

UBC Arts Undergraduate Society

Equity and Inclusion Strategy

Restructured by the Equity and Inclusion Department of 2023-24

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Version 3

Land Acknowledgement

The University of British Columbia (UBC) Vancouver is situated on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the hən̓q̓əmin̓əm̓ speaking xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) people. As members of the Arts Undergraduate Society (AUS), we deeply value the opportunity to be able to operate on this land and would like to extend our gratitude to the traditional caretakers of the land. The AUS recognizes our limited capacity in reversing systemic prejudices that have worked against Indigenous communities, yet vow to acknowledge, honour and respect the vitality of Indigenous communities in our present and future successes and operation.

Statement of Purpose

The Equity and Inclusion (E&I) Department of the Arts Undergraduate Society (AUS) puts forth this bill to ensure that the fundamental concepts of equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) are codified and implemented within the AUS and the greater Arts community. The AUS further understands the prejudices in our communities that have alienated many marginalized minority groups, such as but not limited to: members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, Indigenous communities, asylum seekers, racialized communities, and minority ethnic, religious, and national groups.

This document provides suggestions and guidelines for the AUS and its various portfolios to create a more equitable, diverse and inclusive environment for Arts students.

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SECTION 1: Addressing Issues of Mental Health and Harassment

PART 1: Addressing Issues Related to Mental Health

The AUS understands the varying experiences of the diverse Arts community in regard to mental health. We encourage all students to feel open to sharing their own experience with mental health, in a safe space. Students are advised not to speak or behave in a way that causes distress or uncomfortable feelings in others, such as engaging in harassment or discrimination. Students must take responsibility in preventing disrespectful language and behaviours. Doing so requires students to engage with active self-discipline, respect, care, and empathy for others.

Regarding existing mental illnesses or distress, we do not encourage self-blaming, hiding stress or symptoms, or invalidating mental health issues. Leaders within the AUS should establish a culture where team members are encouraged to seek help from mental health services when needed and feel comfortable to report excessive workload, distress from work, or needs like mental health days. Furthermore, we encourage students to:

1. Understand and appreciate that people could feel stressed from various types of experiences, and never see themselves as "weak" when feeling stressed or needing help.
2. Actively seek help and resources from the Student Health Center, Center for Accessibility, Student Assistance Program, etc. on time when distress affects their mental wellness and/or functioning.
3. Protect others' privacy by not sharing any personal experiences of others without their permission.
4. Actively seek opportunities to educate themselves on mental health issues and terminology. Such as the ["Mental Health Literacy for Student Leaders"](#) Canvas course created by The Wellness Centre.

PART 2: Addressing Cases of Harassment

The AUS follows the understanding that harassment is the act of continued and regular unwanted actions against a victim. This may include anything from racial epithets to malicious remarks, as well as become a pattern of repeated behaviour. The AUS stands against harassment in any shape or form, racialized, gender-based, sexual, or harassment based upon any other facets of one's identity, both at its externally-facing events and internally. The AUS works to hold itself accountable to its commitment to equity and inclusion practices through the implementation of the

Equity and Inclusion Strategy, its social media practices, the cultivation of events that are safe spaces for students, and the transparent reporting of its progress on this action plan to the UBC communities.

Furthermore, the AUS is dedicated to creating a community where fairness and inclusion are ingrained in all facets of academic, professional, and campus life. This is done in a manner which recognizes and works to prevent several elements and types of harassment.

The AUS adheres to the current UBC Equity and Inclusion Action Plan to ensure that the AUS Community can continue to realize its full potential in maintaining equity and inclusion, not only with regards to sexual harassment but of all forms (gender, race, class, religion, or sexuality, etc.). Additionally, within the AUS Code of Procedures, any capacity of harassment (verbal, mental, physical, or virtual) is not only condemned but may be grounds for termination from any position. Likewise, the AUS is committed to maintaining and cultivating an environment in which students are able to safely practice learning, research and engagement, not only within their respective Portfolios, but also in an intersectional and multifaceted way of gathering communal-based knowledge.

