


Inclusive event checklist

BCIT respects and celebrates the expertise, insight, inherent worth, and lived experiences of all within our diverse community. As such it is critical that all BCIT events be planned in a manner that embraces diversity, increases inclusion, and removes barriers to full participation for all to achieve equity.

Diversity is about ensuring that the entire community is represented and that there is variation in the characteristics of people who are there. For example, diversity in race, gender, age, disability, religion, nationality etc.

Inclusion is about ensuring those who are there are treated with respect and that everyone's experience and contributions are equally appreciated. Without inclusion, diversity is only performative and will not lead to real change.

Accessibility refers to ensuring every aspect of an event from the registration to materials, to the physical or virtual location can be accessed by everyone including those with disabilities. In some cases, this can be achieved by granting accommodation to achieve equity. In this context equity means recognizing that different individuals may require different types of support in order to achieve the same level of access and participation at events. However, ideally, an event will be planned keeping principles of "universal design" in mind. This approach focuses on embedding inclusion from the start so that events and materials are accessible and usable by people of all backgrounds, and abilities and can therefore benefit everyone. Inclusion in this context means ensuring that both the principles of universal design and an openness to accommodation are in place.



"We champion diversity of experiences, ideas, cultures, and perspectives, fostering a community permeated with equality and inclusivity."

-BCIT Strategic Plan

How to use this guide

This guide will assist you in increasing Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) for your event. We invite you to use it when planning any event, big or small, at BCIT. We recognize that best practices and terminology are constantly evolving and as such know that no guide can be all-encompassing; rather this can be used as a starting point. We also recognize that not every suggestion is necessary or applicable for every event, as the relevant considerations will vary depending on several factors including but not limited to the nature of the event and intended audience.

BCIT acknowledges that our campuses are located on the unceded traditional territories of the Coast Salish Nations of [xwməθkwəy̓əm](#) (Musqueam), [Skwxwú7mesh](#) (Squamish), and [səlilwataʔ](#) (Tsleil-Waututh).

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Pre-Event Planning

Event working group

✓	Task
	Form a working group of diverse folks (both visible and invisible diversity) to ensure different ideas, lived experiences, and perspectives are included.
	If an event is targeted towards a specific subset of the population, it is critical to include individuals with that lived experience. However, avoid putting extra work on those from equity-deserving groups (i.e. groups who have experienced significant barriers to participating in society, including people with disabilities, women and gender diverse folks, Indigenous, Black, and people of colour (IBPOC), and the 2S/LGBTQIA+ community).
	Ensure all meeting materials are accessible. See Appendix A for more detail.
	Ensure all meetings are accessible. See Appendix B for more detail.
	Ensure members know who to approach with requests for accommodation.
	Be conscious of significant religious holidays or cultural events when scheduling meetings. Review a multifaith calendar before deciding on dates.
	Send an agenda in advance so everyone is aware of what will be discussed and can prepare accordingly – even for informal meetings.
	Set clear expectations for respectful behaviour and communication. Ensure members know who to approach with concerns.
	See Inclusive Committee Checklist for more detailed suggestions.

Selecting & preparing the speakers

✓	Task
	Consider diversity (both visible and invisible) when selecting speakers (including emcees, facilitators, panelists etc.). This includes diversity of lived experience.
	Conduct background research of speakers to ensure there is nothing that would make them unsuitable to speak at the event.
	Ensure speakers are compensated appropriately for their time and expertise. Consider whether characteristics like gender, race, and age may inadvertently impact how you value the speaker's time.
	Ensure the speaker is aware of expectations for respectful behavior and communication, from themselves and others.
	If an Indigenous Elder will be speaking, speak with someone from the Indigenous Initiatives and Partnership Office about proper protocols.
	Determine in advance with the organizers and the speaker how and by whom disruptive or disrespectful behavior will be addressed.
	Have speakers approve any biography or photos of themselves in promotional materials.
	Clarify in advance if the speakers want their pronouns to be used, and if so what pronouns.
	Ensure there is agreement on how their presentation and/or materials will be shared. e.g., will a recording be made?
	Ensure the speaker's materials/slides are respectful and accessible. See Appendix A for more detail and share a copy of Appendix A with the speaker.
	Ask the speaker if they require any accommodations.
	Request that the speaker send all materials (slides/handouts) to organizers a few days prior to the event. This is especially important if you are using accessibility services, such as captioning or sign language interpretation, to help them prepare for the event.
	Ensure that someone, usually the first speaker, will do a land acknowledgement. If they are a member of the territory you are in then they can do a protocol welcome.

