Events and Trips

As a Society, you may well want to run events for your members. Think about what kind of events you’d like to organise and how it relates to your membership. It doesn’t have to be based around your core activities – it might just be a chance for your members to try out something new or just something they’ll enjoy.

The most important part of a trip or event running smoothly is the planning stage. Event planning forms are available for download in the Societies Resources section of the UCSU website.

All events and activities that a Society intends to run MUST be approved by the Societies Federation. In order for this to occur, you must complete an Activities Proposal Form and submit this to the Societies Federation for approval.

**Venue/location**   
Will the venue have an appropriate capacity? If you have 40 members and aren’t planning to allow non-members, a 200 person capacity venue won’t be suitable. Similarly, if the event is likely to attract a large amount of attendees, make sure the venue has capacity for this. You could also think about joining forces with another Society to build numbers.  
  
You can hire a number of meeting/function rooms in the Union/University including one of the Union bars free of charge or on agreed specifications. For this please contact the Societies Federation President or the Volunteering & Activities Co-Coordinator. It is also possible to hire audio-visual equipment with these rooms.

**Before an agreement with a venue**   
Security, tables and chairs, audio-visual equipment and kitchen facilities are all things you may need to use for your event – when looking for venues, ensure you double check and ask:

* What is included with the hire?
* What could come at an extra cost – or whether you would be allowed to provide these extras yourself (e.g. – do you need to use the venue’s security/catering company?)
* Information on deposit and refund policy.
* Damage liability for equipment and furnishings.

**Always consider an appropriate date and time**   
Make sure you plan in plenty of advance of events to allow time to organise and promote the event. Don’t forget to allow adequate time to market the event, and add onto this the amount of time needed to produce marketing materials and find the venue and any extras. Posters and flyers more than a week beforehand, and Facebook groups should be created as soon as details are confirmed.

**Budget**Budget plans help lay out the costs and ensure everything will be covered. Use a budget planning form (available in the Societies Resources section of the UCSU.org website) to ensure all aspects of costs are addressed. Money for events could come from ticket sales, fundraising, sponsorship or Society Federation Grants. See ‘Finance’ for more information.

**You will not be allowed to book any facilities or acts/speakers without proof that the event is fully budgeted.**

**Transport**  
  
**UCSU Safety Bus:**

* The UCSU has a Safety Bus which you can book out depending on the date, time, nature of the activity and availability.
* For more information on the hire of the Safety Bus contact the Societies Federation President or the Volunteering & Activities Co-Coordinator.

**Drinking alcohol on UCSU vehicles and any other hired vehicles is strictly prohibited and will lead to disciplinary and possibly legal action.**

**Other Options:**

* Hiring a coach is more expensive than using the UCSU Safety Bus, therefore Societies are encouraged to get multiple quotes when looking to hire a coach and speak to the Societies Federation President or the Volunteering & Activities Co-Coordinator for advice on local coach companies.
* UCSU has contacts with local car companies – enquire if you’re looking to hire taxis/minibuses.

**Publicity**Publicising the event to the wider student audience could increase the success of the event and even recruit new members. See ‘Marketing and Publicity’ for more information.

**On the day of the event/trip...**

* Be there in plenty of time for the start of the event and any setting up you may need to do.
* Make sure every member involved has the correct information and is easily contactable.
* Define roles for everyone and make sure everyone is aware of this.
* Leave the venue in the condition you found it, and report any damages (if any) to the venue and Union.

**Evaluation**It is always good practice to evaluate events and trips, as it assesses what could be changed or improved for future plans.

* Hold a debrief meeting with the rest of the Committee and any other involved members afterwards to discuss what worked, what didn’t, and what could be improved for next time.
* Make sure all invoices and payments are settled with Finance, through the Societies Federation President or the Volunteering & Activities Co-Coordinator.

**Risk Assessments**Risk Assessments are a written document that explains the various dangers or hazards that you and your Society members may reasonably be exposed to and how the Society has taken reasonable steps to prevent any injury.

A Risk Assessment is a mandatory document for the Society to cover all the regular activities the Society will be undertaking.

Societies are required to complete Risk Assessments for their core activities, plus a separate form for each event or trip. You may also wish to contact the Societies Federation President or the Volunteering & Activities Co-Coordinator for more information on Health and Safety and Risk Assessment procedures. A risk assessment template can be downloaded from Societies Resources, and should be returned to the Volunteering & Activities Co-Coordinator or the Societies Federation Pres.

**Emergencies**All members of the Committee should familiarize themselves with emergency procedures, and all attendees should be given a Health and Safety briefing as to what to do in an emergency by the Committee, including locations of emergency exits, meeting points and contact details.

**Damages**The UCSU is not responsible for any damage to property by its individual members, and the Society or an individual could be fined for this. If a member of your Society causes damage (even if accidental), this should be reported to the venue and the Societies Federation President or the Volunteering & Activities Co-Coordinator immediately.

**Insurance**

* Participants are covered against the UCSU being negligent (which is why we need to risk assess trips etc).
* UCSU Equipment – Society equipment is covered by various policies, depending on the type of equipment – please speak to the Societies Federation President or the Volunteering & Activities Co-Coordinator for further information.
* Those Societies Federation members that have purchased insurance for their Society activities (i.e. Pool/Harry Potter/ Dance), do have a level of personal accident insurance cover for Society activities but this is not a substitute for full personal accident or travel insurance.

**Going Abroad?**If you are planning a trip abroad, please contact the Societies Federation President or the Volunteering & Activities Co-Coordinator for advice on insurance cover, as well as other issues such as Visas for international students.

Socials

Socials give members a chance to socialize with others without having a specific activity or event. Planning a social is usually very simple, but here are a few guidelines for a successful social:

* Choose a social that reflects the interests of your members, not just where the Committee want to go.
* Speak to club and bar promoters about special deals – often when a Society is having a social, clubs and bars are willing to offer special incentives such as free entry, queue jump, VIP and drinks deals.
* Create a Facebook event for the social at least 1-2 weeks in advance, so members can make sure they’re free. On this event should be details of the social, an exact meeting point and time – which the Committee should arrive for in plenty of time to welcome members.
* Communicate the social information by email too, and send an update a few days before/the day before the social to remind members of the timings and location.
* When on a social, the Committee should make sure all members are safe, comfortable and happy. Its fine to have a couple of drinks, but if possible allocate a couple of Committee members to stay relatively sober and keep an eye on the members.
* If someone feels comfortable doing so, then giving attendees a contact number for one of the Committee allows them to find the group if they get lost on the way to or during the social.
* Wear committee t-shirts to be noticeable, and make sure you sit in a clear place if the environment is busy
* Make an effort to chat to all members, and be friendly and welcoming.
* It’s good to make a Facebook post or send an email soon after thanking members for attending and letting them know about the next social/event.
* Think about different ideas for socials – bar and pub socials are a great way to meet people and have a good time, but not everyone wants to do this all the time! Try mixing it up with…picnics, BBQs (weather permitting!), games nights, quizzes, sporting activities, paintball, go karting, live music, movie nights…the possibilities are endless!