

Boston College Office of Graduate Student Life Event Planning Guide and Checklist

Table of Contents

Facilities	Page 1-2
Budget	Page 2
Attendees and Target Audience	Page 3
Contracts	Page 3
Publicity	Page 3-4
Event Logistics-General	Page 4
Time Tables and Deadlines	Page 5-7

This guide is designed to save you time, and can be used for small events like meetings as well as large scale events that take months to plan.

Facilities

□ The Bureau of Conferences:

- If you are planning to hold an event on campus, you will likely need to work with the Bureau of Conferences (BOC) to arrange space, room set-up and/or catering.
- The BOC will not work directly with students. Therefore, all BOC catering, space and set-up requests must be coordinated through the Office of Graduate Student Life (GSL) Program Assistant, who is happy to assist you with your requests (617-552-1851.)

□ On-Campus Space:

- Most on-campus spaces are controlled by the Bureau of Conferences (BOC.)
- If you would like to reserve space on campus, contact the GSL Program Assistant, who will make the request on your behalf. Be sure to include the following information: name of event, sponsoring group, date, time (start and end,) number of expected attendees, room preferences (if you have any,) and a short description of the event.
- If you would like to reserve a room at the Murray Graduate Student Center, you may do so by filling out an on-line request form at: <http://www.bc.edu/offices/gsc/mgc/space-reservations/spaceform.html>.
- **Please note:** on-campus space is in short supply at BC, so plan ahead and request space early!

Off-Campus Space:

- For off campus venues, get all space reservations in writing. Some establishments may require you to sign something and pay a fee for the space (in addition to food costs) – please see “Contracts” section below.

Food:

- If you are planning on having food at your event, please be aware that many spaces on campus only allow food from BC Dining. Always check with the GSL Program Assistant to determine if the space you have reserved allows off-campus catering. (Hint: BC Dining is expensive so if you are on a budget and wish to use an off-campus catering service/restaurant, check with the GSL Program Assistant to find out which spaces allow off-campus vendors BEFORE requesting your space.)
- If you plan to use BC Dining’s catering services, please make sure you have enough time to place your order. Check out their website for ordering time tables and menu options: <http://www.bc.edu/offices/bcds/boc/catering/>. The great thing about using BC Dining’s catering services is that your group’s account is billed directly: no paperwork!
- If you plan on using an off-campus vendor (i.e. a catering service or restaurant,) check with the establishment to determine: how far in advance you must place your order (this will vary: if you are ordering pizza for five people, you will be able to do so the day of the event; if you are ordering catering for 50 people, you will need to give more notice) and what method of payment is acceptable (credit card, check, etc.)
- **If you wish you provide alcohol at your event you must use BC Dining and you must request a liquor license 8 weeks in advance through the BOC of the event due to both Newton and Boston license laws. So plan ahead!**

Budget

- Determine your overall budget for the event as well as how the money will be allocated. Keep a close eye on income and expenses throughout the planning process.
- Determine who needs to approve of the expenses – students in your department? Members of the GSA?
- If you are not the GSA Representative or Treasurer for your department, make yourself aware of all GSA financial policies and procedures.
- Think about “hidden” costs – tables, chairs, licenses, a/v, food, room charges, etc. These can add up quickly. GSL can assist you in figuring out these expenses.

Attendees and Target Audience

- Identify and invite all speakers, guests, entertainers involved in the event, and make sure they all know the date and time.
- Determine if invitations will be extended by word of mouth, an email list, or a more formal mechanism (like professionally printed invitations.) Your timeline will depend on the type of event and invitation.
- If you have special guests like a Dean or the President attending, make sure that your event is confirmed on their calendar and follow up in writing.
- Give people enough advanced notice to attend, but not too much notice. A conference may need a 6 month notice, but a pizza party may just need a week-10 days. Please see the “Timelines” section for important deadlines and preparation timelines.
- Consider co-sponsoring with another GSA department – this helps increase attendance and works toward achieving the GSA goal of interdepartmental community building (It also reduces costs!).

Contracts

- When contracting for services from off-campus vendors, you must fill out a contract. If the vendor does not have a contract, the Office of Graduate Student Life has a standard contract you can adapt for your event.
- The contract should include date, time, menu items, extras (like DJ or pool/foosball) or anything else you have arranged. Make sure the federal ID number is on the contract.
- IMPORTANT: The Associate Dean for Graduate Student Life signs all contracts on your behalf, so make sure to bring the contract to the Associate Dean for Graduate Student Life (MGC, Room 202) to review and sign.

Publicity

Publicity and marketing can make or break your event, so take this part of the process seriously.

- When designing a poster, think about where you will post it, who your audience is, and what the regulations are in the area in which you are posting. For BC posting rules, please go to www.bc.edu/odsd and click on “policies.” Make sure to include contact information and the sponsoring organization(s) on all posters.
- The Office of Graduate Student Life has a stamp to approve posters you wish to post on-campus (Note: your posters will be ripped down if you do not have them

stamped.) See any staff member at the Murray Graduate Student Center for assistance.

