



**MRFA**  
MOUNT ROYAL  
FACULTY ASSOCIATION

## Meetings and Events Policy

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<b>Policy Sponsor:</b>	President

### I. Overview

The intent of Association meetings, gatherings, and events is to share perspectives and work together often with a view to arrive at decisions that affect our collective wellbeing. To do this, the Association must ensure an environment exists where Members feel welcome, comfortable, and fully able to participate.

The overarching goal is to produce an organization where open dialogue is possible, where all parties acknowledge the dignity, needs, and beliefs of all, and where the structures are in place that can be trusted to guarantee inclusive spaces.

This policy has been developed by the Association with the intent to ensure that meetings are accessible and inclusive for MRFA Members. Policies such as these seek to provide procedural trust to ensure that all Members are able to fully participate in all facets of the Association.

**IMPORTANT MEETING AND EVENT GUIDANCE: Refer to Appendix 1 for best practices on universal design for meetings and events. Committees and staff shall be made aware of this policy. Committee chairs are requested to complete the [event planning checklist](#), following best practices, a minimum of 72 hours in advance of each event and all event announcements should be sent with a link to the [Accessibility Request Form](#). This process ensures that all meetings and events are inclusive and accessible for all Members.**

### II. Meeting Scheduling

All Association meetings are scheduled in accordance with the limitations outlined in Association Bylaws articles 7.1 and 8.3. Where possible, Regular meetings of the Association shall be scheduled at various times to ensure all Members have some opportunity to attend.

### III. Online / Hybrid Meetings

#### a. Access and Inclusion

In accordance with III. 1. b above, all Association meetings, except where there is prior approval by the committee to hold an in-person only meeting, shall have online access provided to maximize accessibility and inclusion of all Members and reduce barriers to participation in Association governance.

#### b. Authority

The Executive Board may deem circumstances necessary to permit any and all Association business be conducted via electronic meetings and means. The Executive Board shall determine the online platform and a meeting link shall be shared with members, subject to the provisions below.

**c. Meeting Access**

- i. It is the responsibility of each member to test their technology and ensure they have sufficient resources to join, and participate in, the meeting.
- ii. In advance of the meeting, members shall be provided a cell phone number of an MRFA staff member to text during the meeting should technical issues arise. These text messages shall be responded to as time and circumstances permit during the online meeting.
- iii. Members who do not wish to sign into an online meeting may join via a telephone number provided. Members who phone in shall be provided a cell phone number of an MRFA staff person if they need a point of contact to text messages to (i.e. want to join the speakers' list, are encountering issues) during the meeting. These text messages shall be responded to as time and circumstances permit during the online meeting.

**d. Meeting Security and Privacy**

To participate in an online meeting, a member's identity must be verified to maintain security and privacy to the best extent possible. Meeting security and logistics shall be operationalized by the MRFA office team and all members are expected to adhere to communicated requirements.

To maintain security and privacy, Members cannot have other individuals, excepting Members' dependents, present while attending a meeting, recording of meetings is not permitted, and members are not permitted to share meeting links, or access codes, with any other individual.

**e. Meeting Procedures and Observers**

- i. If there is a chat panel, during the meeting the chat panel should only be used by a member to move or second a motion or to be put on the speakers' list, as per the processes noted in Robert's Rules of Order.
- ii. If there is a motion in an online meeting, all Members in attendance shall be entitled to vote, including all meeting panellists.
- iii. All meeting motions shall be conducted via secret online ballot with the software to be determined by the Executive Board (e.g. Mentimeter).
- iv. Incoming members of the Executive Board, upon election at the Annual General Meeting, shall be invited to attend MRFA Executive Board meetings for the remainder of the academic year. Meeting attendance is voluntary and confidentiality forms must be fully executed in advance.

**IV. Closed Sessions**

The confidentiality conferred in the closed session portion of meetings to the subject matter at hand shall be used to protect individuals and, where appropriate, the Association. To ensure

openness and transparency, the Association is committed to reasonably using closed session meetings.

