BIOCHEMICAL SOCIETY

Guidance Note: Inclusive Governance Meetings

This document is intended to provide guidance on the practice of inclusive governance meetings, to include all board, committee and panel meetings held across the Group. The guidance provided is not exhaustive and is provided to prompt discussion and consideration of more accessible and flexible approaches within the governance meeting structure, to strengthen engagement, grow attendance and open up the Society to a more diverse audience by publicly demonstrating our commitment to EDI.

Scheduling:
- Caring responsibilities: do any members have commitments that may prevent them from attending meetings at certain times, for example needing to collect children from school during term time, or caring for children during school holidays?

- Religious and cultural holidays: do any members observe certain holidays and/or practices that may prevent them from attending meetings at certain times of the day or at certain times of the year?

- Time zones: where are members joining the meeting from? Can meetings be scheduled to allow for different time zones?

Pre-meeting actions:
- Timing: check in with members that the proposed timing of the meeting is still suitable ahead of time to allow for changes to be made if required;

- Comments: encourage those unable to attend to submit comments for inclusion in discussions that will take place in their absence;

- Access: check whether any member requires additional or amended access support for the meeting and put this in place wherever possible.

Holding the meeting:
- Cameras: allow for individual cameras to be turned off to ensure all feel welcome and able to participate in the meeting, for example those who may have children in the background, those who may have carers or individuals providing them with support, or those who may be dialling in from busy public places. Where confirmation of identity is required, for example in the case of a welfare check or prior to the discussion of restricted material, cameras should be allowed to be turned off once such confirmation has taken place;

- Chat function: the use of the chat function should be encouraged for those who may be unable to otherwise participate in the meeting;

- Captioning: the option for participants to enable closed captioning should be enabled to allow for those who may wish to use it to do so;

- Names and Pronouns: where participants are happy to share their pronouns they would be encouraged to do so, stating them after their name within the online meeting display.

Post-meeting actions:
After the meeting it is recommended the full recording be made available to any attendee who may wish to view it, and in particular to any committee/panel member unable to attend on the day.

Venue or Facility considerations
- Accessible toilets are available and clearly signposted.
- Where feasible gender-neutral toilets are made available and clearly labelled with the available facilities inside.
- A dedicated quiet room, prayer room, and co-working room.
- Seating areas around the venue.
- Baby feeding facilities are available as well as baby changing facilities are in the gallery space by the bathrooms.
- Induction loops are available with instruction on how these could be accessed. Clear instruction to be given to all speakers and any questions from the audience to use the microphones.
- If possible, assistance dogs should be welcome.
- Where possible, a creche should be available.
- When making hotel room bookings, consideration should be given to people that have carers ensuring that the size of their room accommodates the extra person, and where possible at the same cost.

Inclusive Events
The Conference and Events team also endeavour to incorporate the below where appropriate.
- During the registration process, enquire about any barriers that could be removed or considered to enable the delegate/speakers experience better.
- Offer delegate support during, and after registration
- Allow delegates to choose the name they wish to have printed on their badge
- Offer optional preferred pronoun stickers at registration
- Offer discounts for students and early career members
- Discounts will be considered for delegates from low-middle income countries
- List and support with various Biochemical Society bursaries to help with costs
- Always assign a Biochemical Society member of staff to the registration desk for support and assistance
- Make sure all dietary requirements are strictly adhered to
- Give delegates the option to be excluded from photos and recordings
- Allow regular breaks throughout the programme in case of medical needs and for caring responsibilities
- Assign/allow a buddy to accompany a delegate if required
- Make sure all speaker AV is accessible, including access to staging
- Offer communication support for attendees or speakers that request it
- Consider visual impairments, including colour blindness in the design of presentations and all written material. This should include font choice and size.
- Wherever you plan to hold your meeting, it is important to do a thorough check of the physical site before booking the location. While facility owners or managers often promote their sites as accessible, interpretations of accessibility vary. An accessible entrance does not necessarily mean access throughout the facility. Considerations should include assessing whether a facility will meet the needs of all participants.