How To Organise
An Event

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What is an Event?

An event is …

‘A social gathering or activity. This often events involve a get-together of important people, or a significant number of people, that merits some detailed planning, to make sure it goes as well as possible.’

This could be…

· Cultural event
· Visit from a guest speaker / VIP / politician
· Charity event
· Presentation
· Awards dinner
· Live entertainment
· Weekend conference
· Comedy festival

There are 6 Steps to a successful event:

Step 1. Outline Planning
Step 2. Budgeting
Step 3. Health and safety
Step 4. Sales &Marketing
Step 5. Operational Planning
Step 6. Evaluation
**Step 1. Enquiry & Outline planning**

The first thing to think about are your objectives, be clear on them.

Why are you running this event?
- Raising money for your society or charity?
- Entertaining people?
- Engaging the local community?
- Publicising a campaign?
- Bringing people together?

Organising an event takes time and needs lots of people power. As a committee you need to ask yourself 5 questions.

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**What?**

*What sort of event do you expect to run?*
A small social /Awards evening/Conference or talk.

**When?**

*When will it take place?*
Check semester dates so you know you are organising the event at a suitable time. It is also worth checking if there are any other big Students’ Union events going on (e.g. it is probably best to avoid holding a charity event the same night as the RAG Spiderwalk).

Ask at the Activities & Sports Zone (activities@shef.ac.uk) if you want to check the Students’ Union’s Marketing Calendar in advance.
Who?

Who will be involved?
Who will be coming to the event? Be realistic in terms of numbers of who will attend.
Also think about who will be involved in organising the event, define roles for your team and establish a clear point of contact.

Where?

Where will it take place?
The Students’ Union can provide you with many options of where to host your event. Match the profile of the event to the venue, think about the size of the space you need etc. The earlier you book your room/venue the better.

There are many outlets within the Students’ Union that can host events. See the Bookable Spaces website for more info http://su.sheffield.ac.uk/sheffield-su/bookable-spaces

How?

How will your event become reality?
Think about the resources needed at every stage e.g. furniture, technical equipment, catering & decorations, marketing & sales.

Students’ Union staff can provide lots of help with organising and planning an event; from room bookings, budgeting and providing technical equipment.

If you are a Students’ Union Society contact the Activities & Sports Zone, or look at the guidance on the Zone online. www.sheffieldsu.com/zoneonline

The Students’ Union Events Team, are located on the Gallery, Level 4, or email su-events@sheffield.ac.uk.
Step 2. Budgeting

It is really important to keep a detailed budget; the last thing you want is to get into debt. First think about the costs which you might incur.

Some top tips for budgeting:

• Create a spreadsheet of costs to calculate how much you are paying and how much money you expect to receive e.g. ticket sales and sponsorship
• Calculate and plan for the worst case scenarios (e.g. lowest attendance numbers, highest costs)
• If you’re intending to cover all of your expenses, make sure your predicted tickets sales, will bring in more money than your highest estimate of costs
• Remember most goods and services in the UK are subject to VAT (Value Added Tax), check if it is included or not when given prices and quotes!
• Find out how and when exactly the venue/suppliers want to be paid and if they require a deposit.

If you are a Students’ Union society:

• Pay in your ticket money to your account as and when it is collected.
• Don’t forget the treasurer needs to counter sign every cash and Cheque/BACS claim form
• Remember you can use your A account money towards publicity

For a budget template to help you get started, just visit the ‘Your Events’ section of the Zone Online: www.sheffieldsu.com/zoneonline
For help with how to use your society account, please read the ‘Treasurer’ guide. For help with sponsorship and funding, please read the ‘Funding and Sponsorship’ guide. Both are located on the ‘Money money money’ section of the Zone Online: www.sheffieldsu.com/zoneonline
Step 3. Health and Safety

As the organiser of the event, you have a duty of care in law to ensure the safety of any people who may be affected by your activities and events. So if the event is dangerous and someone gets injured, then you could personally be held responsible. It sounds scary but you just need to think of reasonable ways to make the event as safe as possible.

