

Meet Cambridge

Event Planners' Toolkit

Planning Checklist

Meet Cambridge offers a free venue-finding search facility, to give you an overview of the venues that would be suitable for your event.

Large events may require the use of two or more venues and in this case we offer a free administration service to collate venue availability and act as a single point of contact to liaise with the venues for you. In most cases we can also provide a single set of terms and conditions, to make contracting with multiple venues easy.

Here are some of the key considerations to help you make a start, but before you do please do get in touch to find out how we can save you time.

Research

- Background research is crucial, check the conference history and delegate feedback. Attend as a delegate to see it in action!
- Check attendance at previous conferences, are numbers increasing, or decreasing year on year?
- How were registration fees structured, did delegates pay for social activities/gala dinners etc. separate to the sessions?
- How many exhibitors attended and what was exhibitor feedback like?
- How much sponsorship was raised?

Dates

- Does the conference traditionally take place at a set time each year and is this written into the constitution? If so then your options may be limited.
- If no date is specified, select a time suitable for maximum attendance.
- Consider public holidays and major events, university vacations and school holidays.
- Consider your audience and any cultural, religious dates that may not suit delegates.
- Check the University of Cambridge's term dates – accommodation isn't available in Colleges during term time.
- Be flexible if you can, off peak periods such as early December or early January may reduce costs.
- The peak conference seasons in Cambridge are Easter vacation and July-September.

Sustainable Events

- Consider ways to make your event sustainable and efficient in terms of travel, waste and the impact on the environment.
- See our sustainable event ideas for more information.

Meet Cambridge

12c King's Parade, Cambridge, CB2 1SJ

T: +44 (0) 1223 768740

E: enquiries@meet-cambridge.com

W: meet-cambridge.com



Meet Cambridge

Event Planners' Toolkit

Venue

- See potential venues first hand, make a short list and then bring your key decision-makers together for a site visit.
- Ensure the venue can meet all your requirements, talk through the programme with the venue.
- Check terms and conditions, cancellation charges and deposit schedules.
- Check what AV, security and equipment is included and what you may need to budget for.
- Check parking arrangements and public transport routes.
- Ask if WiFi is available and check policy re log-ins and passwords.
- Select accommodation close to the conference venue.
- Booking accommodation in the same venue as your meeting space may get you better rates.

Finances

- Have a realistic, detailed budget.
- Obtain written quotes from all suppliers.
- Divide expenditure into fixed and variable (per person) costs.
- Calculate the required attendance to break even and set fees according to your audience profiles.
- Review budget on a regular basis and have a contingency fund if possible.

Sponsorship

- Estimate contribution required by sponsorship.
- Compile a relevant list of businesses and organisations to target.
- Make contact with potential sponsors early.
- Prepare packages.
- See our sponsorship guidelines for further information.

Appointment of Committees

- Define roles and responsibilities.
- Keep to a manageable size.

Meet Cambridge

12c King's Parade, Cambridge, CB2 1SJ

T: +44 (0) 1223 768740

E: enquiries@meet-cambridge.com

W: meet-cambridge.com



Meet Cambridge

Event Planners' Toolkit

Speakers

- Expert speakers will attract delegates and they're crucial to your programme.
- Make bookings with speakers as soon as possible to guarantee attendance.
- Keep your speakers informed and brief them in advance of their arrival.
- Prepare speakers' guidelines to include deadlines for receipt of papers, posters, abstracts etc.
- Obtain permissions re. copyright and film/photography.
- Provide a 'green room' for speakers at the conference.

Management

- Who will manage the event for you?
- Do you need a Professional Conference Organiser?
- Enlist the help of volunteers.
- See our PCO checklist for more detail.

Marketing

- Identify your target audience and plan accordingly.
- Start early!
- Use different mediums to promote your conference, email, newsletters, social media, web site, intranet, trade press etc.

Evaluation

- Collate feedback from your delegates, sponsors and exhibitors.
- Hold a committee 'wash-up' meeting with venues and Meet Cambridge if necessary.
- Prepare a final report to include numbers, income, expenditure, profit and loss.
- Take a note of things that worked well and things that didn't, so you can improve if necessary for the next time.

If you are planning an event talk please do contact us to tell us your ideas. We have a wealth of contacts and resources to help you save time and money!

Meet Cambridge

12c King's Parade, Cambridge, CB2 1SJ

T: +44 (0) 1223 768740

E: enquiries@meet-cambridge.com

W: meet-cambridge.com

