



**STUDENT
DIVERSITY
AND INCLUSION**

Celebrating
Diversity

Designing inclusive events
at Griffith University

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ABOUT THESE GUIDELINES

Celebrations are a common element of life at Griffith. Whether the celebration is for staff, students and/or the wider community, getting the event right reflects on the University. As such being inclusive and celebrating diversity should be a central consideration.

Your event should create opportunities for *all* members of the Griffith community to share in significant events. It's likely that you're already doing many of the things outlined in these guidelines – as many of them are common sense – but you can take your event to the next level by following these guidelines for inclusive practice.

GETTING STARTED

The success of an event reflects on you, your work area and the University. A bit of careful planning will ensure your event runs smoothly and everyone feels included.

It may sound obvious, but one of the easiest ways to ensure your event is inclusive is to include people from your intended audience/s in the planning.

And, if in doubt, ask those in the know. Consult other sections of the University such as Student Diversity and Inclusion (Student Services), Human Resources, the GUMurrii Student Support Unit, the Student Representative Council or Student Guild, and International Student Services where appropriate.

This booklet also includes some useful resources and checklists to assist you.

WELCOME TO COUNTRY OR ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS?

It is important that staff and students are aware of, recognise, and value the significance of Australia's First Peoples, their cultures, and their place in the activities of the University.

In embracing Reconciliation between Australia's First Peoples and other Australians, the University recommends the use of the *Welcome to Country* or *Acknowledgement of Country* at University events, ceremonies, meetings, and functions.

Welcome to Country

A *Welcome to Country* is a formal welcome onto Aboriginal Land given by an Indigenous Elder from the area. 'Welcomes' are used at major formal functions where official guests and dignitaries are in attendance. Examples include, an official welcome to Griffith, community engagement events involving visiting dignitaries, University awards nights, or graduation ceremonies.

A *Welcome to Country* always occurs at the opening of an event and is usually the first item on the program. The local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander custodians or traditional owners conduct the ceremony and this may be done through a speech, song, ceremony, or a combination of these things.

Ensure you give sufficient time on the program for the Welcome and support Elders to access the event and venue easily. This may include negotiating suitable transport and, in some cases, a speaker fee.

Not all Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people can perform a *Welcome to Country*, as it must be given by an appropriate person, such as a recognised Elder within the local community. The Griffith University Council of Elders should be consulted on this matter as part of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols outlined by the University. For more information seek advice from the Griffith University Council of Elders through the GUMurrii Student Support Unit at gumurrii-admin@griffith.edu.au

Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians

It may not always be possible to organise a *Welcome to Country* at such events and functions. If your function is not a major event requiring a *Welcome to Country*, then an 'Acknowledgement' is a mark of respect to the traditional custodians and can be given by anyone as a minimum requirement. Griffith's Acknowledgement is as follows:

Griffith University acknowledges the people who are the traditional custodians of the land, pays respect to the Elders, past and present, and extends that respect to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Further resources:

- ▶ Griffith University First Peoples griffith.edu.au/about-griffith/first-peoples
- ▶ Griffith Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country Policy [policies.griffith.edu.au/pdf/Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country Policy.pdf](http://policies.griffith.edu.au/pdf/Welcome%20to%20Country%20and%20Acknowledgement%20of%20Country%20Policy.pdf)



CELEBRATING DIVERSITY



Australia is a diverse community, and yet our national calendar is almost solely based on a Western Judeo-Christian calendar. The University predominantly arranges business operations around this tradition.

As a diverse community, we should make space for everyone to share the religious observances and cultural celebrations that are not traditionally recognised or celebrated with public holidays and/or provide space for individual observances.

For example, NAIDOC Week held in July, a celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and culture; Hindu and Sikh festivals such as Diwali; Jewish holidays such as Rosh Hashanah (New Year); the Muslim fasting period of Ramadan; Orthodox Christian holy days (e.g. Greek, Ethiopian, Eastern European) such as Christmas and Easter which follow the Julian or Orthodox calendar; and religious and cultural groups from Asia who follow the Lunar calendar (e.g. Buddhists, Sikhs, Hindu Lunar New Year). Some of celebrations are on fixed dates and some are movable depending on the relevant calendar.

Organising a range of events throughout the year which reflect the diversity of the Griffith community will give all participants the opportunity to share their cultural and religious observances and feel included. It's also a chance for all of us to learn more about other cultures.

