



GSAS GRADUATE STUDENT GROUP EVENT PLANNING GUIDE

Spring 2024



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OVERVIEW

The information in this guide will help you plan and execute your graduate student group event, large or small. GSAS and the University will be pleased to collaborate with you to ensure that your event runs smoothly.

When hosting an event, be mindful that you represent Columbia University at all times. GSAS expects your best effort in abiding by University policies (see <http://www.essential-policies.columbia.edu/university-event-policies>) as well as those of any off-campus venue. Appropriate conduct is expected before, during, and after your event.

This guide is for student organizations recognized by the Arts & Sciences Graduate Council (ASGC) <https://council.gsas.columbia.edu/> that are currently in good standing. A list of ASGC recognized groups can be found [here](#):

A student organization that fails to meet the guidelines set forth by ASGC, GSAS, and the University, may lose its official recognition and associated privileges. In addition, student organizations hosting events must agree to the terms described below.

Student groups must:

- Observe all Columbia University rules and procedures, as well as all state and local government laws and regulations, in planning and carrying out the event;
- Follow all University event policies as outlined on the University Events Management (UEM) website at <https://eventmanagement.columbia.edu/>;
- Obtain necessary permissions to hold the event, and follow instructions from both within and outside the University (if applicable);
- Cooperate fully with University officials assigned to the event before, during, and after the event;
- Pay in full any fees incurred from hosting the event.

Student group leaders should inform the GSAS Advisor about plans for upcoming events in a timely manner and, note any relationships or partnerships your group may have with Columbia University departments or outside organizations, prior to hosting an event. Questions about your organization's account and procedures for funding events, ticketing, or creating contracts, can be directed to GSAS Business Office.



PLANNING STUDENT GROUP EVENTS ON CAMPUS | GENERAL INFORMATION

Planning a graduate student group event on campus requires strict adherence to policies, procedures, and timelines, and the coordination of services from a number of University offices. The following information pertains to planning a student group event ON CAMPUS.

PROPOSAL

An event proposal is required for all student events considered to be complex. Event proposals must be sent to Lucia Espineira, GSAS Advisor for graduate student groups (le2409@columbia.edu) and, depending on the complexity of an event, see [Event Classification](#) under Student Event Policies, an **Event Review** with UEM may be required (see Page 13 for details regarding Event Reviews).

Proposals are to be sent well in advance of the event date.

Proposals are not necessary for normal group activities such as weekly group meetings and small gatherings among group members.

Proposals are required for events that have one or more of the following elements:

- ★ Your event requires a contract
- ★ Your event has a number of outside guests invited
- ★ You will be selling tickets and will have guests register
- ★ Your event spans a length of time (½ day, full day, 2-days or more)
- ★ You anticipate a large turnout (on or off campus)
- ★ You have a VIP guest participant or guest
- ★ You are collaborating with an outside group/organization/agency/or office
- ★ You require support of multiple central services such as AV, Rentals, Custodial, and Security

Your Event Proposal must provide the following information:

GENERAL EVENT INFORMATION

- Host (group name)
- Event Leaders (student leader names, UNIs)
- Title of event
- Purpose of event
- Date / Time (proposed)
- Location (proposed)
- Description and Format of event
- Approximate attendance

- Composition of attendance (group members only, CU ID holders, CU + outside guests, VIPs attending)
- How it will be advertised
- Refreshments (food/beverage, proposed source)
- Alcohol served (yes/no, type)
- Audio/Visual needs
- Other support required (Facilities, Custodial)
- Ticketing (yes /no; if yes, what method, is money being collected)
- Budgeting (source of funds for the event)
- Special event criteria present that warrant additional protocols and notifications

PLANNING STUDENT GROUP EVENTS ON CAMPUS | UEM

University Event Management (UEM) oversees booking space inside Lerner Hall as well as residence hall lounges, classrooms, and outdoor space. The Office of Student Events in UEM helps coordinate the support services your event may need. UEM's office is located on the 7th floor of Lerner Hall. For an overview of the event-planning with regard to UEM, please refer to the [UEM](#) web site.

