

# Division of Learning and Teaching

## Inclusive Meetings

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## Rationale

This guide offers strategies and resources to support more inclusive meetings, ensuring that everyone can access the meetings, feel respected and heard, and are empowered to contribute equally and meaningfully. Inclusive meetings promote collaboration, support better decision-making and foster equity for all participants. Inclusive meetings are everyone's responsibility, so participant suggestions have also been included.

## How to use this guide

Use this guide as a **toolkit**: a 'choose your own adventure' set of strategies and resources that best fit the type of meeting you're holding. Strategies have been broken down into: [pre meeting planning for inclusion](#), [leading inclusive meetings](#) and [post meeting follow up](#) with additional resources available to support these stages. Due to the nature of our work, we have not included physical considerations for face-to-face meetings.

Further information can be found in the [Diversity Council Australia inclusive meeting toolkit](#). Practical examples of inclusive practices can be seen in professional development recordings by the Equity Diversity and Inclusion team.

Small changes can make a big difference in creating a space where everyone can contribute.

## Resources

Diversity Council Australia. (2024). *Inclusive meetings at work: How to hold inclusive meetings: Checklist*. Diversity Council Australia.

Kaabel, A., & O'Leary, J. (2024). *Inclusive meetings at work: How to hold inclusive meetings*. Diversity Council Australia.

Quiet Revolution. (2018). *Inclusive meetings checklist*. [https://www.quietrev.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/RC\\_Inclusive-Meetings-Checklist.pdf](https://www.quietrev.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/RC_Inclusive-Meetings-Checklist.pdf)

## Pre-meeting planning for inclusion

Inclusive meetings start with intentional design: considering accessibility, diverse perspectives, and psychological safety from the outset ensures everyone can engage meaningfully.

- **Schedule at inclusive times:** Choose meeting times during ‘core hours’, that accommodate different time zones and caregiving responsibilities. Consider days of work, school holidays and religious holidays, or events such as midday prayers. If not possible, use alternate times to so no one is consistently excluded. If meetings are recurring, consider if a set meeting time (e.g., fortnightly at 1:30 pm) or a varied meeting schedule is more suitable.
- **Share agendas early:** If the meeting requires an agenda, distribute agendas in advance to allow time for preparation, especially for neurodivergent staff. Simple actions like sending the agenda in meeting invites make it easy to find. Consider using times in your agenda to keep things on track. If there is no agenda, share the purpose of the meeting in the text or title. An example meeting agenda template is provided in [Appendix 1](#), and instructions for adding templates to Outlook are included in [Appendix 2](#).
- **Plan inclusion:** Include agenda items or discussion that allow the space for contribution and create a safe environment. Consider including:
  - Collaboration and Support – Are there areas where support is needed, either within the team or from other areas?
  - Project Progress & Wins – Share updates on current priorities and celebrate progress. How is your week going?
  - Feedback & Continuous Improvement – Provide the space for suggestions for improving processes, communication, or team dynamics.
  - Peer Recognition – Encourage team members to acknowledge and appreciate each other’s contributions (e.g., shout-outs or kudos).
- **Prepare participants:** Send slides, documents, and expectations of participants before the meeting. Consider the goal of the meeting and provide information early so it is clear what you require participants to do, e.g., What are you expecting participants to decide by the end of the meeting, will the preference be to have cameras on, will they need to go into break out rooms? Consider options for pre-meeting input via email, survey, or a shared doc. If information cannot be sent prior to the meeting, ensure there is time after the meeting for participants to work through information and provide feedback.

- **Privacy:** For staff working in shared spaces, providing information about the meeting content and enough time to book a private room when needed—particularly for sensitive discussions or when confidentiality is important.
- **Technology:** Share the link and password so people can log in beforehand.
- **Length of meeting:** Try to keep to no longer than an hour, but if it must be longer, then schedule in some breaks. For lengthy meetings or training sessions, consider asking in the meeting invitation if anybody needs adjustments.
- **Invite diverse voices:** Depending on the meeting’s purpose, include people with diverse perspectives. Avoid having just one team member from an under-represented group, as they may not be able to shift group views alone.
- **Input Ally:** Consider assigning an *Input Ally* in larger meetings, or for meetings which may deal with sensitive topics. This person can receive and anonymously relay messages from participants who may be feeling uncomfortable about speaking up. Alternatively, use a tool like Padlet to collect anonymous input. See [Appendix 4](#) for a brief overview of the Input Ally role and responsibilities. [Appendix 5](#) includes sample emails to request volunteers for the role.
- **Chat monitor:** Assign someone to monitor the chat and check in with them during the meeting, so those that are contributing to the chat are heard. It can be helpful to also watch for hands up in larger meetings.
- **Observer:** Consider nominating a person to observe interactions and providing feedback to the meeting organiser after the meeting.