Further resources:

- ▶ Griffith's Cultural Diversity Calendar
griffith.edu.au/student-services/faith-and-spirituality

This calendar details important days in more than half a dozen international religious groups, as well as our own Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, allowing staff the chance to show latitude in their lecture and assessment regimes, as well as affording all of us the chance to acknowledge special days for colleagues and friends

- ▶ Australian Government Calendar of Cultural and Religious
www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/settlement-and-multicultural-affairs/programs-policy/a-multicultural-australia/government-building-social-cohesion/calendar-of-cultural-and-religious-dates

DOES MY MARKETING SAY WHAT I THINK IT SAYS?

It sounds obvious, but you need to make sure your marketing doesn't exclude as many people as it attracts. For instance, not everyone would be attracted to an event focussed on alcohol, and BBQs are not everyone's preference.

Think creatively about your event and consider:

- ▶ who your audience is and who you want to attract?
- ▶ what type of event will maximise attendance?
- ▶ what modes of communication are going to have the most impact and to which audiences? For example, staff and students; different ages of audiences; and internal and external stakeholders may respond to different modes of communication e.g. email, website, posters, social media.
- ▶ is your marketing accessible? Ensure all online material (including marketing material, RSVP forms, or websites) is accessible and compliant with the *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines* (see www.australia.gov.au/accessibility).
- ▶ will translating your advertising/marketing materials into other languages help make your intended audience feel more welcome/likely to come?
- ▶ what signs, images and language will you use to emphasise Griffith's diverse community and acknowledge alternate histories, events and cultural elements?
- ▶ what dietary options do you need to consider? Advertise that non-alcoholic drinks will be available and that a range of diets will be catered for.
- ▶ how can people find out about your event? If they need more information who do they talk to? Provide a RSVP or reply slip, telephone, or e-mail contact to include an option for dietary and access requirements (e.g. sign language interpreters, captioning, mobility needs etc). Consent for the use of images is also recommended (see [Appendix 1](#) for sample RSVP).



TIMING IS EVERYTHING

Check your proposed date doesn't conflict with important religious and cultural celebrations or observances (e.g. Fridays can be problematic for some religions, and during Ramadan Muslim staff and students may be fasting). It's also important to fit with the academic calendar and existing Griffith University events or peak times for staff and students (e.g. Orientation week, exam week, university holidays).

Be mindful that part-time workers and people with carer responsibilities may be limited to events held at times when they are on campus or when child/elder care is most likely to be available and affordable. For example, breakfast events or evening events can create difficulty for carers.

Venues should be accessible by all, including people with disabilities. See below for further information on location, venues and accessibility.

Remember that staff and students from some cultural backgrounds do not wish to enter hotels/ pubs, so alcohol-free, on-campus venues may be seen as more appropriate or neutral.

Further resources:

- ▶ Griffith's Cultural Diversity Calendar
griffith.edu.au/student-services/faith-and-spirituality
- ▶ Griffith's Events Calendar
griffith.edu.au/calendars-events
- ▶ Australian Government Calendar of Cultural and Religions dates Australian Government's online Calendar of Cultural and Religious dates (see link on page 5)

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Make sure your venue is fully accessible. Before booking your venue stop and consider:

- ▶ does the venue provide sufficient access for mobility scooters/wheelchairs/strollers?
- ▶ are pathways to the venue accessible? Even, flat and wide surfaces are preferable. Venues which are in close proximity to disability parking areas; and where access includes both ramps or lifts, tactile signage and automatic doors are also recommended
- ▶ is the seating appropriate to those with physical disabilities?
- ▶ is there appropriate lighting inside and outside the venue?
- ▶ are there accessible restrooms/parents rooms? These would preferably be located on the same level as the function
- ▶ is it easy to enter the venue? Automatic doors are preferable. Wide entry ways where doors can be kept open to allow ease of entry as an alternative to automatic doors are recommended
- ▶ is signage clear leading to the venue? Large, legible print with good lighting along pathways is important to help visitors to the location
- ▶ is the layout of furniture suitable for people with mobility constraints to move around freely?
- ▶ what contingencies and risk management plans have you made regarding weather, emergencies and other unexpected issues?

For events where there are speakers or presentations, are the visual aids clear and/or do you need to provide special arrangements e.g. sign language interpreters, hearing loops, live captioning for people who are Deaf or hard of hearing? Also, check that the presenter/s are able to access any podiums or platforms and technology within the venue.

