Event organisation; tips on how to provide accessibility for special needs persons, including persons with disabilities

SGH Biuro ds. Dostępności i Wsparcia Osób z Niepełnosprawnościami

Contents

Introduction

Ensuring events are accessible to the possibly widest range of people, including those with special needs, also due to disabilities, is a complex matter demanding thorough consideration at the planning and organization stage.

Identifying ready-to-implement and universal solutions suitable for every situation is challenging due to varying needs and the necessity to finance certain adaptations. Another issue is discerning between legally required conditions and so-called "good practices", which depend on factors like the event's nature. Moreover, factors such as organizational form, venue, planned information dissemination, promotional activities, timing, and notably participant group are crucial.

An accessible event should facilitate the equal participation of people with special needs, including disabilities, alongside other attendees. This entails not only overcoming potential accessibility obstacles (for example, by organising events in transport-accessible venues with adequate parking), but also – primarily – organising events in a universal manner, devoid of barriers for individuals with special needs, including those with disabilities. An accessible event considers the special needs of participants, particularly in architectural, digital, and info-communication accessibility realms. We prioritize event accessibility right from the planning phase, disseminating information beforehand, ensuring accessibility during the event, and continuing to do so afterwards (for instance, by making accessible recordings or conference materials publicly available).

With respect to various activities of the University, including different organizations, a plethora of events take place, such as open lectures, training courses, workshops, conferences, seminars, fairs, meetings, and concerts. It is important to acknowledge that among the participants, there might be individuals with special needs who might not always disclose their requirements, even though they may require assistance. As such, it is better to design events in a universally accessible manner from the outset, ensuring that disability does not hinder the participation of the academic community in these events.

As a public institution, we are bound by the provisions of the **Act on Ensuring Accessibility for Persons with Special Needs of 19 July 2019** (Journal of Laws of 2020, item 1062, as amended). – referred to as **UZD.** In the context of event organization, particular stress should be laid on the following legal provisions. Article 4 of the UZD implies an obligation to consider accessibility in publicly funded tasks and to accommodate special needs in ongoing and planned activities. Article 6 of the UZD sets forth the basic requirements we must adhere to at SGH and have the contractors we entrust with tasks comply with them likewise.

Furthermore, under Article 100 of the Public Procurement Law (**PZP**) of 11 September 2019 (Journal of Laws 2019, item 2019), we are obligated to incorporate requirements concerning accessibility and design for all users into the contract descriptions. However, this obligation applies solely to contracts exceeding PLN 130,000 in value. With this criterion met, you are welcome to contact the Office of Accessibility and Support for People with Disabilities to review planned provisions ensuring accessibility. In cases where the PZP is applicable (for contracts in excess of PLN 130,000 in value), we are required to guarantee accessibility in each case, beyond the minimum accessibility standards specified in Article 6 of the UZD, especially when a relevant analysis shows potential use by persons with special needs, including disabilities.

Additionally, the UZD extends its provisions to websites and their published content, as per the **Act on Digital Accessibility of Public Entity Websites and Mobile Applications of 4 April 2019** (Journal of Laws, item 848, as amended). – referred to as **UDC.** In the part concerning the obligation to ensure various communication forms with the public entity, UZD invokes the **Act on Sign Language and Other Means of Communication of 19 August 2011** (i.e. Journal of Laws of 2017, item 1824, as amended).

As per the aforementioned legislation, the obligation to consider accessibility is also stated in the current Rules for Contract Award at SGH, as well as in the Accessibility Strategy and the Order on Ensuring Accessibility for Persons with Special Needs at SGH.

- [Rector's Order no. 77 of 19 October 2021, amending Rector's Order no. 116 of 30 December 2020 on the Implementation of Rules for Contract Award at the SGH Warsaw School of Economics](#)
- [Appendix to Rector's Order no. 3 of 17 January 2023: Accessibility Strategy of the SGH Warsaw School of Economics](#)
- [Rector's Order no. 44 on the Rules for Ensuring Accessibility to Persons with Special Needs at SGH Warsaw School of Economics](#)

This document, prepared by the **Office of Accessibility and Support for People with Disabilities** (referred to as **BON**), aims to facilitate the equitable and universal planning of events, considering the diverse needs of numerous participants. However, the examples at hand serve as inspiration rather than definitive solutions, encouraging a thorough needs analysis before planning, considering, and implementing accessibility measures.

Fostering openness and preparedness to ensure accessibility is of pivotal importance. It is our collective responsibility intertwined with our numerous daily professional activities. The primary objective of this document is to prompt and foster further contemplation on factors to consider when organizing events. Many of the suggestions presented can be universally applied, proving beneficial, for instance, in the planning of accessible educational activities.

