Residential Relocation Policy

Harvard University is committed to ensuring that the College’s House system, when viewed in its entirety, is readily accessible to students with disabilities. This commitment includes reasonable access to House-sponsored programs and events (with particular attention to unique events that are not available elsewhere on campus), except in those instances where accessibility cannot be provided without a fundamental alteration to the program or an undue burden. Harvard may ensure accessibility of House events in a variety of ways, including by such means as auxiliary aids and services, technology, equipment, personal assistance, or, where programs or activities initially are scheduled in inaccessible locations, by relocation upon request to an accessible location where other methods of providing access are not feasible or practical. This policy specifically addresses procedures pertaining to the relocation of House events and activities.

Harvard’s undergraduate Houses were constructed before federal and state law required accessible design. As a result, architectural barriers exist within Harvard’s Houses that require advance notice and planning to address. Even with advance planning, relocation may not always be possible, either because of the nature of certain programs or the sheer number of activities competing for limited space. However, advance planning and communication should greatly facilitate opportunities for relocation or other alternatives where relocation is not feasible. Whenever feasible, events should be scheduled in accessible locations in the first instance (except in the case of events that are open only to House residents, where there are no House residents with disabilities). In the case of events that are open to the Harvard community or the general public (including but not limited to high profile and widely publicized events), it becomes even more important that the sponsors of events plan ahead and make every reasonable effort to schedule events in accessible venues, given the challenges posed by a need to relocate large events. In advance of selecting a particular venue, event sponsors should contact either the University Disability Coordinator or the Director of the Accessible Education Office (“AEO”) for information concerning the accessibility of the proposed venue. (For contact information, see under “Resources” below).

This policy is intended to apply to House-sponsored events, to events that are sponsored by House Committees and held within the House, to requests for access to House space by recognized Harvard undergraduate organizations, and to House-based events sponsored by Harvard University departments (e.g., the Harvard Foundation, Phillips Brooks House, Office for the Arts). This policy is not intended to cover, nor could it realistically encompass, the wide range and volume of student activities that occur within the residential life of each House, given that many of these activities are largely, if not wholly, student-initiated, and many also are relatively spontaneous or impromptu in nature. All Harvard House residents, however, are asked to bear in mind the principles of equal access reflected in this policy, even when this policy does not directly apply to an activity that they are initiating. To that end, House residents are encouraged to contact the resources listed below for guidance on how to maximize the accessibility of student-initiated events.
Requests for Accommodation/Relocation:

Individuals seeking accommodations in order to participate in House events are encouraged to provide as much advance notice as possible, but in any event, a minimum of two weeks advance notice, given the amount of lead time that may be necessary to relocate an event from an inaccessible to accessible location or to provide certain other accommodations (for example, the provision of an interpreter).

Response to Requests for Relocation:

When the House or the sponsoring organization of a House-based event receives a request for a change in the location of an event, Harvard will make good faith efforts to identify an alternate venue that is accessible or to find other means of providing access. Inquiries or requests concerning accommodations should be directed to the University Disability Coordinator or the Director of the Accessible Education Office as promptly as those requests are received (see contact information below). The Director of the Accessible Education Office, or the University Disability Coordinator, as the case may be, will work with the event sponsor to set a new location and inform the requester of the location change (or the other steps taken to provide access), and the event sponsor will be responsible for taking appropriate steps to notify other participants of any location change (such as updating any website announcement, e-mailing known participants, and/or placing a notice at the original location of the change in venue.) Due to the sheer volume of scheduled events at Harvard, relocation may require a change in the day or time of the event in question.

Notice:

Pre-event publicity, whether by flyer, website, or other means should include information on how potential participants may request any accommodations that they made need, including relocation if the event is being held in an inaccessible location (unless the event is only open to House residents and the House has no residents who are wheelchair users). Pre-event publicity should include the name and contact information of the person to reach for more information. Use of the access symbols (see Appendix II) is helpful in highlighting accessibility information in written publicity. The following is a suggested accommodation statement for use in pre-event publicity:

*Individuals with disabilities requiring accommodations or information on accessibility should contact the University Disability Coordinator (617/495-1859; marie_trottier@harvard.edu) or the Accessible Education Office (617/496-8707; aeo@fas.harvard.edu) at least two weeks in advance.*
Resources:

Harvard has resources that can provide guidance as to how to plan events to maximize the opportunities for participation by persons with disabilities, including how to respond to requests for accommodations, such as requests for relocation, for interpreters, or for other forms of accommodation. Within the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (“FAS”), the following office provides this expertise in support of students with disabilities:

**Director of Accessible Education Office**
- **Telephone**: 617-496-8707
- **TDD**: 617-496-3720
- **Fax**: 617-495-0815
- **E-mail**: aeo@fas.harvard.edu

In addition, the Office of the University Disability Coordinator is a resource available both to FAS and to the broader Harvard community:

**University Disability Coordinator**
- **Telephone**: 617-495-1859
- **TDD**: 617-495-4801
- **Fax**: 617-495-8520
- **E-mail**: marie_trottier@harvard.edu

Appendixes:

I. Guidelines
II. Access Symbols
Appendix I

Guidelines

These guidelines are intended to help House administrative staff, House Committees, recognized undergraduate organizations, and Harvard departments sponsoring House-based events understand how to choose a physically accessible location, provide accommodations, and use advance communication to serve people with disabilities. A common sense approach should guide you. The fundamental goal is to facilitate the participation of people with disabilities. While the answer to every question and situation may not be cut-and-dry, the key is to remain respectful, responsive, and flexible.

