



SOCIETIES



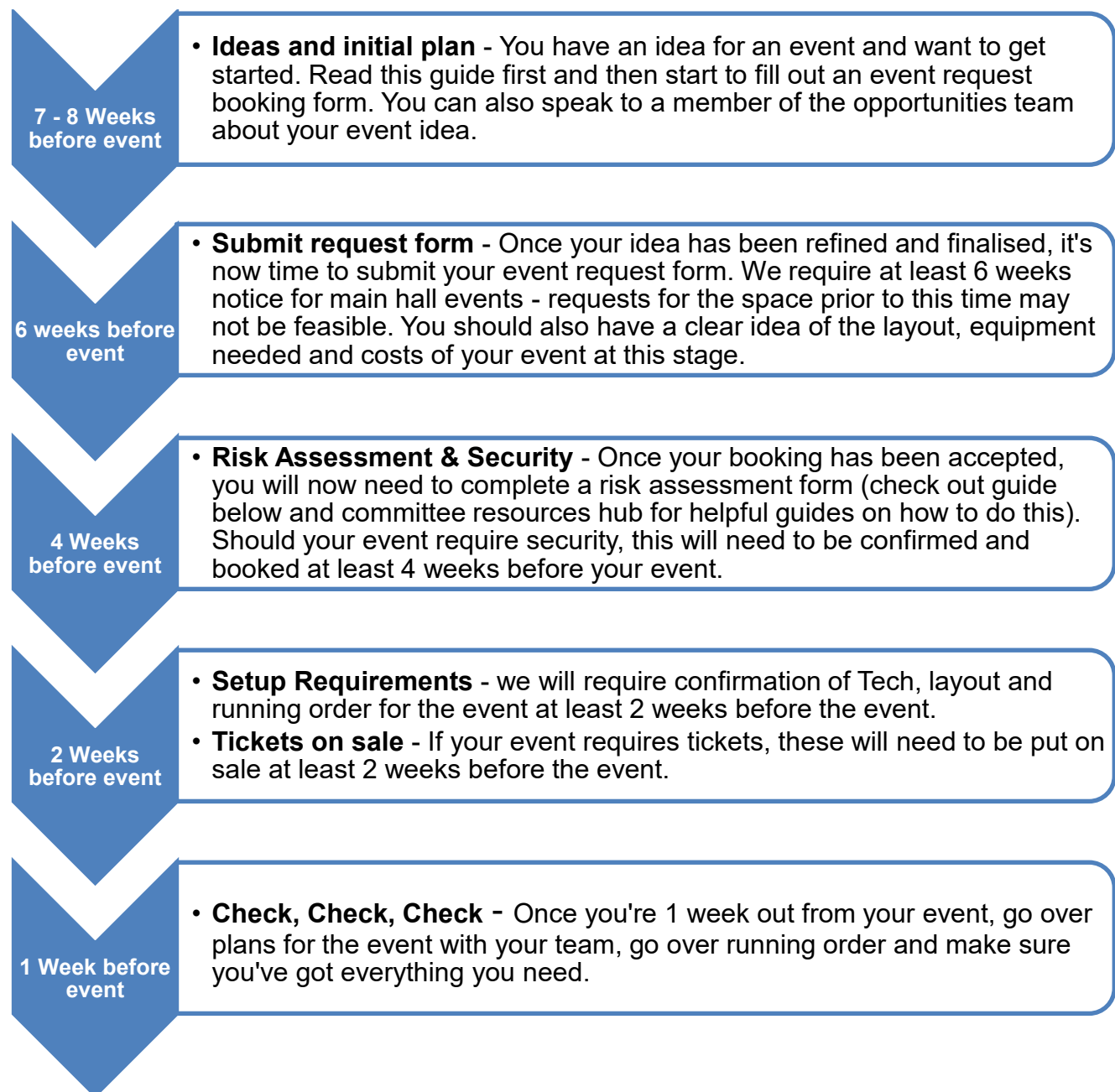
Student Led Events Guide

Step by step guide to planning your event

The best way to organise any event is to plan and make sure that as much work is done as early as possible, to avoid a rush in the days leading up the event. It is important with any event to set realistic goals. This guide to setting up an event is here to help, whether you are a club, society, individual or a group of students looking to put something on.

Timeline for student led events

The below is an outline of the timeline and milestones which a typical student led event in the The Union main hall would need to follow:



1. Plan

WHY ARE YOU DOING THE EVENT?

At the start of any event or activity, it's important to identify and agree upon the reason(s) why you want to run your event – is it because you want to raise money for your student group or a charitable cause? Do you want to raise awareness amongst students about a certain topic or project?

AIMS & TARGETS

Once you have identified why you want to run an event, you can set some aims or targets to work towards. Setting these aims will help focus the work of the group that are leading on the event and so that you can measure the success of the event when reviewing your event afterwards.