We advocate for consulting and contacting us prior to the scheduled event; we will be happy to offer personalized advice and recommend appropriate adaptations based on the specific circumstances.

Justyna Kapturkiewicz

Head of the Office of Accessibility and Support for People with Disabilities

1. Prior to organising an accessible event

Before organising an event, it is important to first analyse the circumstances that will affect how accessibility will be ensured. In this context, it is particularly important to consider the **group of potential participants** in terms of the possible participation of people with special needs, the **venue** of the event and **how it is organised.** Only after identifying these aspects, can we plan how to ensure accessibility.

Answers to the following questions will help:

Who will participate in the event?

- Will the event be attended only by the SGH community or also by people from outside the University?

  The wider the range of participants, the more likely it is that people with special needs will also be among them. In the case of organising, for example, a conference where we invite people from many other academic centres, we have to assume that some participants may need additional support in order to fully participate in the event.

- Is the event open or is it dedicated to a specific group?

  In the case of events tailored for specific groups, such as a graduation ceremony for postgraduate students, it is relatively easy to tell whether participants with special needs will be present. For instance, if we are aware that there will not be any participants with special needs in the group, there is no need to arrange additional accessibility measures like sign language interpretation. However, when events are open to a broader audience, whether people with special needs will attend becomes less predictable. Not all disabilities are visible, and not everyone may choose to disclose them (such as hard-of-hearing persons with in-ear hearing aids).

- Do we know if people with special needs, including those with disabilities, will be attending the event?

  If so, let us ensure the event is organized in a way facilitating their participation on an equal footing with others, as far as possible. The approach to ensuring accessibility may

vary based on specific needs. For instance, if one of the invited panelists at a seminar uses a wheelchair, it is crucial to ensure the venue provides appropriate ramp access and access to a lectern at a suitable height so that our guest speaker can address the audience from the same spot as the others.

- Are we considering pre-registration through a registration form?

The registration form serves as a valuable tool for collecting information regarding participants' special needs. Thus, it is prudent to incorporate questions about expected attendees' special requirements, even if registration is not mandatory for the event. Within the registration form, we should outline examples of available support, for individuals with special needs to know what assistance they can expect.

In turn, individuals requiring specific solutions/support are often best suited to identify the best forms of support for them. For instance, not all individuals with hearing impairments need a Polish Sign Language (PJM) interpreter. In situations where providing accessibility may pose challenges beyond the organizer's control, it is advisable to inform event attendees accordingly.

Is the event on site, on-line, or in a hybrid format?

Accessibility measures will vary based on the event format. For instance, on-line events are not subject to architectural accessibility requirements like on-site events. MS Teams we use at SGH comes with numerous built-in free features, such as live captioning or text transcription, which can aid in the creation of mandatory captions for recording publication.

- Regarding on-site events:

  o will they occur on SGH premises, or is it necessary to secure an external venue?

When outsourcing a non-SGH venue, we have to obligate the contractor to adhere to at least the minimum accessibility requirements as set out in Article 6 of the UZD. Further details will be provided later on in this document.

  o will the event be held indoors or outdoors?

For outdoor events, let us take into account lavatories adapted for persons with disabilities and, depending on the event's nature, a venue with suitable access and stage visibility for individuals of shorter stature or those in wheelchairs. It is paramount to ensure that persons with, for instance, impaired mobility can reach the location without difficulty. Moreover, it is crucial to ensure that evacuation procedures account for individuals with special needs.

2. Event venue

Providing accessibility for people with special needs, including those with disabilities, is paramount when selecting the venue for an event. This becomes especially crucial for events targeting broader audience and when we are aware, during the application stage, that participants with motor or sensory disabilities will be attending.

On the premises of SGH

When organizing events on SGH premises, we have the advantage of choosing from accessible rooms available on our campus. Currently, the buildings best equipped to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities are buildings G and C. Additionally, building M, DS (Student Dormitory) Sabinki, and the building in Abramowskiego Street also facilitate independent movement for individuals with mobility impairments.

SGH continues to invest in further enhancements to ensure architectural accessibility across its buildings. The upcoming projects will contribute significantly to improving accessibility and comfort for people with special needs.

For comprehensive information regarding architectural accessibility, including descriptions of implemented solutions and potential hindrances, please refer to the SGH website on [accessibility for persons with special needs](#).