Refer to [Appendix 7: Quick Reference Guide for Meeting Organisers](#) for a concise summary of key considerations to support effective meeting setup and facilitation.

## Be an inclusive participant

- Ensure you know what the focus of the meeting is, and complete any preparation required. Spend some time thinking and/or recording ideas, points, or questions you would like considered, if appropriate.
- If you are in an open-plan office, consider organising a space that you can use your microphone and camera if required.

Refer to [Appendix 6: Quick Reference Guide for Meeting Participants](#) for a concise summary of key considerations for participants.

## Leading inclusive meetings

Facilitating inclusivity during meetings means actively creating space for all voices, adapting to participants' needs, and fostering respectful dialogue that encourages equitable participation.

### Open meetings inclusively

- Include an Acknowledgement of Country.
- Encourage sharing of pronouns (without pressure).
- Provide a variety of ways to contribute - chat, reactions or raise your hand. Some larger sessions will have a chat and a Q&A section. Discuss expectations on how to contribute, such as 'I will pause for questions', 'Please interrupt if you have a question by raising a virtual hand' or 'Preferred method is to put questions into chat' etc.
- Remind participants about accessibility features. Discuss how to turn your captions on. Don't assume everyone has the knowledge.
- Identify Input Ally and who is monitoring the chat, if required.
- Outline agenda and the objective of the meeting, ask if anything to add.
- Advise if meeting will be recorded and then don't forget to hit record!
- An example meeting introduction is provided in [Appendix 3](#). Pick and choose the parts that are relevant to your meeting.

### Lead inclusively

- Use inclusive language and try to avoid the use of Charles Sturt acronyms.
- Stick to agenda and time. If the purpose has been achieved and meeting finishes early, give people the option to leave.
- Rotate roles like note-taker.
- Encourage people to say who they are in larger meetings before speaking if not identified. They may also like to include their pronouns.
- If referring to or answering a chat question, identify or read out the chat question before answering. Particularly useful for those watching a recording.
- Introduce each agenda item and speaker and stick to timeframes. If others are presenting, given them a time reminder if needed.
- Defer discussions on new topics and plan a space for conversations that need more time, if required.
- If pre-meeting feedback or work has been requested, ensure the content is included in the meeting where relevant.
- At the end of the meeting, summarise decision points and actions items. If possible, add these to the chat for future reference.

## Strategies to hear different voices

- Senior leaders stepping back: Leaders should model inclusive behaviour by deliberately creating space for others to speak first, or when asked a question, redirecting it: 'That's a great question - I'd love to hear [team member's] perspective on this first.'
- Use structured turn-taking e.g. raise hands, predetermined order.
- Consider who is/is not being heard, or if people's ideas are overlooked.
- "Three, then me" encourage people to wait for three people to speak before they talk again.
- Use breakout rooms or anonymous input tools (e.g., Menti polls, shared docs) to gather diverse perspectives.
- Depending on the meeting, invite quieter voices to contribute. Remember though no one likes to be called out unexpectedly! If you do nominate team members to contribute, ask permission first: '[Name] would you be comfortable sharing your thoughts on this?'
- Have people talk in reverse order of seniority.
- Practice silent brainstorming to generate ideas. Give 1-2 mins for everyone to write down their ideas before sharing aloud, or consider using participation tools such as Miro or Menti. (Share the link and password so people can log in beforehand.)
- If someone is interrupted, go back to that person.
  - Say, 'I heard some great points from you, Charlie, that's fantastic. But I really want to make sure we got time to hear from Lee as well.'
- Don't forget the pause. Say 'I am going to pause for 10 seconds to give us time to think about this.' Actually wait the 10 seconds. Don't rush, give people time to come off mute and respond.
- Allow people, when appropriate, to share their ideas after the meeting. People may appreciate the time to consider ideas and provide feedback privately.

## Be an inclusive participant

- State your name before speaking, and if comfortable your pronouns.
- Be an ally & help amplify quieter voices.
- Be engaged with what is being discussed. No emails. 😊
- Be someone else's champion; shout out to a colleague who you have had a positive interaction with, or who has made a positive contribution.
- When possible, have your camera on, especially for smaller meetings where you need to participate. Feel free to use virtual backgrounds.