Based on the nature of your event, not every step below will be necessary.

STEPS TO FOLLOW

- Review [Student Event Policies](#) and [steps to follow](#) on University Events Management (UEM) website.
- Once you know the overall format of your event, review [Event Classification](#) (under Student Event Policies) to see if your event is a Standard or a Special Event.
- Event approval: Send your proposal to Lucia Espineira, GSAS Advisor (le2409@columbia.edu)
- Venue: reserve space (online)
<https://eventmanagement.columbia.edu/content/our-venues>
 - Be sure your group leader has access to Event Management System (EMS) to reserve space on campus.
 - For EMS access write to Lucia Espineira, GSAS Advisor le2409@columbia.edu, to have your account established.
 - Once EMS approves your account, you will meet a staff member of UEM at Lerner to activate your account.
- Facilities Support:

- Custodial services:
<https://eventmanagement.columbia.edu/content/custodial-services>
- Event setup (including furniture):
<https://eventmanagement.columbia.edu/content/event-setup-additional-services>
- Food/Beverage:
 - All catering in Lerner Hall must be Columbia University Catering
 - To use Columbia University Catering, [Request Catering Services](#)
<https://eventmanagement.columbia.edu/content/catering-0>
 - PLEASE NOTE: Food is not allowed in classrooms
- Alcohol: If serving alcohol you must register your event using the Alcohol Registration Form on line through UEM:
<https://eventmanagement.columbia.edu/content/events-alcohol>
- A/V equipment and technological support:
 - <https://eventmanagement.columbia.edu/content/avtechnical-services>
- Security: the necessity of Security (Public Safety) will be determined at an Event Review.
- Timeline: for complex events, you should establish a timeline for your event elements. It should include timing for: arrival of group members and guests, event start/end, set-up and break-down, all event's details of program elements (or agenda), arrival of food, final departure of all. The Event Review team will require this information.
- Accounting and Payments: Review your group's account status and available funds and know the approved methods of payment for costs associated with your event. For budget and accounting questions you can contact GSAS Business Office's Harold Ansah, ha2392@columbia.edu, Assistant Director of Budget Planning and Finance.
- Press, Media Coverage, or Filming: you must send contact information of these agencies or entities to Lucia Espineira, GSAS Advisor le2409@columbia.edu. It will need to be sent to the central offices of PR for the university.
- *After your event is approved by UEM and your GSAS Advisor, announce your event (advertise, send invitations).*
- Set-up registration and/or ticketing.
- Additional event services not noted above can be found here:
<https://eventmanagement.columbia.edu/services>
- For special events like [movie screenings](#) or [BBQ events](#), visit UEM's website for policies and instructions.
- For reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses, see the section on Travel & Business Expenses (Page 8).



PLANNING STUDENT GROUP EVENTS ON CAMPUS | GSAS Graduate Student Center

SEMINAR ROOM - 302 PHILOSOPHY

To submit a request to reserve the Graduate Student Center's Seminar Room (302 Philosophy Hall) and use this link <https://gsas-seminar-room.youcanbook.me/>.

Seminar Room Policies:

- Only graduate-student groups of no more than 24 persons are allowed to reserve this room;
- If you would like *Nous Espresso Bar* to cater your group meeting, you may request by emailing jenny@chokolat.com. All requests must be made at least three days in advance as *Nous* is unable to accommodate requests made on the day of your meeting. (Your group members are welcome to stand in line at the *Nous* counter, order for themselves, and bring their food/coffee into the room);
- If you have ordered outside catering, you are responsible for cleaning surfaces and spills, and properly disposing of all trash and removing leftovers.
- With or without food, groups should always remember to clear and reset the room before exiting.
- Facilities fees will be charged if extra cleaning is required by custodial services.

