



CHECKLIST: PLANNING AN EVENT TO ENSURE ACCESSIBILITY



**GEORGE BROWN COLLEGE
Toronto, Ontario
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CHECKLIST: PLANNING AN EVENT TO ENSURE ACCESSIBILITY

Please consider the following checklist to ensure that your event is accessible to all participants.

1. Budgeting for your event

Ensure that you have a budget to cover the costs of making the event accessible. There is normally a cost to providing certain services such as interpreting, intervening, notetaking and preparation of materials in alternative formats.

2. Planning the room(s) for your event

Make sure the room set-up for your event has:

- Wide aisles that are large enough for wheelchair users

- Accessible areas interspersed throughout the room -- front, middle and back
- Plenty of space around tables
- Good lighting
- A stage that is easily visible
- A screen that is easily visible (for overheads and PowerPoint)
- Reasonably good acoustics
- Reserved seating in the front row for deaf, deafened or hard of hearing people, and those using wheelchairs, scooters or walkers
- Accessible washrooms within a reasonable distance
- Electrical cables or cords that cross over aisles or pathways are covered so that wheelchairs can traverse across them
- Assistive listening devices (e.g., an FM system, where a speaker wears a small microphone that transmits to the listener's receiver) if requested

- Know the location of public telephones that are accessible (e.g., with volume control, with a **TTY*** and for wheelchair users, the coin slot should be 1.22m above floor level).

* **A TTY** is a telephone communications device that an individual with speech impairments or hearing loss uses by typing words in place of using voice. The caller and the receiver of the call must both have a TTY to communicate with each other, or either one can use the Bell Relay Service (this number is located in front pages of phone book).

How do I find out where the closest TTY pay phone is located?

- Public TTY pay phones are fairly rare across the GTA. One is located at Union Station.
- At George Brown College, there is at least one TTY pay phone on each

campus, and is identified with the TTY accessibility symbol.

- Casa Loma: 2nd floor of C building, near elevator
- St. James: 3 locations - lower level near Student Service Centre; main floor near bookstore and east elevators;
- 5th floor to the right of central elevators - Hospitality Building: 1st floor, north balcony
- GBC Ryerson Campus: near room 596

- Post clear, well lit and easy-to-read signs showing locations of accessible washrooms, elevators, TTY payphones, etc.
- Wherever possible, try to eliminate or reduce background noise during proceedings.

- Ensure that all parts of the event are smoke- free (and free of strong scents, e.g., floor varnish, etc.).
- If ceremonial use of traditional Aboriginal medicines will be used, notify Facilities Management in advance and refer to the “Aboriginal Use of Traditional Medicines” document to ensure that the use of such medicines is done in the safest possible and most respectful manner.
- Make sure organizers, presenters and volunteers are aware of emergency evacuation procedures.

3. Advertising, outreach and registration forms for your event

- Give ample notice for your upcoming event – this allows people to arrange for transportation and other needs.

- Make sure that the information advertising the event states the duration of the event and is available in accessible formats.
- Include the accessibility symbols on your event advertisements. Please see <http://www.gag.org/resources/das.php> for the access symbols. Examples are also listed at the end of this document.
- If you are serving food, give participants a chance to request dietary preferences. Try to provide a nut-free menu.

Include the following checklist on your registration form so that participants can identify their accommodation needs.

Please identify any required disability-related accommodations below. Requests for accommodations should be submitted at least two

weeks before the event. Every attempt will be made to fulfill your request.

- **ASL Interpreter**
- **Intervenor**
- **Notetaking**
 - **Real-Time Captionist (C.A.R.T.)**
 - **Speech to Text services**
- **Assistive Listening Device**
- **Braille**
- **Large Print**
- **Electronic file**
- **Accessible Media**
 - **Captioning**
 - **Description**
- **Other (e.g. accessible parking)**

- Follow up with people who request accommodations to inform them whether or not the accommodations will be available.

4. Planning ahead with people power

- Train your volunteers for the event.

- Make sure that volunteers are easily identified, and use nametags and/or other identifiers.
- Book service providers as soon as possible after confirming the date. Provide them with agendas and presentation outlines in advance of the event. At the event, make sure they are identifiable. For information on how to book them, see **Section 5**.
- People who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing often use notetaking services. Users read the typed text that may be displayed onto a television monitor or large screen.
- If you do not know for sure if there will be participants with hearing loss attending, request that the notetaking services be visible by all participants on a separate screen

as the services benefits many people.

