2022 ASTRO 3D Guide for Inclusive Meetings

Last updated 31 August 2022

Authors: Kim-Vy Tran, Ingrid McCarthy, Marie Partridge, & ASTRO 3D EDI committee

OVERVIEW

This updated Guide is intended to provide recommendations for supporting an inclusive environment at ASTRO 3D meetings and events.

In this Guide, "Meetings" refer to workshops, symposia, colloquia, seminars, conferences, retreats, busy weeks, and any other type of meeting that brings people together, both in-person and online.

Please note the Guidelines are meant to be tailored to the event type. For example, synchronous online access may not be needed for writing retreats.

QUICK MEETING CHECKLIST

☐ Does the location provide a safe environment for all participants?

☐ Does the meeting date clash with major cultural events?

☐ Is online participation fully supported (remote talks, recorded)?

☐ Is the organising committee representative?

☐ Are there guidelines for participants, e.g. code of conduct?

☐ Is the speaker list representative?

☐ Is childcare support provided?

☐ Does the venue support all-gender facilities and is it fully accessible?

☐ Does the event follow COVID safety guidelines?

☐ Is there a dedicated point person to contact for accessibility?

☐ Does the program include an Acknowledgement of or Welcome to Country?

ASTRO 3D

PLANNING A MEETING

1) Meeting location and requirements
   a) Ensure support for online and in-person participants
      i) Venue can support multiple online sessions (break-out rooms) with real-time engagement between on-site and remote participants.
      ii) Online forum to consolidate meeting logistics and promote discussions.
   b) Select a location that is a safe environment for all participants.
      i) Have a contact person on the LOC that is in the country where the meeting is planned
      ii) Is the location LGBQT friendly? Resource for LGBTQ+Travel
      iii) Can women safely travel by themselves?
   c) Avoid scheduling on cultural or religious holidays, on weekends, and outside standard work hours

2) Choose a diverse/representative organising committee
   a) The organising committee represents multiple identity axes including career stage, ethnicity, and gender.
   b) Ask SoC to provide representative list of recommended invited speakers
   c) Provide credit and visibility to the organisers – organising is work!

3) Set goals for equity and inclusion, for example:
   a) Representation of different identities, career stages, or institutional affiliations in different sessions.
   b) Quality & quantity of interactions in sessions.

4) Funding – ensure that ASTRO 3D or external funding is used to support inclusive participation.
   a) Childcare costs – all ASTRO 3D organised meetings have childcare arranged or paid for by the organisers. Provided for in-person and remote participants.
   b) Make meetings accessible including online attendance especially for those with hidden disabilities.
   c) Support people without other travel funds, especially students and Early-Career Researchers.

5) Promotion of the Meeting
   a) Advertise broadly to ensure a diverse pool of attendees.
      i) Whenever possible, include key dates and meeting location to help people organise travel.
   b) Encourage people that traditionally are excluded in meetings (women, carers, young members) to attend.
   c) Use inclusive images and specific language in promotion materials, stating that representatives from diverse backgrounds and expertise are encouraged to apply and attend.
   d) Clearly state if funding support is available on a needs basis.
   e) State if special inclusion services are provided (e.g., childcare, onsite accessibility support, accessibility of venue etc.).

6) Registering for the Meeting
   a) Include a Code of Conduct

b) Recommend all participants indicate their pronouns (e.g. she/her/hers, he/him/his, they/them/theirs) at registration and add pronouns to name tags such as stickers for in-person and virtual stickers for online participants.

c) Provide options for participants to correct the spelling of their names, or to indicate their preferred name, including the placement of diacritical markers (like accents and tildes) that are not necessarily in the English alphabet.

d) Ask participants if they need specialist assistance. Examples include sign interpreters, attendant carers, note takers, and hearing loop support.

e) Obtain permission to record talks and post for participants to view, e.g. on a private YouTube channel.

f) Ask about dietary requirements.

7) Selecting presenters and participants
   a) Make a plan for selecting speakers (invited and contributed). The selection process should be clear and available to applicants.
      i) Consider contributions to the profession beyond academic CV, such as engagement with policy-makers or the broader public, contributions to mentoring programs, or advancement of academic culture.
      ii) Make the selection criteria clear and the workload low.
   b) Use a dual blind process for reviewing and selecting abstracts.
   c) Aim for representation in invited speakers, e.g. 50/50 male/female. If needed, proactively invite speakers from under-represented groups.
   d) Select session chairs to be representative and, if possible, prioritise Early Career Researchers.
   e) Recognise it will take effort to create an equitable agenda – for instance, women are more likely to decline invitations for reasons such as increased demands on their time, limited funding and support for travel, and family responsibilities.

8) Venue logistics & scheduling
   a) Confirm that all talks can be recorded and made available to participants.
   b) Confirm the space is physically accessible.
   c) Where possible, ensure the meeting room has adequate ventilation (windows/doors that open or mechanical).
   d) Confirm microphones and speakers are available to make sure voices can be heard by everyone, e.g. during Q&A.
   e) Confirm the room set-up is visually accessible by all (in-person and online).
   f) Confirm there are or can be unisex/all-gender restrooms.
   g) Promote a scent-free environment by providing advance notice to participants to refrain from using strong-scented toiletries.
   h) Identify a point of contact for those with accessibility issues.
   i) Design schedules to include regular breaks (approximately 20-30 minutes health break and a 90-minute lunch break).
   j) If making accommodation bookings on behalf of participants, best practice is for single occupancy. If this is not possible due to budget or room number constraints, please ask participants who they would like to share with or at the very least, ensure same-gender room sharing.