## Post-Meeting Follow-Up

Fostering inclusivity after meetings is just as vital as during them. It shows participants they were heard, gives quieter voices a chance to contribute, and allows organisers to reflect and improve.

### Follow-Up Actions meeting details

- **Share clear, accessible notes:** Include decisions made, what actions need to be taken, who is responsible for each task, and when things are due. If a recording is shared, make sure any links posted in the chat during the session can still be accessed by people watching later.
- **Follow-up clarity and corrections:** Invite attendees to ask questions or suggest corrections if something doesn't look right or they interpreted the actions differently.
- **Encourage asynchronous input post meeting:** Consider an anonymous form or poll or shared document for attendees to give feedback on discussion points after the meeting. Some people are more comfortable sharing after reflecting, or some cultures value listening and reflection over immediate verbal response.

### Follow-Up Actions meeting reflection

- **Reflect on Engagement:** Individually or with feedback from other participants, such as appointed observers, reflect on the inclusivity of your meetings and what you may do differently next time.
  - Floor Time: Who mostly speaks at meetings? Is it representative of who attends? Are they mostly the same people?
  - Interruptions: Is there a culture of interrupting? If so, is there a demographic pattern in who does the interrupting and who gets interrupted?
  - Who speaks first: If two people start talking at the same time, who is the one who consistently provides the space for the other person to speak first?
  - Credit: Track who gets credit for ideas offered and who originated them.
  - Praise: Whose contributions get lauded or implemented?
  - Attendees: Are the right people getting invited? Be sure everyone who has a part to play is at the meeting.
- **Pulse Check:** Use short post-meeting surveys to gauge inclusivity and areas for improvement from participants.

Refer to [Appendix 8: Quick reference guide post-meeting reflection](#) for a concise summary of these points to support ongoing reflection and action

# Appendix

## Appendix 1- Meeting agenda Template

Dear [Participant Name/Team],

Hope you can join us for [meeting].

[Briefly describe the purpose of the meeting. Example: “To review the draft curriculum proposal and agree on next steps for submission.”]

Please review the following materials before the meeting:

- Agenda: [Insert link or attach]
- Slides: [Insert link or attach]
- Background documents: [Insert link or attach]

Pre meeting preparation:

- [e.g., “Come prepared to discuss and vote on the proposed changes.”]
- [e.g., “Review the attached draft and bring any feedback.”]

Preparing for the meeting:

- Decision Points: [e.g., “We aim to finalize the assessment criteria by the end of the meeting.”]
- Camera Preference: [e.g., “We encourage cameras on where possible to support engagement.”]
- Technology: [e.g., “We will be using Miro so please log in and make sure you have access before the meeting. Or we will be participating in interactive activities using Padlet so please ensure you can access the technology”]
- Breakout Rooms: [e.g., “We will use breakout rooms for small group discussion. Please ensure your camera and microphone are available”]
- Accessibility Needs: If you have any accessibility requirements, please let us know in advance.

Looking forward to your participation. Please reach out if you have any questions or need additional information.

Best regards,  
[Your Name]

## Appendix 2 - Use 'My Templates' New Outlook

### **Add a new template**

1. Create a new meeting.
2. Select "My Templates" in the toolbar.
3. Click the "+ Template" button.
4. Add a title and body content for your template.
5. Save it.

### **To use Template.**

7. Create a new meeting.
8. Select "My Templates" in the toolbar.
9. Click the required Template.

## Appendix 3 - Meeting introduction

Hello everyone, and welcome. My name is [Your Name], I use [your pronouns, e.g., she/her or they/them] pronouns. I'll be facilitating today's meeting/workshop/training session, etc.

As we begin, I would like to share an Acknowledgement of Country. [[Acknowledgement of choice](#). Either your own if appropriate or examples are provided by Charles Sturt].