PART 3: Addressing Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment can be understood as unwelcome sexual advances, remarks of a sexual nature, requests for sexual favours, and harassment or remarks regarding a person's gender are all examples that foster a hostile work environment. More commonly, a person in a position of authority over the victim, such as an employer, boss, or teacher, will commit sexual harassment. There are many different types of sexual harassment, however, the following provides two primary forms:

1. **Quid Pro Quo:** This Latin phrase means "one thing in exchange for another." In this instance, it alludes to the practice of linking an employee's advantages, such as receiving a raise or avoiding termination, to their consent to unwanted sexual approaches from their employer or supervisor; this applies to any circumstance in which the harasser is in a position of power than the victim, not only those involving the workplace or the academic environment.
2. **Hostile Work Environment:** This phrase describes circumstances in which a worker is exposed to unpleasant sexual imagery or language, as well as unwanted advances or touch. Coworkers, a manager/employer, or even customers or clients might foster an unfriendly work environment. Employers are responsible for making sure that sexual harassment does not occur at their locations, and for ending any instances of sexual harassment as they become aware.

The AUS condemns any form of sexual misconduct or harassment. within the AUS, or within the Faculty of Arts. Sexual harassment is prohibited under the AUS Code of Procedures and may be grounds for termination. This is true of all types of harassment, whether it is verbal or physical, and regardless of whether it is motivated by gender, ethnicity, class, religion, or sexual orientation. The AUS is committed to cultivating a safe space for all students in the Faculty of Arts.

PART 4: Harassment Related to Other Forms of Marginalization

There are several other types of harassment, such as racial harassment, religious harassment, gender-based harassment, sexuality-based harassment, or class-based harassment.

- The AUS uses the definition that describes racial harassment as an incident, or a series of incidents, intended or likely to intimidate, offend, or harm an individual or group because of their ethnic origin, race, religion or nationality.
- Furthermore, a racist incident is any incident that is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person.
- For the purposes of this strategy, we may follow the definition that behaviours that may qualify as racial harassment can include: derogatory name calling, verbal threats, insults and racist jokes, display of racially offensive material, exclusion from normal workplace conversation or activities, physical acts of violence, and, encouraging others to commit any such acts.
- Religious harassment can be understood as harassment due to an individual's traditional religious views or moral or ethical beliefs;
 - However, religious harassment can also take the form of comments about an individual's faith or lack of faith, offensive and negative remarks about what an individual believes/exercises their faith, and frequent negative comments that create a hostile or offensive work environment for any individual.

The AUS stands against any form of racial and religious intolerance or harassment, as it violates the AUS Code of Procedures (with grounds for termination). Furthermore, the AUS is committed to maintaining and sustaining a safe space for members of any religion and any ethnic background.

Likewise, gender-based harassment is based on prejudices surrounding tasks and responsibilities attached to a certain gender one identifies with. It can also occur in relation to one's gender expression.

Gender-based harassment may include:

- insults or acts that are disparaging to someone just because of their gender;
- The use of nicknames or slurs based on someone's identity;
- remarks that carry on after the target has asked the individual to stop or made them aware of an offensive term;
- Misgendering someone intentionally, or repeatedly misgendering someone after being made aware of their preferred pronouns.

To foster a safe space for all students, the AUS encourages including pronouns in introducing oneself. This not only holds space for those who may not feel comfortable stating their pronouns, but can additionally further our collective awareness of non-heteronormative gender identities, and can prevent the discomfort and harm of misgendering.

Finally, harassment based on sexuality, also known as homophobia, biphobia or otherwise, is any actions or behaviours targeting an individual based upon their sexual orientation, how they choose to identify and how they express that orientation. While closely tied to gender-based discrimination, as it largely affects members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, they are not one and the same. The AUS stands firmly against harassment based upon sexual orientation, and condemns homophobia, biphobia, and the like, in the strongest terms.

SECTION 2: Social Affairs

All AUS events will consider principles of equity and inclusion in their planning and execution, but acknowledge that this will not always be entirely possible. To continue to improve AUS events, the [E&I Event Approval Form](#) is to be completed by each team during their event planning process, in order to facilitate discussion between the E&I Department and other portfolios.

a) Considerations required by the form include:

- Location of the event and the relative accessibility of the venue
- Price of event and if financial support is available if there is an associated cost
- Contact for accessibility concerns included in the promotion of the event
- Is a Land Acknowledgement appropriate?
- What sensitive topics may be covered during an event and will there be a content warning in advance?
- If food and beverages are being served, how are allergies and dietary preferences being accommodated?
 - Is there a way for participants to express dietary needs?

