

Inclusive Events Guide: Organisers, Speakers and Panel Chairs

The Centre for Science and Security Studies and the Department of War Studies at King's College London are committed to hosting events that advance knowledge and understanding. We believe that an essential part of this is holding events that include diverse voices and that are inclusive, that is, events in which everyone is treated equally and where everyone has the same opportunity to engage substantively, so that the best ideas flourish regardless of where they come from.

To this end, we ask **event organisers, speakers and panel chairs** to consider the following guidelines related to the aims of the event, and who they need to reach in order to achieve these aims.

Before the event:

- ***Speaker and participant selection:*** Have you recruited a diverse range of participants that are best suited to address the event topics? Including people with a diverse range of views and experiences is likely to produce innovation.
 - DO select participants that can add valuable perspectives to the debate.
 - DO support the development of junior colleagues by including them when they have expertise to contribute.
 - DO make sure they have the necessary materials and context so they can prepare appropriately before the event.
 - DON'T, however, put a junior female that lacks necessary expertise on a panel alongside senior male experts only to tick the diversity box. Doing so may only reinforce perceptions that women are less capable than men.
- ***Personal pronouns / identifiers:*** Have you checked how each participant prefers to be addressed?
 - DO: ask participants for their preferred pronouns and honorifics.
- ***Advertising:*** Are you advertising to all potential audiences, in ways that are accessible to all?
- ***Accessibility:*** Ensure that the event is fully accessible, including to those with disabilities. [See the [King's EDI Guidance and Resources page](#)].
 - DO include details on accessibility in the event details, e.g. "there is a ramp at the entrance" or "there will be microphones for speakers and for questions." [See example of [King's Anatomy museum](#) from www.accessible.co.uk].
 - DO include in advertising a contact email for questions about accessibility.
- ***Timing:*** If possible, hold the event within core working hours. This would allow more people with family or other responsibilities to participate in the event. DON'T hold events on religious holidays. [See www.timeanddate.com for a list].
- ***Catering:*** If you are providing refreshments, ensure they meet the dietary requirements of attendees and participants, and are labelled with potential allergens

During the event:

Introductions: Introduce all speakers with a note of their academic/service/experiential credentials and relevant titles. This is important as people have a habit of introducing representatives of some groups (usually women, junior colleagues, etc) more informally, which undermines their professional credibility.

- DO: "We are pleased that Dr Roberts and Professor Smith are joining us for today's panel" or "We're glad Jane and John are joining us today."
- DON'T: "We are pleased that Jane and Professor John Smith are joining us for today's panel."

Question and answer sessions: Treat all those asking questions with the same degree of formality and respect.

- Make sure a diverse group is called on to ask questions. There is often limited time during the Q&A and the chair needs to prioritise who to call on. Inevitably, not all will be given a chance to speak.
 - DO: call on a diverse range of people to ask questions where possible.
 - DON'T: call on only those you already know or the most senior participants.

- Give all panellists the same amount of time to respond to questions. When questions are asked of the whole panel, rotate who responds first.
 - DO: set expectations clearly: “Would each panellist please take one minute to respond to the question?”
 - DON’T: allocate time during Q&A based on speakers’ seniority; doing so tends to give speakers from minorities or more junior experts less time, or leave them completely neglected.
- Be aware that implicit bias can colour your reaction to questions (e.g. questions by individuals from some groups receive approbation while questions asked by individuals from other groups are unintentionally side-lined or downplayed).
 - DO: Try to engage substantively with all questions asked.
 - DON’T: Dismiss others’ questions or perspectives off the cuff.

In addition, we ask that everyone at any event treat everyone as an equal professional colleague. To that end, we ask that you:

- Avoid comments about people’s physical appearance, even if intended as a compliment.
- Avoid making comments or jokes that may be appropriate for a social gathering but would be inappropriate for a professional one. This includes comments and jokes about personal beliefs or with sexual content.
- Avoid generalising statements about men versus women or other groups (for example, statements that involve stereotypically feminised roles or that make characterisations about a particular religion or ethnic group). These can make the space feel exclusionary and can undermine the professional status of the group referenced. Additionally, statements of this kind are likely to be empirically incorrect.
- Address or call out inappropriate comments and behaviour when they occur if you are comfortable doing so and can do so safely. If you witness or are the recipient of an inappropriate comment or an incident of bullying or harassment, you may wish to address the issue on the spot. Keep in mind that the person who made the comment may be unaware that the comment is hurtful or inappropriate and may have the best of intentions. Do not immediately assume that the offender meant harm or maliciousness.
 - Start with humour or a respectful but firm response that provides the speaker with a learning opportunity and face-saving way out of what will likely be an embarrassing situation for them.
 - If you do not wish to address the issue on the spot, you may also report it to one of the event organisers or to the Diversity and Inclusion leads in the Department of War Studies (diversity-warstudies@kcl.ac.uk).
- If you are challenged about a comment or behaviour, take a deep breath. We all fall short sometimes even when we have the best intentions.
 - Try to avoid ‘if’ apologies (i.e. “I’m sorry ‘if’ you were offended”).
 - Instead, acknowledge your actions generated a negative reaction even if this was not intended (e.g. “I did not realise my comment was inappropriate. I am sorry it made you feel uncomfortable.”) Listen to the feedback being given and try to engage with it constructively (e.g. “Thank you for bringing this up with me. I will be conscious of that in future.”)

If you have any comments or suggestions, please contact:
diversity-warstudies@kcl.ac.uk.