Apart from ensuring the overall architectural accessibility of the building, special attention should be given to the designated assembly hall, particularly in terms of its organization and equipment, for instance, accessibility to the podium/lectern, such as the presence of stairs or ramps for visitors with disabilities, proximity to lifts, and the

availability of lavatories specifically designed for individuals with disabilities. Additionally, it is important to ascertain whether a permanent induction loop is installed in the auditorium. Several halls in the building C are equipped with induction loops, including 1A – lecture hall, 1B – lecture hall, 2E – seminar room, 3A – lecture hall, 4B – lecture hall, 5A – lecture hall, and 5D – computer room. If the loops are not provided, there may be a need to borrow an FM assistive listening system, which is available from BON.

Outside SGH

Architectural accessibility is an obligatory criterion when choosing a venue for an event to be organised outside SGH, e.g. when we are booking a room in a conference facility/hotel. When looking for a venue meeting the criterion of architectural accessibility, we should require, and check beforehand if:

- the facility is easily accessible by public transport (close proximity to the bus stop) and if there are parking spaces near the entrance to the building;
- the entrance to the building is accessible from the ground level around the building or there is a ramp to overcome a possible obstacle by yourself;
- there are no hard-to-cross thresholds or heavy, difficult-to-open doors;
- if the venue is on a higher floor, we make sure that, apart from stairs, the building has a lift adapted to the needs of people with disabilities (e.g. a person in a wheelchair can enter easily, the control panel is within their reach);
- in the corridors, there are no barriers that are difficult to overcome, e.g. protruding display cabinets, unnecessary furniture that could be an additional obstacle for wheelchair users or visually impaired persons;
- there is a lavatory adapted to the needs of persons with disabilities in the building, preferably on the same floor as the event;
- there is clear information in the building about the layout of the room – the information is presented at least visually (e.g. clear boards) and by touch or voice (e.g. infomat, tiflomap; voice information can also be provided by a person);
- the room is equipped with an induction loop to assist the hearing of people using hearing aids and sound processors (if such a device is not permanently fitted, portable devices such as an FM system may be used);

- a person with an assistance dog may enter the building;
- the building has the capacity to evacuate or rescue persons with special needs, i.e. special procedures, equipment e.g. evacuation chairs; safe waiting areas, sound and light alarm systems, etc., have been allowed for in case of emergency,
- if we know that people with special needs will be attending the event, let us inform those responsible for the evacuation. Let us check that the building has specialist equipment e.g. evacuation chairs.
- If the event includes speakers with disabilities, it is essential to inquire about their specific needs beforehand (for instance, an assistant of a person with disabilities, a microphone on a stand, an accessible podium or opting for no rostrum, or space for an assistance dog).

Note

When organizing events outside SGH, such as booking a hall, hotel, or restaurant, selecting an architecturally accessible venue is mandatory. This means that among the requirements imposed on potential venues, accessibility must be included, meeting at least the standards specified in Article 6 of the UZD. In cases involving public procurement, the chosen venue must exceed these accessibility standards as far as necessary due to potential participation of individuals with special needs, including disabilities. **This requirement must be explicitly stipulated in the contract.**

If multiple venue options are available, let us prioritize the one with universal design, i.e., one that meets or comes closest to meeting accessibility requirements through the application of so-called reasonable accommodations, such as the installation of ramps enabling access for wheelchair-ridden persons.

3. Promotional and information materials

Posters, invitations, agenda

Materials promoting the event, such as posters, flyers, invitations, the agenda and the registration form should be prepared in both print/paper and electronic formats, in line with digital accessibility.

[Creating MS Word documents consistent with the rules of digital accessibility at SGH Warsaw School of Economics](#)

[Accessibility standards for electronic documents – Accessibility Plus](#)

Let us adhere to the principle that information should always be accessible through different sensory channels, including sight and hearing. For example, blind individuals will not be able to read on their own the content of a poster displayed on a board. However, by publishing the same poster on a website or social media platform with the support of assistive software, the content becomes accessible for them to read, provided it is prepared in a digitally accessible format. **Let us require contractors to adhere to these.**

Our recommendation is to prepare promotional and information material in a universal format right from the start: e.g. sans-serif font (Open Sans, Tahoma, Verdana) size 12 pts., text alignment to the left instead of justification, graphics with alternative descriptions and, in the case of captions applied to an image, the same text must be included in the alternative description or in a separate, published text file. This costs nothing and facilitates accessibility.

In the case of traditional (printed) materials, it may be that some participants will individually request enlarged print, an increase or change in contrast, or a simplification of the graphic form, e.g. text alone without decorative graphics – it is advisable to anticipate and be able to handle this.

SGH on-line portals

Under UDC, it is mandatory for content published in on-line portals to be digitally accessible so that everyone has the same opportunity to read it, without special adaptation. This applies to all forms, such as text, presentations, forms, photos, graphics, videos and any attachments. **Any person responsible for introducing or posting content on the website is also responsible for ensuring its accessibility.**

Specific internal rules govern the publication of material on SGH websites.