I also want to acknowledge that we're meeting in a shared online space, and I'd like to take a moment to go over a few ways we can make this meeting inclusive and respectful for everyone:

*Select from the following statements -*

- Microphones are available today and we will have set points where we will stop for a questions or comments.
- To ensure everyone has a chance to contribute, we'll be using the 'raise hand' feature or the chat to manage speaking turns.
- If you are coming off mute, please feel free to share name and your pronouns if you're comfortable.
- If you'd prefer to contribute in writing, you're welcome to use the chat at any time. I'll be keeping an eye on it and will bring comments into the discussion.
- Our chat will be monitored by [Name], so we will refer to [Name] regularly to make sure we are keeping on top of chat comments or questions
- Our Input Ally for this meeting is [Name], if you would prefer to comment anonymously, please direct message [Name] and they will read your comment or question out for response. Today the best way to message [Name] is via [type of message e.g. email, teams]. Or to provide input you can add to the Padlet board. The link is in the chat.
- If you would like to make an anonymous comment you can do so via [technology]. Please remember to keep comments to clarifying questions or ideas to support the discussion topic.
- You may also like to use the reactions button to support a statement.
- Turn captions on in this meeting using the three dots in right hand corner.
- Feel free to participate in whatever way is most comfortable for you—whether that's speaking up, raising your hand, using reactions or posting in the chat.

Here's what we'll be covering today:

*Select from the following statements -*

- \* Agenda Overview – including participant expectations e.g. break out rooms
- \* Request for other agenda items, if appropriate
- \* Meeting will be recorded and available [Place]

We'll aim to wrap up by [end time], and I'll make sure we leave time at the end for questions or reflections.

## Appendix 4 - Input Ally role defined

An Input Ally offers a confidential and anonymous way for participants to share questions or concerns they might feel uneasy expressing directly during a meeting. This enables meaningful contributions from all voices, especially in larger groups or when sensitive topics are on the agenda.

### What does an Input Ally do?

The purpose of this role is to support inclusive participation by enabling people to contribute when they may not feel confident doing so directly. They will be required to:

- Receive messages from participants during meetings.
- Relay relevant questions or feedback to the group anonymously in a respectful and constructive manner.
- Maintain strict confidentiality and not discuss feedback outside the meeting.
- Ensure that shared input is appropriate to the meeting context, and reflects genuine questions or concerns — not personal critiques of presenters or unrelated commentary.

### Important boundaries of the role:

- The Input Ally role is limited to the meeting itself. It is not a channel for ongoing feedback. There will be other avenues for feedback after the meeting, if deemed necessary.
- The Input ally is not the avenue for complaints or feedback about other communication or actions, e.g. emails. Feedback can be provided via the Division of Learning and Teaching (DLT) [Ideas and feedback - Division of Learning and Teaching](#) or consider the complaints options at [Complaints - People and Culture](#)
- When messages are received from meeting participants, it is important for everyone to remember this is not a space for commentary on individuals' tone or presentation styles, word choices, judgmental remarks e.g. 'they are trying to avoid the issues', or past actions e.g. 'they always do this' or 'why are they leading this?'

### History of the role:

This approach was first implemented during change proposal meetings in 2025 by Faith Valencia-Forrester. Since 2018, Faith has applied this method across various settings at Charles Sturt University, and previously at Griffith University, to foster inclusive participation during periods of conflict, stress, and organisational change.

In 2025, the role was included in DLT's Inclusion and Diversity Groups Inclusive Meetings project, helping to shape inclusive meeting standards for use across the division. The term *Input Ally* was generated using Copilot, to reflect the role's purpose and impact within DLT.

## Appendix 5 - Input Ally email examples

### **Subject: Invitation to Nominate Yourself as an Input Ally for DLT Meetings**

Dear colleagues,

We are compiling a list of Input Allies who can be called upon for future DLT meetings. If you are someone who values inclusivity, discretion, and respectful dialogue, we encourage you to nominate yourself.

An Input Ally provides a confidential and anonymous channel for participants to share questions or concerns they may feel uncomfortable voicing directly in the meeting. This role is especially valuable in larger gatherings or when sensitive topics are being discussed.

#### **What does an Input Ally do?**

The purpose of this role is to support inclusive participation by enabling people to contribute when they may not feel confident doing so directly. They will be required to:

- Receive messages from participants during meetings.
- Relay relevant questions or feedback to the group anonymously in a respectful and constructive manner.
- Maintain strict confidentiality and does not discuss feedback outside the meeting.
- Ensure that shared input is appropriate to the meeting context and reflects genuine questions or concerns—not personal critiques of presenters or unrelated commentary.

#### **Important boundaries of the role:**

- The Input Ally role is limited to the meeting itself. It is not a channel for ongoing feedback. There will be other avenues for feedback after the meeting if required.
- The Input ally is not the avenue for complaints or feedback about other communication or actions e.g. emails. Feedback can be provided via the [DLT Ideas and feedback - Division of Learning and Teaching](#), or consider the complaints options at [Complaints - People and Culture](#).
- When messages are received from meeting participants, it is important for everyone to remember this is not a space for commentary on individuals' tone or presentation styles, word choices, judgmental remarks e.g. 'they are trying to avoid the issues', or past actions e.g. 'they always do this' or 'why are they leading this?'

