

2025 Symposium: Inclusive Design for Learning Spaces

Academic Symposium Call for Abstracts

The **2025 Symposium: Inclusive Design for Learning Spaces** will explore the design and use of learning spaces for students and educators who are neurodivergent or who live with disability.

With early learning, school, and higher education organisations around the world increasingly seeking to welcome students of all abilities, **how can the built environment contribute to a more inclusive educational experience?** What do we already know that can be implemented for immediate impact? What new knowledge is needed to accommodate the diverse needs of building users in educational settings?

This three-day event runs from **11– 12 November 2025**, and involves:

- **Academic Symposium: Days 1** will be an academic conference for sharing research-based insights and fostering future collaborations.
- **Public Symposium: Day 2** will be a public-facing event that celebrates diverse voices, shares insights from lived experience, and presents evidence-informed approaches to designing educational facilities for a broad range of human needs.



The symposium will consider inclusive built environment design through three key principles:

- **Diversity** – acknowledging and appreciating human heterogeneity
- **Inclusion** – seeking equitable access to learning environments and activities for students and educators
- **Participation** – promoting access and meaningful involvement for all.

This Call for Abstracts

The Organising Committee invites papers for the **Academic Symposium** that address inclusive design issues related to **built environments in early learning, school and higher education settings**, as well as other educational situations or contexts.

Abstracts should be:

- Maximum of 1,800 characters (300 words approx.)
- Plus, up to six keywords for one of the following **six built environment-focused themes**.

1. **Design of inclusive learning spaces** (e.g., indoor, outdoor/landscape, masterplans, city planning, co-design processes etc.)
2. **Lived experiences of learning spaces** (e.g., user perspectives on spatial experiences)
3. **Evaluation of learning spaces for inclusivity** (e.g., methodologies, measures, outcomes)
4. **Inclusive placemaking for learning** (e.g., design of inclusive education precincts)
5. **Design teaching for disability/inclusion** (e.g., engaging people with lived experience in design studios/processes)
6. **Other topics** at the nexus of the built environment, neurodiversity and/or disability, and learning spaces.

Abstracts will be accepted for presentations in either of the following **two formats**:

- a. **1,500-word research papers for 10-minute presentations** (to be presented in-person and subsequently published in the conference proceedings)
- b. **2 x A1 landscape-size poster presentations in JPEG format for printed display and 10-minute presentations** (to be presented in-person and subsequently published in the conference proceedings in a revised format).

We encourage insightful submissions from people with diverse backgrounds, including early career and established academics, PhD candidates, design practitioners, evaluators, and others wishing to share research into issues relating to inclusive learning spaces across all education sectors and related contexts.

We especially encourage those with lived experience to submit.

All abstracts will be peer-reviewed.

Abstracts should identify the issue or problem you addressed, your approach to addressing it, and your key insights or findings.

The Organising Committee will select the abstracts with the highest ratings for the conference program. All submitters will be advised if their abstract has been accepted or not by **Friday, 9 May 2025**.

Accepted papers of 1500 words and 2 x A1 posters will be published in the peer-reviewed conference proceedings.

Key Dates

Thursday, 14 November 2024	Call for abstracts opens
Friday, 28 March 2025	Call for abstracts closes
Friday, 9 May 2025	Abstract notification deadline

Research papers & poster presentation submissions

Monday, 30 June 2025	Draft papers & posters due
Monday, 8 September 2025	Reviewer feedback due
Monday, 13 October 2025	Final papers & posters due

Registration

Early-September 2025	Registration opens
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We will provide written acceptance of your abstract for the purposes of conference support funding or visa applications.

Publication

The peer-reviewed conference proceedings will be:

- Uploaded to the University of Melbourne's FigShare Repository and allocated a digital object identifier (DOI).
- Circulated to delegates before the event, allowing all attendees to prepare for engaging discussions.
- Made freely available for maximum impact.

Speakers will be asked permission for their presentations to be video recorded and uploaded to the University of Melbourne's FigShare Repository and allocated digital object identifiers (DOI).

After the conference, selected authors/presenters will be invited to contribute to an edited book. This contribution will involve extending paper ideas into a book chapter of 3,000 – 5,000 words and re-submitting for a second round of peer review.

Organisers

Presented by the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning, University of Melbourne, Australia

In collaboration with the Designing Learning Spaces for Diversity, Inclusion and Participation ARC Linkage Project

How to Submit

Please submit via this Qualtrics form:

https://q.surveys.unimelb.edu.au/jfe/form/SV_dpoU7mhhT9cTikK

Academic Symposium Registration Costs

Early bird ticket sales open early-September 2025 and close 17 October 2025. Full price tickets will then be on sale.

Paper/poster presenter - General Registration	Early bird \$480
	Full price \$600

Paper/poster presenter - Concession Registration	Early bird \$240
	Full price \$300

Please note that Academic Symposium registration costs include:

- ✓ Days 1 - 2 of the event, including the Public Symposium and Academic Symposium
- ✓ Morning tea, lunch and all-day tea/coffee at Academic Days
- ✓ Networking drinks and canapes at the end of Public Day

Concession Registration includes student card holders and concession card holders.

All fees are quoted in Australian dollars (AUD) and are inclusive of 10% GST (Goods and Services Tax).

When ticket sales open, an '**attend only**' ticket price will be available for **non-presenters** at a cost of \$120 for the two days.