

How to Plan a Successful Event



Ten Steps to Planning a Successful Event

You want to hold an event for your organization. Great! But how do you do it? What resources are available to you to make it successful and fun? Event Services has a step-by-step guide to help you host your perfect event!

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1. Where Do I Start?

Start by thinking about the following questions:

- What is the purpose of this event?
- What do you want to accomplish?
- What do you want people to remember about this experience?

Have the following information ready before moving to step 2:

1. Event Type (For example: meeting, lecture, workshop, live performance, banquet)
2. Preferred Date, Time, and Location
 - Is this a recurring or one-time event?
 - When will your Event Start? When will your Event End? When will you Open Doors for your attendees?
 - Will you need time before and/or after the event for your own setup and takedown?
 - If you are requesting an outdoor space, what is your inclement weather plan? Rain location, backup date, or cancel?
3. How many Attendees expected (or at least a minimum capacity)?
4. Preferred Room Layout (For example: theater, conference table, classroom, custom)
 - Would your event be taking place in a Meeting Space or a Multi-purpose Space?
5. Whether or not you will need Sound Reinforcement, Video Projection, Lighting (For example: wired or wireless microphone, sound system, laptop connection for sound and/or projection, stage and/or background lighting)

You will need to know this information prior to submitting your space reservation request.

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Still feeling unprepared? Feel free to reach out to us if you just don't know where to start. Other great resources are your RSO advisor, other groups who have hosted similar events, or your department's event planner.

2. Request Space

- Once you can answer the questions in Step 1, [navigate to University Events](#) to learn about the process of requesting and scheduling your event. Or, if you're already familiar with the process, head straight to 25Live to put in a request.
- In general, reservation requests can be submitted up to three years in advance.

[View Room Diagrams](#)

3. Receive Confirmation

- Receive Confirmation – you should not proceed with the additional steps until you have received Written Confirmation of your space reservation and reviewed it for accuracy.
- If you have received an email acknowledgement of your 25Live request, but HAVE NOT received a CONFIRMATION of space assignment please contact University Events at gmuevent@gmu.edu.

4. Submit Booking Request for Event Services

Planning an event for your Mason organization or department? It can seem overwhelming and complicated, so we've outlined 10 easy steps to guide you through the process.

While these additional services do come at a charge, an estimate can be requested three or more weeks before your event date through the Event Services Online Booking Form and can be adjusted as necessary throughout the planning process to meet event and budget needs. Be sure to consider additional time considerations such as when you need furnishings and equipment to be set by, and any necessary rehearsal time!

[Event Services Request Form](#)

To see more information about what audiovisual setup comes free of charge with your venue, access your event reservation in 25Live, click on the assigned room, and review the Features listed under the Details tab. Additionally, an itemized list of available production services is accessible by clicking below.

[View Available Equipment](#)

[Reviewing Your Event Quote](#)

5. Submit Requests for Other Services

In addition to the room reservation, production equipment, and furnishings, your event may require additional services in order to be successful. Consideration should be given to:

- [Catering](#)
- [Parking](#)
- [Security](#)
- [Facilities \(power distribution, special room heating and cooling requests\)](#)
- [Housekeeping](#)

If your event requires catering services, you can order food, drink, and table linens through Mason Catering or through any of these approved caterers. Your University Events 25Live Scheduler can put you in contact with Parking, Police, Facilities, and other service departments as necessary – be sure to communicate these needs during your scheduling and event planning processes, and to contact any necessary offices a minimum of three or more weeks in advance to schedule their services for your event.

6. Review Other Event Documentation

While requesting services for your event is certainly the most important part, the communication with these service providers should not end there. Once any documentation or estimates have been received, they should be reviewed for accuracy, both, in terms of the services to be provided as well as the event information, such as date, times, and location. Any necessary changes or alterations should be communicated to the service provider as soon as possible to ensure that they are able to accommodate these new requests.

- As the event date gets closer, all event documentation should be reviewed for continued accuracy.
- If event attendee registration or interest indicates that a larger or smaller setup should be needed, or if the event will now have a different timeline than originally planned, that information should be updated in 25Live, any diagrams for the event, and any service orders.
- Day-of, on-site changes of this nature may not be possible with certain vendors, so it is important to confirm this information a week or two beforehand.
- Please be sure to share any additional helpful materials with the Event Services team (such as a run of show, an agenda, event handouts, etc.) to ensure that our staff are prepared to assist with keeping the event on schedule and are able to answer questions regarding the event schedule if approached by an attendee.

7. Advertise Your Event

Once your event details are in place, you'll want to get the word out about your event. Be careful not to advertise before your services are confirmed, and always double check the details, like the time and location of your event. Visit our page (click below) to find out about the promotional opportunities available through Student Centers, such as kiosks, flyers, and MasonAds. You can also have your event listed on the Today@Mason calendar by contacting University Events (click below).

[View Advertising](#)

[View University Events](#)

8. Final Event Review

You're just about ready to hold your event! About ten business days before your event, double check with the respective department(s) and representative(s) to make sure that all of your event details are confirmed and ready to go. Make sure you know who to contact if you have last-minute needs the day of your event. If you have questions or need to make any changes to your event details prior to the day of your event, contact your Event Scheduler from University Events and any applicable representatives or departments (such as Event Services or Catering) as soon as possible. Please note charges may be applied for last-minute changes in venue location, venue set up, or production needs. Use the following checklist to make sure everything is ready:

- Do I have a confirmation for my event space?
- Is the space I've chosen still appropriate for what I want to do?
- Do I have a confirmation for the tables, chairs, and basic equipment I've requested, if applicable?
- Do I have a confirmation for the audiovisual technology I've requested, if applicable?
- Do I have a confirmation for my catering service, if applicable?
 - If my chosen caterer was not already approved, have they been added to the approved catering list and are able to provide my food and drinks?
- Do I know who I need to contact the day of my event in case I have questions or need to make changes?
- Once you can answer "yes" to the above questions, you're ready to hold your event!

9. Day of Event

You've now planned your perfect event! Sit back, relax, and have fun at your event!

Your Student Centers event space will be accessible by the Pre-Event Time listed on your space confirmation, or at least fifteen minutes before your Event Time. If you need assistance after arriving on-site, you can reach our Event Assistant Team by calling 703-993-8919.

10. Event Follow-Up

Once your event has ended, that does not mean that the work is done! Successful event planners will reflect on what went well and could have gone better after each event; the most successful events focus on improvement and innovation.

Following your event, reflect with your team on what went well and any areas for potential improvement, and document these notes and ideas for reference when planning your next event. Use these notes to provide any relevant feedback to your vendors and service providers (Event Services will provide you with a link to a survey following your event with your invoice or through your room reservation, or you can always email us directly at es@gmu.edu).

You will also want to re-confirm your payment method for any services ordered for your event. These invoices will typically post in the month following your event (for Event Services, invoices will typically post on or around the 10th of the month following your event). Be sure to review the final amounts charged and confirm that the account or payment method on file is still accurate. To avoid any excess charges from Event Services, make sure to leave the room clean and free of any incidental damages.

When you are ready to hold your next event, simply start again at Step 1.