- Advertise through the GSA listserv by sending a request to the GSA President. The GSA list goes to all department representatives, while the BC grad students list is a voluntary list.
- Put an announcement in the *Grad Student Life* Newsletter, which is published every two weeks. The Office of Graduate Student Life is happy to advertise events open to all graduate students in its newsletter. Email gsc@bc.edu if you want to submit an article or notice.
- You can also submit events to the BC Events Calendar at <https://events.bc.edu/cgi-bin/publish/webevent.cgi>.

Event Logistics - General

Parking: If you are bringing people to campus and want them to be able to park here, you must let the Parking and Transportation office know. Send an email to transportation@bc.edu with all event details, including how many guests, what time, day, etc. They will let you know where to tell your guests to park.

Boston College Police: If you have a large event with alcohol, you will need a police detail. The Office of Graduate Student Life arranges for this through BOC. Contact: the GSL Program Assistant (617-552-1851.)

Audio Visual: Requests for all audio visual must be submitted directly to BC Media Technology Services, <http://www.bc.edu/offices/ats/mts/>.

BC Seal: If you want to use the BC seal for your event or speaker, contact the GSL Program Assistant (617-552-1851,) who will help you with this.

Timetables and Deadlines for Event Planning at Boston College

6 months ahead:

- Request your large event space! For on-campus space reservation requests, contact: GSL Program Assistant (617-442-1851.) For large-scale off-campus events, find out when payment is due (note: most establishments require a deposit in advance of the program date.) For off-campus venues, work with one person at the establishment to coordinate your event (preferably the event coordinator if one is on staff.)

8 weeks ahead:

- Secure a liquor license for on-campus events at which alcohol will be served. Contact: GSL Program Assistant (617-552-1851)
- Plan your advertising campaign. (Send out “save the date” notices for large-scale events.)

Four weeks ahead:

- Reserve space and secure a contract for smaller off-campus venues (i.e. a Grad Night Out at Big City.) Bring all contracts to the Association Dean of Graduate Student Life to sign (617-552-3482.) Get the name of the person with whom you make the initial arrangements and work with this person from start to finish.
- Find out when the next *Grad Student Life* newsletter submission deadline is and prepare an advertisement for the newsletter. Contact: GSL Program Assistant (617-552-1851.)
- Contact the GSL Program Assistant (617-552-1851) to arrange for ticket sales at the Murray Graduate Student Center, if you will be selling tickets for the event.

Two weeks ahead:

- Request catering and confirm set-up arrangements for on-campus events. Contact: GSL Program Assistant (617-552-1851.)
- Request audio visual equipment for on-campus events. Contact: GSL Program Assistant (617-552-1851.)
- Confirm with all featured program attendees (facilitators, speakers, etc.)
- If you’ve reserved an off-campus venue for a large-scale event (a large conference, reception, dance, etc.) check-in with your contact at the establishment with count, final menu choices, etc.

- Submit all paperwork needed for advance payments (check requests) to the GSA Financial Director (Murray Graduate Student Center, Room 101.)
- Send an advertisement out via appropriate email lists.

One week ahead:

- Poster the campus with advertisements. Make sure to have all posters stamped at the Murray Graduate Student Center (Room 101.)
- Request small catering services for on-campus venues (snacks, beverages, cold sandwiches, etc.) Contact: GSL Program Assistant (617-552-1851.)

2-3 days ahead:

- Send a reminder advertisement out to appropriate email lists. Poster the campus again.
- Place order for small food orders from off-campus vendors (i.e. Baker's Best catering or Pino's Pizza)
- If you've reserved an off-campus venue, check in with your contact at the establishment for last minute counts, instructions, etc.
- If you've reserved transportation services (i.e. a bus,) confirm arrival and departure times, etc, with the company.
- If you are waiting for a check to be cut for the event, check in with the GSL Program Assistant (617-552-1851) to be sure it has arrived and make arrangements to pick up the check.

Day of event:

- Have a list of key contacts and their phone numbers with you: Manager on duty at off-campus site, BOC Coordinator, Audio Visual Services, GSL Staff, GSA Representatives, etc.
- Make sure you have the necessary payment with you (check, credit card, etc.) Always have money for tip if appropriate. Have a credit card available for unanticipated expenses.
- Show up early (15 minutes for a meeting, up to an hour or two for large events) to ensure the room is in order, set up correct, food has arrived.
- Introduce yourself to the event coordinator/manager/BOC coordinator working the event. This will be your key contact person for the duration of the event.

One Week after the Event:

- Send out thank-you notes to invited participants.
- Submit paperwork for reimbursement requests to the GSA Financial Director (Murray Graduate Student Center, Room 101.)
- Send out evaluations to participants, if appropriate (You may wish to do this at the event.)
- Conduct a post-event wrap-up meeting with your constituents. (What went well? What challenges did you encounter? What would you do differently next time? Etc.)
- If this is an annual/repeating event, save all documentation for the next group.