[Creating MS Word documents consistent with the rules of digital accessibility at SGH Warsaw School of Economics](#)

When providing information about the event, it is good practise to include a description, such as on the website, detailing how the event will be accessible to individuals with disabilities (for example, the conference will be held in a building adapted for people with mobility impairments, etc.) and to include a situational plan of the event premises so that individuals with special needs, such as those on the autism spectrum, can familiarize themselves with the layout in advance. This practice is particularly crucial for public events, such as an open day, where attendees with special needs are almost surely to be expected. Incorporating such information does not necessarily entail additional costs yet it significantly enhances accessibility.

Providing a comprehensive description of the event's organization in terms of accessibility allows all interested parties to familiarize themselves with the information beforehand. Moreover, individuals with special needs can better anticipate what to expect and see if they require additional support. It is paramount to provide descriptions of the venue, surrounding area, access options, parking arrangements, registration process, availability and location of lavatories, location of lifts (or information of their absence), provision of induction loops or options to borrow portable loop systems and FM sets from BON SGH, presence of on-site event assistants, potential availability of PJM interpreters, and any other relevant amenities and forms of support we are planning.

Prior analysis of the specific needs of various groups with special needs, including with disabilities (e.g., parents with small children, or elderly attendees), is highly recommended. This allows for the inclusion of organisational information that they will find valuable.

Additionally, it is worthwhile disclosing any aspects of the event that may impact attendees' health adversely, such as the expected volume levels or lighting conditions (e.g., strobe lighting during concerts). If full accessibility cannot be guaranteed (barriers removed), this should be communicated.

An effective approach to accessible communication is the pictograms, which can assist, for instance, individuals on the autism spectrum as well as non-Polish speakers, such as foreign students.

Social media

When sharing event details on social media, it is crucial to adhere to digital accessibility guidelines, mirroring those applied to website content. The following instructions to ensure accessibility should be taken into account:

- [Adding alternative texts to photos on Facebook](#)
- [Adding alternative texts to photos on Instagram](#)
- [Adding alternative texts to photos on Twitter](#)

Note

When mandating a website development service, such as for a conference or project, **ensuring digital accessibility is paramount**. That is to say, compliance with the Act on Digital Accessibility of Websites and Mobile Applications of Public Entities of 4 April 2019 is mandatory.

It is necessary therefore to stipulate compliance with the **"Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 for Websites and Mobile Applications Accessible to Persons with Disabilities"** (WCAG 2.1) in the contract description and subsequent agreement. This entails meeting the requirements outlined in the table which is provided in the Act's Annex and which corresponds to the WCAG 2.1 guidelines at level AA, except for the provision of live captions. Additionally, notwithstanding the Act on Digital Accessibility of Public Entity Websites and Mobile Applications, together with its Annex, it is advisable to detail any specific accessibility rules of our utmost concern, as contractors may not be familiar with accessibility standards. Clear instructions will facilitate compliance with WCAG 2.1 guidelines.

Other information:

- [Act on Digital Accessibility of Public Entity Websites and Mobile Applications of 4 April 2019](#)
- [WCAG 2.1 – an official translation of the full version – practical recommendations on enhancing the accessibility of website content](#)

- [WCAG 2.1 – a summary](#)
- [Discussion on digital accessibility requirements for public entities](#)
- [How to find basic errors in website digital accessibility?](#)

Registration form

For events requiring compulsory registration, it is prudent to provide a question (in the registration form) addressing participants' special needs, including those concerning evacuation, and to facilitate selection of their preferred contact method, such as email, SMS, or telephone. Under Article 6 of the UZD, the section pertaining to information and communication accessibility, we are required to offer various alternative contact options.

An example question could be:

"What additional needs do you have regarding your participation in the event? Please specify the assistance you require and your preferred method of contact:
- SMS
- e-mail,
- telephone."

We can also identify specific arrangements, ensuring beforehand that adequate funds are allocated in the conference cost estimate, to accommodate participant requests.

An extended version of the question might read: "Please specify the type of support you require:

- a PJM interpreter,
- an interpreter of SJM (a manually coded version of Polish),
- induction loop/FM system,
- enlarged text in printed material, e.g. conference programme,
- support of an assistant: blind person, deaf-blind person, person with physical disabilities,
- special dietary requirements,
- other ...."

