Ysgol Graddedigion Gwyddorau Cymdeithasol Cymru (YGGCC)

Welsh Graduate School for the Social Sciences (WGSSS)

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: Events and Conferences

The WGSSS is working to build an open, inclusive and socially representative research community, and strives for equality, diversity and inclusion irrespective of age, disability, sex, gender identity, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. Widening participation is a key goal for the WGSSS.

This guidance is intended assist WGSSS students, fellows, professional services staff, and academic colleagues in achieving these goals. It should be followed for all WGSSS events (e.g. Induction and Capabilities and Careers Conference), and any events facilitated or supported by the WGSSS, whether on-line or face-to-face. These include pathway and cohort-building events such as conferences, seminars and workshops, whether hosted by the WGSSS (e.g on its MS Teams page) or by one of the universities in the partnership. They include, but are not limited to events supported by the WGSSS Cohort Grants Scheme, e.g. knowledge exchange activities, user engagement and interdisciplinary work.

WGSSS support, whether financial, technical, or in terms of publicity, is conditional on the organizers agreeing to follow these guidelines. Relevant application forms will include a statement to this effect.

We welcome further advice on our work in this area from all our stakeholders.

Guidance for Organisers of Online Events

Due regard should be given to ensure that conferences and events promote and support the equal participation of those attending. Specific attention should at a minimum be paid to the following:

- Recognise the potential barriers to attendance or participation in events which may be faced by particular groups, and how these may be avoided or ameliorated;
- Awareness that the timing of your event could limit participation for certain groups, for example if it clashes with other conferences, major religious festivals or school holiday dates, timing in the day for working parents and potential childcare provision where possible to facilitate participation;
- Ensure that events are promoted accessibly to a range of different audiences, such as through social media;
- Recognise the way in which particular demographics such as (but not limited to) race, religion, sex and disabilities (broadly defined) are represented in plenary or speaker invitations;

- Digital accessibility requirements and incorporating accessible software into online materials, providing subtitles on recorded videos and live captioning
- Ensure the use of the Welsh language in promotional materials in line with institutional requirements, and facilitating use of the Welsh language at events where appropriate;
- Take in to account the wide range of adjustments that people may require to attend or speak at conferences. Willingness to accommodate adjustments should be made clear from the outset, to ensure that no potential speakers/delegates are deterred from participation due to concerns about the potential barriers they may encounter. Such adjustments could include the following:

  - digital accessibility requirements and ensuring Zoom sessions are kept to a suitable duration with sufficient break time for all involved, taking account of particular needs

Guidance for Delegates

The WGSSS requires delegates attending conferences and events to have due regard to the different characteristics, circumstances and positions of those attending. The WGSSS requires delegates to consider their own role in promoting and supporting the equal participation of those attending conferences and events. Delegates are expected to follow the following examples of 'best practice':

- When presenting papers and posters: to consider the accessibility needs of other delegates, such as by using appropriate font sizes and background colours, and to keep to allotted timings in order to avoid impinging on the opportunities of others to contribute.

- When asking questions: to ensure that questions are always framed constructively, do not take up unnecessary time that would prevent others from participating in discussions, and posed in ways which avoid behaviours that may have exclusionary or degrading effects for particular groups.

- Reflect on the composition of panels to ensure diversity where possible and as appropriate, and to avoid tokenism or overburdening members of traditionally underrepresented groups.

- When chairing to reflect on the order in which questioners are called, and the time they take up, recalling that more senior white male participants historically tend to be favoured in this regard.

Guidance for Organisers of Face-to-Face Events held at a physical location

Due regard should be given to ensure that conferences and events promote and support the equal participation of those attending. Specific attention should be paid to organising events in ways that facilitate equality, diversity and inclusion, and should include, at a minimum, respect and consideration of the following:

- Recognise the potential barriers to attendance or participation in events which may be faced by particular groups, and how these may be avoided or ameliorated;
- Awareness that the timing of your event could limit participation for certain groups, for example if it clashes with other conferences, major religious festivals or school holiday dates, timing in the day for working parents and potential childcare provision where possible to facilitate participation;
- Ensure events are promoted accessibly to a range of different audiences, such as through social media;
- Recognise the way in which particular demographics such as (but not limited to) race, religion, sex and disabilities (broadly defined) are represented in plenary or speaker invitations;
- Ensure that venue accessibility details are provided to speakers and delegates in advance;
- Ensure any printed signage is produced in accessible font (it is recommended to use dark text on light background, sans serif font, avoiding italics) and that it is displayed at a height readable by wheelchair users;
- Ensure the use of the Welsh language in promotional materials in line with institutional requirements, and facilitating use of the Welsh language at events where appropriate;
- Ensure that dietary requirements are met taking into consideration those with specific allergies or needs e.g. vegetarian, vegan, halal (note that halal meat is too often replaced by a vegetarian substitute)
- Avoid imposing specific seating arrangements
- Ensure provision of quiet spaces across the venue. Consider providing prayer mats and enough room for gender segregation in quiet rooms
- Note that assistance dogs must be permitted entrance;
- Take in to account the wide range of adjustments that people may require to attend or speak at conferences. Willingness to accommodate adjustments should be made clear from the outset, to ensure that no potential speakers/delegates are deterred from participation due to concerns about the potential barriers they may encounter. Such adjustments could include the following:

  - provision for those who may require seating during breaks
  - provision of a British Sign Language interpreter
  - consideration to the provision of childcare facilities
  - admittance of personal assistants and additional seating, e.g. for a note-taker
  - catering for dietary requirements

- appropriate AV equipment, hearing loops and other auxiliary aids at the venue
- ensuring adequate wheelchair space
- the provision of documents in large type or the option to ask/take questions in particular ways, allowing additional time to move between rooms and sessions.