



Event Planning Guide

The guide explains how Students' Union groups should plan and run events safely, effectively, and within budget. It applies to activities outside the group's usual activities, such as cultural events, guest speakers, charity events, awards dinners, conferences, and live entertainment.

1. Outline Planning

Start by establishing the **purpose and objectives** of the event. Consider the five key questions:

- **What?** – What type of event are you organising?
- **When?** – Choose a suitable date, checking semester dates and other major SU events.
- **Who?** – Identify your target audience, expected attendance, organisers, and committee responsibilities.
- **Where?** – Choose an appropriate venue and book it as early as possible.
- **How?** – Identify the resources required, such as furniture, equipment, catering, decorations, marketing, and staff support.

The Students' Union can provide advice and assistance with areas such as room bookings, budgeting and technical equipment.

2. Budgeting

Create a detailed budget before committing to the event. Include both **expected income** (such as ticket sales and sponsorship) and **all potential costs**.

Key points:

- Use a spreadsheet to track income and expenditure.
- Plan for worst-case scenarios, including low attendance and higher costs.
- Make sure expected ticket income can cover the highest estimated costs.
- Check whether quoted prices include VAT.
- Confirm payment deadlines and whether deposits are required.
- SU groups should pay ticket income into their account and follow the required procedures for financial claims.

3. Health and Safety

Event organisers have a **duty of care** to keep attendees and others safe.

For SU groups:

- Read the relevant health and safety guidance.
- Contact the Clubs and Societies Coordinator if the event has foreseeable risks.
- Complete a risk assessment where required.
- Consider first-aid requirements, particularly for large or higher-risk events.
- Check whether additional first-aid provision or equipment is needed.

There are also specific rules around **food safety**. Societies generally cannot cook, sell or distribute food unless it falls within permitted member-to-member activities. Cake sales have separate requirements and must be arranged with the Opportunities team.

4. Marketing and Sales

Organisers are responsible for making sure the event is effectively promoted and that tickets are sold where required.

A successful publicity campaign should:

1. Identify the **five Ws** – who, what, where, when and why.
2. Start planning at least **four weeks before the event**.
3. Generate a range of creative promotional ideas.
4. Develop a consistent style or brand.
5. Set clear deadlines for promotional materials.
6. Keep the committee motivated and involved.

7. Make the campaign enjoyable and engaging.

For sales, decide whether the event is **free or ticketed**, set an appropriate ticket price based on the budget, and determine when and how tickets will be sold.