Privacy notice

A privacy notice regarding the processing of personal data must accompany any form used for collecting such data – irrespective of the type of data being collected. The inclusion of this notice serves the purpose of informing individuals who intend to share their personal data about its intended use, enabling them to complete the form with full awareness. This notice should encompass details outlined in GDPR provisions, including information regarding the data controller (SGH Warsaw School of Economics), the purpose and legal basis for the processing of personal data (inclusive of so-called sensitive data, such as health-related information, which may involve the need for assistance from a blind persons' assistant), and the rights afforded to individuals registering for events organized by us. Guidance on how to prepare the privacy notice can be accessed on the personal data protection page at SGH.

[Personal Data Protection](#)

In the case of doubt, the personal data protection coordinator (KODO) at SGH: kodo@sgh.waw.pl, should be contacted.

Efforts also must be made to ensure that the registration form itself follows digital accessibility rules. The form may be drafted in Microsoft Forms, an application available in the SGH Cloud and recommended for data protection purposes[1].

Instructions: [Accessibility support in Microsoft Forms](#)

If a registration form is not envisaged, it is good practise to provide information on the site detailing how, to whom, and by when special needs can be reported, along with a suggested (open) catalogue of available options.

4. Communication with event participants

Communication with event participants should be accessible through various channels, such as email, telephone, SMS, audiovisual communication via instant

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[1]However, if other applications are considered for form creation and personal data collection, prior consultation with KODO is necessary.

messaging, fax, and social media. Individuals with special needs may opt for a contact method that suits them best; for example, a deaf person may prefer email, while a blind person may prefer telephone communication.

Providing diverse communication options is mandated by Article 6(3)(a) of the UZD. Additionally, upon request, communication should be provided in the form as specified in the request, such as the Polish Sign Language (PJM).

SGH offers permanent and unlimited access to an on-line PJM interpreter service, available Monday to Friday between 8.00 AM and 4.00 PM.

On-line PJM interpreter at SGH

5. Reception desk

For on-site events, on-site registration is typically required. It is essential to ensure that the registration area is accessible to all attendees to the same extent. This can be achieved by preparing the stand appropriately. The reception desk should ideally be partially lowered to accommodate individuals of shorter height or those using wheelchairs, allowing them to register for the event and access necessary information easily. Additionally, providing a bookmark or frame can aid visually impaired individuals in signing the attendance list, while a mobile induction loop[2] can support individuals with hearing impairments (both the frame and the loop can be borrowed from BON). Furthermore, specially trained assistants can be present to aid individuals with special needs, for instance, assisting them in reaching the hall or taking the seat.

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[2] The provision of an induction loop aligns with the obligations of architectural accessibility set forth in Article 6(3)(b) of UZD. If a fixed loop is not permanently installed, a mobile loop can serve as an alternative solution.

6. Catering

Events very often come with the catering service. In this case, ensuring accessibility is not mandated by law but is considered good practice.[3] However, in this context (in particular, if we know catering will be provided to a person with disabilities), it is worthwhile to consider factors such as service delivery, location, and the types of dishes served. For instance, it is important to assess whether a person with limited manual dexterity can easily consume dishes with only one hand. Adhering to good practice involves serving finger foods that can be eaten without cutlery, and a variety of dietary options, including dairy-free and gluten-free choices. Lightweight jugs for drinks are preferable, as they can be handled more easily by individuals with limited manual dexterity. Additionally, an induction loop[4] can be provided at the waiter's station (mobile loops can be borrowed from BON).

Catering service on SGH premises

When arranging catering services at SGH, we must adhere to the contractual provisions with WARS, which include specific accessibility requirements, and notably:

- The contractor must arrange tables in a manner that does not obstruct free movement between the buffet area and the hall/auditorium where the event is held. The contractor must be informed of the number of tables and wheelchair spaces required no later than 5 days prior to the event.
- A manoeuvring space of at least 1.5 by 1.5 meters between tables should be provided by the contractor, particularly for wheelchair users and the visually impaired, if feasible at the venue and always upon request in the service order by the contracting party.

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[3] With the exception of the requirement for information and communication accessibility in the case of catering with waiter service (whenever consumers have a need to inquire, for example, about the composition of a dish – this may include people with hearing impairments).

[4] The provision of an induction loop aligns with the obligations of architectural accessibility set forth in Article 6(3)(b) of UZD. If a fixed loop is not permanently installed, a mobile loop can serve as an alternative solution.

- The contractor must allocate at least 5% of tables (not less than 1) with chairs for seated dining, including provisions for wheelchair users.
- In the case of individuals with disabilities or special needs, waiters will assist with taking the seat, food selection, and table service.
- The contracting party retains the right to request, through the service order, the application of enlarged print or adjusted contrast labels/menus in case visually impaired participants are registered for the event.
- Additionally, the contracting party reserves the option to stipulate in the service order the accommodation of special dietary requirements, along with the number of participants with such requirements (not exceeding 10% of attendees), such as lactose-free milk or gluten-free dishes. Products and dishes meeting special dietary needs will be clearly delineated,
- and labels describing dishes and beverages will be legible and prepared using sans-serif font.

