

Academic Conference Planner

A guide for academics who plan to organise a conference or workshop

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(09/2016)

	> 12 Months	> 9 Months	> 6 Months	> 3 Months
Event Format	Formulate concept, discuss with stakeholders. Theme, format (workshop, workshop at conference, conference, conference in series, ...). Rough estimate of duration & attendance. Basic small team & responsibilities.	Make basic site, then update and enlarge	Decide: Participation open or invited only? Speakers open to submission or invitation only? Parallel sessions? Panels? Posters? Demos, exhibitions, other forms? Invite sub-workshops? Provide space for informal interaction.	Make provisional programme, update continuously. PR efforts for non-speakers to attend. -- Team of helpers (students?)
Speakers	Make informal enquiries with prominent names where there are contacts.	Invite prominent names, people important to you (what can you offer to them?), then others	Update site with speaker & talk information	Invite the last speakers. Finalize travel.
Papers & Publication		Make initial public announcement (optional) & internal announcements. - Decide on publication: yes/no. Look at format options. Contact publishers, journals.	Set up online reviewing system. Invite Program Committee (reviewers). Send CFP with details (submission types, submission system, requirements, programm committee, publication) - Decide on options to offer authors of submitted papers. --- Make publication plan with dates: publication a) at conference, or b) after conference.	CFP deadline is now + 2 weeks reviews + 2 weeks late & additional reviews -> announce decisions. Provisional programme (>2-3 months). Get in touch with media.
Registration & Budget	Decide which legal person is responsible for money. Get institutional approval. - Decide on date, check for conflicts. - Investigate sponsoring options, note application deadlines. Ability to outsource, to pay for professionals?	Make budget: Estimate fees, registration options (student, member, speaker). Numbers: worst & best case. Non-paying participants (organisers, invited speakers, ...). How to pay and to whom?	Finalise sponsoring arrangements. Registration open. Include dinner & dietary requirements. Book accomodation for speakers etc.	Estimate of attendance -> budget update. Oder folders/bags etc. for participants. Organise who will chair which sessions.
Physical Site	Decide location. Book spaces if high demand. What are the costs for rooms, etc.? Anything for free? What atmosphere do you want?	Professional or academic? What do we need, do we have it? Book location. Staff to pay?		Fix rooms together with provisional programme. Internet? Local transport? Non-academic programme?
Food & Drink		Rough idea of plans (dinner, breaks)	Food & Drink allowed on site? External catering allowed? Book dinner on site or elsewhere (esp. for large events).	Communicate provisional programme to catering to catch problems.

NOTES

This is a guide for academics who plan to organise an event. If you have suggestions for changes, please contact me: vmueller@act.edu or v.c.muller@leeds.ac.uk

The author of this guide has organised or co-organised about 25 academic events (from 50 to 250 people) in philosophy, cognitive science and AI in the last 10 years.

The advice given here assumes largely academic funding, i.e. it is not for business-funded events and it assumes the events are not for profit.

The advice given here is somewhat rough because it needs to be adjusted to your particular event, and habits differ between disciplines and regions (e.g. in the US, earlier deadlines are common). Also, thankfully, habits change over time.

> 1 Month - POINT OF NO RETURN -	> 1 Week	> 1 Day	At Event	Aftermath
Post full program on site, including session chairs, room allocations etc. Organise participant feedback, if desired.	Send information package to all participants (location, travel, food, accommodation, programme, emergency numbers, registration location, etc.) Print programme, if		Elicit participant feedback, if required.	Send thank you notes.
Finalize accommodation & inform speakers. Special needs?	Arrange for speakers arrival, pickup, perhaps pre-conference dinner, etc.	Check speakers are OK.	Have people take care of speakers. Collect reimbursement information.	Make reimbursements
Confirm with all speakers. Information about time slots, poster sizes. - a) full papers in & submission to publishers. Publisher to make stand at event?	Confirm with media outlets & journalists			b) Get publication to publisher (3 months.) Promote publication.
Sponsoring money arrived, or after expenses? Pre-payments needed? Send out conference information pack (maps, local info, programme, ...)	Registration close. Print name tags (large enough names). Name lists for signing off? Certificates of attendance?	Registration packs ready and on site	Registration desk ready (more staff first hours)	Final actual budget
Organise personnel (reception, tech, help). Technical requirements. Poster stands? Banners? Photo, video, streaming,	Know the contact persons, with phone number.	Make/print orientation signs + fixing. Check the rooms for equipment, chairs, cleanliness. Ready for photos/video?	Place orientation signs around campus (>1 hr before registration starts). Check that attendants are registered.	Paid?
Basic program to catering. Agreement on food/drink, prices, location. Pre-payment?	Confirm catering schedule & content. Confirm numbers, numbers for special diets, etc.	Check with caterers that their plans and yours agree	All according to plan and OK? Get invoice.	Paid?