FIX A DATE

This does not mean taking a pin and sticking it in the diary at random. Do some basic research:

- Does your proposed date clash or is it close to something that attracts the same kind or large amounts of students?
- Is it during exam periods or reading weeks? If so, are fewer people around? This also affects your pool of potential helpers.
- Is it at a time of year that students are likely to have disposable income to be able to attend?
- Have you allowed yourself enough preparation time?

FIX A TIME

Don't start too early in the day, allow time for setting up. There is no point in having main events/activities starting at 19:00 if the majority of people won't arrive till 21:00. And what time should the events finish? This may depend on licence, transport, follow-on activities, etc.

FIND A SUITABLE VENUE

Make sure you book your event space as soon as possible! Availability can vary depending on your venue. It's also important to consider accessibility, so bear this in mind when considering your options.

SHARE THE WORKLOAD

Be open, honest and communicate with the rest of your committee (or anyone else involved in the event) as the more people who know the timeline and process, the better. Assign roles to each person. Agree a list of tasks to be undertaken by each person. Have regular meetings to check progress and report back.

2. Finance

Firstly, if you are a student group, you need to see how much money you have available from your student group account to put towards this event.

You can request a finance statement of your account from the Opportunities office.

Make sure that before you start planning you factor in all of the costs. This could include, but is not limited to:

- venue hire
- security
- tech support
- food and drink
- entertainment
- decorations
- licences
- equipment necessary for your event

For events being held in The Union, see the section below for more guidance on these costs.

If it is an event that your group has run in the past, you may be able to see how much was spent previously. Things to consider are:

- Are there any 'hidden' costs from the venue (i.e. security fees?)
- If you want to print tickets, have you factored in the costs for doing this (especially if you're getting them professionally printed)
- What is the realistic number of people coming, and will ticket sales cover all of these costs?
- Have you factored in any promotional budget? i.e. cost of printing posters
- Are there any immediate costs that you may have to cover?

At the end of this guide, you will find an example budget form to help you with your planning.

3. Events in The Union

When running events in The Union there are some specific processes you will need to follow, as well as additional support from our staff to help you.

To run an event in The Main Hall in The Union, we will need 6-8 weeks' notice. Complete a student led events request form and a member of the opportunities team will review this, and speak to you if more information is needed, or confirm your booking within a week.

Within The Union, there are specific costs to consider. These include:

- Reception and Staffing - With reception and staffing you will need to consider if your event is being ran outside of our reception opening hours. Additionally, if you need additional bar staff there may be a cost to this.
- Security - For security, there are stepped costs depending on the size and nature of your event.
- Tech Support - if you require additional tech support you may need to consider the costs of this too.

For example costings for these, see the example budget on the [committee resources hub](#).

4. Risk Assessments

It is a legal requirement to have a risk assessment.

Risk assessments need to be comprehensive and cover all reasonable risks and specific risks to your event. There is a template for this that can be found at the end of this guide.

You must carry out the risk assessment yourself, so that you understand the risks and know how to manage them. You will need to complete and submit your first draft risk assessment at least 4 weeks before your event, a member of our team will be able to support you further with this if needed. The Union and University have staff that are well trained and experienced in risk assessment who can advise.

If you are unsure of what to include, think about the following:

- Hazard - Identify the potential hazard that could occur.
- Severity - If this does happen, how dangerous is it?
- Likelihood - How likely is it that this risk will happen.
- Controls - What measures have been put in place to ensure they don't happen?

If you do not provide a risk assessment for your event to a member of opportunities staff, your event will not take place.

Please provide this to us when submitting this form. There is an example risk assessment at the end of this guide, and a blank template on The Union website to help you along with a hazard checklist and training module to help you compile a risk assessment, [these can be found on our committee resources hub](#).

If you cannot find this, please email a member of the opportunities team.

Security

During the planning of your event, an assessment as to the need for venue security staff will be made.

Should your event require security, The Union can book this for you and will need to be done at least 4 weeks before your event and will be done upon completion of a risk assessment.

As a guide, the types of events which will require security staff include the following:

- Ticketed events or events which require the exclusive use of the main hall
- Events with an expected attendance of over 100 people
- Events which are deemed high risk due to consumption of alcohol

5. Catering

Do you need food at your event? If so, how much will it cost you and will you charge your guests for it? If you are having food it can be useful to ask for any dietary requirements or meal choices when attendees book their tickets.

On university premises you may find you are restricted to campus catering depending on where and when your event takes place. You may also be unable to bring food into some university spaces.

In The Union, if you require catering you can use The Union catering service for your event. This will need to be booked at least two weeks in advance of your event.

For events taking place at external venues, make sure you ask about catering if you need it. Some venues will have their own rules on catering which can be very restrictive and expensive. Alternatively, some venues may be flexible and work with you to find a suitable solution. This is why it is important to ask about their requirements when you are booking the venue.