Catering service outside SGH premises

When engaging an external provider for an event organised outside SGH (e.g., a conference), such as a hotel or restaurant, for services outside the scope of a framework agreement in place at SGH, it is advisable, as a matter of good practice, to consider the special dietary requirements of event participants (e.g., vegetarian, gluten-free diets). When planning such services, provisions should be included in the contract to accommodate these needs. In drafting the contract description and relevant clauses, it can be beneficial to reference provisions from the framework agreement with WARS mentioned above.

If we know that the event will be attended by individuals with special needs, such as wheelchair users, we should ensure that they can use the services on equal terms with other participants. To facilitate this, the contract should specify that the contractor is responsible for providing tables to accommodate individuals in wheelchairs and that these tables should be arranged to allow for unrestricted movement between them.

Note

The determination of accessibility requirements should be grounded in actual needs reported by participants, particularly in the case of pre-registration events.[5]

7. Multimedia presentation

Multimedia presentations and all other conference materials must be consistent with the rules of digital accessibility (it is obligatory for those intended for publication on the website). A PowerPoint presentation can be so adjusted at the preparation phase as to ensure digital accessibility. Similar recommendations as for accessible Word documents will apply here. You are welcome to consult the internal manual prepared by SGH for guidance (link available on page 13).

To enhance the clarity and readability of the presentation, the following tips can be taken into consideration:

- a clear title for each slide;
- limited amount of text on each slide (approximately 4–6 lines);
- a large and clear sans-serif font, without additional embellishments, with a minimum size of 18-20 pts. The Open Sans font family is recommended for promotional materials, in line with the SGH Visual Identity Guidelines;
  SGH Visual Identity Guidelines
- high contrast between text and background, concise slogan text, short sentence equivalents recommended;
- high quality graphics and photos, with a mandatory alternative caption.
  You are welcome to use SGH **presentation templates**, available for download from
SGH Visual Identity.
Examples of external instructions:

- Creating accessible multimedia presentations in PowerPoint

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[5] This does not concern the mandatory requirements under Article 6 of the UZD, which must always be adhered to.

- [PowerPoint with accessibility for persons with disabilities](#)
- [Creating accessible digital office documents – Microsoft PowerPoint 2016](#)

8. Publication of the video and photographs of the event

Video

Captions

Videos published after the event, e.g. conference reports, must include captions presenting the audio content of the material in text format (both all statements and a contextual description of the sounds, if relevant to the broadcast). Captions are not mandatory solely for live broadcasts, but for larger and high-profile events, it is advisable to provide them.

Live captions

For on-line conferences, the built-in MS Teams feature can be used to provide captions. Each participant independently activates this feature in case they wish to use captions. In this case, the captions are only visible to the participant who has enabled the feature on their device: "live captions."

To use this feature, in the menu (top left corner of the screen) click: "more" and select the option: "turn on live captions". The language option is located in the bottom right corner of the screen. When recording a conference, "live captions" will not be recorded by MS Teams.

Text transcription

In order to obtain a text file of the recording after the meeting, the meeting owner can enable transcription of the recording. To do this, click "more" on the menu, located in the upper left corner, and select the option: "start transcription". The language option is located in the top right corner of the screen. Each participant, if they wish to follow the transcript during the meeting, selects: "view the transcript".

After the meeting, a downloadable text file in MS Word form will appear in the chat room. The file has time markers and indicates the speakers.

Audio description

Pursuant to UDC, videos should include audio description in addition to captions, with the option for viewers to turn it off. Audio description is an extra audio track that complements the video, where the narrator provides description of elements, actions, or events visible in the video.

It is necessary when the standard audio track does not convey all visible and relevant information.

For conference recordings that feature a speaker's address from behind a lectern, audio description is usually unnecessary. However, if graphics or charts are presented during the conference, additional content may be required in the form of audio description.

Photos

Images and graphics published on SGH sites must necessarily include alternative captions, i.e., a textual description of the object. The alternative text is a short message, conveying the most important content and taking into account the context of the situation. If there is text in the image, we also add it in the description.

Example of alternative text: "Walking by the Baltic Sea. Dad and his little daughter walking barefoot on the beach.[6]

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[6] https://imediasolutions.pl/jak-napisac-dobry-tekst-alternatywny-do-zdjecia-alt/

Examples of external instructions:

- [How to prepare and add alternative text](#)
- [Captioning rules for the deaf](#)
- [Available multimedia](#)

9. Examples of additional event accessibility formats

Sign language interpreter service

As per current legislation, this service is not mandatory at events like conferences unless specifically requested by an attendee. Additionally, it is considered good practice, especially for large or high-profile events, to offer sign language interpretation. It is advisable to allow everyone to participate on an equal basis, regardless of their disability.