Choosing date and time

✓	Task
	Be conscious of significant religious holidays or cultural events when scheduling events. Review a multifaith calendar and BCIT's events calendar for conflicts.
	If the event is on a day with religious or cultural significance consider what contingencies or changes may need to be made.
	Hold the event at a time where the greatest number of people can attend. Consider avoiding early morning and late evening times. Consider FSA meeting regulations (i.e. avoid events on Wednesdays from 2:30-5:30).
	Incorporate breaks and travel time into the schedule for long events.

Selecting the venue

✓	Task
	Check room capacity and ensure the space is large enough to allow for comfortable movement of attendees including those who use mobility devices.
	Ensure the building and room are fully accessible for all. Consider physical access, seating, acoustics, and lighting. See Appendix B for more detail.
	Ensure all-gender and accessible washrooms are close by.
	Offer to arrange site visits with speakers and participants who have accessibility needs.

Marketing & registration

✓	Task
	Ensure all communications, advertisements, and documents are accessible, inclusive, and respectful. See Appendix A for more detail.
	Include, front and centre in your marketing, invitations and registration an “active offer” of accommodation. See Appendix C for more detail.
	Consider asking that all attendees in the invite to refrain from wearing any scents.
	Promote far enough in advance to allow any accommodations to be implemented.
	Designate someone to follow-up with accommodation requests.
	Ensure guests are advised of the location of accessible parking and entrances.
	The registration process should include expectations for respectful behaviour. See BCIT's Diversity Circles Expectations for Behaviour as an example.

Other considerations to book in advance

✓	Task
Accessibility	
	Book (if applicable) ASL interpreters as soon as possible. See Appendix D for more detail.
	Book (if applicable) Communication Access Real-time Translation (“CART”).
	Book required audio/visual services and devices. Contact avservices@bcit.ca
Food	
	Confirm capacity to create menu that is inclusive and can accommodate dietary requirements: Gluten friendly, nut free, vegan etc.
	Confirm zero cross contamination, packaging, and clear labelling of dietary information.
	Work with food vendor to ensure compostable or multi-use utensils.
Sustainability	
	Arrange extra recycling receptacles for large events. (Submit an Archibus work request).
	Minimize printed material.
Speaker Gift	
	Consider arranging a thank you gift for the speaker. See Appendix E for more information.

Event Day

In-person event set up

✓	Task
	Clear signage (large print, contrasting colours, sans-serif font) indicating locations and directions for event, washrooms (including accessible and all-gender), exits, and registration.
	Check to ensure pathways, entrances, exits, and stage remain accessible and not blocked (ensure cords taped down).
	Have a well-lit visible area for ASL interpreters that is close to those speaking and reserved seating for those who need access to ASL.
	Test all accessible technology equipment and services such as microphones.
	Ensure food is clearly marked, e.g. “vegan”.
	Ensure collateral are posted at accessible locations.
	Have large-print handouts available.
	Notice of photography and video capture or signed media release documents in advance if applicable.
	Registration: clear location, accessibility/services/volunteer check-in.
	Provide space for use of pronouns on name tags for those who wish to specify their pronouns.

Online event set up

✓	Task
	Livestream the event so people in the room can also view it up close on a personal device.
	Do a practice run to test all technology in advance.
	For zoom events designate someone to “pin” ASL interpreters so they remain visible.

