

Top Tips for Designing an Inclusive Conference Programme Layout: A Guide to Accessible and Welcoming Design

1 Speakers

Reflect diversity in Speakers and content to foster inclusivity and diversity.

Inclusive representation: Showcase diverse speakers across gender, ethnicity, and expertise.

Session variety: Incorporate topics and formats that cater to different learning preferences (e.g., panels, workshops, networking sessions).

2 Participants

Use inclusive language: Write in plain language to make the content accessible to all participants, including non-native speakers.

Gender-neutral terms: Use inclusive terms like "they" instead of "he/she" when referring to individuals.

Cultural sensitivity: Be mindful of language and imagery that respects cultural diversity.

3 Location/Venue

Location: locate conference in a place with good transport connections.

Venue: review logistics and safety of venue for the conference.

4 Other categories

4.1 Tips for Presentation materials

Prioritize Clear and Accessible Formatting.

Readable fonts: Use easy-to-read fonts like Arial, Verdana, or Tahoma. Avoid overly decorative or small text.

Font size: Ensure font sizes are at least 12pt for body text and 16–18pt for headings.

Contrast: opt for high contrast colour combinations (e.g., black text on a white background). Avoid red-green contrasts as they can be challenging for colour blind readers.

White space: Use ample spacing between lines and sections to prevent visual clutter.

4.2 Provide Multiple Formats

Digital accessibility: Ensure the programme is accessible via screen readers (e.g., PDF with alt-text for images).

Large print and braille: Offer printed versions in large text and braille formats for attendees with visual impairments.

Mobile-friendly layout: Design a responsive layout for easy viewing on smartphones and tablets.

4.3 Include Visual Aids Thoughtfully

Descriptive labels: Add alt-text or captions to all images and graphics.

Icons and Symbols: Use recognizable, inclusive symbols for navigation (e.g., wheelchair-accessible icons).

Avoid overcrowding: Limit the number of images to maintain clarity.

4.4 Plan for Accessibility Needs

Time Accessibility: Clearly mark breaks, session times, and accessible facilities using signages.

Content Warnings: Highlight sessions with sensitive topics or trigger warnings.

Language Services: Indicate the availability of sign language interpreters, translation services, or captioning.

4.5 Engage with Your Audience

Feedback Loop: Include a QR code, links feedback and evaluation forms to collect feedback on accessibility and inclusiveness.

Help Information: Clearly list contact details for accessibility support and queries on correspondence.

4.6 Test for Usability

Conduct Reviews: Have people with disabilities and diverse backgrounds review your programme layout for accessibility.

Simulate Use Cases: Test readability in low-light environments and check for usability on various devices.

5 Working Group/Planning Committee

5.1 Checklist for venue

Here are our top tips on managing a venue.

- a) Check for availability of furniture's (Registration desks, chairs, tables etc.).
- b) Check for IT requirements, laptops, Wi-Fi and stationaries.
- c) Check for First aid, fire safety and security Marshalls for the venue.

6 Documentation for the conference

Here is our list of documents and files you should plan for documentation for your conference.

- a) Attendance sheet /Sign in forms
- b) Brochures
- c) Programme handout
- d) Parking permits (If any)
- e) Request, complaint and observation log sheets