The form will serve as a way to consider E&I principles and receive resources from the E&I Department. The form must be submitted 4 weeks in advance of the intended event date, and E&I Strategists will review and respond to the form within 1 week of receiving it.

The form should be updated as necessary and required to be reviewed on a yearly basis.

SECTION 3: Communication with the Arts Community

The AUS engages with Arts students in a variety of ways, including on social media, using accounts like @ubcaus, @ausequity, @ausfyc, @aushewe on Instagram and the AUS Elections Facebook page. Our social media posts should always promote a sense of community and shared understanding within the AUS. The AUS upholds this commitment by following a strictly codified set of procedures which guide the manner in which we post to social media to uphold standards for our social media posts. The following standards, in accordance with the [AUS Brand Guide](#), are to be adopted by these accounts:

PART 1: Social Media Standards

1. Sans-serif fonts should be used when selecting fonts, as they are cleaner and less distracting when reading than Serif fonts.
2. Colour use and contrast should be considered when creating visuals, to ensure the text is legible.
3. Captions should be provided on all pre-recorded video content, and where this is not possible, transcriptions should be provided in the comments of the post for those using screenreaders.
4. The creation of an 'AUS dictionary' is recommended to be shared on these accounts to assist users in understanding the jargon that may be used in posts (such as Arts Student Centre 'ASC', etc.)
5. Any media posted should contain no content that flashes over three times sequentially within the period of time of one second.
6. When sharing video content, be mindful of playing loud music or the existence of distracting background noise, to ensure the speech is intelligible.
7. When filming or photographing events, the consent of participants must have been acquired in advance of such activities taking place, and those wishing not to be included in photos should have been given adequate notice to remove themselves from the shot.

PART 2: Survey Standards

1. In surveys, questions should encourage the community to reflect on the status of equity and inclusion, as well as what possible changes can be made to improve equity and inclusion
 - a. This can be achieved by using scales, such as the [Likert Scale](#);

- b. Open-ended opinion questions to remove the assumption of needs or opinions of the diverse community the AUS serves;
- c. Categories of demographic information, if being collected and analysed, should be constructed based upon best practices at that time. Beneficial resources include [UBC Research Ethics](#).
- d. Data should be disposed of after its use, or on a defined, periodic basis;
 - i. More information on responsible data collection can be found [here](#).

Lastly, communications within the Arts community should also remain respectful (e.g., use indicated pronouns to refer to people), confidential (i.e., keep one's identifiable information private unless their behaviours may harm themselves or others), and professional (e.g., remember one's representation of the AUS and keep communications organized and on-topic, only use official working accounts for AUS-related communication).

SECTION 4: Advocacy and Resources

The AUS follows the understanding that advocacy is the act of speaking on behalf of, or in support of, another person, place, movement or idea. Promoting someone's or a group's interests or cause is additionally understood as advocacy. Equity, social justice, social inclusion, and human rights are all promoted by advocacy. It strives to make things happen in the most direct and empowering manner imaginable. It understands that self-advocacy – wherein people, maybe with encouragement and assistance, speak up and act on their own behalf – is the ultimate objective. At the AUS, we also take into account the fact that advocacy can also be construed as any conduct that promotes, urges, justifies, defends, or begs on behalf of another person.

The E&I Department commits to providing a relevant and routinely revised set of resources that aims to serve all students within the Arts Faculty. This includes, but is not limited to, resources aimed at those who are experiencing physical and mental health hardships, economic hardships (e.g., food insecurity, housing insecurity), those with accessibility needs, those facing discrimination on the basis of gender, race, sexuality, class, and etc.

SECTION 5: Portfolio Specific Conduct

Presidential Portfolio

Equity and Inclusion Department

Social Media Department

Purpose:

There are **two goals** the AUS E&I Department aims to achieve in communication with the AUS students:

1. Developing the Arts community's collective awareness of the Equity and Inclusion Department, the E&I Strategy, and the ongoing initiatives and events hosted by the E&I Department;
2. Increasing Arts students' response rates to surveys in order to hear and address more Art student voices.