A motion to move to closed session may be presented to handle sensitive issues that cannot be publicly discussed or recorded: the intent is to ensure confidentiality of subject matter discussed. Due to the nature of the work of the Association, every meeting of the Executive Board shall include a closed session. Matters to be handled in closed sessions may include, but are not be limited to

- Positions taken in Collective Bargaining,
- Member Representation and Grievance Handling,
- Staff Management and related personnel decisions,
- Appointments and Nomination processes,
- The handling of conflict-of-interest situations,
- Time sensitive matters which cannot yet be made public, and
- Other matters of private nature relating to an individual.

The recorded minutes and any documents distributed during closed session meetings are not made public (and are not attached to approved minutes). The closed session minutes are filed confidentially by the Association and are only available on request to those present in the meeting in accordance with legal requirements, approved Association communications and confidentiality protocols.

If a decision is made during the closed session portion of a meeting, that decision shall be recorded in the official minutes as a formal record; however, any related documentation and/or discussion shall remain confidential.

## **V. Related Policies**

- Grievance Process
  - Duty of Fair Representation
  - Confidentiality in the Grievance Process
  - Conflict of Interest (inc. Conflict of Interest Checklist)
- Confidentiality Policy

## Appendix I. Universal Design for Meetings

In accordance with Association Bylaws, in person and online meetings shall be structured in the most accessible way possible. Member input shall be solicited on an ongoing basis and the following provisions may be adjusted as deemed appropriate.

- a. Universal Design Principles, which apply for all Association Meetings, suggest that all individuals presenting content or speaking (including comments and questions) at an Association meeting do the following, when applicable:
  - Prior to speaking, speakers shall state their name, position (if applicable), and pronouns (the latter being subject to personal discretion),
  - Remain in a predetermined space (e.g., a podium) at the front of the meeting room for the duration of the presentation,
  - Provide captioning for videos and simultaneous closed captioning for in-person attendees on request,
  - Use large fonts for all handouts (minimum 12 pt. font),
  - Describe important graphics and read text,
  - Ensure appropriate colour contrast per UDL best practices, and
  - Provide digital content in advance to provide flexibility and accessibility for users to select their own preferred font size on digital devices and tools. Ensure font size of at least 12pt in print and at least 14-16pt in digital text, and colour contrast are, subject to UDL best practices technical limitations, are used in presentations (including reduced text on slides to ensure readability when using online software platforms).
- b. Universal Design Principles applicable to all meetings include, but are not limited to the following:
  - Members should be able to attend in person, by computer or by phone and all efforts shall be made to ensure that no Member is disadvantaged based on the mode of connection,
  - Speakers shall always use a microphone, and
  - Rooms shall be booked, wherever possible, that are physically accessible and in close proximity to gender inclusive bathrooms.
- c. Materials and content to be presented at meetings shall be submitted to the MRFA's Senior Administrative and Faculty Relations Officer ideally, at least three days prior to the Meeting for review to ensure compliance with Universal Design Principles. Association staff shall be responsible for ensuring that appropriate peripherals are available for the meeting to ensure compliance with the above noted Universal Design Principles.
- d. To foster inclusive and safe meeting environments where all members feel comfortable expressing their opinions and participating in decision-making, all in meeting voting shall be conducted using software that supports anonymous voting.
- e. Where approved by Members present in a meeting, Association business for which notice was given as part of the written notice pursuant to Article 7 of the MRFA Bylaws, may be

conducted by online ballot subsequent to the distribution of related information including the draft minutes of the meeting.

**3. Universal Design - Meeting Notice**

In addition to requirements for meeting notices as stipulated in the MRFA Bylaws, all meeting notices shall include details on all access provisions that shall be in place for each meeting. Where applicable, this shall include, but is not limited to, the use of microphones, captioning, physical access considerations, and the identification of emergency exits and nearby gender inclusive bathrooms.

**4. Universal Design - Training**

All Association Officers, Committee Chairs and Staff shall be reminded of this policy at annual orientations to ensure consistent application of the policy.

## **Appendix II. Best Practices for Event Accessibility based in UDL Practices to Support all Members Checklist**

An *event* is a planned gathering organized for a specific purpose, such as education, celebration, outreach, or community engagement.

### **How to Use This Checklist:**

The checklist below, developed by the MRFA's EDIA Committee, has been incorporated in two online forms to facilitate implementation: the [event planning checklist](#) and the [Accessibility request form](#). Changes to these forms must follow the policy change and review process and all changes shall be reflected in the checklist below.

