

ORGANISING A FORMAL OR SOCIAL

So, you want to organise a society formal or social, 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 or social takes, but UUSU are here to help with this useful list of things to consider to ensure you have a fab night!

Don't forget to take a look at our Event Planning checklist as well to keep you on track!

WHEN

- You need time to sell your tickets, there is no point in planning to sell last minute tickets in the run up to the event and then realising that campus is closed for Easter for example!
- We are normally all fairly skint in the run up to Christmas so it might not be advisable to have an expensive formal/ social at this time.
- Student loans hitting bank accounts is an ideal time to advertise ticket sales.
- Make sure 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

WHERE

Logistically it makes sense to choose a venue close to campus so that it is easy to travel to.

Have a look at different hotels and venues in your area and find out which of them can cater to the size of event you are planning (you'll know how many members your society/ course has so use this as a benchmark. Not everyone will attend of course).

Different venues will offer different packages so chat to them all, get a brochure and an approximate price per guest. It's often useful to see where previous committees have held formals and get feedback from them.

WHAT

Consider putting a poll on your social media to find out what your members would like

- What type of event do you want?
- Fancy dress or casual?
- Sit down meal or buffet?
- Pre-planned entertainment or make your own fun?
- How much are you prepared to pay?
- When would suit you best to attend?

HOW MUCH

Formals and socials generally 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:

- Deposit to the hotel - as much as £200-£300 can be due in advance
- Price per head - set by the hotel for venue hire and food
- Drinks on arrival
- Band/ DJ
- Decorations for the venue
- Photo booth/ Candy cart or any little surprises

TOP TIPS

- Price around- get the best deal you can from the venues in your area and choose the one that gives you the best value for money.
- If your venue is charging e.g £15 per person, you'll need to factor in the cost of décor, entertainment, and advertising etc to ensure that the ticket price you charge covers your costs.
- Be realistic - don't tell the hotel you are expecting 100 people to come when you only have 75 members!
- Most of your suppliers will want to be paid in advance so sell your tickets early enough to ensure that you have the funds to pay your bills.
- 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 on your event communicate and delegate tasks. Decide 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 back easily on who has been paid what.
- If signing a contract, read the small print! What happens if you do not sell as many tickets as planned?

ADVERTISE

If you are organising the event of the year, people need to know about it! Set up a social media events page, book stalls to sell tickets and promote the event.

It's also useful to go around your classes and announce the event to everyone on your course. Just check in with your lecturer first if you can nip in for 5 minutes at the start of the lecture.

Read up on publicity and promotion for more information

SELLING TICKETS

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

- **IN PERSON:** If you accept cash for ticket sales you will need to keep a track of how many tickets you have sold. This is especially important if more than one person is selling tickets.
- Ensure you capture the following information when selling tickets in person:
 - student's name
 - contact email address
 - number of tickets purchased
 - total money paid (this is important if society members pay less than non-members).
- Monies collected should be left to the UUSU office asap with a lodgement form so that it can be allocated to your society account. Sit down meal or buffet?
- **ONLINE:** Students can purchase tickets directly from your society via the UUSU website. You can download a report detailing who has bought tickets which will help you keep track of sales in a timely way. The money received will be allocated directly to your society account enabling you to pay your venue and suppliers easily.
- If you wish to use the UUSU website to sell your tickets, please speak to your Activities Coordinator well in advance and they will help you set this up. Check out our instructional video [here](#)