Providing information on transportation options to the relevant campus including links to public transport, drop-off points and parking is important. Sending campus maps and/or floor plans before the event to assist participants to find the venue including access to disability parking helps visitors to plan their journey smoothly.

- ▶ There are guidelines for how campus facilities can be used for events including serving alcohol, non-smoking policy and use of venues ([see policies.griffith.edu.au/facilities-and-assets/property-management/](https://policies.griffith.edu.au/facilities-and-assets/property-management/)).

Further resources:

- ▶ Accessible Events: a guide for organisers:
www.meetingevents.com.au/downloads/Accessible_Events_Guide.pdf
- ▶ Griffith Parking
griffith.edu.au/parking
- ▶ Griffith Campuses and Facilities
griffith.edu.au/about-griffith/campuses-and-facilities
- ▶ Griffith Room Bookings
griffith.edu.au/room-bookings
- ▶ University Campus Access and Use Policy
policies.griffith.edu.au/facilities-and-assets/property-management/



ENTERTAINMENT

If you're providing entertainment, it goes without saying that it needs to be appropriate to your guests, the location and allowable noise levels.

Where possible, entertainment should be family-friendly. However, if content is explicit or may be offensive to any members of audience e.g. nudity in plays or dance recitals, content of comedy or dramatic performances that may cause offence, graphic content not suitable for all ages, it is necessary to forewarn participants. For example:

WARNING: The following presentation contains coarse language and nudity, viewer discretion is recommended.

WARNING: Viewers are advised the following presentation contains graphic content of medical procedures.

WARNING: Viewers are advised the performance includes dramatized violence and coarse language.

If you're planning to show photos/videos that contains images of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the protocol is to include a warning. For example:

WARNING: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander viewers are warned that this presentation/these videos may contain images and voices of deceased people.

If an event includes strobe lighting or smoke machines then also warning audiences with health conditions is also recommended. Strobe lighting can trigger people with epilepsy and smoke machines or smoking can trigger people with lung conditions or asthma to react badly.

For participants with hearing or visual impairments, high noise levels or poor lighting may make it difficult to participate, and for those with assistance animals noise may affect the animal's ability to support a person with a disability within the venue. It is illegal to prevent a certified assistance animal from entering any venue (with some exceptions around health and safety). Seek advice from the Disabilities Service if you're unsure of how to plan for this.

Further resources:

- ▶ Australian Classifications for Publications, Television and Computer Games
www.classification.gov.au/Pages/Home.aspx
- ▶ Live Performance Australia: Content Ratings and Warnings
liveperformance.com.au/sites/liveperformance.com.au/private/files/resources/content_warning_advice_for_members.pdf
- ▶ Support animals for people with disabilities
www.adcet.edu.au/disability-practitioner/student-access/Support-Animals-on-campus/



FOOD

When it comes to food there are some simple rules you can follow to ensure everyone is fed and happy:

- ▶ if food is placed on tables for guests to help themselves, label all food with place cards (e.g. 'pork-free', 'beef-free', 'vegetarian', 'vegan', 'may contain alcohol', 'gluten free', 'dairy free', 'may contain nuts' etc.)
- ▶ if you intend to serve meat, consider your intended audience. There are a number of religions where meat must be prepared and served appropriately (e.g. Judaism, Islam, and Sikhism) and some additional limitations around fish, dairy and eggs. Make sure you provide options for people to indicate preferences and work with caterers to manage menus appropriately
- ▶ serving vegetarian and vegan food will cater for people from most religious and cultural backgrounds. This doesn't mean it can't be interesting – again work with catering staff to be creative with the menu
- ▶ food sensitivities can be serious or fatal so consider if you need to exclude known allergens such as nuts, shell fish or egg protein. If you provide these, ensure they are labelled accordingly
- ▶ provide lactose-free, gluten-free and diabetic-friendly options (these can often be the vegan options too)
- ▶ ensure separation of meat dishes from vegetarian and vegan foods, and clearly mark if meat dishes are halal or not. This includes separate plates, utensils and, where possible, placing food on a separate table
- ▶ ensure caterers are on hand to advise guests who have questions about the ingredients on offer
- ▶ serve food such as fresh fruit and vegetables, foods that are low in fat, gluten-free and dairy-free.



Most catering companies should be able to provide a varied and interesting menu for all participants, but make sure you give them sufficient notice to make appropriate arrangements. Research the options on-line and work closely with your caterer when planning the menu.

