

**UBC Medical Undergraduate  
Society**

**Accessibility &  
Inclusivity Framework**

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## Land Acknowledgements

The University of British Columbia (UBC) Faculty of Medicine is privileged to be situated on various Indigenous territories across British Columbia where our campuses (Victoria, Prince George, Kelowna, and Vancouver) are situated. We recognize that as individuals and as members of the larger collective of healthcare professionals, we must actively address the health inequities which have resulted from colonialism. Systemic racism still persists in our Canadian healthcare today and requires action from individual and systemic levels.

The Island Medical Program at University of Victoria is situated on the traditional territory of ləkʷəŋən peoples. We acknowledge the historical relationship that the Songhees, Esquimalt and W̱SÁNEĆ peoples have with the land that continues to this day.

The Northern Medical Program at University of Northern British Columbia Prince George campus is situated on the unceded traditional territory of the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation. The Lheidli T'enneh are a part of the Dakelh (Carrier) peoples' territory.

The Southern Medical Program at UBC Okanagan in Kelowna is situated on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the Syilx Okanagan Peoples.

The Vancouver Fraser Medical Program at UBC Point Grey campus is situated on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the xwməθkwəy'əm (Musqueam). The city of Vancouver is built upon the traditional unceded territories of three Coast Salish Nations: the xwməθkwəy'əm, the Tsleil-Waututh, and the Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish) Nations.

## Acknowledgements

Adapted by Allison Lui (UBC Medicine 2022) with permission from UOttawa<sup>1</sup> and Queens<sup>2</sup> accessibility policies authored by Julia Hanes and Jordana Wasserman respectively. This document is endorsed by the UBC Medical Undergraduate Society (MUS) with the assistance of Híhye (Hannah) Minnabarriet (UBC Medicine 2023), the 2021-2022 Equity, Diversity and Inclusion representative (EDI). We would like to acknowledge the support of the UBC Medical Undergraduate Society 2021-2022 in helping support the inception of this document. We would also like to acknowledge the support from the Canadian Association of Physicians with Disabilities (CAPD) Trainee Group.

We would like to thank the following individuals who provided their input into this document: Jordana Wasserman, Quinten Clarke, and Dr. Maria Hubinette.

This document is being continually revised and we welcome feedback. If you have any feedback, please visit the [Accessibility and Inclusivity page](#) on the [MUS](#) website. You can submit anonymous feedback which will go directly to the current EDI representative. If you would like to have the EDI representative contact you back, please leave your e-mail address, however this is not mandatory. Please note that this document is student initiated and is not an official document of the UBC Faculty of Medicine.

## Purpose of Accessibility & Inclusivity Framework

The purpose of this document is to provide UBC medical students a document to reference when planning events to help promote inclusivity and accessibility<sup>3</sup>.

## How to Use This Document

1. Read about the importance of this document in the “Background” and “Definitions” sections.
2. Go to pages 5-14 to access the Accessibility and Inclusivity Framework.
3. Apply Accessibility and Inclusivity Framework to your event planning. Consult “Resources” section for helpful documents and contacts.

This document can be accessed online here: [Accessibility and Inclusivity](#)

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## Background

There is a need to create events that are accessible and inclusive for attendees. In 2018, medical students at the University of Ottawa authored a student-initiated accessibility plan. Other Canadian medical schools have followed and through The Canadian Association of Physicians with Disabilities (CAPD) Trainee Group there is a movement to create a document which medical students can reference to help create inclusive events for their peers and others. UBC’s Equity and Inclusion Office also has a [Checklist for Accessible and Inclusive Event Planning](#).

## Accessibility & Inclusivity Framework

Please use the table below to help your event to be as accessible and inclusive as possible. We would like to acknowledge the UBC Equity and Inclusion Office's [Checklist for Accessible and Inclusive Event Planning](#). We have incorporated ideas from this document and we encourage individuals to use **both** this resource and the UBC Equity and Inclusion Office's checklist.

