**Alberta Services for Students Conference (ASSC)**

**Accessibility and Inclusion**

**Main buildings and lobbies**

* Buildings used for conference activities to have a level front entrance or ramp. Ramps meet or exceed code standards. If the accessible entrance is not the main entrance, clear signage to indicate where the accessible entrance is located. Conference participants are informed in advance through conference promotional materials.
* Doors with pressure paddle buttons, automatic electronic sensors, or lever handles must be functioning properly. Where a conference participant has identified a mobility disability in advance, assign staff or a volunteer to assist that individual with doors that are not automatic or are difficult to manage.
* Staff and volunteers throughout the facility are trained to direct or assist people with disabilities into the building and to meeting rooms as needed.
* Essential doorways and major hallways must be wide enough to allow passage for a person using a wheelchair or scooter.
* Large, clear signage to be mounted at a comfortable level to indicate where sessions or meetings are taking place for all participants, including people who use wheelchairs and for those with low vision.
* Clear signage to direct persons using a wheelchair or scooter to washrooms providing accessible stalls. An accessible washroom should be located in the main building used for events. Ideally, the main building would have at least one barrier-free unisex washroom.
* Elevator access available if conference events are being held on different floors.
* Elevators to accommodate an individual using a wheelchair or scooter. Check whether controls are at a comfortable height for persons in a wheelchair and whether the elevator has an auditory signal for persons who are blind or have low vision. If not, train and encourage staff and volunteers to assist as necessary.
* An alternative to florescent lighting, where possible, for persons with sensitivity to light.

**Meeting rooms, Information sessions, Key note**

* The main stage/key note area, session rooms, and meeting rooms to be accessible and large enough to allow for circulation and seating for individuals using a wheelchair or scooter, guide dogs, other mobility aids, etc.
* Ideally, speaking platforms, including lectern or podium, to be accessible to individuals using a wheelchair or scooter, or, with a reasonable amount of time and effort, can be temporarily adapted for a wheelchair user, as needed.
* Accessible tables or desks provided in rooms where others are using a table or desk.
* Refreshment breaks in an area that allows for easy circulation and seating for individuals using a wheelchair or scooter, guide dogs, other mobility aids, etc.

**Dining area & Dietary Considerations**

* The dining area to be accessible and large enough to allow for circulation and seating for individuals using a wheelchair or scooter, guide dogs, other mobility aids, etc.
* All food to be clearly labelled with key ingredients listed for the benefit of all conference participants.
* Persons with disclosed dietary restrictions to receive a timely communication to confirm alternative food provision and to clarify the process for attaining food alternatives. For example…the food will be labelled with an ingredient list, or…present your special food card and the cook or assistant will be on hand to bring you a specially prepared plate, or…your plate will have your name on it…etc.
* An assigned staff member or volunteer clearly identifiable to help those with mobility challenges in managing buffet style food service or, for those with dietary restrictions, to assist in identifying what/where to get safe food alternatives.

**Social Venues**

* Keeping in mind the goal of **accessibility and inclusion,** ASSC encourages social activities and “fun events” that are suitable for a range of interests and ability.

**Stairs**

* Designate stairs which accommodate those with depth perception disabilities. If stairs to meeting spaces or events do not meet this need, a relatively inexpensive and simple, temporary solution might be to paint stair nosing in a contrasting colour.

**Sidewalks**

* A barrier free path of travel to be in place from the parking lot to the accessible entrances for persons using mobility aids or clearly mark out and inform attendees of accessible routes.
* Staff and volunteers to be available for help navigating steeper inclines.

**Parking**

* Designated accessible parking spots available for registrants who have identified this as a requirement on their conference registration forms.
* Designated accessible parking spots in close proximity to the accessible entrances of the buildings being used for meetings, etc.

**Personal Care Attendants**

* Housing, food, and transportation offered free of charge for personal care attendants.

**Housing**

* Residences on campus are wheelchair accessible or, with a reasonable amount of time and effort, can be temporarily adapted for a wheelchair user. Failing this, accessible hotel accommodations are nearby, with plans for negotiating accessible commuting transportation.
* An accessible billet may also be considered with accessible transportation for the commute.

**Transportation**

* Designate a safe drop off area in front of the main building.
* Accessible transportation available for a conference attendee who uses a wheelchair or scooter to commute back and forth from the hotel or to participate in social venues outside of main conference site.

**Communication**

* Adequate budget to hire interpreters or CART reporters with accommodations.
* TTY available for use on site.
* Budget for the possible need for materials to be distributed in alternate format, such as enlarged print, Braille, or e-text.
* Provisions for an assistive listening device.
* Prepare for an alternate format requirement by contacting the office that provides these services to give a heads up and to inquire about process, time requirements, cost, etc. Where in doubt, consult with other institutions that have experience and capability in this area.
* Videos to be closed captioned for use of individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.
* A hands-free microphone in addition to the traditional podium microphone for those who are unable to access the podium or to physically hold a microphone.
* Amplification for all presentations, even in smaller classrooms, so that all can hear presenters adequately.

**Invitation & Promotional Materials**

* Promotional materials to identify the barrier-free access that is in place and what sorts of disability-related supports are available upon request. Explicitly welcome full participation of persons with disabilities as presenters, moderators, committee members, organizers, and conference participant.
* In Call to Presenters, presentations to be submitted electronically by a reasonable date so that presentations can be published online prior to the conference as well as be easily converted into an alternate format that may be required by some conference participants.
* Identification of specific disability-related accommodation requirements to be submitted by conference attendee or speaker eight weeks prior to conference start. Requirements submitted with less notice will be accommodated where possible but may require some negotiation between conference participant and onsite committee for resolution.

**Scent free environment**

* Promotional materials to remind conference participants to avoid the use of scented products in order to minimize the harmful effects to individuals with asthma or those allergic to scented products.

**Safety**

* Visual fire alarms installed within all of the main buildings, including washrooms, or, at minimum, have an evacuation plan and inform participants of that plan.