Online Event Planning Checklist

# **Before Your Event**

## Develop Your Event Strategy

* **Establish your event goals and objectives.** Why are you holding the event? What outcomes do you hope to achieve? How many attendees are you hoping to get?
* **Select the date.** Make sure it doesn't conflict with any other events taking place in your area, or any major holidays.
* **Identify online venue.**Will you host a webinar? A livestream? An interactive Zoom call? Think about the type of event you’re hosting, whether it’s a workshop, guest speaker, conference or performance and let your needs guide your decisions on tools. Find out more about these and other platforms in the Club Hub Toolkit here.

## Get Organized

* **Develop an event master plan.** Include tasks, details, dates, those involved and any other relevant details. The work plan template and event run template in the club hub toolkit are useful tools for figuring out all the steps to take leading up to your event, and for planning out logistics on the day.
* **Recruit an event committee.** What club/team members are involved in making things happen. Think about all of the requirements for which you will need support. These could include communications, tech support, registration, finance, activity planning, liaising with speakers and more.
* **Determine if you need other software to support planning.** Microsoft Teams and Microsoft Planner are both free for Queen’s students. Find out more about these platforms in the Club Hub Toolkit.
* **Identify and confirm speakers/presenters**. Who will you need on hand during the event? Do you need to schedule them in? Now is the time to do this.

## Make It Inclusive & Accessible

* **Land Acknowledgement.** As a leader, creating your own Land Acknowledgement, rather than using a pre-written one, is encouraged as it makes the statement more genuine and personal. Find out more about developing a Land Acknowledgement here.
* **Closed Captioning.** Have closed captioning available on all pre-recorded and live videos. Videos can be uploaded to Ensemble and can be captioned through Amara . Find information about closed captioning on Zoom here. If you choose to use a different platform for your event, please take the time to look into closed captioning options.
* **Financial Accessibility.** Does your event have an attendance fee associated with it? It may act as a financial barrier for some students. Try to provide a bursary or financial assistance if possible.
* **Content Descriptions.** If your event plans to discuss content that some individuals may find difficult to listen to, due to personal experiences or a connection to the content, it is recommended that content descriptions are used. Providing a succinct overview of the topics that will be discussed ahead of time will allow students to determine whether the event is right for them.
* **Sharing Pronouns.** Encouraging attendees to do this if they would like to promotes a safe, accepting space for all students to express who they are.

## Finance Your Event

* **Get cost estimates.** Some costs you might need to consider are Technology costs for accounts or special equipment and speaker fees
* **Create an event budget.**Based on the costs above, you'll be able to determine how much your event will cost — and if you'll need to reduce any of them! There is a Budget Template from the AMS Clubs Office in the Club Hub Toolkit.
* **Funding.** If you require funding for your event, then the Club Hub Funding page is a good resource to look to.Identify and contact sponsors/partners.

## Setting up Registration

* **Registration/Ticketing.** Do you require participants to register for your event? If so, consider how you will organize registration and which member of your team will oversee the process.
* **Determine what tools you can use to make the registration process easier.** Some of these include Eventbrite, Google forms, or RSVPs through Facebook events.
* **Accessibility Considerations.** When students register, create a section where accessibility requirements can be voiced.

## Promote Your Event

* **Identify the name for your event and key messaging.** Be sure to include important details including who/what/when/where/how. These can be used to develop graphics and blurbs. You should also include key information on how to register if registration is required.
* **Promote using multiple channels.** This includes things like social media posts, event listings on your website events calendar and on third-party calendar sites, reaching out to past attendees, etc.
* **Highlight interactive elements of your event:** Telling participants how they will be engaged at the event can increase their likelihood of attending (i.e. games, quizzes, breakout rooms, prizes, question periods etc.)
* **Boost your posts:** Get the word out beyond your followers by boosting your posts on Facebook, Instagram and other social media outlets. A link is included that shares more about boosting posts and how to do so.
* **Use Queen's groups**: Posting in Queen's Facebook groups can gain you viewership and awareness of the event beyond your club's circle.
* **Incentives:**When promoting an event, the use of incentives can increase engagement with posts and help spread the word about your club/student group and upcoming events.
* **Marketing Plan:** Having a set plan that details when you will release posts and promotion material is helpful.

## Communicate with Registrants

* **Send a “thanks for registering” email.** This can be done as soon as attendees register or RSVP, and be sure to include important details like the event date and time and instructions on how to access the virtual event. You should also let attendees know if they need to prepare or bring anything: Will they be asked to participate with their computer video and audio on, or should they stay on mute? Will attendees need any supplies to participate?
* **Share itinerary:** Provide registrants with an event itinerary or schedule that the event is set to follow.
* **Send event reminders as your event approaches.** Emailsand social media posts can give attendees a friendly nudge when the event is coming up. Be sure to send instructions on how to access your virtual event.

# **The Day of Your Event**

## Tech Set Up

* **Make sure all your tools are working in advance.** Avoid technical difficulties by rehearsing in advance with all your tools. Make sure your microphone and camera are working and that you have all the software you need, whether it’s Zoom or another platform. For detailed information on online platform and how to use them, refer to the Club Hub toolkit.

## Moderating/Facilitating the Event

* **Follow good virtual event etiquette.** Right before your event, send one final communication with the info so that attendees can connect to the call or livestream. Once you get going, give attendees a few minutes to show up; don’t start until people have had a chance to log on and settle in. Share housekeeping notes. Finally, be a good moderator. If your event has a live chat, keep an eye on questions and comments—this is especially important if you run into technical difficulties and need to adjust a faulty mic or camera.
* **Use engagement strategies.** Zoom breakout rooms and polls are a good way to engage participants. Check out this Zoom Best Practices guide for more info. You could also include fun activities to break the ice or share ideas. A list of these are included in the Club Hub Toolkit.
* **Use an Event Run to make sure you’re on track.** An event run lays out all of the details and timing for your event including who is responsible for certain tasks. This can be a shared document for you and your team to make sure things are running smoothly. An event run template is available in the Club Hub Toolkit.
* **Thank speakers.** Let them know that you appreciate their involvement. You could give them a small gift if you have budgeted and planned for this.
* **Let your attendees know about next steps.** Make sure that you thank those in attendance for coming! You should also let them know if there is any follow up:
  + Encourage attendees to think about something they have learned and how they might utilize new knowledge or skills in the future.
  + You could also ask them to stay in touch and attend future events.
  + Let them know if there is a survey they will be asked to fill out.

# **After the Event**

## Contact Those Involved

* **Send a “thank-you” message to attendees.** Everyone likes to feel appreciated, plus, a thank-you email provides an excellent opportunity to solicit feedback from your guests.
* **Thank Presenters/Speakers.** Again, an email with a note of thanks is a great way to do this.
* **Send a message to people who couldn’t make it.** Send over a few highlights from your event and start building interest and excitement now for your next event.
* **Thank your team!** Give them feedback on a job well done and express your gratitude.

## Reflect and Assess

* **Ask for feedback from attendees.** This could include a survey or other type of event assessment. Some assessment tools are included in the Club Hub toolkit.
* **Reflect with your team.** Have a discussion around what went well that you could continue doing, and talk about some areas for improvement in the future. Encourage team members to think about the skills they have gained and how they might utilize them in the future. There are some great reflection tools in the Club Hub Toolkit.
* **Report on the event.** Attendance numbers and survey results, along with written feedback from attendees and team members is good to include. Comment on how the group should hold events in the future. This is something you can pass along to other club/group/society leaders in the future!