



Event Design

There are a number of things to consider when designing an event/program. Please use this as a guide to assist you through the process. Should you need additional assistance, please contact the Department of Student Life at 585-245-5851.

Step 1: Determine the Goal and Need for the Event

Without knowing why an event is taking place, there is no way to continue the planning phase to determine what the event will be or if it will be successful. There are many reasons to host an event. Some examples include:

- To increase visibility on campus
- To promote your organization
- To recruit new members
- To facilitate bringing groups together
- To offer recreation or leisure needs to the campus community
- To foster leadership development

The goal and need for the event should be written into a mission statement. This statement must clearly and simply describe the event's purpose. This can be used when describing your event in the future.

Step 2: Define the Event

When choosing an event/program, the choice must match the organization's goal. Filter out suggestions that do not support the focus. Decide on a feasible event, recognizing every organization has limited resources, including physical location and facilities, financial constraints and available assistance.

When deciding what kind of event/program or what to offer at the event/program, a number of things must be considered, including planning time, production cost, allotted space, weather conditions, time of year, community support.

In this step, it should be determined what will be present at the event such as:

- Entertainment
- Art
- Food
- Games
- Displays
- Hands-on activities
- Sports



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Step 3: Select Event Name

When selecting the name, it should be catchy, memorable, and something that can be used again. It should also articulate the theme of the event and not sound like another event within the same area.

Consider ways to save the event money while creating a catchy name. For example, if the name remains the same, then costs of banners, signs and certain marketing materials can be used year after year.

Step 4: Determine the Theme

The theme portrays the event's overall purpose and goals and must convey a distinct, enticing image or quality that appeals to prospective event-goers.

Although this step may not be necessary, a theme can illustrate specific categories of event types, such as:

- Music and entertainment
- Arts and crafts
- Holiday or seasonal
- Cultural and ethnic
- Historical or heritage
- Educational

Step 5: Define the Target Audience

For the purpose of effective marketing, it is critical to identify the target audience – to whom is the event appealing (students, staff, faculty, or community members). Consider if this is an event open to the entire campus, just organization members or members of another club.

Step 6: Set Date, Time and Location

The date and time may be obvious (e.g., holiday events), or the timing should best meet the goals and objectives for which the event was organized. Do not plan with a specific date or location in mind until you have reserved this date and location with Campus Scheduling and Special Events which is located in Erwin Hall or can be reached at 585-245-5500. Online scheduling is reserved for registered organizations and can be done at <http://emsprod.geneseo.edu/virtualems/>

Often the location is specific to space available. Focus on a few sites that might best meet the needs of the event – large enough to accommodate the crowd, but not too large that the event components do not allow for good flow.

Please also use *Special Event Check List and Event Timeline* for additional planning resources. Both can be found on the Department of Student Life webpage.