

## Event Planning

### Things to Consider

#### Overall Goals and Objectives:

- Is an event the best or most appropriate way to achieve your goals (versus, for example, a press release or other targeted communication)?
- What is the desired outcome and what do you want your attendees to take away from the experience? What would you like them to *do* (or do *differently*) as a result of attending your event? What ‘aftercare’ might you put in place to facilitate and follow-up on this?
- How does the event, its target audience, and potential outcomes contribute to the overall objectives of your project?

#### Event Format:

- Will your event be in-person or online? Online events could help you to reach a wider audience, as there are no geographical limitations and they are often more convenient; however, in-person events can encourage more interaction and dialogue, as well as giving participants the opportunity to meet each other.
- What kind of event would suit your audience and objectives? E.g., a talk, a workshop, a drop-in event, film screening, a series of talks bringing together various experts, etc.?

#### Audience:

- Who do you want to reach with your event, and why?
- Have you thought whether you could reach audiences who wouldn’t normally engage with your research (particularly relevant for public engagement)?
- What kinds of events would suit your audience? For example, an interactive workshop or short talk could work well for an event targeted at the public, while an event for industry professionals could be a more in-depth, longer event.

#### Venue:

- What equipment do you need, and what does the venue provide? Some AV equipment is available to hire for free from IT services:  
<https://warwick.ac.uk/services/its/serviceessupport/av/bbav/equipment>. (Book in advance to ensure that the equipment you need is available, and if you take it off campus ensure that it is properly secured.)
- If you need catering, will the venue provide this? Don’t forget dietary requirements and allergies.
- Consider the accessibility of the venue, both in terms of disabled access and how people will get to the venue - e.g., are there good public transport links?
- If you are working with a partner organisation, they may be able to host events.

**Communications and Marketing:**

- What are the primary messages and themes of the event? What might the 'hook' be for your respective audience/s?
- Think about the best ways to reach your audience to advertise your event. You could consider using existing mailing lists, social media (including University channels), contacts from any partner organisations and existing channels which your target audience reads – for example, industry newsletters.
- If you have external funding, ensure that you follow any communication guidelines from your funder (some funders will want you to include their logo on any publicity).
- Make sure that you are complying with [GDPR](#) if you are using mailing lists or collecting contact details.
- Would it be worthwhile to design and print advertising materials (there will likely be further costs for this)?

**Funding:**

- Take a look at funding sources available for Impact activities:  
<https://warwick.ac.uk/research/impact-academy/funding/>
- Utilise any resources you already have - e.g., any resources from a partner organisation, or holding an event on campus if you are not able to hire a venue.

## **Event Planning Timeline Example (adapted from UCLA Guide):**

This is an example timeline for a typical, large-scale event of approx. 100 participants to give you an idea of how you might plan your event. In practice, this will vary depending on factors such as the size and format of event, your audience, and the actual amount of time you have available, etc.

### **1 year to 4 months before:**

- Set objectives for the event (why you are running it and what do you hope to achieve)
- Prepare a budget (will the event be free to attend or charged-for?) and apply for any funding required.
- Identify your audience(s)
- Select a venue. Consider location, room size, room layout, AV needs and capabilities
- Contact and confirm with any external speakers. Make provisional arrangements, such as accommodation, if necessary (remember that [Warwick Conferences](#) has accommodation available on campus, with discounts for staff bookings).
- Choose a date, avoiding, where possible, major national and religious holidays
- Draft the programme and registration forms
- Marketing – liaise with the university's press office about promoting the event and creating backdrops, posters, and flyers

### **3 months before:**

- Create a database of potential audiences to be invited
- Finalise marketing including leaflets, emails and websites; send out marketing in waves targeting most important audience first
- Confirm any AV and accessibility requirements of speakers
- Decide whether you will be having a post-event report – you may wish to have the speakers circulate papers beforehand

### **2 months before:**

- Review the budget to ensure it is on course
- Confirm technical requirements and equipment with the venue, such as flipcharts, overhead projectors, or PowerPoint.
- Assess the response to the first wave of marketing literature and send to a second wave of potential attendees if necessary.
- Begin compiling a list of delegates and any special requirements they may have (remember to think about [GDPR](#))
- Identify if you need equipment (such as marketing materials) sent to the venue; liaise with venue about when they can take it and if they can store it
- Plan your evaluation methods – e.g., a survey?

### **1 month before:**

- Finalise menus and catering arrangements.
- Finalise hotel room requirements, if required
- Confirm the final AV requirements.
- Send final details to attendees including location maps and the programme.
- Keep any speakers and chair informed of progress (for example, give them the revised programme and a copy of the guest list).
- Draft the staffing list for main conference and any workshop or breakout sessions.
- If you have one, send the chairperson their brief, along with a list of attendees and speakers' biographies.
- Finalise the details of any post-event report, for example, who will be responsible for editing and collating submissions
- If you are compiling delegate packs for more than 100 delegates begin to compile these. If you have less than 100 you can do this one week before.
- Produce any printed materials.

#### **1 week before:**

- Ensure all printed materials are ready.
- Prepare name badges, programmes, menus and signage where required.
- Brief any other staff or volunteers working on the day, ensuring they know their specific responsibilities, such as greeting the speakers and delegates, and assisting with the AV equipment.
- Notify caterers of final numbers and any special dietary requirements.
- Contact the conference organiser, venue, the AV company, speakers and chairperson to ensure they are clear about all aspects of the event.

#### **After the event:**

Plan your post-event activities at the outset. To wrap up an event, you need to do the following:

- Evaluate the event – collate all the feedback forms to assess the success of the event against the original objectives. Decide whether any further follow-up work is required to meet your objectives.
- Send emails to the speakers thanking them for their contributions and giving them feedback from the evaluation forms.
- Write a press release or web page with a photograph based on the event. You could send this to journalists who might be interested in the subject of your event.
- Consider creating a post-event report, including transcripts or summaries of the key speakers' presentations. The report could be sent directly to delegates and made available in PDF format from the website (with an email sent to all delegates and others who were unable to attend).
- Ensure any equipment is ready for pick-up from the venue by a pre-arranged courier service, and in accordance with the venue's instructions.