

LEAH DLA Hub Inclusive Training and Cohort Development Statement

LEAH DLA Hub is committed to providing a welcoming, inclusive, and accessible development environment and community for doctoral students and anyone participating in our events and activities. We have developed this statement to highlight the considerations we put into the design, organisation, delivery, and evaluation of our programme to make it inclusive for all. We ask everyone who helps deliver our programme to embed these considerations in their work, and we encourage recipients of our Student-led Activity and Network fund to do the same.

We would like to thank colleagues at the University of Glasgow for sharing good practice in [this blog](#), which inspired many points mentioned in the Statement.

We regularly review and update this Statement to continuously improve what we do. We also recognise that individual needs vary considerably that your preferred way of working might not be sufficiently covered in the statement below. If you have any needs that you would like to discuss, have any questions or would like to share something that we miss, please contact us at leah-dla@kcl.ac.uk.

Design

- Examples and case studies used should represent the diverse disciplinary backgrounds and lived experience of participants.
- Inclusive and plain language should be used as a norm. When jargon, technical terms, acronyms, or specialist concepts are mentioned, they should be clearly defined.
- Activities should include clear instructions, explanations of purpose and expected outcomes. Written instructions should be provided for activities where possible.
- All digital content (e.g., PowerPoint slides, PDF files) should pass accessibility check before being used ([this guide from Microsoft](#) might provide some helpful tips).

- Handouts should be designed with accessibility in mind, including layout, spacing, font choice.
- We encourage using images that represent the diversity of the researcher community (e.g., disabled, indigenous researchers, etc.).
- The training facilitator should not assume advanced prior knowledge of UK Higher Education/research landscape.
- For interactive activities both online and in-person, consideration should be given to how participants of different needs can participate meaningfully and comfortably (e.g., due to neurodiversity, disability, mobility issues, caring responsibilities etc.).
- We encourage training facilitators of online training and development activities to design their session content with consideration of participants' uneven level of access to undisturbed working environment and stable internet connection.
- By default, an event should be designed so that participants can contribute in different ways and not only through speaking publicly.
- The Hub will make a genuine and meaningful effort to have a diverse group of contributors to its programme (seniority, race and gender, career background, etc.); and we will proactively seek to co-design and co-create with students where appropriate.

Organisation

- Due to environmental sustainability concerns, we will prioritise online delivery for our training and development opportunities. However, we will also run in-person events as we acknowledge the cohort building value and pedagogical benefits this format brings. The organisation of in-person events will follow the relevant inclusive practices listed below.
- When scheduling events, we will avoid scheduling essential training and cohort development activities during major religious holidays, where possible. We will avoid scheduling day-long events during half-term time or provide alternative modes of engagement.
- Where possible, activities should be scheduled within core working hours (10:00 – 16:00), unless early morning/evening sessions are offered to address specific needs.

- Sufficient comfort breaks should be planned as standard for sessions longer than 1.5 hours.
- For training and development activities considered essential by the Hub, we will do our best to deliver the content through different formats (e.g., live session, asynchronous resources, etc.) so that students unable to attend the event can have access the key information.
- For all Hub-organised activities, we will have clear, advanced communication on accessibility information and facilities.
- For in-person events, we will ensure that the venue is set up appropriately and equipped with appropriate facilities (e.g., enough space between furniture for wheelchair users; induction loop or hearing assistance facilities; opportunity for people to sit down during receptions; quiet room; space for private breastfeeding; baby changing facilities).
- We provide clear and advanced communication on the level of interactivity and expected experience for Hub-organised events. Where possible, we do not actively persuade participants to turn on their camera or use their mic.
- We will clearly communicate session aims and outcomes (including content warning if applicable), and any pre-session preparation, in advance, and avoid last-minute changes.
- Where possible, we will schedule iterations of the same training on different days of the week/at different times.
- For in-person events, questions about dietary requirements, non-alcoholic drinks, and quiet room facilities will be provided as default.
- During Ramadan, in addition to quiet room/prayer room, in-person, catered events hosted by the Hub will provide fasting participants with access to food at a later point if required.
- We will make handouts and slides available in advance or at least at the beginning of the session.
- Accessibility information will be clearly visible on the event listing page by the time of booking, and participants are always welcome to get in touch to discuss their specific requirements.

Delivery

- We ask training facilitators to avoid microaggressions when approaching non-western names (e.g., assume heritage; only ask if pronunciation is correct with non-western names), model use of pronouns, and speak at a moderate pace.
- We encourage training facilitators to explicitly acknowledge and encourage different ways of contributing to discussions (e.g., in group or 1-2-1 conversation, through chat, written feedback, etc.).
- We encourage training facilitators to consider describing themselves at the beginning of the event and to verbally describe visuals (charts, images, etc.) for people who may join the session over the phone (online) or are visually impaired. Slides and documents containing visuals should always include alternative text descriptions.
- We ask training facilitators to explicitly acknowledge and encourage the diverse ways participants use to support concentration and learning, including note-taking, movement, fidget tools or other self-regulation strategies.
- Closed captions will be turned on as a default for online events.

Evaluation

- The question on accessibility and inclusivity is included in the feedback survey and part of debrief by default.