Pre-Event	Details	Complete? If not, explain mitigation strategies
1. <b>Choosing event date</b>	(a) Consider choosing an event date that is not a day of significance (E.g. religious holiday) to foster increased attendance by participants. Consider days of significance from multiple religions and cultures.	
2. <b>Choosing an event space</b>	(a) Event space that has accessible entranceways (E.g., no ledges/lips, doors minimum width of 32 inches if not wider, automatic door openers that are activated, smooth surfaces). Also ensure that movement within the event space accessible (E.g., if there are stairs, ensure elevator/lift/ramp).	
	(b) Gender-neutral and wheelchair accessible bathrooms that are clearly labelled.	
	(c) Consider if the event space has accessible parking and cost of parking. Consider the ease of access to the event space for those taking public transport. Ensure that route from parking/transit is accessible.	

	<p>(d) Event space that allows for comfortable movement for individuals who use wheelchairs, mobility devices, persons with visual disabilities, persons with assistance dogs, and other attendees (E.g., hallways wide enough, tables appropriate height for wheelchairs).</p>	
	<p>(e) Event space that allows for adequate acoustics and ideally have ability to use microphones and speakers.</p>	
	<p>(f) Event space that has adequate airflow for those with chemical sensitivities.</p>	
	<p>(g) If outdoor event:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider if surface accessible for those with wheelchairs, scooters, and other mobility aids.</li> <li>• Provide areas that offer protection from exposure (sun, rain, wind).</li> </ul>	
	<p>(h) Prior to event, recommend visiting venue to check location's accessibility features. If you cannot visit the location, go through this document with venue manager.</p>	
	<p>(i) Consider environmental microaggressions with the event space. (E.g., is the event hosted at a religious venue; who is the event space named after?).</p>	
	<p>(j) Consider lighting and safety from the event space if individuals will be leaving after dark or on their own.</p>	

<p><b>3. Promotion and Advertisement</b></p>	<p>(a) Outline accessibility details on promotional materials, RSVP form, event social media page etc. (E.g., outline if there are microphones/speakers, wheelchair ramps, gender-neutral bathrooms etc.).</p>	
	<p>(b) Provide contact information of organizers if someone would like to discuss accommodations further. It is helpful to outline a deadline for accommodation requests to allow for enough time to plan and implement someone’s accommodation. Can provide contact information in event e-mails, social media, posters etc.</p> <p>Sample statement (from <a href="#">UBC Accessibility Checklist</a>)          “If you require an accessibility-related measure (E.g.: sign language interpretation, captioning, accessible parking, specific dietary requirements, or any other accessibility-related measure) please contact _____ (name, phone number, email address, etc.).”</p>	
	<p>(c) <a href="#">UBC Accessibility Checklist</a> outlines some accessibility principles for websites, e-mails, posters and other promotional materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Recommended text size is 14 pitch or larger. The recommended font is a sans serif font such as Arial (this document is prepared in 14 pitch Arial font). Fancy, small or italic scripts are not accessible.”</li> <li>• “Use high contrast colours – simple use of dark text on light background is preferred.”</li> <li>• “Do not embed essential information, including the name, date, time and location of the event, and the accessibility statement described above, in a graphic. Graphics often cannot be ‘read’ by a</li> </ul>	

	screen reader being used by a person with a visual disability.”	
	(d) For promotional material, include image descriptions (see “Definitions”) for pictures/graphics and captioning for videos (see “Definitions”).	
	(e) If using images in promotional materials, try to ensure diversity is represented (E.g., if using images of people, ensure diversity amongst the group).	
	(f) Promote and advertise event through various platforms: e-mail, social media, posters, flyers to reach a wide variety of audience. Consider reaching out to certain organizations to reach under-represented groups that might not normally know about your event.	
	(g) On promotional material, encourage participants to refrain from wearing perfumes or scented soap as some other attendees might have allergic reactions.	
	(h) Strive to use inclusive language on promotional materials (E.g., avoiding gender binaries).	
<b>4. RSVP form</b>	(a) Have section on RSVP form for guests and presenters to request accommodations.	
	(b) Advertise event and provide RSVP form far enough in advance to allow for thoughtful and thorough accommodation organization.	
	(c) If providing food, provide option on RSVP form to request diet accommodations.	

