and accommodations.

Disability Resource Center (DRC)

T: 503-725-4150

E: drc@pdx.edu

Contact Information - Campus Events and Student Union (CESU)

Campus Events and Student Union

T: 503-725-2663

E: conferences@pdx.edu

Contact Information - AV Services (CAVET)

AV Services

T: 503-725-9125

E: cavet@pdx.edu

Table and Chair Rentals - Materials Management

Tables and chairs can be rented from Materials Management for events outside of PSU's Campus Events and Student Union spaces. Plan in advance and have your rental requests in ahead of time.

Materials Management

T: 503-725-4924

Resources

- [PSU's Accessibility Web Page](#)
- [PSU's Digital Accessibility Web Page](#)
- [Campus Events and Student Union - Forms and Tools](#)
- [Event AV Support Form](#)
- [PSU Catering](#)
- [Campus Maps and Floor Plans](#)
- [Accessible Parking](#)

URL Index

Below are the embedded links found within this document. Some links that were exceedingly long were replaced with shorter links that will provide access to the same information.

Accessibility and Accommodation Questions - Disability Resource Center Pg. 2

<https://www.pdx.edu/disability-resource-center/>

Interpreter or Captioning Requests - Referenced under Event Coordinators Role Pg. 3

<https://www.pdx.edu/disability-resource-center/asl-interpreting-or-captioning-meetingevent>

Portland State University Calendar - Referenced under Date and Time Considerations Pg. 3

<https://www.pdx.edu/registration/academic-calendar>

Conference Spaces - Referenced under Venue Considerations Pg. 3

<https://www.pdx.edu/conferences/venues>

All Gender Restrooms - Referenced under Venue Considerations Pg. 3

<https://www.pdx.edu/queer-resource-center/resources>

Emergency Management - Referenced under Venue Considerations Continued Pg. 4

<https://www.pdx.edu/emergency-management/>

Campus Public Safety - Referenced under Venue Considerations Continued Pg. 4

<https://www.pdx.edu/campus-safety/contact>

University Communications Marketing Resources - Referenced under Advertising Pg. 4

<https://www.pdx.edu/university-communications/marketing>

Fragrance-Free Value Statement - Referenced under Advertising Pg. 4

<https://www.pdx.edu/human-resources/fragrance-free-value-statement>

Accessibility Training - Referenced under Event Materials Pg. 5

<https://www.pdx.edu/accessibility/training>

Sli.do - Referenced under Event Materials Pg. 5

<https://www.sli.do/>

What is Kosher - Referenced under Food Considerations Pg. 5

<https://www.ok.org/companies/what-is-kosher/meat-dairy-pareve/>

Green Party Kit - Referenced under Food Considerations Pg. 5

<https://www.pdx.edu/sustainability/psu-reuses>

PSU Land Acknowledgment - Referenced under Event Announcements Pg. 7

<https://www.pdx.edu/cultural-resource-centers/>

URL Index

Campus Events And Student Union Forms - Referenced under Resources Pg. 9

<https://www.pdx.edu/conferences/contact/contact-campus-events-portland-state>

Event AV Support Form - Referenced under Resources Pg. 9

<https://www.pdx.edu/technology/event-av>

PSU Catering - Referenced under Resources Pg. 9

<https://www.pdx.edu/conferences/catering>

Campus Acronyms

Below is a list of acronyms that were used in this document.

- **CAVET** - Campus Audio Visual Events Team
- **CESU** - Campus Events and Student Union
- **CPSO** - Campus Public Safety
- **DRC** - Disability Resource Center
- **SMSU** - Smith Memorial Student Union

Here is a list of acronyms commonly used across campus.

- **CRC** - Cultural Resource Center
- **DOSL** - Dean of Student Life
- **OIT** - Office of Information Technology
- **OIA** - Office of Academic Innovation
- **UCOMM** - University Communications
- **AAUP** - American Association of University Professors
- **SEIU** - Service Employees International Union
- **SHAC** - Student Health and Counseling
- **SLS** - Student Legal Services