

Suggested Event Planning Timeline

Note: Not all items on this list are required for every event. This timeline is to be used as a guide, as unique circumstances must be considered when planning your special occasion.

Six Months to One Year in Advance

- ___ Determine the goal of your event and select the appropriate format for your message
- ___ Outline a budget estimate and seek appropriate approval
- ___ Select the date, after review of calendars for key participants, the University, and community
- ___ Check for major holidays, religious, cultural, or legal observances
- ___ Check for other major events such as a football game, fair, Vintage Days, or concert
- ___ Discuss roles and responsibilities with other supporting units
- ___ If requesting the President's participation, contact the President's Office
- ___ Select and reserve a venue, and obtain agreement in writing
- ___ Select guest list categories and begin master guest list
- ___ Choose a theme
- ___ Develop a rain plan (if scheduled for an outdoor venue)
- ___ Contact University Catering to review catering needs
- ___ Reserve hotel accommodations, if needed
- ___ Outline décor needs
- ___ Choose and order favors/give away items
- ___ Select and order any plaques, awards, etc.
- ___ Reserve rental equipment needed from external vendors
- ___ Confirm event speakers, including a master of ceremonies
- ___ If planning to serve alcohol, seek appropriate permission from University Catering
- ___ Plan audio/visual presentations and hire necessary audio-visual support

- ___ Develop plan for publicity with University Communications
- ___ Discuss parking/transportation needs with Traffic Operations
- ___ Develop plan for any online components

Three to Six Months In Advance

- ___ Write copy and design printed invitations, seek approval before printing
- ___ Finalize guest list
- ___ Confirm program speaking order
- ___ Request bio information and photograph/headshot for publicity
- ___ Add your event to the online University event calendar, 25 Live
- ___ Confirm event entertainment, and obtain agreement in writing
- ___ Confirm event menu with University Catering
- ___ Select and meet with a florist
- ___ Develop security plan with University Police, if needed
- ___ Request/hire a photographer, if needed
- ___ Develop a layout of your venue and determine where specific activities will take place
- ___ Confirm support staffing
- ___ Request volunteer staffing, if needed
- ___ Continue to update website with event details as needed

Two Months in Advance

- ___ Submit work order to Facilities Management for set up/logistical needs/materials
- ___ Complete guest list with addresses and prepare for mailing
- ___ Request parking code from Traffic Operations, if needed
- ___ Send out invitations 4-6 weeks before the event
- ___ Finalize décor
- ___ Make hotel accommodations and transportation plans for out-of-town guests/dignitaries
- ___ Create signage needed for event (banners, directional, etc.)

- ___ Prepare draft of printed program
- ___ Contact the Office of Disability Services for assistance with accommodations

Two to Four Weeks in Advance

- ___ Create menu cards, if needed
- ___ Finalize program and send to printer for production
- ___ Track RSVPs as they come back to your office
- ___ Prepare registration packets
- ___ Continue event publicity
- ___ Send detailed instructional packet to presenters, including directions, parking info, etc.
- ___ Finalize arrangements with all vendors, including A/V, catering, material suppliers
- ___ Write speeches and introductions
- ___ Giveaways should be received and prepped for distribution
- ___ Create table numbers
- ___ Create seating diagrams of room
- ___ Visit venue for walk through
- ___ Receive printed program, pull at least 2 for your file
- ___ Develop master timeline for event day(s)
- ___ Request Wi-Fi code, if needed
- ___ Contact “No Replies” on the RSVP list to avoid unexpected attendees

One Week in Advance

- ___ Print guest list in alphabetical order and also by table number for easy reference
- ___ Create nametags, placecards, and seating chart
- ___ Provide detailed advance packet to hosts with VIP backgrounds and other pertinent info
- ___ Collect plaques, awards and other presentation materials
- ___ Finalize remarks and create master script book for podium (tabbed for each speaker)

- ___ Send electronic version of script to each presenter for final review
- ___ Confirm security arrangements with University Police
- ___ Develop master timeline for event day(s)
- ___ Send final instructions to volunteers
- ___ Review responsibilities with event support staff
- ___ Confirm guest count with catering, to include all dietary restrictions (vegetarian, gluten free, dairy free)

Event Day

- ___ Arrive at least 2 hours early
- ___ Wear comfortable shoes!
- ___ Bring final copies of all planning documents for reference
- ___ Bring script book for podium
- ___ Greet volunteers and brief them on their responsibilities
- ___ Examine venue to ensure all details have been covered
- ___ Set up venue with signage, favors, awards, etc.
- ___ Perform sound, video and lighting checks
- ___ Set up registration table at least 30 minutes before event start time

Following the Event

- ___ Collect all needed invoices and process for payment
- ___ Send thank you notes to participants, volunteers and staffers
- ___ Hold event review to examine successes and points for improvement
- ___ Make list of notations for the next event
- ___ Pull tearsheets and media clips for your file