<b>5. Getting to event and transportation</b>	(a) Provide details on accessible parking and transportation. Note that HandiDart often requires a one week notice for reservation.	
	(b) Provide information on building accessibility through building maps/routes, pictures, text descriptions etc. (E.g., describe if there is a wheelchair ramp or elevator/lift).	
	(c) Have clear signage at the event guiding participants on where to go. Ensure that does not block sidewalk or trip hazard.	
<b>6. Other</b>	(a) Striving to create low/no cost for event, and addressing financial assistance for attendee if needed	
	(b) If your event will have speakers/presenters, consider the diversity of event speakers/presenters.	
	(c) Depending on event audience, consider providing child care for event attendees. Also consider timing of event as certain times in the day, such as early morning or evenings, can be challenging for some folks (E.g., those with children).	

During Event	Details	Complete? If not, explain mitigation strategies
1. Land Acknowledgement	(a) Event organizers research the Indigenous land(s) the event is held on and incorporating it into promotional materials and event itself (E.g., on social media event page have land acknowledgement and also saying it verbally at event). Take this opportunity as an event organizer to move beyond just reciting a land acknowledgement created by someone else, but rather take the time to reflect on your own positionality and relationship to the land (E.g., could share something that you have personally learned about the land).	
2. Virtual events	<p>(a) Provide real-time captioning (see “Definitions”) for virtual events (available on Zoom) and dial-in phone options for those who do not have access to computers.</p> <p>(b) Inform speakers and organizers about best practices for virtual meetings/events. The Queens Checklist<sup>2</sup> outlines some good practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read comments from chat aloud, including when responding to typed questions.</li> <li>• Ensure important chat content is shared in other ways (E.g., distribute links shared in the chat before and/or after the meeting).</li> <li>• Ask meeting participants to state their name each time they speak. This can help blind and low vision attendees know who is speaking.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe on-screen visuals or slide content before you start talking about your slide.</li> <li>• Minimize background noise and mute your microphone when you are not speaking.</li> <li>• Offer multiple ways for attendees to engage with the event, and outline what these will be (E.g., the ‘raise hand’ function, unmuting, typing in the chat, etc.).</li> <li>• Encourage participants to turn on their cameras (this can help some deaf or hard of hearing people by reading lips), while recognizing that many may not be able to or feel comfortable turning them on for any number of reasons. Can also be nice to acknowledge that participants can feel free to turn off their cameras whenever they want. If participants plan to have their cameras on, it is helpful to be in a well-lit space and avoid having a window behind them. Again, we recognize that this is not possible for all individuals.</li> </ul>	
	(c) Consider if there will be reliable Wi-Fi for event attendees (E.g., some more rural locations may have Wi-Fi challenges).	
<b>3. Setting up event space</b>	(a) Provide seats near front of room for those with vision loss, hearing loss, or folks with some types of neurodiversity. This can allow those individuals to better see visual presentations, lip read, hear speakers etc.	
	(b) Ensure adequate lighting to ensure any visual information is seen easier.	

	(c) Ensure layout of tables, chairs, podiums, stages, etc. are wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs, scooters, and other mobility aids.	
	(d) Ensure information displayed and tables provided are at a height that is comfortable for those sitting down or in wheelchairs or scooters.	
	(e) Refrain from designating areas “for wheelchair use” as this can further segregate those individuals. A strategy is to have wheelchair accessible spaces throughout the event.	
	(f) Ensure speaker podium is accessible for those with wheelchairs, scooters, and other mobility aids.	
<b>4. Presentation of Information</b>	(a) For those with vision challenges can provide image descriptions (see “Definitions”) and create materials that are inclusive (see “Event Planning Resources” for creating inclusive visual documents). E.g., easy-to-read font, good colour contrast.	
	(b) For those with hearing loss, provide accommodations such microphones, speakers, video captioning (see “Definitions”), and written material of auditory information. Provide American Sign Language upon request.  Sign language interpreter resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">UBC Captioning and Sign Language Interpreting Request Form</a></li> <li>• Western Institute for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, tel. 604-736-7391, <a href="http://www.widhh.com">http://www.widhh.com</a></li> </ul>	

