UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

MAKING IMPORTANT EVENTS HAPPEN

A guide to planning events at the University of Birmingham

1 INTRODUCTION

A successful event can be a key part of your communications portfolio, allowing you to engage with new audiences, cement existing relationships and empower staff to make important things happen on a civic, national and international level.

This pocket guide to event management has been produced by the Stakeholder Relations Team and provides a brief guide to managing your events on the University campus and outside. It will give you suggestions on what to consider throughout the process and will hopefully assist in creating a successful and enjoyable event.

2 BEFORE YOU START

Ask yourself some questions:

- What message/information am I trying to communicate?
- What format could that be in?
- Who is my audience?
- Why would they want to attend this event?
- What am I trying to achieve?
- What budget do I have for this event?
- What is a realistic time scale?

3 SETTING OBJECTIVES

SPECIFIC

MEASURABLE

ACHIEVABLE

RELEVANT

TIME BOUND

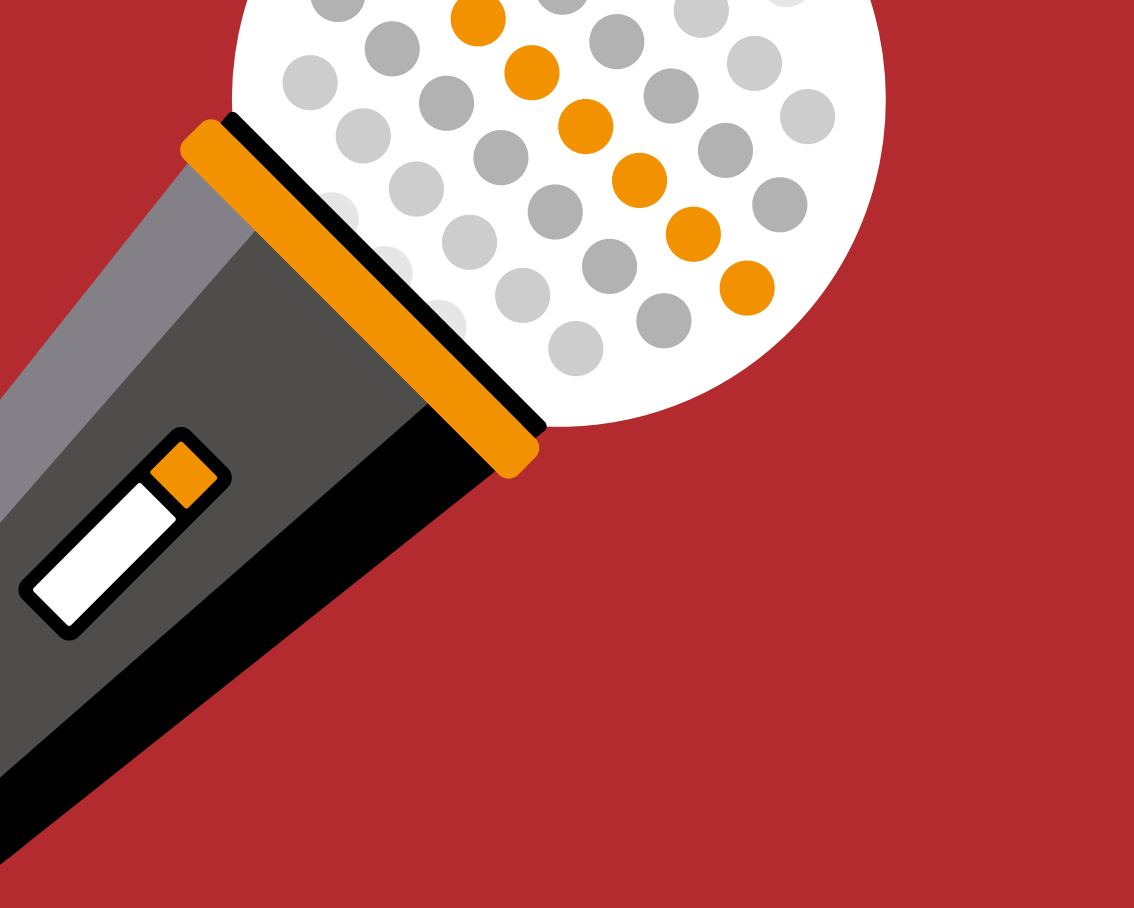
Your objectives will determine what format your event should take and will allow you to measure the success of the event. Your objectives should be **SMART**