To accomplish both **Goal 1 and 2**, the E&I Department implements the E&I Strategy through surveys and social media posts.

The Social Media Department should consider the following recommendations in creating media for the @ausequity page, as well as in all other contact with Arts students:

- 1) In social media posts, the content should aim to increase the awareness of the history and current situations of marginalized groups and address bias and discriminations towards said groups;
- 2) Social media should highlight and celebrate the diversity of the Arts community.
- 3) When creating content for the @ausequity Instagram account, refer to SECTION 3: Communication with the Arts Community, PART 1: *Social Media Standards*;
- 4) In surveys, questions should encourage the community to reflect on the current status of equity and inclusion efforts within the Arts community, as well as what possible changes can be made to improve equity and inclusion;
- 5) When creating surveys, questions should encourage the community to reflect on the current status of equity and inclusion efforts within the Arts community, as well as what possible changes can be made to improve equity and inclusion.
 - a) The Social Media Department should adhere to SECTION 3: Communication with the Arts Community, PART 2: *Survey Standards*.

Events Department

1. When creating events, refer to SECTION 2: Social Affairs;
2. The Events Department addresses **Goal 1** by hosting AUS events in collaboration with other constituencies, AUS Clubs, cultural clubs, and AUS portfolios.

Strategy Department

1. The Equity and Inclusion Strategy should be reviewed on a yearly basis and updated to reflect best practices, as well as address any structural changes that may have occurred with the AUS;
 - a. The E&I Department suggests holding marginalized and racialized people at the center of the conversations regarding equity and inclusion. For example, consulting with groups, such as [Arts Indigenous Student Advising](#) and [Black Student Union](#), and other cultural clubs, for recommendations, collaboration, surveys, or policy considerations.
2. The Strategy team will provide support, resources, and feedback to the rest of the AUS;
 - a. This includes responding to submissions to the [E&I Events Approval Form](#) within a week of its receipt.
3. The [E&I Events Approval Form](#) should be reviewed on a yearly basis and updated as necessary.
4. The E&I Strategy team should be involved in training members of the broader AUS through Orientation sessions.
 - a) Such training should:
 - i) Make members aware of the E&I Strategy and how they will interact with it;
 - ii) Address foundational principles of Equity and Inclusion and encourage the application of said principles, whether it be through scenario-based discussions or otherwise.

Academic Portfolio

Academic & Professional Development Department

1. The E&I Department strongly advises taking into consideration the academic hardships that are caused by various underlying factors such as cultural stigmatization or financial hardship, and creating future policies while accommodating these hardships by means such as but not limited to:
 - a. Recognizing that cultural stigmatization and/or financial hardship is grounds for an academic concession and can interfere with one's ability to work productively;

- b. Redirecting students experiencing the aforementioned hardships to mental health departments in the AUS, i.e. the HeWe department, where readily trained individuals will be able to appropriately address these hardships;
 - i. Trained individuals assisting the academic department in combating mental hardships should preferably have sufficient knowledge of the specific forms of marginalization experienced by individuals of various backgrounds
2. The E&I department recommends that events held by the Academic portfolio, such as tutoring sessions, be planned in accordance with SECTION 2: Social Affairs.
3. Providing diverse resources, like multilingual tutoring services, would be of benefit to the widely diverse Arts community.
4. When looking at speakers for Professional Development weeks and workshops, speakers should be chosen with intersectionality in mind, in order to reflect the diversity of their audience.
5. Those who host faculty events should consider and see the effects of intersectionality on one's life experience by looking for potential speakers who have multiple minority group identities.
6. Careers existing beyond 'conventional' understandings should not be discounted when considering participants for Professional Development Events.
7. Events should be created in accordance with SECTION 2: Social Affairs.

Health and Wellness Department

1. The E&I Department recommends that all HeWe volunteers receive sufficient training and education to facilitate important discussions on Mental Health and disseminate that information to other departments when relevant.
2. The E&I Department recommends that the HeWe Instagram includes and expands on the current resources being provided to students with mental health concerns;
 - a. This may include options such as but not limited to:
 - i. Chaplain services; to ensure all types of mental healing are taken into account via an acknowledgement of cultural sensitivity;
 - ii. Information like acupuncture, homeopathy and/or alternative wellness practices.
3. In advocating for mental health and wellness, the department should aim to broadly represent symptoms and expressions of varying states of mental health.

