# Event Access Statement Guide

**Purpose:** The purpose of this Event Access Guide is to encourage and facilitate equal access for all participants in programs, events, and activities hosted/sponsored/co-sponsored by departments within the Division of Student Services. This aligns with the Division's mission of dedication to cultivating a community that provides access, fosters development, and promotes holistic well-being, as well as the vision to provide transformative learning experiences. (Ties to Division Goals A:2, A:5, A:6)

- Division Goal A:2: **Create opportunities for students to connect to the university and greater community through intentional programming.** Use of event access statements will let participants know ahead of an event that accommodations can be arranged if they are needed, thus encouraging *all* students to participate.

- Division Goal A:5: **Develop standard procedures and workflows that are in line with service excellence**. The Event Access Guide will serve as the resource for wording of access statements for events hosted/sponsored by the offices/departments within the Division of Student Services.

- Division A:6: **Allow for proactive planning in light of federal and state legislation, mandates, and regulations.** Use of access statements ensures adherence to the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504, etc., and encourages event planners to consider concepts of environmental Universal Design.

**Why include an access statement?:** Access statements indicate a department/office's level of commitment to the Division's mission, vision, values, and goals of inclusion, access, and holistic well-being through programming, much in the same way that a syllabus statement indicates a commitment to inclusion on the academic side. The immediate goal is to remove access barriers so all students can fully participate in events, with the eventual goal of creating events without barriers on the front end. It is recommended that an access statement is included on all event announcements, both published and online. Statements should be in a readable-size font (12 pt, minimum) in a noticeable location on the announcement.

## Implementation:

- **Include access statement with notification of events.** See sample access statements in this guide. Choose the one that best fits your purpose.

- **Consider access and elements of Universal Design when planning events.** An overview of considerations is below. The Office of Disability Services is always available for consultation.

- **Identify departmental point of contact for accommodation requests and plan for implementation.** If your department is hosting an event, be sure the person identified as the point of contact in the access statement is trained on how to facilitate/implement accommodation requests as they are made. The Office of Disability Services is happy to provide guidance to event sponsors when vetting accommodation requests.

EVENT PARTICIPANTS SHOULD **NOT** BE REQUIRED TO PROVIDE DOCUMENTATION TO EVENT HOSTS WHEN REQUESTING ACCOMMODATIONS, NOR SHOULD THEY BE ASKED ABOUT THE NATURE OF THEIR DISABILITY. The Office of Disability Services is ready and willing to consult, if there are questions about whether the request is reasonable or how to implement a request.

## Event Access Statement Samples:

***Sample standard statement for general campus event access:**
*To request an accommodation for this event, please contact [insert program/event contact] at [insert program/event contact's email address] or [insert program/event contact's phone number] by [insert date, typically at least one week in advance].*

**Sample standard statement for division programs/events:**
*The Division of Student Services encourages persons with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities. If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation or have questions about the access provided, please call [insert program/event contact] in advance of your participation or visit.*

**Sample General statements for calendars/flyers:**
*If you have questions concerning access or to request accommodations for events hosted by our department, please contact [insert departmental/event contact] at [departmental/event contact's email address] or [departmental/event contact phone number].*

**Abbreviated statement (space constraints):**
*All participants are welcome. For questions regarding access and accommodation, please contact [insert program/event contact] in advance of the program.*

**General statement on catalogs, brochures, other publications:**
*To request this information in an alternate format, please contact [insert departmental/event contact] at [departmental/event contact's email address] or [departmental/event contact phone number].*

**General statement for registration of events requiring travel/lodging**:
*To request accommodations that will facilitate your full participation in this [event, activity, conference, etc.], please contact [insert program/event contact] at [insert program/event contact's email address] or [insert program/event contact's phone number] by [insert date, typically the day registration for the event closes].*

**Considerations when planning an event:** The concept of Universal Design is to create/design environments that are usable for all people, to remove the need to adapt or accommodate. Here are some tips for inclusive event planning:

**Venue (for all events):**

Before booking a room/venue, check for:

- **Accessible parking spaces** with appropriate curb cuts leading to a clear path to accessible entrance of the venue, with clear signage indicating location of parking and entrance.

- **Unobstructed and clearly signed route of travel** through outdoor spaces to get to the event venue (if applicable);

- **Accessible entrances** (ramp or unobstructed ground level entrance with automatic door opener);

- **Elevator access** (if event is not on main floor);

- **Accessible restrooms and drinking fountains** on the same floor as the event;

- **Assistive Listening System (ALS)/amplification system** as part of the technology available in the room;

**Seating**:

- **Arrange tables/chairs/seats in the event space to ensure adequate room in aisles and between furnitur**e to allow for easy movement of wheelchairs/mobility devices, and/or blind or low vision participants using canes or guide dogs, or for students who may not comfortably move in tight spaces;

- **Ramps, if participants are required to navigate stairs or tiered/sloped spaces** (for example, a stage where a student is receiving an award);

- **Availability of multiple seating options**: high capacity chairs, tables at a variety of heights, or with adjustable height (for wheelchair users or others who need additional space at knee height); reserved seating near speakers for students who are deaf or hard of hearing; interpreters or captioning (if reasonable and appropriate – you'd need advanced notice to book a qualified interpreter or captioner);

**<u>If food is served</u>:**

- **Provide more than one option for food** – preferably one option that includes common allergen-free components. Gluten-free and nut-free options are the most common allergies/sensitivities/preferences currently. (Recognize that while there is a difference between a true food allergy and a preference, it is becoming standard practice to offer food options, when food is available at an event.)

- **Post/label ingredients for food and drink options** so participants can decide what will work for them. Also label if there is any way there was potential cross-contamination of ingredients.

**<u>Presentations:</u>**

- **Alternate formats** of handouts/programs/print materials – large print options (20 pt font) at the door, access to an electronic version of materials (could be used with screen reader) prior to the event in an accessible format (either on an event website or sent directly to participants);

- **Visual formats** (videos, video clips, etc) should include captions (check for availability of closed caption capability for AV equipment in the room you are booking);

- If using a visual aid(s), **offer descriptions of the visuals**. (poster presentations, for example, should have either real-time or recorded explanation of displays).

**Other things to think about in programming:**

- Latex-free balloons/decorations;
- Scent-free decorations (no scented candles/strong room sprays, etc.);
- A room set aside nearby for students to decompress and then return to the event (students on the autism spectrum sometimes need a respite);
- Transportation – if a student requests transportation accommodations, the sponsoring department will need to rent a vehicle. Check with procurement on contracts that ATU has with local vendors.

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## Sample checklists from recent AHEAD (Association on Higher Education and Disability) registration forms:

***PROGRAMMATIC ACCOMMODATIONS*: Please checkmark if needed. Submit by [*DATE] to [NAME + CONTACT INFO.]***

| Interpreter | **Interpreter Deaf-Blind** | **Alternate Media** | **Other Accommodations** |
|---|---|---|---|
| ____ ASL | _____ Tactile | _____ e-Text | _____Amplification System |
| ____ Signed English | _____ Close proximity | _____ Large Print | Other (please specify) |
| ____ Oral | Other (please specify) | _____ Braille | _____ |
| ____ Cued Speech | _____ | | |

***Dietary Restrictions***
***(highlight or mark any that apply)***

- Ova/Lacto
- Diabetic
- Vegetarian
- Vegan
- Low Sodium

- Kosher
- Gluten free
- Food Allergy or Other: _____