4 SELECTING TIMES AND DATES

Choosing the correct date and time of day for your event is crucial to all involved. Knowing your audience is vital. Think about:

- The best time of year for your audience as well as time of day
- School holidays
- Exam periods
- End of financial year
- Particularly busy periods for certain sectors
- Religious holidays
- Hours of the working day
- Weekends
- Catering needs
- Avoid clashing with other university, community and UK events that are competing for the same audience
- Consider collaborations should a clash happen
- Set the date based on speaker's availability (at least six months before)
- Remember planning time is imperative and will mean your audience is more likely to be available

CALENDAR



5 APPROACHING HIGH-PROFILE SPEAKERS AND PERFORMERS

Things to consider:

- Approach the speaker with plenty of time (at least six months in advance).
- Do you want a member of the University senior management such as the Vice-Chancellor or Provost and Vice-Principal at your event?

- Phone the speaker's PA or agent and discuss your intention of inviting said speaker. Ensure that the venue is available. The PA will let you know what dates would be difficult for the speaker. Hold the available dates in the diary of all involved.
- The formal invitation should come from the senior manager. You will be expected to write this and forward it to the appropriate office for them to send to the speaker.
- Follow up with the senior manager's office if you do not hear back within a month.
- Once your speaker is booked please fill out a Freedom of Information Form that can be found at https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/has/Freedom-of-Speech/index.aspx this will ensure the appropriate people including security are notified of the visit.

6 HOSTING THE SPEAKER BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER THE EVENT

Things to consider:

- Consider the opportunity for an ongoing relationship with the speaker and maximise this.
- Ensure the speaker's experience of the University is positive and engaging.
- Consider a chaperone for the speaker.
- Ask the speaker's PA for a biography and photograph to use in publicity.
- Brief the speaker on the format of the event, who will be in the audience and how many, well in advance.
- Assist with travel plans.
- Who will meet your speaker on arrival?
- If the Vice-Chancellor is hosting your event he may wish to meet the speaker before the event.
- Will your speaker be using PowerPoint?
- Provide water for them while they speak.
- Do you need to know dietary requirements?
- Who will be introducing the speaker? You should offer to write the welcome speech for senior managers.
- Provide senior managers with full briefing.
- Ensure the speaker is comfortable with the venue and set up before the event start.
- At the end of the event, escort the speaker to their vehicle.
- You may wish to thank the speaker in writing after the event.
- Identify any follow-up activity resulting from your event.

7 THE AUDIENCE

Knowing your audience is extremely important. Getting the correct people in the room will help you to meet your objectives and create real impact with your event.

Things to consider:

- Ensure you are inviting people who will be either actively or passively interested in your event
- Think about how you are going to invite your audience, by closed personal invitation or by widely advertising and opening the invite up
- If advertising widely, ensure you are targeting your audience correctly by making the information available in the correct places

Check list

Ensure your audience has all the information they require with this check list

Invitation:

- Date, time and venue
- How to sign up to attend the event
- What the event is about
- When the event will finish
- Dress code (should you have one)
- Any other information eg, book signing, a chance for questions
- Cost

Confirmation:

- Date, time and venue
- Finish time
- Parking (free or pay and display)
- Public transport details
- Cost
- Dress code
- Contact details of organiser

8 BRIEFING DOCUMENTS

Briefing documents are key for the home team and any keynote speakers you may have invited. You should ensure your briefing documents are tailored to the individual giving the reader the specific information that is most important to them. You may like to consider including the following information: full running order including times; event overview; objectives and tone; key speaker biography; dinner guest list and biographies; and emergency contact details.

9 VENUE AND ROOM BOOKING

Things to consider:

- **Location.** Is it easy for your audience to get to? Is parking available? Wherever possible you should use a University venue as we should show off our wonderful campus as often as possible.
- **Capacity.** How many people are you expecting to attend? You want a venue that can accommodate your audience comfortably. You may need to consider disabled access and toilet facilities.
- **Impression.** Think about what the first impression will be for your audience. You may want the venue to echo what kind of event you are holding. How can you exceed expectations?
- **Original Thinking.** Use your imagination and try to visualise your event in different environments. You may need to dress a dull venue to add interest. Or overcome obstacles in order to use a truly innovative space.