The University has a strict policy on the serving and consumption of alcohol on university grounds (see policies.griffith.edu.au/Facilities-and-Assets/Property-Management/). You need to know and comply with the requirements outlined in this policy before planning an event where alcohol will be served.

Again, for both religious and personal reasons people may choose not to attend functions where alcohol is served. Always include non-alcoholic drinks and water and advertise this.

For people with disabilities ensure there are options such as tables at appropriate heights, tables to rest plates or drinks on, room to negotiate tables and furniture and options to sit down.

Further resources:

- ▶ Vegan/Vegetarian catering
www.vegsoc.org
- ▶ Information on Halal food
griffith.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/593743/muslim-hosting-booklet.pdf
or www.halal-australia.com.au
- ▶ Information on Kosher food
www.cyber-kitchen.com/rfcj/kosherfaq.htm
or brisbanehebrewcongregation.com/about-us/kosher/
- ▶ Information on Sikh dietary guidelines
www.sikhs.org/meat.htm
- ▶ Policies on Facility Management policies
<https://intranet.secure.griffith.edu.au/university-administration/campus-life/plans,-policies,-and-frameworks>

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS AROUND ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE EVENTS

Contact information and an RSVP slip is vital. This allows guests to indicate their accessibility needs, dietary requirements, or to get more information in advance. It also helps organisers to plan in advance for supports such as sign language interpreters, captioning, print materials in different formats, dietary requirements, parking and planning venue layout.

Sign language interpreters for example are in high demand so should be booked early. Griffith University's Disabilities Service can assist in sourcing interpreters and live captioners and guiding you on arrangements for the day. The event organiser is responsible for the costs. Please contact the Disabilities Service at disability@griffith.edu.au

If you are showing videos that require captioning please ensure they have been captioned appropriately. Some useful resources about captioning can be found at www.mediaaccess.org.au/about/captioning-audio-description-and-transcription-suppliers

Make your documents for promoting the event and any materials at the event accessible webaim.org

You can also find further information on accessible materials from the Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training at www.adcet.edu.au



CONTACT US

We welcome feedback on this document to continuously improve the way events are delivered.

Student Diversity and Inclusion

Phone: (07) 3735 5740

Email: accessibility@griffith.edu.au

REFERENCES

- ▶ Dietary Dilemmas: A Handbook for Food Providers on Catering for Alternative Diets (UniSA)
- ▶ Celebrating Diversity: Diversity and inclusiveness at events: good practice guidelines (QUT)



APPENDIX 1: SAMPLE RSVP

Survey Monkey or Google Forms are accessible with Survey Monkey being more accessible for screen-reading software.

First Name _____ Last Name _____

Student/Staff number (if applicable) _____ Email _____

- Yes I will be attending
- No I cannot attend

Dietary Requirements (tick all that apply)

- Vegetarian
- Vegan
- Halal
- Kosher
- Gluten free
- Dairy free
- Diabetic
- Other _____

Access Requirements (tick all that apply)

- Auslan interpreters
- Captioning
- Wheelchair access
- Assistance Animal
- Other _____

Photography

Photographs and video recordings at this event may be used by Griffith University or event partners for promotional purposes and may appear on websites or in publications. Your image may appear in video recordings or group photographs. Please indicate your consent below.

- I am happy for my image to be used
- I would prefer that my image not be used

APPENDIX 2: CHECKLIST

Use this checklist to assist you to manage all elements of your event or create your own.

Checklist

Planning notes

Event name

Day/s and Date/s

Time/s

Venue/s

Campus/es

Purpose

Audience

RSVP created with clear details on due date, contacts, dietary and access requirements (see Appendix 1)

Parking and Map information provided

Photography release information provided

Welcome to Country or Acknowledgement to Traditional Custodians arranged? (see p. 3)

Marketing (see p. 5)

multiple avenues for promotion

inclusive language

Checklist

Planning notes

Venue (see p. 6)

accessibility/layout

signage/lighting

emergency evacuation plan

weather contingency

entertainment (see p. 7)

Food (see p. 8)

caterers booked

all dietary needs catered for

clear signage for meals

Accessibility

all elements meet accessibility guidelines

sign language interpreters

captioning for videos

accessible facilities e.g. toilets, parent rooms, parking

Other



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For more information, visit
griffith.edu.au/student-services/diversity-and-inclusion