

Thinking about holding a virtual event for your organization? Our Online Events Guideline for Student Clubs & Organizations describes important expectations and resources for recognized clubs hosting online events and attendees, including Pre-Event Planning, Protocols, Activities, Process and Post-Event Evaluation.

PRE-EVENT PLANNING

1 – Registration

- Select an appropriate method to host your online event (i.e. Zoom, Google Hangouts). Ensure your event has a way to control who is permitted to attend the event (e.g. Pre-registration with unique links, password or waiting room features).
- Create a registration form for participants to access the event to monitor how many people are expected to attend. Minimized the chances of “meeting/event-bombing”.
- Send registrants notifications/reminders before the event (Ex. Zoom can automatically send registrants notifications/reminders for upcoming events they signed up for).
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- Provide an option for registrants to state accessibility needs in registration (i.e. Determine if language interpreter, ASL interpreter, etc. is needed).

2 – Ensuring Your Event is Accessible

- Make sure that the platform used to host an event is accessible to everyone who wants to attend.
- Be aware of where everyone is joining the event from and take into consideration time zone differences.
- Assign a point of contact (ideally a club executive) that participants may reach out to if unsure of how to participate and/or if having issues accessing the event and its activities.
- Note and accommodate all accessibility needs expressed in registration forms.

3 – Entry Fees

- If charging for events, use a reputable online ticketing platform (i.e. Eventbrite).
- Plan the logistics of how participants may pay for event entry fees and access the event (e.g. Registration and entry fees may be done through Eventbrite and a link to the event will be provided in a confirmation immediately after).

4 – Sharing/Promoting Your Event

- It's always best to share a direct zoom link to individuals registered rather than sharing it widely.
- Utilize various social media platforms.
- If you create a hashtag for your event, make sure it isn't already being used.
- Consider incentivizing early registration as well as attendance in general (e.g. Draw for a gift card for first 10 registrants and an additional draw of another prize for all attendees).

5 – Assigning Facilitator Roles

- It is highly recommended to assign who will be facilitating certain components of the event (i.e. - Who will be host/moderator, co-host/co-moderator, monitoring the waiting room, monitoring the chat box, point of contact if participant is experiencing technical or accessibility difficulties, etc.)

EXPECTATIONS/PROTOCOL

1 – Ensure Your Event is Inclusive

- See the university's [Inclusion Lens](#) for resources.

- Use inclusive language.
- Establish that your event is a safe space for all participants but also allows for people to express their opinions using a values-based approach. All participants must be confident that they will not be subject to discrimination, harassment, and/or abuse.
- Attendees may stop participating or exit the event at any time.
- Establish expectations for the event. Have expectations accessible to all participants (e.g. If using Zoom: can share rules to the waiting room, screen share at the beginning of the event, make it available in the chat box, etc.) Clarify process for why someone would be asked to leave event or be muted.
- Clarify intentions for respectful dialogue and facilitator should be aware of registration list in case of uninvited guests or attendees who are disruptive or don't adhere to event expectations for attendees.
- Community Guidelines:
 - [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#)
 - [Statement of Policy on Free Speech](#)

2 – Outline Support Resources

- Be aware of triggers and provide support resources for participants if needed.
- List of resources may include: Student Counselling Centre for Human Rights Equity & Inclusion, The Centre for Sexual Violence Response, Support & Education (<https://mhw.info.yorku.ca/resources/resources-at-york/students/> & <https://mhw.info.yorku.ca/finding-help/>)

ACTIVITIES

1 – Create Engaging Events

- Utilize platform's functions to increase audience participation (e.g. Using Zoom's annotation, chat box, reactions, raise hand features, breakout rooms, etc.)
- Examples of online platforms to potentially use include: Jackbox, Pictionary, Houseparty, Skribbl.io, and Code Names. If using online games, consider if non-inclusive/exclusive language is used.

2 – Decide if the Event Activity Will be Competitive or Collaborative in Nature

- If competitive (i.e. e-sports) ensure it's a fun atmosphere and reiterate expectations of participation.
- If collaborative (i.e. Family Feud) consider mixing people up so participants get the chance to meet new people.

3 – Have at Least Two People Running an Activity

- One person goes over rules and maintains order, the other takes care of technical and behind the scenes work.
- Always have a backup activity in case you run into tech or other access issues.

4 – Don't Be Afraid to Try New Games and Activities

- Planning virtual events is new for almost everyone so you don't need to be a huge success in your first few tries.

PROCESS

1 – Review Online Event Etiquette in Relation to Function of the Activity with Attendees (i.e. Zoom)

- Express that all attendees are muted upon meeting entry.
- Clarify if there's a recording of the video going to happen.
- Review expectations of having video on or off:
 - Allow attendees the option to have video off
 - Let attendees know that having video is preferable when necessary
 - If attendees need to leave and come back, outline expectations (e.g. If leaving, turn your video off and leave a thumbs up reaction to inform that you are okay).
- Mention all the features that the platform offers to engage with the audience and how to use and change those settings.
- Establish what it means to be a host, co-host and participant.

POST-EVENT EVALUATION

1 – Asking for Participant Feedback on Event

- Not mandatory.
- If needed, consider asking for feedback at the end of the event rather than later (e.g. If at the end, Mentimeter can be used. If after, Google or Microsoft forms can be used, etc.)

2 – Having a Debrief With the Team

- Discuss the success you had and what can be improved.
- Be sure to identify what reasons may have existed for registrants not to show up.

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- Remind the team that even if participation was low, if everyone enjoyed themselves then this is something that can be built upon.