University venues can be booked through

venuebirmingham

10 CATERING AND ACCOMMODATION

Depending on the time of day your event is being held you may require catering and/or accommodation. The University has onsite caterers that can be booked through venuebirmingham and will cater for all occasions from breakfast meetings to sit-down dinners for 430 people. When booking catering you should consider any dietary requirements you may need to cater for. Also ensure people have the facilities to eat and drink comfortably (particularly if it is a stand up reception). There are also several approved external suppliers you could use. Accommodation at the University can be found at the conference park with the usual hotel service available.

11 EVENTS BUDGET

In the current financial environment it is essential your event budgeting is accurate. Ensure you think through all possible costs linked to your event and get accurate quotes for all aspects. For fund generating events, know your break-even point. You may wish to consider using sponsorship for certain aspects, request donations from local companies or partners, or sell tickets for the event to cover costs.

12 MARKETING AND PROMOTION

Marketing and promoting your event is very important in order to reach your intended audience and ensure quality in that audience. Your marketing strategy will depend on the type of event you are holding, how many people you are trying to attract, your budget and your target market.

Things to consider:

- Smaller events will mostly benefit from a direct email to the named receiver
- Larger events that may be targeted at a 'public' audience would benefit from a more general approach
- E-cards
- Flyers
- Website events pages; college pages, student website
- Newsletters; college newsletters, university-wide publications such as *Buzz*, *Community Buzz* and *Old Joe*
- Adverts in publications such as the *Metro*, *Marketing Birmingham*, *I Choose Birmingham*
- Social media channels
- Campus TV screens
- Radio shout outs

Always invite more people than you want to host to account for drop out, particularly if your event is free – for example, if you want an audience of 100 people to attend you should invite approximately 300 people.

PRESENT

13 UNIVERSITY BRAND IDENTITY AND ADVERTISING

It is important for the University to deliver a strong brand identity as it feeds into the overall brand and promotes recognition, sets us apart from our competition, helps create clarity, connects us with our stakeholders, promotes trust and creates impact.

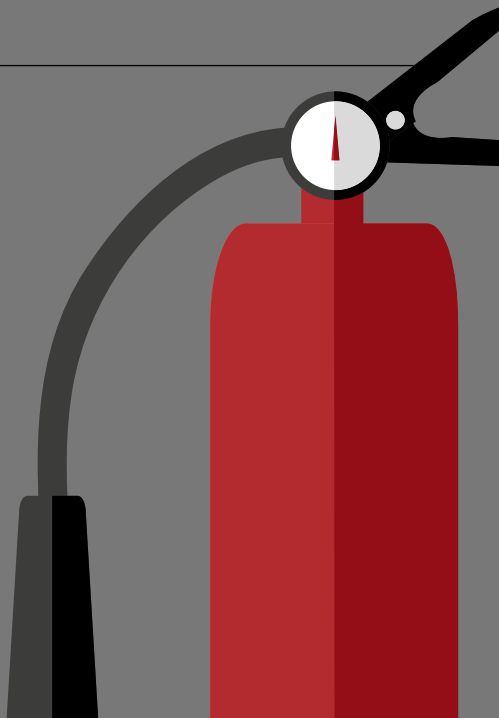
The University's Creative Media department will support you to ensure the communications you produce are to University brand standards. They provide a full professional service in design for web or print and film production. See: www.creative-bham.co.uk for details.

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

14 HEALTH AND SAFETY AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Things to consider:

- Do a risk assessment to highlight the areas that may need attention – see: **https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/has/documents/public/venuebirmingham-risk-assessment-template.pdf**
- Have copies of the public liability documents for any external companies you may be using for your event
- Ensure you are using approved suppliers where possible – see: **https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/finance/procurement/i-need-to-buy-something/approved-suppliers.aspx**
- Unapproved catering providers must go through the correct checking process administered by venuebirmingham
- Have a first aider present; you could use St John's Ambulance for larger events – see **www.sja.org.uk**

