Boston University Center for the Humanities
Accessibility Guidelines

PROMOTING AN EVENT
When promoting an event, all promotional materials (posters, emails, mailers, social media posts, etc.) should indicate clearly a person to contact in advance for accessibility accommodations. This person will be tasked with responding to and dealing with any accommodations in a timely manner.

SPACE
Event spaces with full accessibility should be prioritized. BU has a map that denotes the accessibility of buildings on campus here (you need to check the box for “accessibility” at the top to view the accessibility of each building), but please keep in mind that just because a building has certain accommodations it is not necessarily maximally accessible. (For example, CAS’s wheelchair ramp is at the back of the building and is not easy to find. So ideally, an event held in CAS will make the location of the ramp clear beforehand.)

Please keep in mind building location when booking events: the closer to public transportation the better.

In addition, please try to book spaces that have access to gender neutral bathrooms if at all possible. Here is a list of on-campus buildings with gender neutral bathrooms.

When setting up for events, please ensure adequate space for people to navigate the room.

FOOD
Food at events should be labeled with allergen information. A basic guideline for allergens can be found here. Major allergens include milk, eggs, fish, crustacean shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat, soybeans. It’s important to not only note allergens in ingredients but possible cross-contamination. Full nutrition information should be included if possible. Display the nutrition label for any bulk or packaged food.

When ordering food, please ensure that there are options for those who require vegetarian, vegan, lactose-free, and/or gluten-free food. If your event has pre-registration, ask about dietary needs as part of pre-registration.

SOUND
Ensure adequate sound and amplification for the size and space of the event. Speakers should be politely stopped and asked to use microphones properly if necessary. Some people will prefer not to use a microphone because they are nervous or insist that their voice is loud enough. Speakers should be asked to use the microphone for accessibility reasons. If speakers still do not use a microphone, someone with a microphone should repeat what they say.

If someone indicates the need for a sign language interpreter prior to an event, please secure one. You can contact Disability Services about this at 617-353-3658 or at access@bu.edu.

If possible, audience members should not be required to move to reach a microphone. Use mic runners whenever possible.
KICKING OFF THE EVENT
At the beginning of a meeting, event organizers should invite any outstanding accessibility needs to be heard.

If someone has disabilities related to auditory/sensory processing, event organizers should instruct attendees to use snapping and ASL applause instead of clapping and cheering at events.

DURING THE EVENT
Pictures in presentations should be described fully to the audience.

Videos and audio should have closed captions or transcripts.

Whenever possible, speech transcripts should be made accessible.

SOCIAL EVENTS
If part of your event planning involves social events or post-meeting social events, try to have some at locations that do not serve alcohol and minimize events in traditional bar environment if possible.

POST MEETING
Invite attendees to give feedback about accessibility as part of feedback about the event to the event organizer.

As a goal, people participating in events should always be aware that facilitators and organizers are responsive to their needs. Participants should know who the point of contact is to express those needs before or during an event, and how to give feedback after an event.