Simultaneous interpretation as "live captioning"

As per the current legislation, live captioning is not mandatory for live events. It is, however, good practice to be considered, as in the case of a sign language interpreter, that is when organising particularly large and widely accessible major events or when such a request is made at registration by participants.

Such a service can be outsourced; however, it is worth noting the availability of free applications for mobile devices (e.g. "Live Transcription"), which automatically generate captions. Unfortunately, such a text may contain numerous errors due to the device's misreading of the speech. However, it is a format that does not generate additional costs and can be used when the need suddenly arises, with no prior preparation.

Note

Captions and audio description must definitely be incorporated into multimedia published after the event, e.g. videos of conferences that have already taken place.

Both the service of a sign language interpreter and professional live captioning are associated with rather high costs. It is prudent to provide for them at the event costing stage.

Assistant for a person with special needs, including with disabilities

An assistant for individuals with special needs, including disabilities, will offer personalized support upon request from an event participant. The types of assistance provided may vary depending on the person's requirements. In this respect, it is recommended to inquire about the extent of assistance needed upon request. This could include assistance with tasks like opening heavy doors or locating a seat, as well as helping with heavy or bulky luggage or assisting with electronic devices. In some cases, specialized knowledge and preparation may be necessary to provide support, such as working with individuals on the autism spectrum; for further assistance, please contact the ASD student assistant leader at SGH: asystentasd@sgh.waw.pl).

We could also anticipate scenarios where individuals with disabilities wish to attend events with their personal assistants, who are best equipped to provide necessary support. In such cases, arrangements must be made for the assistant to accompany them to the event.

Event Assistants

Event assistants display strong social skills essential for interacting with persons with special needs, including with disabilities. They are also knowledgeable about the various forms of support available during the event. These assistants can include students or employees, possibly engaged through employee volunteering initiatives. Before assuming their roles, they should undergo training, for example, at the BON.

10. EU-funded contracts

When procuring services (such as conferences, information materials, websites, or recording broadcast) funded by the EU, it is crucial to highlight accessibility and universal design. It is important to ensure accessibility by defining relevant requirements at the procurement stage – both in the contract description and in the contract itself.

EU accessibility standards serve as guidelines in creating these contract descriptions:

- [Accessibility Standards for Cohesion Policy 2014–2020](#) (cf. IV information and promotion standard p. 35)
- [Availability of EU Funds 2014–2020 for persons with disabilities in practise](#)
- [Standards and guidelines – European Funds Portal](#)
- [Accessibility standards for electronic documents](#)

11. In short: obligations and good practices

Obligations

> **We are required to provide the following at all times:**
>
> - **architecturally accessible place, i.e. meeting at least the minimum requirements set forth in Article 6 of UZD (unless a higher level of accessibility is required under PZP);**
>
> - **assistive listening systems (induction loop, FM systems) referred to in Article 6 of UZD, in the case of on-site events;**
>
> - **accessible electronic materials published in SGH portals, compliant with WCAG 2.1, including videos with captions (with audio description if required by the video type), photos and graphics with alternative description;**
>
> - **an accessible website, i.e., one that complies with WCAG 2.1 if created for the event;**
>
> - **an option to contact the organisers, through various communication channels e.g., telephone, e-mail, MS Teams, SMS and in any other personalised form requested by the applicant e.g., in PJM.**

Good practises

As a matter of good practice and as needed, planning the event universally or upon request of a person with special needs entails considerations regarding:

Form of accessibility provision	Costs
Interpretation into the Polish Sign Language (PJM) during the event	Extra costs necessary. The costs vary based on the event type and its duration. Events exceeding 1 hour typically require a team of interpreters, usually two people, which drives the price up.
Invitation to an event in the form of a video published in PJM	Involves extra costs depending on the video length.
Audio description[7]	It requires extra costs in case the service is outsourced.
Live captions	It requires extra costs in case the service is outsourced to a professional company. Captions may also be generated free of charge and automatically, e.g., via MS Teams or other free apps.
Assistant for a person with special needs, including with disabilities	It may entail an extra expense when the assistance of a qualified person is necessary. However, individuals with disabilities frequently bring their own personal assistants to events.

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[7]Audio description can be substituted with text description but it is a less effective solution. Audio description is not mandatory when the video already contains comprehensive information, such as a lecture video where the lecturer provides a detailed description of their presentation.