Administrative Portfolio

Operations Department

1. ASC Services
 - a. Must assign rooms and venue bookings based on the order of the [ASC Booking Information Form](#) to determine priority.
 - b. Subparts of ASC
 - i. Office Administration

Booking the ASC

 1. The booking system and booking form should be accessible and easy to understand, in accordance with visual requirements, outlined in SECTION 3: Communication with the Arts Community, PART 1, points 1 and 2.
 - ii. Maintenance
 1. Ensure the availability of menstruation products in all washrooms.
 2. Ensure the building elevator is functional, for the sake of accessibility concerns.
2. Webmaster
 - a. The website should be maintained in accordance with SECTION 3: Communication with the Arts Community.
 - b. It is recommended that UX/UI design should continue to be improved upon for those who use various accessibility aids, such as screen readers.

Governance Department

1. AUS Council
 - a. Provide a personalized Land Acknowledgment to connect with the Indigenous community.
 - b. Include and define Robert's Rules of Order on the website.
 - c. Both the Speaker of Council and the Clerk of Council must use relatively accessible, though formal language. If any technical or precise terms are used, these terms should be defined and easily accessible alongside the materials from the council, whether that be through linked definitions or a glossary attached to the materials.
 - d. Any food provided should accommodate all councillor dietary restrictions.
2. Governance Committee

- a. The Committee is only open to two kinds of general members: AUS members and students outside of the AUS but in the Faculty of Arts.
 - b. When the Governance committee is aiding in the drafting of the language of amendments to the AUS Code of Procedures, the language should be as accessible as possible without violating the format of the written code.
3. Club Support
- a. Involve and communicate with the E&I and HR departments when conflicts or issues of harassment may be targeted to specific groups.
 - b. Club access and support should be done with no preference given to one group over another.

Sustainability Department

1. AUS Food Hub Initiative

The team must ensure the following is adhered to on each of the Food Hub's projects:

- a. ASC Food Fund
 - i. No preference should be given to an applicant.
 - ii. The distribution of the Food Fund must solely be on a first-come first-served basis, as reflected in the application form.
- b. ASC Community Pantry
 - i. The pantry must include food items that cater to dietary restrictions.
 - ii. The pantry will be accessible to all students. Students wishing to take up to 3 goods from the pantry must not be denied access.
 - iii. No policing of the Pantry should take place, and intentions of goodwill should be presumed.
- c. ASC Community Meals
 - i. Community Meals must include food that can accommodate dietary restrictions.

Arts Caucus Portfolio

1. The Arts Caucus Portfolio creates a bridge between the AMS and AUS to the Arts student body, to ensure Arts students' voices are heard and uplifted.
 - a. Given the often difficult-to-navigate nature of organizations like the AMS and other governing bodies, the Arts Caucus should share summaries, such as council meeting summaries, in more accessible language for the benefit of Arts students.

- b. The Portfolio centres around student leadership and organizations, connecting them with broader systems on campus. The E&I Department would encourage the AMS Arts Caucus Portfolio to consider principles of equity and inclusion, as well as decolonization, in facilitating connections.

Year Representatives

First-Year Representatives

1. The E&I Department recommends that First-Year Representatives (Gateway, Collegia, Totem Park, Orchard Commons, and Vanier) conduct extensive outreach and data collection to know the concerns and needs of members of their community, including in regard to equity and inclusion principles.

All Representatives

2. With regards to equity and inclusion practices, the team of AMS representatives work to ensure that their voices represent a diverse set of voices within the Arts Students community, and to ensure that they are held accountable to the community.
 - a. One of the recommendations made for the AMS Arts caucus is to ensure that the newly hired staff undergo mandatory training to enhance their ability to advocate for the diverse community they represent.

Engagement Portfolio

Marketing Department

1. Refer to SECTION 3: Communication with the Arts Community.

Analytics Department

1. The data gathered should be anonymized and should exclude demographics UNLESS the demographic in question is highly relevant to the analysis;
 - a. Refer to SECTION 3: Communication with the Arts Community, PART 2: *Survey Standards*.
2. The data gathered in the analytics department should be disseminated on a need-to-know and confidential basis.