If you are a Students’ Union society:

Make sure you read the relevant guides on the Zone Online www.sheffieldsu.com/zoneonline

These include:

- Rules and Safety Handbook
- How to do a risk assessment

You must seek advice from your Society Development Coordinator (society.coordinator@shef.ac.uk) on the safety of your event if it has foreseeable risk. Your Society Development Coordinator can advise you as to whether you’ll need to write a risk assessment and can help you with this.

First Aid

Large or higher risk events may need first aid cover. Speak to the Activities & Sports Zone (activities@shef.ac.uk) to check, and/or to borrow high visibility jackets or first aid kits. Larger events may require dedicated first-aid cover. The St.John’s Ambulance Society (Sheffield Links) may be able to help sheffieldlinks@gmail.com.

Food Safety

Food safety regulations mean that the Students’ Union cannot allow societies and committees to cook, sell or distribute food either on or off Students’ Union premises (unless it is ‘member to member’, i.e.
shared food between registered society members). For more information on this, please refer to the Rules & Safety Handbook www.sheffieldsu.com/zoneonline or contact the Activities & Sports Zone (activities@shef.ac.uk).

However Cake Sales are different, if you wish to hold a bake sale then you will need to speak to the Activities & Sports Zone (activities@shef.ac.uk) to book a slot and get a copy of safe baking guidelines and disclaimer.
Step 4. Marketing & Sales

How are you going to advertise your event?

If you are a Students’ Union society:
Read the guide on ‘Marketing & Publicity’ guide on the Zone Online. There you will find useful tips and different methods of publicity. http://su.sheffield.ac.uk/get-involved/society-support-zone-online

It is important to note that committee or organisers of the event take responsibility for effective marketing and sales.

7 top tips for PLANNING your Publicity Campaign...

1. The Five ‘W’s
   First of all consider the five ‘Ws’: who, what, where, when and why are you publicising? Discuss this with your committee - these should help you set your marketing plan.

2. Planning
   Planning is the crucial element to success. As soon as you’ve set the date of your event, work back at least 4 weeks to set your publicity officer / team deadlines. Make sure you turn your rough marketing plan into a real action plan with dates and delegation.

3. Generate Ideas
   Hold a brainstorming meeting where everyone has the chance to suggest publicity methods. Don’t hold back – write down as many different ideas as you can. You could write down associated words / themes / ideas, reflect on previous publicity or draw inspiration from designs / adverts you currently like.

4. Style or Brand
   Try to develop a style or ‘brand identity’ that all your communication / material will carry and create an identity. Having a ‘brand’ could mean having a certain colour, logo or tagline for your society, then making sure that you use this in all your
publicity! This should make you more recognisable. Always keep in mind your target audience.

5. **Timescales**
   Take into account how long design work will take, when to launch facebook events, when to submit plasma screen artwork...work your way through the Zone Online guide to see how long it takes to produce different methods of publicity.

6. **Motivation**
   Motivate and inspire your fellow committee members in order to achieve the committee goal together!

7. **Have Fun!**
   Most importantly – HAVE FUN! If you are enjoying the campaign and are excited about it, it will come across in the materials and messages!

**Sales**
Is your event free? Do attendees need tickets? Are you charging?

When budgeting for your event, you will have come up with a ticket price. Next you need to think about when and how you are going to sell your tickets.

The SU Box Office provides a free service so you can sell your tickets from the counter, online and you can also sign tickets out to sell yourselves.
Step 5. Operational Planning

Operational Planning is the specific activities that have to be accomplished to make the event happen and run as smoothly as possible

1. List the tasks to be completed
2. Allocate tasks to individuals
3. Plot a timeline. Be realistic and give yourself time for things that could set you back or go wrong.
4. Create an event plan for the night or day of the event, think about what is needed and at what times etc. (e.g. performers, technical services, security, bars and catering)

Communication is a key factor in success- does everybody know what is happening? How will you communicate with staff, committee, performers etc on the night? Have a main person who is the point of contact to avoid confusion and miscommunication.

Administration: Ticket sales, purchases and invoices. Keep all evidence of your purchases! Don’t carry ticket money around, pay it in ASAP.

Remember to support each other. If someone is struggling give them help. Always ask for help if it is needed, the Students’ Union Staff are here for any problems you might have.

