

Running an accessible and inclusive 'Meet the Candidates' event

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Accessibility and Inclusion

If you decide to plan an event you should make every effort possible to make it as inclusive and accessible as possible. Accessibility and inclusion needs are incredibly personal.

Nothing is going to be able to be completely accessible to everyone at all times but we can manage our behaviour, materials and events to ensure that many more people can engage and get the most out of the event.

Campaigning and voting week can be very busy and stressful for candidates, so it is really important to consider their wellbeing when you're organising your event. It should be a positive, meaningful experience for candidates as well as students in attendance.

Please read the top tips and other information below about how to ensure that it will be.

If you need an alternative copy of this guide please email representation@kclsu.org and we'll be happy to send you one.



Top Tips

1. Ensure questions are submitted in advance and circulated to candidates, giving them an opportunity to respond in a way that is suitable for them. This could be in person, writing or online.
2. Ensure candidates know that they are non-compulsory and do not feel pressurised to attend.
3. Be focused around an opportunity to meet and get to know student communities, rather than looking for faults in candidates or opportunities to highlight gaps in knowledge.
4. Provide 'crib sheets' with updates from your community and information on your latest campaigns and activities.
5. Invite small communities on relevant campuses with relevant officers rather than expecting all candidates to attend large, potentially overwhelming sessions.
6. Set specific timings for the event, ensuring that it starts and ends on time with appropriate access breaks. 15 minutes for an hour event works well. A session should not be longer than two hours.
7. Ensure the event takes place near to gender-neutral toilets, prayer facilities and quiet spaces.
8. To ensure you are aware of emergency exits and layout provides easy access.
9. To provide live streaming, tweeting or some form of recording for distance learners and students who are unable to attend.
10. Check out websites such as <http://www.disabledgo.com/> to check out full accessibility information for KCL venues.

Promotional Materials

Your promotional materials are a great place to consider the access and inclusion needs of your attendees.

Here are some things you should consider:

- Include a statement on your registration form, flyers and computer or print advertisements confirming the access available at your event.
- Consider using trigger warnings if your event includes sensitive material that some attendees may find distressing.
- Make use of KCLSU's Safe Space Marshalls and [Safe Space policy](#).
- Be flexible and arrange for promotional material to be available in alternative formats. Keep an electronic file of your promotional materials that you can edit and send out if necessary.
- Make attendees aware that you can make adjustments for a variety of needs.
- Provide details of someone they can contact to make your group aware of their needs, for example:

If you have a disability or any additional needs and require assistance in order to fully participate in this activity, please email contactdetails@email.com. You will be contacted by someone from our committee to discuss your specific needs.

Alternative formats

You may receive a request for your promotional materials be received in an alternative format. Students will usually be able to guide you as to exactly what they need but here are some common requests:

Coloured Paper

Many disabled students, particularly dyslexic students, need to read information without the 'glare' of white paper and, as such, need to access materials on coloured paper.

Electronic format

Some disabled students, particularly those with visual impairments, may need to optimise text to make it more readable for them. To do so, they can use screen readers to make text and images larger. However, some students may need to enlarge documents themselves without a screen reader. Always try to have your materials in Word or PDF format. Using specialised design software is fine, as long as you are able to convert it afterwards to a more appropriate format.

Text only

If you receive a request for a manifesto in text only format you can simply remove images, text boxes and so on to create a simple word document. It is fine to use headings in this instance.

If you receive requests for any other format and are unable to assist, please contact us at representation@kclsu.org and we can try to assist.



A Variety of Events

It is important to consider the diverse needs of the student body, and to try and run your events with this in mind. In order to engage with the most students, particularly with students from liberation groups, you should consider the following:

A mixture of daytime, evening and weekend events

Many mature, nursing and post-graduate students highlight that standard events run by student groups are often at times they cannot make. Varying the times of your events means that you are more likely to attract these students

Including non-alcoholic events

Some non-alcoholic events are rated as the most favourite and successful events of the year, particularly for students from liberation groups. Often underage, international, and non-drinking students are left out of traditional social events which makes the incorporation of alcohol-free events into your social calendar a necessity!

A change in location

Try not to restrict your events to one campus in order to attract the highest level of student engagement possible. When choosing an alternative location, consider how easy it will be for your attendees to get home.

Using the Correct Pronouns

You can't always know what someone's pronouns are by looking at them. Asking and correctly using someone's pronouns is one of the most basic ways to show your respect for their gender identity.

When someone is referred to with the wrong pronoun, it can make them feel disrespected, invalidated, dismissed, alienated, or dysphoric (often all of the above).

To ensure that trans and non-binary people feel comfortable and safe at your event, whether they are candidates or attendees, you can refer to the tips below:

1. Offer the opportunity to self-define and describe on any forms or paperwork you provide.
2. At meet and greets or events, ask everyone attending or speaking to add their pronouns to name badges.
3. When the Chair introduces themselves, have them state their pronoun and suggest that everyone could state theirs when introducing themselves, if they feel comfortable.
4. Never assume someone's pronouns; misgendering (referring to someone using a word, especially a pronoun or form of address, that does not correctly reflect the gender with which they identify) can create a great deal of distress.
5. Politely ask which pronouns someone uses to refer to themselves.
6. Do not assume that if a person is openly trans or non-binary in your community that they are openly trans or non-binary in all circumstances.