GRADUATE STUDENT CENTER LOUNGE - 301 PHILOSOPHY

To submit a request to reserve the Graduate Student Center lounge (Room 301, Philosophy Hall) email Lucia Espineira at le2409@columbia.edu.

GSC Lounge Policies:

Use is limited to:

- Official ASGC activities (6:30-11:30pm)
- Recognized ASGC student groups in good standing (8:00-11:00pm)

Groups must follow these guidelines:

- Send an event proposal to le2409@columbia.edu at least three weeks in advance
- Group size is limited to 50 participants
- The Graduate Student Center will not be closed to other graduate students during your event. Therefore, you should expect other people to be in the room during your event and you may not ask them to leave.
- The event cannot last more than three hours

Furniture:

- Tables may not be moved
- Chairs may be rearranged for the event, and returned to their original arrangement before leaving

Alcohol:



- If you intend to serve alcohol, the event will need to be registered with UEM. Intention to serve alcohol must be clearly stated in the event proposal.

Clean-up:

- You must clean up after the event (e.g., place all waste in the waste bins, return chairs to their original positions, and wipe up any major spills that may have occurred)
- If your event requires significant cleanup, your group will be charged for Facilities' service

Use of A/V equipment:

- A/V needs must be confirmed with CUIT at least one week in advance.

Attendees:

- Indicate who will be attending the event in your event proposal.
- If you plan to invite non-CUID card holders, this must be approved in advance.
- For any VIPs who have their own support/guard service, this must be communicated to Lucia Espineira, le2409@columbia.edu so Public Safety can be made aware.

Inspection:

- Staff from GSAS or *Nous* will inspect the space after the event to ensure that the space is properly cared for.



PLANNING STUDENT GROUP EVENTS | OFF CAMPUS

Student groups are encouraged to hold events at venues outside of Columbia University. Depending on the nature and size of your event, the need for a contract agreement may or may not be necessary. Below are some important event-planning procedures to follow.

STEPS

- Know your account status;
- Define your event (purpose/format);
- Select your venue and estimate the costs;
- Consult with GSAS Business Office for best practices (for payments/reimbursements).
- Advertise, announce, set up registration, etc. as needed.

CONTRACT AGREEMENTS

- When using an outside vendor, you must obtain a contract agreement well in advance for vendor and payment approval.
- Once you have chosen an outside venue and created a contract agreement, forward the contract (immediately) to GSAS Business Office: Harold Ansah (ha2392@columbia.edu) Assistant Director of Budget Planning and Finance; it will require approval by the Purchasing Office.
- If approved, GSAS will contact you and you may continue planning your event.
- If the contract agreement contains any indemnifying language or issues, it will require additional review by the Purchasing Office or the Office of General Counsel. In such cases, the contract may take as long as 3-4 weeks to process.
- The Purchasing Office will work directly with the vendor to make contract changes; once finalized, the appropriate authority will sign, forward it to the vendor, and you will be notified by GSAS.

**Students may never sign a contract on behalf of the University.*

OUT OF POCKET EXPENSES | USE OF TRAVEL & BUSINESS EXPENSE REPORTS

Students groups are encouraged to ask for invoicing and use contract agreements for event expenses when possible. Before dipping into personal funds, please read the following instructions for reimbursement. As always, it is strongly recommended you consult the GSAS Business Office for best practices with regard to forms of payment.

Instructions:

- Review Columbia's [travel](#) and [business](#) expense policies.
- Complete the **Non-Profiled Payee Travel and Business Expense Worksheet**.
 - This worksheet is designed to help organize travel and business expense items for reimbursement to any individuals who are not University faculty, staff or student employees (aka non-profiled payees).