If you are considering providing food from external sources, please speak to a member of the opportunities team for further advice.

There are specific procedures you must follow and a food policy you must adhere to, these can be found on the committee resources section of our web-site:

Catering At Events Policy

Bake Sales Guidance

What to think about:

- What food do you require?
- How much do you need?
- How will it be served?
- Are you charging for the food?
- Dietary requirements
- Allergy labelling
- Meal choices
- Additional costs (napkins, cutlery, tablecloths, etc)

6. Tech, Layout & Running Order

Tech

The Union has its own in-house tech staff who can help in the planning of your event and give you an idea of what can be done in the main hall space and the equipment available.

If you are planning to bring in external suppliers for anything the Union can't supply (such as a DJ decks, UV lights or headphones for a silent disco). This will need to be added to your event risk assessment and PAT certificates for all equipment being hired will need to be supplied.

The main hall also has a projector and screen which can be used as part of your event (i.e. if you need to have a presentation).

If you are having performances by artists or acts as part of your event (both student and external) a soundcheck may be required prior to the event. This will be arranged during planning of the event with Union staff.

Room Layout

The main hall is a great space to run your events and can be laid out in a number of ways – for example it can be set up for an awards ceremony, in theatre style for comedy nights, with or without a stage to allow more or less space for your event.

Running Order

There is an example running order and a blank template available on The Union website for you to use.

The key things to remember when writing your running order are:

- Including set up times
- Ticket sales times (when is the last time for tickets to be bought)
- Time between acts or parts of the event to rearrange the space
- Who is the responsible person for that part of the event
- Clean up time at the end of the event
- Breaks

The Union will require this information at least 2 weeks before your event in order to ensure the space can be cleared and set up how you require it for your event.

7. Advertising

It doesn't matter how good your event is if people don't know about it, they won't come!

The Union can offer you support with marketing, including space on our social media channels. To do this, we will need at least two weeks notice from your planned content. Please contact Opportunities staff to arrange this.

Decide how you are going to advertise and allocate a budget:

- Are you going to use social media, The Union website, posters, flyers, local media, etc?
- How much is your advertising going to cost, who will design it, where can you get it printed, how will you make it stand out?

Try and advertise as early as possible, and make sure people are aware of key dates, such as when and where tickets go on sale. Tickets can be sold on The Union website, and in some instances can be paid for with Metcard.

If you create your own advertising, don't forget to put the following on your posters:

- Name of the event
- Location
- Date and time
- Price and ticket information
- Links to social media, key contacts, or website
- Any pictures or logos
- Additional information or description (such as venue access, dress code, event specific information)
- Who can attend

8. Communicate, confirm & prepare

Make sure that you as an organising team, communicate effectively with each other. Make sure that you meet regularly to monitor progress towards achieving your aims and that the event is on target to be delivered when you set out to deliver it.

As well as communicating with each other, it's also vital that you communicate with The Union about any changes, problems or support you may need – make sure you communicate early so that we can provide the support and guidance you require – don't leave things to the last minute.

It's good practice to double check everything after booking and prior to the event, to ensure that all parties involved in the event know the plan and their involvement is confirmed.

Ensure you have shared the responsibility and that everyone on your organising committee knows their role for the event. It's no fun for anyone if you have to pick up tasks you were expecting someone else to do!

For Union events, make sure Union staff and your team are aware of the requirements for the night and that everything works in advance. For external events, check in with the venue to ensure any last-minute issues are resolved.

9. Deliver your event

On the day of the event, make sure you have an achievable timeframe in place, so when doors are set to open, they do.

Check the times and running order for everything and have a key individual responsible for making sure these things happen. Don't be afraid to delegate some jobs and try and clean up as you go along to save time at the end.

MOST IMPORTANTLY, ENJOY THE EVENT AS IT'S THE ACCUMULATION OF ALL YOUR AND YOUR TEAM'S HARD WORK!



10. Review

One of the most important parts of running an event is to review it after you have delivered it.

Was it a success?

The review stage gives you the opportunity to look back at the event and measure it against the aims and targets you set for it – did you meet or exceed them?

You can also look back at the reason(s) why you ran the event and reflect upon whether the event met these reason and how.

What did you learn?

One of the big benefits in being part of organising an event is that it gives you great learning and development opportunities.

Being part of organising an event offers you the opportunity to use and develop a wide range of skills, including:

- Communication
- Team working
- Delegating
- Leadership
- Budgeting
- Marketing/Social Media

By looking back over the course of the planning and delivery of an event, you will be able to reflect on the skills that you used as well as what you learn't during the course of planning and running the event that you didn't know at the start.

What would you do differently?

Lastly, the other benefit of carrying out a review is that it gives you the opportunity to reflect on things that didn't quite go to plan.

These could be mistakes that were made during planning, deadlines that were missed when booking or purchasing equipment or unforeseen that occurred on the day of the event which you can factor into your planning for your next event.