During the Event

✓	Task
	Start with a land acknowledgement or protocol welcome.
	Remind folks of expectations for respectful behaviour, specifically what is expected of them with respect to asking questions or sharing comments.
	Advise where washrooms are (including accessible and all-gender).
	Point out the nearest emergency exits at the beginning of the event.
	Advise audience who they can approach with questions or concerns.
	Ensure speakers use microphones and the audience either uses a microphone or someone with a microphone repeats the question.
	Ask anyone speaking (including during questions from the audience) to introduce themselves to ensure people who are unable to read nametags have people’s names.

After the Event

✓	Task
	Ensure any follow-up materials are sent out in an accessible format. See Appendix A for more detail.
	Preferably all videos posted of the event will have picture-in-picture for an ASL interpreter. If this is not available ensure captions are edited/verified to ensure accuracy. (Do not rely on auto-generated captions).
	Capture feedback through a follow-up survey. See Appendix F for more detail.

Appendix A - Accessible and inclusive materials and presentations

✓	Task
Ensure content is inclusive and respectful:	
	Use gender-neutral language, e.g. “Folks” instead of “ladies and gentlemen.”
	Avoid ableist language, e.g. “crazy”.
	Avoid phrases that suggest victimhood e.g. use “survivor” instead of “victim” (but also defer to people from the group as to how they want to be referenced and identified).
	Graphics and examples should reflect authentic diversity.
	Avoid reinforcing stereotypes.
	Avoid acronyms and jargon or include definitions if you need to use them.
	Avoid complex graphs and charts.
	Follow plain language best practices.
Ensure materials are accessible:	
	Documents should be in digital formats that allow for the use of audible text and screen-reader applications with ease.
	No important information within image as it may be inaccessible.
	Alt-text for any images.
	Use high contrast colours.
	Large-print documents available in size 14 font or greater.
	Have captioning for all videos.
	Use sans serif font and avoid all caps.
	Bold is preferable for emphasis rather than underlines and italics.
Ensure presentation is accessible:	
	Slides should be simple and viewable from a distance.
	Slides should contain few words and include a lot of spacing.
	Incorporate a variety of media.
	Avoid or limit slide transitions and animations (avoid flashing and strobe animations).
	Verbally explain any graphic shared during a presentation.
	Consider providing a recording and/or transcript of the speaker’s presentation.

Additional accessibility resources:

1. [Web Accessibility Initiative \(WAI\)](#) is a program of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) that provides resources and guidelines for making web content, including documents and presentations, more accessible to people with disabilities.
2. [Microsoft Accessibility](#) provides resources and tools for making Microsoft Office documents and presentations more accessible to people with disabilities, including tutorials and templates.
3. [Adobe Accessibility](#) provides information and tools for creating accessible PDF documents and presentations, including guidelines and tutorials.
4. [American Foundation for the Blind \(AFB\)](#) provides resources and guidelines for creating accessible documents and presentations for people with visual impairments.
5. [PlainLanguage.gov](#) provides a wealth of information on plain language, including best practices, guidelines, and examples. It is managed by the U.S. government’s Plain Language Action and Information Network (PLAIN).