9) Health & safety guidelines regarding COVID
   a) Check with current government (federal/state) guidelines.
   b) Confirm the meeting rooms are well-ventilated with appropriate capacity.
   c) Provide a plan for testing, masking, isolation requirements etc
   d) Recommend COVID testing prior to travel, and ASTRO 3D asks that all conference attendees take a RAT upon arrival before attending the meeting.
   e) If possible, provide daily RATs.
   f) Ensure that participants understand isolation requirements, and any available support, if they should test positive at the event.
   g) Provide P2/N95 face masks to all conference attendees and make the following statement upon arrival: "ASTRO 3D recommends that all attendees wear masks at all times while indoors in shared areas."
   h) Weather & venue permitting, plan on having breaks and meals outdoors.

DURING THE MEETING – CREATING AN INCLUSIVE SPACE
1) Welcom talk/introduction:
   a) Welcome to Country or Acknowledgement of Country – it is mandatory to include a 'Welcome to Country' or do an 'Acknowledgement of Country'. Be sure to consult with Aboriginal people of the community where the event takes place. This way you ensure that the ceremony pays the appropriate level of recognition and involves the right people. An Acknowledgement of Country Best Practice Guide can be obtained from the ASTRO 3D website.
   b) Make a simple statement that inclusion is important.
   c) Verbally acknowledge and draw attention to the Code of Conduct.
   d) Introduce the point of contact for accessibility issues.
   e) Describe how moderation will happen and clearly identify the moderator.
   f) Note time constraints and stick to them.
   g) Remind everyone that talks are recorded and available to participants.
   h) Remind presenters to use microphones – this is essential for hearing impaired and online participants.
   i) Ask presenters to identify themselves before speaking throughout the meeting for the benefit of participants who are visually impaired.
   j) Encourage clear speech at a moderate pace by all attendees to help communicate with persons who are hearing impaired and for those who English is not a first language.

2) Moderate to support inclusion:
   a) Make sure everyone uses a microphone to record.
   b) If a microphone is not available or a question is posted online, have the session chair read aloud the question.
   c) Prioritise questions by early career researchers.
   d) Ensure every presenter has an audience, particularly for posters.

3) Physical environment

ASTRO 3D

a) Prepare event signage using large print and contrasting colours (eg: directions to meeting rooms and restrooms, scent-free environment poster, emergency exits, name tags).
b) Prepare presentations using at least 18-point font with high-contrast backgrounds.
c) If possible, identify interpreters to allow inclusion and participation during networking events that take place during and after hours, such as receptions, dinners and other activities.
d) Find participants to volunteer to help persons with disabilities who require assistance in the event of an emergency evacuation.

4) Collect Feedback from participants on inclusion and consider collecting data on participation
a) [Example google survey](#)

5) Plan activities to help participants connect
a) Help participants introduce themselves.
b) Consider having ambassadors, e.g. members of the Science Organising Committee, to help younger members network.

6) If there is a deliverable from the meeting or workshop, develop clear guidelines for authorship, roles and responsibilities.

7) Encourage participants to explore opportunities for post-workshop mentorships.

8) Consider putting up in the venue and/or circulating before the meeting, suggestions for how to contribute to an inclusive atmosphere:

How can participants contribute to an inclusive atmosphere?
- Practice respectful communication
- Counter your affinity bias – leave your comfort zone and reach out to people
- Alternate using your voice and making space for other voices
- Give credit appropriately
- Criticise respectfully and constructively
- Use pronouns proactively
- If you have concerns, talk to the organisers

AFTER THE MEETING – ASSESSMENT
1) Wrap-up discussion with Science Organising Committee/Local Organising Committee
a) Which goals were met? Which were not?
b) What worked well from the organiser's perspective? What fell short?
c) What worked and did not work from participant perspectives? What did we find out from the post-event survey?

d) What will we do differently next time? What can we have learned to improve best practices in the future?

2) Consider circulating a brief report (1 page) of the post-meeting assessment with all meeting participants and stake-holders.
    a) Did the meeting have appropriate representation?
    b) Lessons learned regarding what worked & what didn't.

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

Hybrid meetings:
https://www.nature.com/articles/s41550-021-01325-z#change-history

Code of Conduct Examples:
- ASTRO 3D Meeting Code of Conduct
- Space Telescope Science Institute
- American Astronomical Society Meeting Etiquette

Acknowledgement of Country examples:
- UNSW Indigenous Strategy, Education, & Research
- University of Melbourne Statement of Acknowledgement
- University of Western Australia Indigenous Portfolio

Example forms:
- Before event: Template Google Survey registration form
- After event: example google survey for participants to determine if meeting is inclusive

Example of dates of Cultural significance
- USyd 2022 Staff Cultural Calendar
- USyd 2022 Cultural, Religious, Diversity, & Inclusion Dates

Resource for LGBQT+Travel
- List of Worse & Safest Countries

HELP Q&A
- Are the invited speakers *not* representative, especially if there are late cancellations?
    o Promote a contributed talk.
- SoC not representative?
    o Go to the invited list of speakers and invite to join SoC.