To help you get started visit the Zone Online for a timeline template. http://su.sheffield.ac.uk/get-involved/society-support-zone-online
Step 6. Evaluation

This is essential for development of the event, your skills and society/committee.

Write a report on what went well and what didn’t, even if it’s just a few bullet points. Collect everyone’s thoughts as soon as possible - on the night or the day after.

If it is a recurring event, produce a report for the next organisers to refer to the next time the event is being organised.
What to do first!

Event planning meeting

Now that you have understood what makes a great event, it is time to have an event planning meeting.

- When should this take place? As soon as possible
- Who should attend? Everyone that is involved in the project
- The project leader should chair the meeting

Here is a suggested agenda to get you on your way.

**AGENDA**

**Meeting Objective:**
By the end of the meeting, the team should have a much clearer idea of what the project is, how you will be judging its successes and there should be an established collective team vision

1. **Vision**
   What do you all want to achieve?
   What is the collective aim of the group or project?

2. **Values**
   How do you want to achieve it as a group?
   What are your ethics?

3. **Goals**
   What are the specific achievements? E.g. Attendance, money raised, awareness
   How will you know you have been successful at the end?
Events Department

The Events Department works on many different events at the Students' Union, created for students and the wider community. The staff in the Department provide:

- Advice and support to student events
- A programme of Arts & Cultural events
- Conferencing and venue hire services
- Co-ordination of Students’ Union events activity

If you’re planning a big event in the Students' Union, pop in and see them on the Level 4 Gallery.

Entertainments Department

The Entertainments Department runs all the club nights and live gigs that happen at the Students' Union, from Pop Tarts to Summer Social, from comedy to The Tuesday Club.

Club Night Group Discounts - Cheaper tickets may be available for big groups and socials coming to Students’ Union club nights. Just come to the Entertainments Office for more info or email ents@sheffield.ac.uk

Tickets In Advance System – A simple form which allows Students’ Union Societies to use their ‘B’ account to sign out tickets, rather than pay for them all upfront personally. Just come to the Entertainments Office for more info or email ents@sheffield.ac.uk

Theme Up a Clubnight – Entertainments are always on the look out for exciting themes, so get in touch with your suggestions!
**Fundraising for Charities**

If you want to fundraise for a charity or organise a fundraising event please get in touch with Sheffield RAG.

RAG stands for ‘Raising and Giving’ – a huge student committee who exist to support student fundraising and help you put on amazing events that raise money for charity too.

In the last five years, we’ve run hundreds of events, supported hundreds of student groups and raised over £700,000 for charities.

Plus if you’re a Students’ Union society, club or committee, you can claim back up to 50% of your fundraising for your group – or donate it all to charity – the choice is yours! You can fundraise for any charity you like – or we can help you select one.

**RAG CAN SUPPORT YOU TO:**

- Run your own fundraising event – anything and everything from a tournament or quiz, to a 24 hour challenge
- Set up a street collection in the city centre (‘RAG Raid’)
- Take part in a ‘Street Team’ (selling glow-sticks and merchandise at Union clubnights) – we provide the merchandise for free plus 5 of you get on the guestlist!
- Run a raffle
- Hold a bake sale or krispy kreme sale
- Come up with ideas for fundraisers…

The RAG Committee and x2 full-time members of staff are here to support you in all areas of fundraising fun-ness.
WE CAN HELP YOU WITH:

- Budgeting, events management, booking venues and maximising your fundraised income
- Ticketing
- Marketing
- Banking
- Health and safety advice, insurance and risk assessment
- Charity law and good practice
- Online Fundraising
- Fundraising equipment, resources and materials
- Collection permits
- Choosing charities (we have a database of over 200)

FUNDRAISING ON THE CONCOURSE

If you want to do any kind of fundraising for charity on the Students’ Union Concourse, you must do it through Sheffield RAG. This is because RAG organise fundraising collection permits for this area and report on fundraising activity to the council. As permits can take up to 1 month to secure, RAG hold a rolling permit for the concourse all year round - this makes it easier for all students to fundraise at shorter notice, whenever you like.