- Make sure service providers are identifiable. See **Section 5** for information on booking.
- If your event is in the evening, and is for students, consider that many of our students may have childcare responsibilities that could prevent them from attending the event. You may need to arrange for child-minders and an activity room. See **Section 5**.
- If food is provided, make sure the total count includes interpreters, notetakers, attendants and child-minders.

5. Booking services

How do I book service providers?

How do I provide an Assistive Listening Device?

- Fees for service providers may vary. Bookings may require a 2-hour minimum. For some events, more than service providers may be required.
- Contact the ASL/ English Interpreter for College Employees and Events at ext. 6236 for assistance booking interpreters, intervenors, notetakers, electronic files and/or assistive listening devices.
- The Canadian Hearing Society, Ontario Interpreting Services at 416.964.9595 also books sign language interpreters for community events.

- Captionists can be booked from Neeson & Associates, 416.413.7755
www.neesoncourtreporting.com
Or ACS at 1.800.335.0911
www.acscaptions.com

How do I get materials produced in Braille format?

- Contact Disability Services at ext. 4830. They may be able to assist you with transferring computer files to large print or Braille format.
- Other resources for getting Braille formatted documents include: CNIB www.cnib.ca 416.486.2500, or Microcomputer Science Centre Inc. www.microscience.on.ca 905.629.1654

How do I arrange for childcare workers?

The College's Early Childhood Education Department can act as a resource in

some cases. Staff in that department can post notices asking for students to act as childcare givers for events that take place outside school or placement hours. For further information, call ext. 4616.

6. Suggestions for Effective Presentations

- Remind presenters to end meetings or presentations on schedule (people with Wheel-Trans arrangements often have very little flexibility; service providers are booked for a specific timeslot).
- Ask presenters to use the CNIB Clear Print Accessibility Guidelines when preparing their presentation materials. This will enhance the accessibility of their overall presentation. The document can be found at <http://www.cnib.ca/en/services/accessibilities/resources/clearprint/Default.aspx>

- Have print copies of presenter's presentation available to the audience at the beginning of the presentation.
- Ask presenters to send an electronic copy of their presentation well in advance. This allows you to proceed with fulfilling the requests for alternative formats such as Braille or large print since the conversion process requires time.
- For presenters, lectern heights and audiovisual controls need to be adjustable to meet the needs of different speakers.
- During the session, presenters should *verbally* describe contents of overheads, PowerPoint slides or chalkboard notes.
- If a presenter plans to show a video or other media, request that it include accessibility features. For

help, contact the Accessible Media Coordinator, Education Resources, ext. 2782. Please see <http://llc.georgebrown.ca/llc/>

- In the opening remarks of the event, the speaker should review the "Take 5 for Safety" document with the audience. http://insite/human_resources/ohs/managers.asp
- Organizers or presenters should check with the audience and service providers (interpreters, notetakers) about the need for breaks.

7. Helping participants get to the space you are using

- Make sure transportation options for getting to the venue are realistic for people with disabilities.
- Check for wheelchair accessible parking close to front entrance

- Make sure that wheelchair access is via the main entrance – or post clear, legible signs at the main entrance showing alternative, safe and accessible entrances.
- Make sure people with disabilities can reach all areas used at your event independently, e.g., the registration desk, auditorium, breakaway rooms, stage, etc.
- Elevators should have low buttons for wheelchair users, and Braille or raised number markings, or audible floor announcements.

8. Evaluating your event

- If you plan to distribute an event evaluation, ensure that the evaluation form is available in an accessible electronic format.
- Include in the evaluation an opportunity for participants to

comment on the accessibility of the event.

- Consider using on-line surveys that have been developed with accessibility features in mind (i.e. surveygizmo). Participant feedback about accessibility issues will provide an opportunity to learn how to make the next event even better.

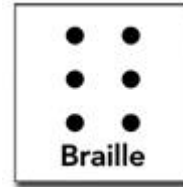
For information on accessibility issues in the classroom, see Resources, Faculty Guides, 2002 at www.disabilityissues.ca or contact Disability Services, ext. 2622 or Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services, ext. 4654.

9. Some Examples of Accessibility Symbols

You can find them at: <http://www.gag.org/resources/das.php>



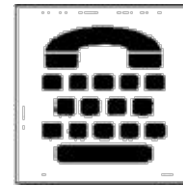
Sign Language Interpretation



Braille



Physical Accessibility



TTY



Assistive Listening Devices



Materials in Large Print



Closed Captioning



Audio Description