A QUICK GUIDE

Inclusive events

Organising committee

- Use a diverse team of individuals for the organisation of your event, to provide balanced views and ensure underrepresented groups are actively considered and included.

- Take time in decision-making to reduce the effects of implicit bias. Watch our video to learn more.

- Keep transparency in mind. Ensure prospective attendees know who is involved in the organising committee, how speakers are selected, how submissions of abstracts are selected for presentation, and who they can get in touch with to ask questions.

- For more guidance, see our quick guide to inclusive committees.

Before the event

- Consider inclusion and diversity in all marketing materials and communications. For more guidance, see our guide to inclusive communications.

- Consider the costs of attending the event, and how these could be mitigated for lower-income attendees or those who have extra expenses linked to caring responsibilities or disability. Options could include tiered pricing, travel funds, and signposting to the Royal Society of Chemistry's Grants for Carers and Accessibility Grants.

- Before the event, ask participants whether they have any accessibility requirements, and give yourself time to arrange these.

- Consider best possible times for everyone, for example, lunchtime or early evening to include people with caring responsibilities.

- Publicise accessibility information, such as step-free access or captions availability, as early as possible so that disabled attendees can make informed choices. All event communications should signpost a point of contact for any questions or requests about accessibility.

Participants

- Consider where and how you will advertise the event (channels, location, formats) in order to attract a diverse range of participants and attendees in the chemical sciences.

- Consider your current criteria for shortlisting speakers and session chairs – suggest more potential speakers and chairs from underrepresented groups.

- Ensure your invitations use inclusive wording. Avoid requesting that a speaker demonstrate 'excellence in the field'; instead, consider their valuable experience and skills.

- Actively select a diverse range of speakers and session chairs. For example, the Royal Society of Chemistry's policy is that women must make up at least a third of speakers and chairs at all RSC-sponsored events.

- Collect diversity monitoring data. We would be happy to share good practice on collecting diversity data - get in touch with us at diversity@rsc.org .

Registration

- Establish and make clear your zero-tolerance approach to harassment. Provide a clear and well-publicised code of conduct that makes specific reference to protected characteristics, for example the Royal Society of Chemistry Code of Conduct , and a tick box that signals the registrant agrees to abide by it.

- Consider and communicate whether children can attend the event and whether childcare and/or a nursing room will be provided.

- Provide an access statement detailing the physical accessibility of the venue, the event format, and any accessibility services provided, for example using this Access Statement Generator .

- Request information on any accessibility needs, for example if registrant requires communication support or specific reserved seating. Use an open text box.

- Collect dietary requirements separately from access needs, using an open text box.

- If there will be a photographer, include information about this and how to opt out.

- Provide information on how to get to the venue, for example, parking, nearby bus routes, nearest train station, local taxi companies. Consider accessibility for mobility impaired attendees (for example, investigate whether local taxi companies can provide wheelchair-accessible vehicles).

- Find out how the RSC collects and uses diversity data .

ROYAL SOCIETY OF CHEMISTRY

Venue

Facilities and services

- Provide inclusive catering (consider dietary requirements, provision of alcohol, religious observances).
- Ensure there is an appropriate prayer space, and that this is clearly signposted.
- Consider childcare provisions, such as a crèche or nursing room, or provide contacts for nearby registered childcare as appropriate.
- Ensure that accessible toilets are available.
- Consider 'unseen' disabilities; facilities such as lifts and accessible toilets should be clearly signposted and open to all.
- If there are no existing gender-neutral toilets in the venue, consider designating some facilities as gender-neutral for the event.
- Consider baby-changing facilities, including in gender-neutral and accessible toilets.
- Provide a quiet space for attendees, particularly for longer events.
- Ensure that Wi-Fi is working and available to attendees.
- Clearly signpost plug sockets and charging points, and consider providing spare charging cables.
- Provide and encourage the use of **pronoun stickers**.

Seating and moving around

- When selecting and preparing the venue, consider accessibility for attendees with mobility impairments. Ensure that there is step-free access (level, ramped, or via a lift), automatic doors (or an alternative solution), that corridors and doorways are of adequate width, and that emergency evacuation has been considered.
- Provide maps in advance and ensure there is clear signage around the venue.
- Reserve seats for those with access requirements, for example, front-row seating, padded seating, seating on the ends of rows and/or close to doors.
- Reserve seating at the front so that D/deaf or hard of hearing attendees are able to lipread speakers.
- Consider the length of time participants might be required to stand, and provide seating for those who cannot stand for long periods. Provide a range of seating, for example padded or unpadded, arms or no arms. If no padded seating is available, consider providing cushions.