	<p>(c) Offer variety of formats to how information will be presented (E.g., PowerPoint, hard copies, electronic versions). Offer to provide materials in advance for those who request. Can also provide materials at the event for event attendees to follow-along (E.g., for folks who can find it challenging to process auditory input, written materials can be beneficial to follow along with).</p>	
	<p>(d) If using felt markers (E.g., with flip paper) ensure non-toxic as smell can be triggering for those with chemical insensitivities.</p>	
	<p>(e) Consider inclusive teaching practices (E.g., including images that represent diverse groups, which authors/scholars are being referenced, inclusive language). If hosting speakers at the event, encourage them to use inclusive teaching practices too.</p>	
<p><b>5. Other</b></p>	<p>(a) If you are having speakers/presenters, as the event host, ask what their pronouns are and preferred name so you know how to introduce them. Ask the speakers how to pronounce their name for when you introduce them.</p>	
	<p>(b) If event requires participation, provide multiple means for attendees to submit questions/comments (E.g., in writing, orally, anonymously)</p>	

Post-Event	Details	Complete? If not, explain mitigation strategies
<b>1. Providing Feedback</b>	<p>(a) Provide mechanism for guests/presenters to provide anonymous feedback post-event. For example, can ask how they felt their accommodations were handled, if they had feedback on how to create more accessible events in future etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E.g., could create Google Form for post-event feedback</li> </ul>	
<b>2. Event material</b>	<p>(a) Provide participants with recordings, chat transcripts, clean captions and transcripts, PowerPoint slides, links shared in the chat, notes and/or other alternative formats of the event content, and provide these in follow-up as requested.</p>	
<b>3. Other</b>	<p>(a) If hosting a repeat event, consider letting event attendees know what changes you have made based on feedback from previous event attendees. This can help demonstrate how feedback is used and increase dialogue around improving event accessibility and inclusivity.</p>	

## Definitions

- <sup>3</sup> **Accessibility:** creating opportunities for, “All people can take part in their communities through work, play and other daily activities.” Accessibility if focused on, “Removing barriers and increasing inclusion and independence for everyone.”
- <sup>4</sup> **Image Descriptions:** “An image description conveys the same or equivalent information that a sighted reader would get when they look at a picture, to someone with a print disability such as those who are blind or visually impaired.”
  - Here is a resource on writing [image descriptions](#)
- <sup>5</sup> **Captioning:** can have written text for the audio portion of a video which often occurs at the bottom of the screen. For events that are live there is Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) which transcribes spoken text into words while the words are spoken (usually visible on a big screen). You can contact UBC Centre for Accessibility (see “Resources”) to inquire if they can direct you to resources to obtain various accommodations for your event.
- [UBC Equity and Inclusion Glossary of Terms](#)

## Resources

### *Event Planning Resources*

- [UBC Equity and Inclusion Office: Checklist for Accessible and Inclusive Event Planning](#)
- [UBC Checklist for Accessible and Inclusive Event Planning](#)
- [Queen's University Accessibility Hub:](#) “how-to guides” for accessibility for: in-person events, documents, accessibility, e-mails, social media, virtual meetings, and videos
- [Guidelines for Creating Accessible Printed Posters](#)
- [City of Peterborough Guide to Accessible Documents](#)
- [6 Posters for Approaching Digital Accessibility](#)
- [AccessAbility: A Practical Handbook for Accessible Graphic Design](#)
- [Planning Guide for Accessible Conferences](#)
- [Checklist for Planning Accessible Conferences](#)
- [Disability as Diversity](#)
- Sign language interpreter sources: Western Institute for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, tel. 604-736-7391, <http://www.widhh.com>