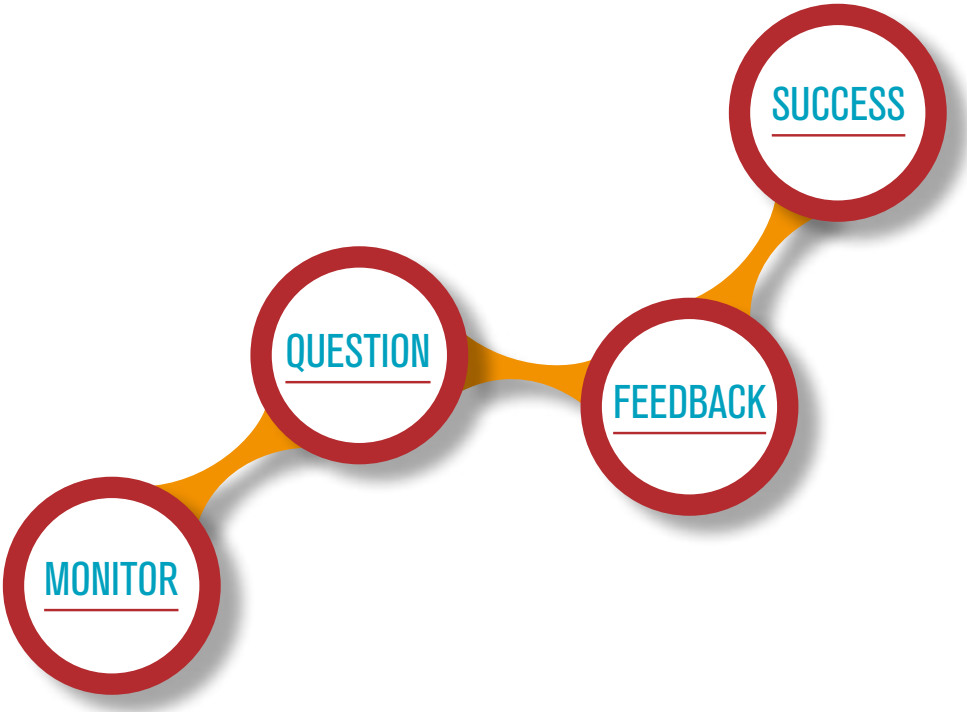


15 EVALUATION

The need to evaluate impact and measure the effectiveness of your events is becoming more and more important. Consider your event objectives, networking, knowledge, or motivation and link them with the University's strategic framework (www.birmingham.ac.uk/strategic-framework/index.aspx). You may wish to link home team members up with particular guests or consider pre- and post-event evaluation to compare the difference.

Things to consider:

- Monitor visitor/guest numbers
- If you have a privately invited audience then ensure you know exactly who attended
- Audience questionnaire
- Run a focus group
- Follow up with the home team, gain feedback
- Map follow-up activity after your event (if a conversation started at your event that was then continued by a colleague)
- What did your audience take from the event and what will they do differently as a result of the event?
- Did your event result in the securing of funding or sponsorship?


SUCCESS
QUESTION
FEEDBACK
MONITOR

16 USEFUL CONTACTS

UNIVERSITY EVENTS TEAM

For advice and support in the planning of your event:
Jane Arrowsmith:
e.j.arrowsmith@bham.ac.uk,
0121 414 7254
Stuart Panrucker:
s.g.panrucker@bham.ac.uk,
0121 414 8782
Eleanor Burdis:
e.g.burdis@bham.ac.uk,
0121 414 7271

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE

l.wilden@bham.ac.uk,
0121 414 4536

VENUEBIRMINGHAM

Venuebirmingham provide a full conferencing and hospitality management service. Event forms for consideration can be found at https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/has/organising-events.aspx
Find out more at:
www.venuebirmingham.com,
0121 415 8400

ROOM BOOKINGS

Central Room Bookings are responsible for booking the majority of rooms on campus. Rooms can be booked at:
https://webroombooking.bham.ac.uk/roombooking/current_academic_year/Login.aspx - login with adf username and password, or email; roombookings@contacts.bham.ac.uk

CREATIVE MEDIA

Creative Media includes the Media Centre, who can provide filming support; Design, experts in producing promotional materials; Central Print, who can print any promotional materials, and Distribution, who can deliver promotional materials to your target audience
For more information:
www.creative-bham.co.uk

CATERING

Venuebirmingham can provide catering to the venues they manage. For all other on-site catering contact Fresh Thinking: freshthinking@venuebirmingham.com, 0121 414 6250.
Menu selection can be found at: http://www.venuebirmingham.com/?q=freshthinking

FURNITURE HIRE

If you would like to create a different look in the room of your choice please contact venuebirmingham at: www.venuebirmingham.com, 0121 415 8400.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Can be sourced from venuebirmingham and also the University's LRAT (Learning and Resources Accommodation) Team: https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/cladls/lrat/index.aspx
Contact LRAT on lrathire@bham.ac.uk or book online at: https://universityofbirmingham.service-now.com/eq/ with adf username and password.

