A guide to accessible events at Federation University

What is an accessible event?

An accessible event is designed to be inclusive so everyone can participate, including people with disabilities. This may include physical access for wheelchair users, or other assistance to enable full participation for example providing interpreters or documents in a different format.

An event at FedUni refers to any function or activity, and may include campus tours, workshops, concerts and media events. Attendees may include staff, students, prospective students and visitors.

Why should I consider access?

An accessible event allows people with disabilities to participate. With just under one in five people reported to be living with disability, being proactive about accessibility simply makes sense.

The University’s Equal Opportunity and Valuing Diversity Policy states ‘The University will provide reasonable adjustments to the learning and working environment as required, and will strive to apply the principles of inclusion in all of its activities, to ensure all people have equal opportunity to access and participate in University activities...The lack of provision of reasonable adjustments may constitute discrimination.’

In addition, the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and Disability Standards for Education 2005, make it unlawful to discriminate against people with a disability. The University’s Disability Action Plan helps to address some of the systemic access and participation issues.

As an event organiser, you are responsible for taking all reasonable steps to ensure your event is inclusive to people with disabilities. The checklist below has been developed as a starting point for event planning at FedUni.

Considerations for hosting an accessible event

* Are all of the event locations accessible (no steps or barriers) for wheelchair users? Is there adequate space to move about?
* Are accessible toilets located nearby? Is there appropriate signage from the event to the accessible toilets?
* Have you included a way for attendees to register their specific disability needs? Suggested wording for advertisements “If you have any disability access or support requirements in order to participate, please let us know when you RSVP”. Always include a telephone and email contact for disability related enquiries.
* If additional disability support needs are requested, have you considered contacting Equity & Equal Opportunity or the Disability Liaison Unit for advice?
* Is the stage accessible to people using wheelchairs, mobility scooters and walking aids?
* Are paths and ramps free from signs, stalls or banners?
* Is seating provided for people that may not be able to stand for the duration of the event?
* Are tables and chairs provided where food is served? Some people with disabilities may not be able to carry or hold a plate of food without a table to place it on.
* If organising self-serve food or tea and coffee, will a staff member be available to provide assistance if required to a person with a disability?
* Consider dietary needs and options available.
* Will there be special lighting effects used? Some special effect lighting (for example strobe lighting) can affect people with disabilities. How will you let attendees know about this before the event? Is the special effect lighting for a short amount of time or throughout the whole event? Consider how you will let attendees know.
* Is seating available at the front for people with low vision or for those who lip read?
* For all presentations, consider the appropriate level of amplification (microphones and speakers) for the venue. Keep in mind that many people have some level of hearing difficulty.
* Is the audio visual equipment accessible to a speaker/presenter using a wheelchair? Is the equipment at a height where they can both access the controls and be visible to the audience? Is there enough circulation space around the controls?
* Consider removal of all background music during presentations as this can impede reception for people that are hearing impaired and people with processing disorders.
* Are you familiar with FedUni Mobility Access Maps (page 3 of the corporate map)? Are you familiar with the most accessible route from disability access parking to the event location? Consider how you will let attendees know about accessible routes prior to the event. Consider signage.

Queries

If you have any questions or concerns about making your event accessible or providing disability adjustments for attendees, please contact Equity & Diversity or the Disability and Learning Access Unit.

Equity & Diversity
Email equity@federation.edu.au or phone 5327 8104 or 5327 6461

Disability and Learning Access Unit
Email disability@federation.edu.au or phone 5327 9470 (Ballarat & Wimmera) or 5122 6425 (Gippsland & Berwick)

*Document correct as at 10 October 2018. The most up-to-date version is located at* [*www.federation.edu.au/accessible-events*](http://www.federation.edu.au/accessible-events)