Choosing a Physically Accessible Location

Whenever possible you should hold your event in a wheelchair accessible location (unless the event is only open to House Residents and no wheelchair users reside within the House.) Locating your event in a wheelchair accessible location will facilitate the participation of wheelchair users and people with other mobility impairments as well. If you cannot hold your event in a wheelchair accessible location, you should try to locate your event in a space in which physical barriers are kept to a minimum. For information concerning accessible House locations, in advance of selecting your venue, you should contact either the University Disability Coordinator at 617/495-1859 (voice), 617-495-4801 (TDD), 617-495-8520 (fax), marie_trottier@harvard.edu (e-mail) or the Director of the Accessible Education Office (617/496-8707 (voice), 617-496-3720 (TDD), 617-495-0815 (fax), aeo@fas.harvard.edu (e-mail).

Removing Communication Barriers

In almost all cases, the University (or sponsoring organization) will be legally obligated to provide some type of auxiliary communication aids and services to enable people with visual and hearing impairments to participate in events. (Funds and other support will be made available to recognized student organizations for this purpose.) Participants may not be charged a fee for auxiliary communication aids and services.

Sign language interpreters

- Sign language interpreters are usually booked weeks in advance. Accordingly, pre-event communications and publicity (including any web site publicity) should invite people who may need this service to notify the designated contact person by a specified date.

1 These Guidelines have been adapted from Harvard University Events: Serving People with Disabilities, a publication of the Office of the University Disability Coordinator.
Assistive listening devices

Some Harvard locations are equipped for assistive listening devices (headsets that amplify and/or filter sound). The Building Manager should be able to tell you whether the selected location is equipped with assistive listening devices. If it is not, you can arrange to obtain them from Instructional Media Services, 1 Oxford Street, Cambridge, MA 02138, 617-495-9460 (voice), 617-496-4204 (fax).

Examples of accepted symbols for mobility access, assistive listening devices, and sign language interpreters can be found in Appendix II.

Alternate formats of meeting materials and other information

- Large print, Braille, audiotape, and computer disk versions of lectures, prepared in advance of the event, can be useful for participants with visual impairments.
- In the occasional circumstance when it not feasible to provide the most appropriate aid or service to remove a communication barrier, you must still make a reasonable effort to provide an accommodation that will enable the person with a visual or hearing impairment to participate in the event. If you are unclear as to how to make an accommodation, you should contact the Director of the Accessible Education Office at 617-496-8707 (voice), 617-496-3720 (TDD), 617-495-0815 (fax), aeo@fas.harvard.edu (e-mail) or the University Disability Coordinator at 617-495-1859 (voice), 617-495-4801 (TDD), 617-495-8520 (fax), marie_trottier@harvard.edu.

Modifying Policies, Practices, and Procedures

Be aware that policies, practices and procedures may need to be modified in order to accommodate a person with a disability. It may not always be easy to anticipate such accommodations in advance; the key is to remain responsive and flexible.

For example, a policy prohibiting animals at an event would have to be modified to allow a blind person to bring a guide dog. Likewise, the practice of people serving themselves at a buffet meal might have to be modified by having a person available to offer assistance to people who may have difficulty in serving themselves. There may be instances where modifying a policy, practice, or procedure is not required, but if you receive a request to change a rule or practice on account of a disability, you should consult with the Director of the Accessible Education Office or the University Disability Coordinator before denying the request.
Appendix II

Access Symbols

International Access Symbol

The International Access Symbol may be used for two purposes. In pre-event publicity, this symbol should be used to indicate that an event is being held in a wheelchair accessible location. At appropriate event locations, this symbol should direct people to accessible features of a facility or to access information. A photocopy of the symbol enlarged for 8 ½” x 11” paper, mounted on cardboard, is an acceptable means of reproducing the symbol for use at events.

Teleypewriter Device for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (TTY)

A TTY is a keyboard device that transmits typed messages over phone lines. The TTY symbol may be appropriately used in pre-event publicity to indicate a TTY phone number that can be called for information or accommodation requests, if such a device is available. If a facility is not equipped with a TTY, the TTY symbol may appear with the phone number of the Massachusetts Telephone Relay Service (1-800-439-2370).
Assistive Listening Devices

Assistive Listening Devices are headsets that amplify or filter sound. The symbol for Assistive Listening Devices should be used in pre-event publicity to indicate that an event will be held in one of the Harvard auditoriums equipped for assistive listening devices, and to indicate how people may reserve/request them.

Sign Language Interpreters

Pre-event publicity should invite participants to request sign language interpreters in advance of an event. However, if it is known that sign language interpreters will be available at an event, then the symbol should be used in event publicity.

*Note: These and other access symbols may be downloaded from the following site: [http://www.gag.org/resources/das.php](http://www.gag.org/resources/das.php)