

PLANNING A FORMAL

So, you want to organise a society formal, and why not?! It is a great way to bring all your members together for a celebration. Don't underestimate how much hard work organising a well-run formal takes, but UUSU are here to help!

Before you start planning, there are a few things to consider:

In order that a society formal event proposal is considered for approval by SAT, the following criteria should be met.

- The society should have a minimum of 50 registered members.
- The society should have delivered a minimum of one event per semester during the academic year in which the formal is proposed.
- The society should have at least £300 in their fundraising account.

In addition to our standard event planning process (you can read more about that [here](#)) the following actions should also be completed:

- Hotel/Venue contract should be made available to the Events coordinator for review before being agreed/signed.
- Only when the above criteria and actions are met and carried out, will the events coordinator give their permission for the society to enter into a contract with the venue.

WHEN

- In the run up to Christmas students have lots of commitments and money can be tight so it might not be advisable to plan a formal at this time.
- Pay attention to when Easter break falls. Your members might not want to attend an event when they are on a break from uni.

- Try to ensure that your event doesn't clash with anything else happening on campus that might mean you are competing for guests. Refer to your yearly plan for info.
- Student loans hitting bank accounts is an ideal time to advertise ticket sales!
- Your venue will want the final bill paid before the event takes place so consider when the UUSU payment dates are. Ideally, your event will fall the week after a payment date.

HOW MUCH

Formals aren't cheap but if you offer value for money your members won't want to miss out! Plan your budget in advance to ensure you have all costs covered.

These are likely to include:

- Hotel deposit. As much as £300- £500 may be due to secure your preferred date and venue. Your society may need to start fundraising well before your formal is booked to make sure you can afford this.
- Price per head. This is determined by the hotel for venue hire and food.
- Door staff for security. Speak to your venue about this. Cost depends on the number of guests but can be £300-£400.
- Security damage. Some hotels will ask for a deposit of £300 or more to cover any accidental damage. If there are no issues, this cost is refunded.
- Photo booth, candy cart or any little surprises.
- Band/ DJ
- Venue decor

When all your research, and costing is done, it's time to let the Student Activities Team know about your plans BEFORE you make any commitments to your venue and before you start selling tickets.

Submit your proposal [here](#)

TOP TIPS

- Price around. Get the best deal you can from the venues in your area and choose one that gives you value for money.
- Ensure that the ticket price you charge covers all costs, not just the price per head stipulated by the venue. You may want to consider making a small profit, so the society has some money for future events.
- Be realistic. Consider how many members you have and how many are likely to want to attend before you make promises to the venue. Some venues will charge you a minimum cost regardless how many guests are in attendance. If things don't go to plan and you cancel your event due to low ticket sales, you may lose your initial deposit.
- UUSU will only pay fully for a service when it has been delivered. We can however pay a deposit and will issue a "Purchase Order" which is our official promise to pay the remainder after the event has taken place. Ensure that you sell your tickets early enough to have the funds to pay your deposits.
- You might want to arrange a fundraising event such as a bake sale or quiz night to keep money flowing into your society account for all the bills you'll have!
- If you are collaborating with another society, communicate and delegate tasks. Agree in advance who will pay what!
- Have all your paperwork in order and submitted in time to ensure that UUSU accounts can pay your suppliers by their deadlines.
- Get a receipt for any payments you make so you can check easily who has been paid what.
- Before signing a contract, read the small print and seek advice from your Events Coordinator.



ADVERTISE

If you are organising the event of the year, people need to know about it!

- List your event on the UUSU website
- Book a stall on campus to sell tickets and promote the event
- Email your members
- Add the event details to your socials
- Hang posters in the UUSU social spaces
- If you are an academic society, it's also useful to announce the event to everyone on your course. Ask your lecturer if you speak to your class of hand out flyers at the start of the lecture.

You can read up more on publicity and promotion [here](#)

SELLING TICKETS

There are 2 ways you can sell tickets to your events– in person or online via the UUSU website.

ONLINE:

- The easiest option is to create your formal as an event on the UUSU website & set up tickets so students can make their purchase online.
- You can set up a member and non- member ticket so your members can benefit from a reduced cost compared to non members.
- Non students can purchase tickets on the website by creating a guest account [here](#).
- Collect all the vital info you need such as contact email address, dietary requirements, accessibility requirements etc.
- You can download a report detailing who has bought tickets. This will help you keep track of sales in a timely way.
- An e-ticket option can be added to your event which will mean you don't have to design and print physical tickets
- All money received from ticket sales will be allocated directly to your society account. This enables you to pay your venue and suppliers easily.

If you wish to use the UUSU website to sell your tickets, please speak to your Events Coordinator well in advance so they can help. You'll also find some useful information [here](#)

IN PERSON

- If you are selling tickets in person, you may find it beneficial to book a promotional stall on campus.
- Ensure you capture important information when you hand over the ticket and take payment:
 - Student's name
 - Contact email address and contact number
 - Number of tickets purchased
 - Money paid
 - Dietary Requirements
 - Any accessibility requirements
- All money collected should be left to the UUSU office asap with a lodgement form so that it can be lodged in your society account.

Don't forget...

It's important that you enjoy organising your formal – don't let it become too stressful. If you need help, please reach out to a member of your Student Activities Team

Be adaptable. Sometimes things don't go as planned. Be prepared to adapt the finer details as you go along the event planning process.

Formals should be a fun, welcoming and inclusive occasion. Bear this in mind in you are considering novelty awards, as not everyone shares the same sense of humour.

Your formal showcases your society and should uphold the values of UUSU and those of your school if you are a course based society

Have a great night! Enjoy seeing all your hard work pay off!