

Law and Society Association

Disability Access Guidelines for Meeting Sessions, Workshops and Institutes

The Law and Society Association is committed to making arrangements that allow all its members to participate in its activities. LSA therefore requests that all session organizers and presenters review the following guidelines and take the steps necessary to make the sessions accessible to attendees with disabilities.

Room Setup

Space should be left for at least two wheelchairs in each meeting room. Please keep these areas, as well as the aisles, clear for persons who may be using wheelchairs, canes, crutches, or motorized vehicles. Space should also be left around the doors to allow adequate access.

In a session where a presenter has a mobility impairment, organizers should ensure that platforms, risers, podiums and tables do not pose barriers to the presenters.

People who are deaf or hard of hearing and who use sign language interpreters, use captioning, or read lips need to sit where they can see both the speakers and the interpreter or captions. An interpreter may stand close to the speaker or within a direct line of sight to allow the audience to view both the speaker and the interpreter. Speakers should be aware of the location of interpreters and attempt to keep this line of vision clear.

Papers, Handouts, and Audiovisuals

Speakers should bring five copies of their papers—even if only drafts—for the use of members who wish or need to follow a written text.

When distributing papers or other documents, please have electronic versions available for persons who cannot read printed text.

Speakers who use handouts should prepare three copies in large-print format (boldface 14 to 16-point font size) and briefly describe or read all handouts to the audience. Avoid colored papers. (Speakers should indicate whether they want papers and handouts returned.)

Be aware that persons in the audience may be blind or visually impaired. Allow ample time when referring to a visual aid or handout or when pointing out the location of materials. Also, briefly describe the materials.

When not using an overhead projector, turn it off. This reduces background noise and helps focus audience attention on the speaker.

In events where presenters bring papers for sale to interested attendees, an electronic version of the paper should be submitted along with hard copy versions. Conference attendees should have the option of purchasing a copy of any paper offered for sale in machine-readable format.

Communication and Presentation

Speak clearly and distinctly, but do not shout. Use regular speed unless asked to slow down by members of the audience, sign interpreters, or persons using real-time captioning. Avoid speaking from a darkened area of the room.

Because microphones often fail to pick up voices in the audience, speakers should always repeat questions or statements made by members of the audience. In dialogues or discussions, only one person should speak at a time, and speakers should identify themselves so that audience members will know who is talking.

This document is a slightly modified version of the Modern Language Association's "Access Guidelines for MLA Convention Session Organizers and Speakers," Copyright 2002, and is used with the permission of the MLA.