Please reply to this email by [insert date] if you're interested or would like to learn more about the role.

## **Response to volunteers**

Hi All,

Thank you for nominating yourself to be an Input Ally for future DLT meetings. We truly appreciate your willingness to support inclusive and respectful dialogue within our community.

Due to having had several generous volunteers express interest in this role, we'll be sharing the responsibility across meetings to ensure broad participation and manageable workloads.

As an Input Ally, your role will be to:

- Receive messages from participants during meetings.
- Relay relevant questions or feedback anonymously in a respectful and constructive manner.
- Maintain strict confidentiality and ensure that shared input is appropriate to the meeting context.

We have created a list that we will communicate with the Leadership team. They will be able to see and note who has volunteered to allow sharing of the role across the group.

The meeting organiser will be in touch when they would like you to be an Input Ally. Thank you again for your commitment to fostering inclusive participation.

Warm regards,

## Appendix 6 - Quick Reference Guide for Meeting Participants

### **Before the Meeting**

- Review agenda and materials.
- Prepare thoughts or questions.
- Arrange a quiet space if needed.
- Check tech access (e.g., Miro, Mentimeter).

## During the Meeting

- State your name (and pronouns if comfortable) when speaking.
- Be engaged—avoid multitasking.
- Champion colleagues' contributions.
- Respect turn-taking and pause moments.
- Use chat, reactions, or raise hand to contribute.

## After the Meeting

- Review notes and action items.
- Provide feedback or corrections.
- Share additional thoughts asynchronously.
- Complete any post-meeting surveys.

## Appendix 7 - Quick Reference Guide for Meeting Organisers

### Before the Meeting

- Schedule Inclusively: Vary days/times for recurring meetings meeting different needs.
- Share the Agenda: Outline meeting purpose, discussion topics and expectations.
- Prepare Participants: Send accessible slides, documents and tech requirements.

- Invite Diverse Voices: Include participants from varied backgrounds and roles.
- Include Breaks: For meetings longer than 1 hour, schedule a break.
- Plan for Inclusion: Allocate time for contributions and reflection. Use inclusive strategies (e.g., silent brainstorms, breakout rooms, anonymous tools).
- Assign Roles: Input Ally, Chat Monitor, Observer for reflection.

## During the Meeting

### Start inclusively

- Acknowledge Country.
- Invite (optional) sharing of pronouns.
- Outline agenda, expectations, and whether the meeting is recorded.
- Identify Input Ally and Chat Monitor. Mention accessibility features.

### Lead Inclusively

- Use inclusive and respectful language.
- Stick to the agenda and manage time effectively.
- Rotate roles (e.g., note-taker, facilitator).
- Read chat questions aloud for recording viewers.
- Acknowledge pre-meeting work or feedback.
- Encourage contributions from quieter or underrepresented voices.
- Summarise decisions and action items before closing.

## After the Meeting

- Distribute notes and action items. Invite clarifications.
- Offer asynchronous ways to provide feedback and contribute post-meeting.
- Reflect on Inclusivity: Who spoke and who didn't, interruptions, credit given for ideas. Consider observers' thoughts and gather feedback from surveys.

## Appendix 8 – Quick Reference Guide post-meeting reflection

### Planning & Preparation

- Did the meeting time suit diverse needs (time zones, caring duties, holidays)?
- Was the agenda shared early with clear purpose and expectations?
- Were materials sent in advance and accessible to all?
- Did I invite a diverse range of participants?

- Were breaks included for longer meetings?
- Did I plan for inclusive participation (e.g., turn-taking, anonymous tools)?
- Were roles like Input Ally, Chat Monitor, and Observer assigned?

## During the Meeting

- Did I start inclusively (e.g., Acknowledgement of Country, pronouns, accessibility)?
- Was the agenda followed and time managed well?
- Did I use inclusive language and rotate roles?
- Were quieter voices encouraged to contribute?
- Did I summarise decisions and action items clearly?

## After the Meeting

- Were notes and action items shared promptly?
- Did I offer ways for participants to give feedback asynchronously?
- Did I reflect on inclusivity (e.g., who spoke, interruptions, credit for ideas)?
- Did I consider feedback from the Observer or surveys?