ROYAL SOCIETY OF **CHEMISTRY**

Venue

Sensory considerations

- Consider how to mitigate sensory issues for attendees with access needs, for example: lighting too bright, too low or flickering; background noise, including low-level continuous noise or fragranced air fresheners.
- Ensure that there is a working hearing loop (you can purchase or hire portable hearing loops if not already provided by the venue).
- Ensure that microphones are available and, if possible, include roving microphones for audience questions.
- Ensure that session chairs and speakers use microphones, since not everyone can hear at the same volume.
- Try to reduce feedback from microphones. Read about **microphone techniques** and **how to prevent microphone feedback.**
- Avoid flash photography, or limit it to a specific time and place and communicate this clearly.

Virtual and hybrid events

- Make accessible versions of any digital resources available in advance. For more guidance on making resources accessible see our quick guide to **inclusive communications**.
- Use platforms that are considered most accessible and widely used, for example, Zoom and Microsoft Teams. If using a virtual conferencing platform, consider rehearsing with technology providers before the event begins.
- Ensure online delegates for hybrid events are given access before sessions begin.
- Enable automatic captions or live transcription if available; for more guidance see our **communication support FAQs**.
- Ask participants to mute themselves when they are not talking.
- Recommend that participants use a headset and microphone to filter out background noise and enhance sound quality.
- Encourage each speaker to say their name when they speak.
- Screen-shared slides cannot be read by text to speech software such as screen readers. Ensure that any information communicated visually is also verbally described, for example trends in graphs. Make slides available before the event and announce each slide during the event so that the participants can read the relevant slides using their screen reader.
- Chat windows are an important accessibility tool because they offer an alternative way to contribute to the discussion. However, they can be distracting and interact with captions and screen readers. Ask participants not to use the chat window during speaking, unless urgent, for example, if audio or captions are not working. Consider including dedicated discussion or Q&A sections instead.
- Book communication support if required; for more guidance see our **communication support FAQs**.
- Record events so that they can be watched again, and/or provide a transcript. See our **communication support FAQs** for more guidance.
- Encourage attendees to include their pronouns in their screen names. Zoom profiles now include a **dedicated pronoun field**.

Event format

- Consider switching onsite events to hybrid events. Alternately, make onsite events accessible remotely by livestreaming or providing a recording afterwards.

- Provide a clear programme as far in advance as possible.

- Build regular 'access breaks' into the event programme, for example, a 5–10 minute rest break every 60 minutes, or a 15-minute break every 90 minutes.

- Give people a choice as to whether and how they engage with others. Some people need a break from communication. For example, make it possible for people to opt out of networking or breakout discussion activities.

- Provide alternative ways to ask questions, such as via a physical question box, social media hashtag, chat window, or third-party software. Ensure session chairs are aware of these options and use them. It may be helpful to designate co-chairs to monitor incoming questions.

Audience engagement

- Encourage attendees to talk one person at a time, and ask session chairs to clearly repeat audience questions.

- Ensure speakers use inclusive language, for example, 'colleagues', 'guests', or 'everyone', instead of 'ladies and gentlemen'.

- Encourage session chairs not to assume participants' gender based on their appearance and to use alternative means of identifying audience members for questions (for example, "the person up front in the red shirt" instead of "the [lady/gentleman] at the front").

Did you know?

- Research has found that **women ask 2.5 times fewer questions than men in seminars**.

- When the first question was asked by a man, fewer subsequent questions were asked by women.

- Possible steps to improve this include:

  – increasing the time allotted for questions;

  – encouraging speakers to answer concisely;

  – asking chairs and facilitators to aim for a balanced range of questions from attendees of different genders, backgrounds, and levels of seniority;

  – equipping chairs and facilitators to recognise and mitigate their own implicit bias – **Watch our implicit bias and fair decision making video for further guidance**.

Review

- Collect feedback from attendees on the inclusivity of the event.

- Include questions to assess the accessibility of the venue or platform and event for disabled attendees.

- Consider how to collect feedback from the wider community to ensure that anyone unable to attend – particularly for reasons relating to accessibility or any protected characteristic – can provide insights.

- Use diversity monitoring data and feedback to review the event and improve future practice.

Together we can help make chemistry truly for everyone.
See our quick guides for more help with inclusive events, communications, and committees.

ROYAL SOCIETY
OF **CHEMISTRY**