Merchandise Department

1. When considering merchandise production, items, such as tote bags, water bottles, etc., should be prioritised over size-dependent items, such as t-shirts, hoodies, etc.

2. If producing wearable merchandise, sizes must be as broadly inclusive as possible.

Media Department

1. Refer to SECTION 3: Communicating with the Arts Community.

External Portfolio

Sponsorships Department

1. When evaluating candidates for sponsorship, an evaluation of their business practices should take place, looking at their philanthropic presence, their business ethics, their corporate values, and any controversies that may have taken place;
 - a. Additionally, when a candidate does not meet this criteria in full but may still be considered a beneficial sponsor, the E&I department should be brought on to consult with the department.
2. Sponsorship companies that favour or bias against certain groups based on candidates' races, sexuality, religious and political beliefs, etc. must not be worked with.
3. Sponsorship collaborators should be sourced locally.

Philanthropy Department

1. Research the citations that are used or will be used in NGOs' presentations to check the reliability and accuracy of sources.
2. Consider the implications of funding NGOs and whether their values are in line with the values of the AUS.
3. Check NGOs' finance conditions (e.g., check where the money was spent by going over the CRA List of Charities, reasons why students were nominated and students' reviews).
4. Involve E&I in consultation with AUS Philanthropy to continue to monitor where AUS funding is being allocated.

Finance Portfolio

1. The AUS operating budget should be allocated in such a way:
 - a. That benefits the Arts student body at large, as the funds are comprised of student contributions;
 - b. That is fair to all portfolios under the AUS.

Reimbursement Department

1. Ensure that expense information (e.g., requested portfolios, expense description, amount and date sent) is viewable and transparent by using the reimbursement tracker.
 - a. Ensure that this data complies with accessibility standards, such as those in SECTION 3: Communication with the Arts Community, PART 1, points 1 and 2.

Grants Department

1. When evaluating the grants for AUS clubs (e.g. fiscal surplus, allocation of funds), the name of the clubs should be unknown to the evaluators: this should be done to account for biases related to the club's equitable values.
2. Provide objective reasons why grants are declined, to allow more transparency, and when requested, further resources or assistance in grant applications may be provided.

Internal Portfolio

Internal Development and Volunteer Appreciation Department

1. When planning events, refer to SECTION 2: Social Affairs,
2. The materials created for AUS orientations should follow the standards in SECTION 3: Communication with the Arts Community, PART 1: Social Media Standards.
 - a. To promote accessibility of in-person internal training and workshops, minutes or presented materials should be provided to participants, when appropriate.

Elections Department

1. When requesting candidate biographies, **candidates should be made aware their responses will be shared** and a general template should be followed outlining the candidate's name, pronouns as shared by candidates, and relevant demographic information (year, major), as well as their key issues and standpoints.
 - a. This would enhance student understanding of who they are voting for, and simplify the language and structure used.
 - b. When drafting the Elections Code, consent to share demographic information and pictures should be considered.
2. Account for holiday and religious observances when planning election timelines.

3. Mandatory election events should have virtual and recorded alternatives when appropriate.
4. If requested, accessible accommodations will be made for candidates, within reason, so as to not bias the outcome of elections;
 - a. Candidates must have the opportunity to disclose any necessary accommodations prior to the election commencing.

Human Resources and Onboarding Department

1. In order to adhere to equity and inclusion practices, the Internal Portfolio will review the HR Strategy and Termination Procedures on an annual basis to ensure up-to-date information.
 - a. This review will include consultation with the E&I Department.
 - b. Continue to explore ongoing equity & inclusion, cultural awareness and trauma-informed training to provide to members.
2. When creating documents like the Master Contact List, pronouns of all listed members should be shared, with the consent of the members.

Student Life Portfolio

1. When planning events, refer to SECTION 2: Social Affairs.
2. The E&I Department recommends a vetting process be implemented when evaluating potential candidates for collaboration, actively assessing the organization's goals and values, as well as their commitment to the values of E&I.
 - a. For further recommendations, see SECTION 5: External Portfolio, *Sponsorship Department*
3. When appropriate, there should be multiple skill level options available, in order to promote fair gameplay amongst participants.
4. Be mindful of, or avoid, scheduling events on major religious holidays.