PORTERING SERVICES

If you require equipment/furniture rearranging, moving or storing contact the University porters team. Jean Moran: j.moran@bham.ac.uk, 0121 414 5639.

TRANSPORT SERVICES

For all transport needs.
Jean Moran:
j.moran@bham.ac.uk,
0121 414 5639

PHOTOGRAPHY

The University does not have an events photographer. The events team do have photographers that are used regularly. For further information contact the events team.

SECURITY

You are advised to inform security of any event you are holding for reasons such as parking. Extra security may be needed for high-profile visitors. Venue security: securityservice@contacts.bham.ac.uk,
Security control 24/7 non-emergencies
0121 414 3000,
Securitycontrol@adf.bham.ac.uk

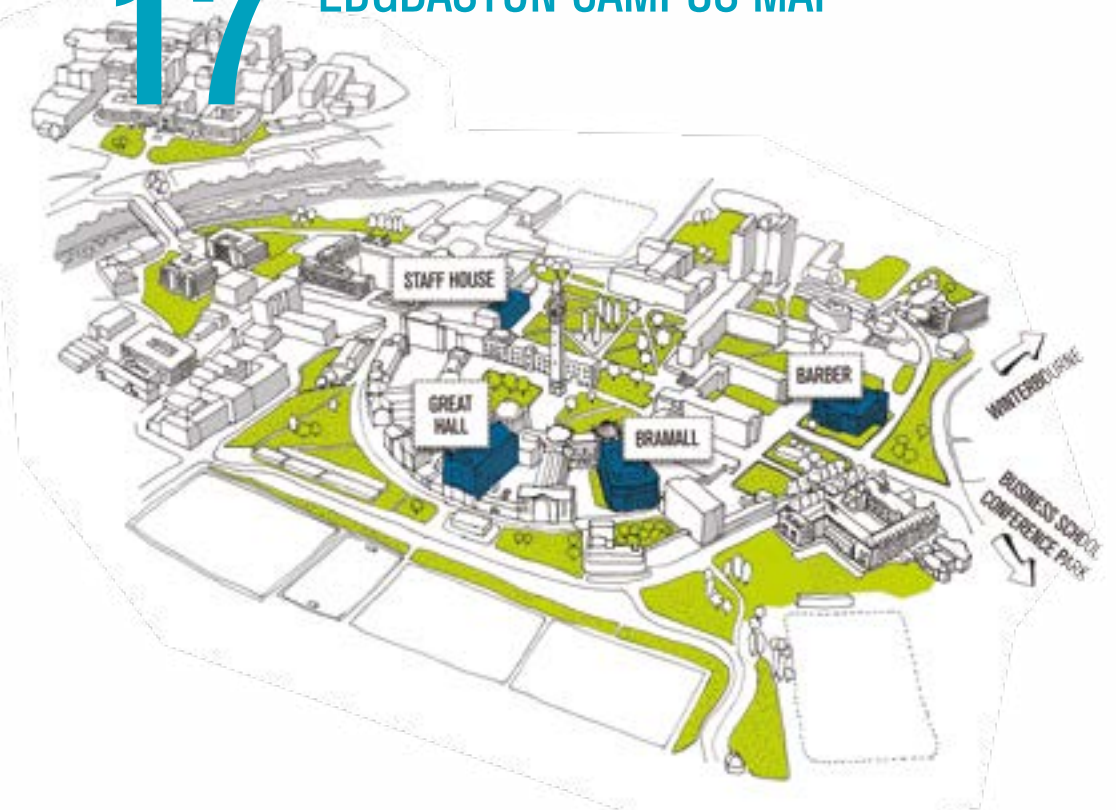
CLEANING SERVICES

You may need to book extra cleaning to ensure the venue is presentable for your event. Contact cleaning services on 0121 414 5633.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- Insurance – the University's insurance is usually adequate to cover most internal events, if you are using third party suppliers you should always request a copy of their own Public Liability Insurance to cover anything they are bringing onto campus.
  The University Insurance Manager is Gill Kelsall; g.l.kelsall@bham.ac.uk, 0121 414 6111
- Risk assessments – it may be necessary to carry out a risk assessment of your event. The University standard risk assessment form can be found at https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/hr/wellbeing/worksafe/documents/guidance/hsguidance.aspx
- Fire safety – ensure that fire safety has been considered for your event, further advice and information is available from the Fire Safety Office, Melanie Ashfield, m.a.ashfield@bham.ac.uk, 0121 414 5817

17 EDGBASTON CAMPUS MAP



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