✓	Task
Mobility considerations	
	Wheelchair accessible room, stage (if applicable), and washrooms.
	Accessible doors.
	Ramps/elevators.
	Clear wide paths that can be easily navigated by those who use mobility devices.
	Accessible tables and work surfaces.
	Chairs with high backs for people with balance issues.
	Accessible seating should be integrated as part of the room set up (e.g. don't have only a designated area for people who use mobility devices).
	Reserve seating in front for those who request it for accommodation reasons.
	Have assistance available for people who request it.
Visibility considerations	
	Clear signage (large print, contrasting colours, sans-serif font) indicating locations and directions for event, washrooms (including accessible and all-gender), and exits.
	Projection screen visible from all seating.
	Consider the lighting and the possible ways it could make the event inaccessible for some people (e.g. glaring lights negatively impact some visual impairments, while some folks require very well-lit spaces).
Auditory considerations	
	Consider how sound moves in the room and how this will affect the ability of participants to hear the speaker or engage in dialogue with each other.
	Limit unnecessary background music.
	Limit ambient noise and that caused by ventilation systems if possible.
	Ensure ASL Interpreter is booked if requested.
	ASL Interpreter should be viewable to in-person and online audience in a well-lit space near the presenter.
	Provide a public address (PA) system.
	Provide a roving microphone if there will be questions from the audience.
	Seating available near presenter for lip reading.
Transportation Considerations	
	Accessible parking near venue.
	Proximity to bus stop.
Miscellaneous Considerations	
	Ensure all-gender washrooms are close by.
	Ensure food and beverages are in an easily accessible area. Buffet style is sometimes challenging for folks with mobility, dexterity, vision, or other unique needs. Consider offering sit-down service or volunteers to offer help with serving a buffet.
	Accessible rest, toileting, and watering facilities for service animals.
	Consider having somebody to take notes or even transcribe the event and make these notes accessible after the event.

Appendix C - Example active offer wording

Include an active offer for accommodation in the front and center in the registration and marketing materials so it doesn't appear as an afterthought. For example:

It is important to us that our event and materials are fully accessible to everyone. If you require any assistance related to disability, communications (e.g. ASL interpretation), accessibility (e.g. accessible parking), or dietary restrictions (e.g. vegan meal) please contact ____ at ____ by (date)_____.

The active offer may also be accompanied by an accessibility checklist. For example:

- Advance copy of slides
- Assistive listening device: _____
- Captioning
- Dietary restrictions: _____
- All-gender bathroom
- Lactation room
- Large print
- Reserved front row seat
- Scent-free room
- Wheelchair access
- Other: _____

Appendix D - Booking an ASL Interpreter

✓	Task
	Interpreters should be booked as far in advance as possible – usually a few weeks.
	If the event exceeds one hour, two interpreters will be required.
	When booking, advise if the event will be streamed online and/or recorded to ensure the Interpreters grant permission for their image to be used in this manner.
	If the event is to be streamed online ensure technology is in place to capture the Interpreter so they are viewable to online audiences.
	If the event is to be recorded and posted online ensure the technology is in place to record the interpreter and post them as picture-in-picture.

Appendix E - Gifting

✓	Task
	Avoid gifts that may not be able to be used by some folks due to allergies (e.g. food, scented products etc.).
	Never gift alcohol.
	Choose gifts that are ethically and sustainably made with little packaging.
	Ensure gifts don't reinforce negative stereotypes. For example, avoid giving different gifts to folks based on gender or age.
	If the gift is for a BCIT employee consider the Code of Conduct Policy 1500 which limits gifts including those more than \$200.
	If gifts contain Indigenous artwork or materials ensure they were in fact created by an Indigenous person and know the nation the artist is from.
	Check with Indigenous Initiatives and Partnerships if you have any questions relating to the gifting of Indigenous themed items or gifts that may be ceremonial.

Appendix F - Survey Tips & examples

Surveys can be conducted in a number of ways including, paper surveys, poll questions via zoom, and online survey such as survey-monkey.

✓	
	The survey method should be accessible for all participants.
	Have no more than 10 questions. Generally, the fewer the questions the higher the response rate.
	A response rate of 20% is considered good.
	Ensure there is at least one question about the accessibility of the event and materials.
	Consider a combination of open and closed questions.
	Keep survey questions similar, when possible, to compare responses to events – but considering adding questions if appropriate for specific events or new workshops

Example questions for an event survey:

1. Overall, how valuable did you find the event?
(rate 1-5)
2. How would you rate the speaker?
(1-5)
3. How was the duration of the event?
Too short Too long Just right
4. What is your preferred method of delivery for events of this nature?
Zoom In person No preference Hybrid
5. What was the most valuable part of the event and why?
6. What could be changed to make this event more valuable to you and why?
7. What topic would you like to see for future events from our office?
8. Please let us know if you encountered any barriers to accessibility of the event?
9. Any other comments or feedback?