Committee chairs are requested to complete the [event planning checklist](#) a minimum of 72 hours in advance of each event (following best practices) and all event announcements shall be sent with a link to the [Accessibility request form](#). This process aims to ensure that all meetings and events are inclusive and accessible for all Members.

### **1. Pre-Event Planning & Communication**

- Event announcements and registration pages explicitly state our commitment to accessibility.
- The registration form includes the question: "What can we do to support your full participation?" with a contact email.
- A process is in place to receive and respond to accessibility requests (e.g., for American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters and Google Meets captioning).
- Information on travel, parking, and public transit accessibility is prepared for distribution.
- Event website and all digital materials (e.g., PDFs) are screen-reader friendly (use proper headings, alt-text for images).

### **2. Venue & Physical Accessibility**

- Wheelchair-accessible main and emergency entrances/exits (clear of obstructions).
- Accessible and clearly marked parking spaces close to the entrance.
- Elevators are available and operational if the event is on multiple floors.
- Accessible, gender-inclusive washrooms are available and clearly signed.
- Wide, clear, and non-slip pathways throughout the venue (halls, between tables).
- Accessible seating locations are available (front, back, sides) without segregating attendees.
- Lighting is adjustable; strobe or flickering lights are avoided.
- Acoustics are managed to reduce echo and background noise where possible.

### **3. Communication & Information (During Event)**

- Clear, large-print signage to key locations (registration, main event, quiet room, restrooms).
- All event materials (agendas, handouts) are available in plain language, large print, and digital copies. The handouts will use large, easy-to-read fonts (minimum 12-point) with high contrast. Important graphics will be described verbally, and all text on slides will be read aloud when appropriate. Presentations will use accessible design principles, ensuring appropriate font size, color contrast, and minimal on-screen text to support readability, including when viewed through online software platforms. [Meeting Policy #3](#)
- A microphone and sound system are available, tested, and mandatory for all speakers.
- Speakers are reminded to:
  - Use a microphone at all times.
  - Speak clearly and at a moderate pace.
  - Verbally describe all key visuals on slides.
- Live CART (Communication Access Realtime Translation) is provided for keynotes/panels.
- A well-lit space for ASL interpreters is reserved near the stage/presentation area.
- All videos shown during the event have accurate captions enabled.

#### **4. Participation & Inclusivity**

- A meaningful land acknowledgement is planned and delivered.
- Clear community agreements (e.g., respect, one voice at a time, no harassment) are shared at the start.
- Multiple ways to participate are offered (e.g., speaking, written notes, digital polls).
- The schedule includes adequate breaks to prevent cognitive overload.
- Advance materials (agenda, speaker bios) are sent to registrants to help them prepare.
- On-site childcare is provided, or information on local services is shared (if applicable).
- That the MRFA works to create Staff/volunteers as clearly identifiable "Accessibility Liaisons."

#### **5. Sensory & Environmental Needs**

- A "Low-Sensory / Quiet Room" is designated, signposted, and maintained as a calm, break space.
- The event is promoted as a "Scent-Free Space," and reminders are posted.
- Dietary options are clearly labelled (vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, common allergens).
- Food staff are available at food stations to answer ingredient questions.
- Food is served in an accessible manner (low-height buffet, easy-grip utensils).
- Non-alcoholic beverages are available and prominent.

#### **6. Technology & Digital Participation (For Hybrid/Virtual Elements)**

- The virtual platform is accessible (screen-reader compatible, keyboard navigable).

- Live captions are enabled for all virtual sessions.
- Clear instructions on how to use the virtual platform are sent in advance.
- Online participants can engage via multiple methods (chat, voice, reactions).
- A person is assigned to monitor the chat, correct caption errors, and relay questions.

#### **7. Staff & Volunteer Preparedness**

- All staff and organizers receive accessibility training at the beginning of each academic year
- Members know the location of all accessibility features (quiet room, restrooms, and first aid).
- That a clear protocol is in place for handling accessibility requests or issues during the event.

#### **8. Post-Event Follow-up**

- A short, accessible feedback survey is sent out, with specific questions about accessibility.
- Recordings of sessions (with captions) are shared with all registrants.
- All feedback and noted barriers are documented in a "lessons learned" file for future event planners.
- Thank-you messages to participants, interpreters, and CART providers acknowledge the shared commitment to accessibility.