BAKE SALES

Bake sales are limited to two per week so we do not step on the toes of our lovely Students’ Union food outlets. Bake Sales need to be booked into the ‘Bake Sale Calendar’ by either Sheffield RAG, at the Activities and Sports Zone Information Desk or with Union Room Bookings. If your bake sale is for a charity and on the concourse, it must be booked through Sheffield RAG.

KRISPY KREME SALES

Krispy Kremes are also classed as bake sales so please follow the same guidance as above. Once a date is sorted you need to speak to Krispy Kremes directly to order (RAG can provide the confirmation
letter for you). Remember that all doughnuts must be resold within 12 hours so please bear this in mind when placing your order.

**RAFFLES & TOMBOLAS**

Societies and groups can run private raffles for their own members or as one-offs at a single event without needing a licence. To run another type of raffle for example, selling tickets over a period of time, a Small Lotteries Licence is needed as stated by the Gambling Commission. Sheffield RAG hold a Small Lotteries Licence and can provide you with guidance for different types of raffle.

**STREET-TEAMS**

RAG work with Union Entertainments so groups can ‘Street-Team’ at regular Union club nights. If you want to sell glow-sticks, sweets, face-paint (or anything else you think of) we can book this for you. We provide the glow-sticks and 5 guest lists for you to enjoy after your collecting!

**HOW IS RAG FUNDED?**

Sheffield RAG is part of a registered charity and is completely self-financing. This means that the costs of running the programme successfully and safely have to be covered by the programme itself. These costs are things like staffing (there are two full-time staff members to support the programme), first aid training for the Committee to safely run events, merchandise for fundraisers street-teaming and resources such as buckets, seals and raffle licenses.

Programme costs are funded by 10% from all net fundraising (this is the total left once any event expenses have been deducted). This 10% goes toward meeting the core costs of the programme and ensures that RAG can continue to provide excellent support to student fundraisers.
OTHER FUNDRAISING GUIDANCE

COLLECTING THOSE PENNIES
If you want to collect on private property then you must gain permission from the owner of the premises. Top Tip: Keep a record of this through email / in writing.
If you are collecting on a public highway/byway, then you must secure a collection permit from the local council [available via the Street Collections page of the City Council website]. You must have the permit and a form of ID on you during the collection in case of checks by police or council officials. This also applies for busking.

COLLECTION BUCKETS MUST...
1. Remain sealed at all times during the collection
2. Not be shaken whilst collecting
3. Clearly display the benefiting charity and charity number at all times

Have you thought about...

BANKING THE CASH
Charity money should never be banked into a personal bank account. Sheffield RAG can provide you with your own charity account to keep things separate.

We strongly advise that money should be banked that same day. We do not advise that you walk around with money on your persons for your own safety. Money taken home is not covered by the Students’ Union insurance. You can deposit money safely into your RAG account at the Students’ Union, even when the finance office is closed – we have a “drop-safe” procedure to help you bank money safely

DONATING MONEY TO THE CHARITY
All money collected must be donated to that charity by law. It must be donated in the charity's name and into their charity bank account. Sheffield RAG can write a cheque for you to donate personally or we can donate payment on your behalf
**TOP TIPS**

Research your charity so you can clearly articulate the cause

Ask your charity for help to give your fundraising an extra boost!

Get creative! It’s getting harder and harder to get people to part with their cash so think outside the box to get people's interest...here are some to get your creative juices flowing:

- Sponsored fancy dress... wear your onesie to lectures!
- 24-hour film-a-thon, dance-a-thon, row-a-thon...etc
- Supermarket bag packing
- Busking in town
- Guess how many... the possibilities are endless!
- Sponsored wax or headshave!
- Penny collections...only takes 100p to make £1!
- Make & Do...get some donations for your creations!

The RAG Website has a big A-Z of Fundraising Ideas to get you thinking as well as lots of other useful information:

**www.sheffieldrag.com**

**OTHER USEFUL WEBSITES**

http://www.institute-of-fundraising.org.uk/guidance/
https://www.charitychallenge.com/pdf/a-z_fundraising_ideas.pdf
http://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/licensingAuthorities/information_about/licensing_authorities/small_society_lotteries.aspx