Disability Access and Compliance - Making Presentations Accessible: Best Practices and Tips

Equal access allows people with disabilities to participate in university in-person and virtual events. Access Coordinators benefit everyone when they give advanced notice to Presenters about the university commitment to equal access. This ensures that Presenters will have the time to make their presentation materials accessible, share them with interpreters, caption writers, and those who request access.

Be sure to also ask presenters if they need reasonable accommodations for a disability.

Digital Access

- Provide all materials (papers, PowerPoints, agendas, slides) in alternative formats (e.g., large print, Braille, electronic, audio CDs, etc.) and in advance of the meeting/event upon request
- Make electronic versions of materials available in plain text, rich text, Microsoft Word document, accessible PDF, accessible power point, accessible Google slides) upon request
- Provide Alt tags for all images, photos, graphics, logos, etc.
- Make materials available in advance to sign language interpreters and caption writers

Structure Recommendations

- Eliminate background noise by muting everyone except for the person speaking
- At the start of the meeting, introduce the interpreter(s) or caption writer an tell everyone to say their name each time they speak so that attendees, captioners, and interpreters know who is speaking.
- Announce when the meeting begins and ends.
- Build multiple breaks into the schedule, preferably 5-10 minutes every hour
- Ensure that the virtual environment behind presenters is not distracting. If it is, use a virtual background, but note that some can wash out faces.

Presenter

- Keep the presentation clear, simple, concise, and organized
- Always face the audience or camera
- Do not stand in front of a window or bright screen in order to avoid the silhouette effect
- Keep hands and other objects away from your mouth when speaking
- Use a microphone
- Speak in well-modulated tones and at a moderate pace

Presentation Content

- Give an overview of the presentation at the start and a summary of the key points at the end
- Keep the presentation clear, simple, concise, and organized
- Provide a verbal overview of information in textual materials
- Accompany gestures and other relevant embodied actions with utterances
- If acronyms, jargon, and idioms are used, define them
- Verbally describe referenced visual content (e.g., slides, charts, overheads, videos) upon request
- Use multiple communication methods for different learning styles
- Give attendees enough time to process information by pausing between topics
- Check in with participants to ensure that presentation is understood and clarify if needed
- When reading directly from text, provide an advance copy for interpreters, captioners, and end-users and pause slightly when interjecting information not in the text
- Provide captioning for all videos
- Provide audio descriptions if requested (i.e., describe facial expressions, body language, actions, costumes, etc.)

Q&A with Audience

- Instruct attendees to wait to be called on, to not interrupt, to speak one at a time, and to speak clearly into the microphone
- Provide attendees with the option of writing their questions ahead of time, which the presenters can then read before responding

- Repeat questions posed by people in the audience before responding
- Allow recording of meetings as an accommodation

Resources

- [Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) W3C - Making Events Accessible - Checklist for meetings, conferences, training, and presentations that are remote/virtual, in-person, or hybrid](#)
- [How to Create Accessible PDF's](#)
- [Instructions on How to Create and Check Accessible PDFs](#)
- [How to create accessible tables](#)

Surveys and Forms

- [Online tools for making online surveys accessible](#)
- [Adobe Optical Character Recognition](#)
- [How to Make Accessible Images](#)
- [How to Create Accessible Word Documents](#)
- [Create More Accessible Slides](#)

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