## **UBC Faculty of Medicine Resources**

- [UBC Faculty of Medicine Student Affairs](#): “Confidential resource for current MD students seeking support, guidance, and advice on a range of issues, including: health and well-being, financial planning, career planning, safety, academic support, mentorship, and any other topics students might wish to discuss.” Often a good “first line” resource to reach out to if you need assistance with accommodations or finding contact information for certain resources.
- [UBC Medical Undergraduate Society \(MUS\)](#): represents undergraduate MD students on university, community, provincial, and national level.
- **Vancouver Medical Program (VFMP)**: [UBC Medical Student & Alumni Centre \(MSAC\)](#) (MSAC) in Vancouver is a common place for students to hold events. Please see link below to read descriptions and see pictures and of the MSAC. We would recommend walking through the MSAC and making sure all the accessibility features are available (E.g., working elevator). Lectures at the UBC Life Sciences Centre (LSC) and the Gordon and Leslie Diamond Health Care Centre (DHCC) are wheelchair accessible. Classrooms for Case Based Learning (CBL) at LSC are on ground floor and for DHCC are accessible via elevator.
- **Northern Medical Program (NMP)**: The lecture halls and CBL rooms are on the first floor and there is an elevator to access the study rooms/labs on the different floors.
- **Southern Medical Program (SMP)**: The Reichwald Health Sciences Centre (RHS) and Clinical Academic Campus (CAC) are accessible via an elevator or electric ramp. There are also gender-neutral bathrooms at both sites.
- **Island Medical Program (IMP)**: The lecture halls are wheelchair accessible (first floor of the Medical Sciences Building) and have a ramp on the side of the classroom with specific seating available. The classrooms for CBL are also wheelchair accessible: there is an elevator for access to the second and third floor of the building.

## **UBC Resources**

- [UBC Centre for Accessibility](#): Vancouver campus. “The Centre for Accessibility facilitates disability-related accommodations and programming initiatives designed to remove barriers for students with disabilities and ongoing medical conditions in all aspects of university

life.” A good resource to ask how to acquire various event accommodations (E.g., CART, interpreters)

- [Disability Resource Centre](#): Okanagan campus
- [UBC Vancouver Libraries Accessibility](#)
- [UBC Okanagan Accessibility on Campus](#)
- [Captioning and Sign Language Interpreting Request Form](#): Online form to request captioning and sign language interpreting for UBC Vancouver and UBC Okanagan campuses

### **Financial Resources**

- [Inclusive Initiatives Fund](#): “Supports diverse student-led projects that seek to create a positive impact on student experiences and advance change at UBC Vancouver and UBC Okanagan. Eligible projects will seek to advance equity, diversity, and inclusion, including through social justice, decolonization, and anti-racism efforts
- [UBC Equity Enhancement Fund](#): “Supports community-based initiatives that enhance equity, diversity and inclusion”
- [UBC Anti-Racism Initiatives Fund](#): “Supports initiatives that advance anti-racism efforts and seek to celebrate and elevate diverse communities at UBC”

### **References**

<sup>1</sup> University of Ottawa Aesculapian Society and Julia Hanes (2018). Aesculapian Society Accessibility Policy. Ottawa, ON. (Adapted from Council of Ontario Universities. A Checklist for Planning Accessible Conferences. Toronto, ON; [cited 2018 May 13]. Available from: <https://www.uottawameds.com/accessibility.html>

<sup>2</sup> Jordana Wasserman (2021). Queens University Aesculapian Society Accessibility Policy. Kingston, ON. (Adapted University of Ottawa Aesculapian Society Accessibility Policy). Available from: <https://meds.queensu.ca/qmed/sites/qmed/files/inline-files/Queen%27s%20AS%20Proposed%20Accessibility%20Policy%20-%20Disability%20%26%20Accessibility%20Subcommittee.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Government of British Columbia. (2021, June 17). *Accessibility legislation plain language summary*. Province of British Columbia.

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/about-the-bc-government/accessibility/legislation/summary#03>

<sup>4</sup> National Network of Equitable Library Service. (2021, October 24). *Guide for image descriptions*. AccessiblePublishing.ca.  
<https://www.accessiblepublishing.ca/a-guide-to-image-description/>

<sup>5</sup> Hearing Loss Association of America. (2021, October 24). *Captioning and CART*. Hearing Loss Association of America.  
<https://www.hearingloss.org/hearing-help/technology/cartcaptioning/>