Form of accessibility provision	Costs
Event assistants, tasked with event oversight and providing support to individuals with special needs as required	No extra costs are necessary for student or employee volunteers.
Enlarged print text for conference materials, such as the agenda	No extra costs necessary.
Other forms of adaptation of conference materials as requested by the participant, e.g. Braille printing; relief printing.	May require additional cost when outsourcing, depending on the type of adaptation.
Sharing conference materials with participants, e.g. presentations	No extra costs necessary
Description of how to ensure accessibility in information materials, e.g. description of the conference venue	No extra costs necessary
An additional question in the registration form regarding participants' special needs and the preferable accessibility provisions	No extra costs necessary
Adding pictograms to facilitate conference information reception	No extra costs necessary
Catering tailored to accommodate participants' special needs	No extra costs necessary
Other amenities, e.g., a frame to indicate the signature space for a person with visual impairment	No extra costs necessary
Adapted (e.g., lowered) reception desk top	No extra costs necessary

Form of accessibility provision	Costs
Water for the assistance dog	No extra costs necessary
Other personalised forms of support as requested by the participants	Depending on the support requested

12. Additional support from BON in organising accessible events:

- Consultations regarding:
  - forms of event accessibility;
  - additional apps and software to facilitate accessibility (internal user instructions).
- An option to borrow assistive listening systems:
  - mobile induction loop;
  - FM systems.
- An option to borrow other amenities
  - noise-cancelling headphones;
  - a signature frame to aid a person with visual impairment;
  - electronic magnifier.
- Assistance (if required) in using the sign language interpreter on-line while contacting deaf persons.

  On-line PLN interpreter

13. Valuable resources for planning accessible events:

- Accessible events in practise
- Accessibility guide
- How to optimise the ordering of audio description?

14. Excerpt from the Act on Ensuring Accessibility for Persons with Special Needs of 19 July 2019 (Journal of Laws 2019, item 1696)

Article 4 Public entity

1. A public entity must ensure accessibility for persons with special needs by employing universal design or reasonable accommodation.

2. When providing accessibility to a person with special needs, a public entity must also undertake measures aiming to

   1) consider their needs in the activities scheduled and carried out by the

   2) entity as well as to remove and prevent barriers.

3. In instances where the public entity entrusts or contracts the implementation of public tasks financed with public funds or awards public contracts to non-public entities, it must outline accessibility conditions in the contract. These conditions should address the needs of individuals with special needs as regards the public tasks or public contract in alignment with the minimum requirements as specified in Article 6.

4. Ensuring accessibility to persons with special needs under the contract referred to in paragraph 3 is (as far as practicable) universal design-based.

Article 6 Minimum accessibility standards for persons with special needs include:

   1) in terms of architectural accessibility:

   a) providing barrier-free horizontal and vertical circulation spaces in buildings,

   b) installation of equipment or the use of technical means and architectural solutions in the building which allow access to all rooms, excluding technical rooms,

   c) providing information on the layout of rooms in a building at least by visual, tactile or auditory means,

   d) providing access to the building to a person with an assistance dog referred to in Article 2(11) of the Act on Occupational and Social Rehabilitation and

Employment of Persons with Disabilities of 27 August 1997 (Journal of Laws of 2020, items 426, 568 and 875).

e) providing persons with special needs with evacuation or other rescue options;

2) in terms of digital accessibility: the requirements set out in the Act of on Digital Accessibility of Websites and Mobile Applications of Public Entities of 4 April 2019;

3) in terms of info-communication accessibility:

service with the use of means supporting communication, referred to in Article 3(5) of the Act on Sign Language and Other Means of Communication of 19 August 2011 (Journal of Laws of 2017, item 1824), or by using remote on-line access to the interpreter service via websites and applications,

a) installing devices or other technical means to serve the hard-of-hearing persons, in particular induction loops, FM systems or devices based on other technologies aimed at assisting hearing,

b) providing the information on the scope of activities of the entity concerned on its website – in the form of an electronic file with machine-readable text, recordings of content in the Polish Sign Language and information in an easy-to-read text,

c) providing, at the request of a person with special needs, communication with a public entity in the form specified in the request.

15. Excerpt from the Public Procurement Law of 11 September 2019 (Journal of Laws 2019, item 2019)

Article 100 1. For contracts intended for natural persons, including the contracting authority's employees, the contract description is so drafted as to consider accessibility requirements for persons with disabilities and universal design for all users, unless the nature of the contract does not provide the grounds to do so.

2. If the requirements referred to in paragraph 1 arise from an act of the European Union law, the subject matter of the contract, with regard to requirements concerning accessibility for persons with disabilities and design for all users, will be described by referencing that act.