- All University travel and business policies and procedures apply to individuals who are not University faculty, staff or student employees.
- All reimbursements need to have a clear explanation of the detailed business purpose.
- All expenses should be listed as they would appear on a statement (e.g., if you have multiple Uber trips, each trip is a separate expense).
- Fill out the worksheet at this link: <https://npp-expense.finance.columbia.edu/> (This will generate a PDF version of the completed worksheet)
- Submit the completed worksheet and required documentation.
 - Provide an itemized receipt and proof of payment for each expense.
 - Provide documentation of business purpose (i.e., conference program, flyer, schedule of events).
 - Review the [Reimbursement Processing Checklist](#) to ensure your worksheet is filled out correctly and you have included all of the required documentation before submitting it.
 - Send the completed worksheet with itemized receipts, proof of payment, and documentation of business purpose to Harold Ansah (ha2392@columbia.edu), Assistant Director of Budget Planning and Finance, so that it can be processed for reimbursement.

PLANNING STUDENT GROUP EVENTS | ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Advertising
- Calendaring
- Cancellations
- Condition of Space
- Donations and Contributions
- Event Reviews
- Funding
- Guest Lists
- Student Waivers
- Vendor Recommendations

ADVERTISING

A student group's advertisement/flyer:

- May not support or promote illegal activities including but not limited to the sale and/or use of illicit drugs.
- May not promote or encourage the consumption of alcohol.
- May not promote for-profit gambling ventures.
- May not include sexually explicit images or content.

Student organizations may place flyers around campus as long as they follow all policies and procedures outlined by individual department and building policy, and as outlined in the Essential Policies for the Columbia Community. Student organizations are further subject to New York City ordinances when flyering off-campus. Please contact your local police precinct if you have a question or concern about off-campus flyering. Student groups should also be aware that placing flyers on pavement or ground is a hazard for individuals living with disabilities, and will be removed promptly by Columbia University staff.

**You may contact the Office of Communications, GSAS for possible assistance in promoting your event; it is strongly encouraged to do this at least 3-4 weeks in advance.*

CALENDARING & PRE-CALENDARING

Student group events held on campus must be held during the academic semester (after the first day of classes, before the last day of classes).

Student groups can begin reserving non-classroom space on campus through UEM beginning on the first day of classes; classroom space is available after the first three weeks of each semester.

For space in Lerner Hall and other select spaces, registered groups are able to pre-calendar. Pre-calendar takes place during the second half of the current semester and allows the group to request space for the following semester. More information can be found at the [UEM pre-calendar](#) web page.

CANCELLATIONS FOR EVENTS RESERVED THROUGH UEM

Student groups may cancel online through EMS if the event will not happen.

- If you have any issues canceling online, contact UEM;
- Provide 5-business-days' notice for small events such as rehearsals, meetings, movie nights, or study breaks;
- For large-scale events such as performances and productions, please provide 10-business-days' notice
- Cancellations for reasons other than those outside of an organization's control may impact future booking status. Student groups are allowed three cancellations without notification before reservation privileges will be affected. On both the first and second times a group does not show up for a scheduled event without notification, the group will receive a warning. After a third incident, the group will lose the privilege of reserving space in Lerner Hall, classrooms, and residence hall lounges for 14 academic weeks
- The University reserves the right, without penalty, to cancel or relocate an event with at least 3-business-days' notice

CONDITION OF SPACE

Student groups are responsible for leaving spaces in the condition found.

- If furniture in a room must be rearranged, students should restore the room to its default configuration following an event;
- Failure to comply with this regulation will result in additional charges;
- Food is not allowed in classroom space.

DONATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Columbia University is a not-for-profit, tax-exempt institution, categorized by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c) (3) organization. The IRS permits contributions from one 501(c)(3) to another 501(c)(3) in some circumstances, but not to other types of legal entities.

MAKING DONATIONS

What is needed to process a donation from a GSAS student group to a not-for-profit organization?

- Prior approval must be received from the GSAS Associate Dean for Administration and Finance. Students are encouraged to obtain as much information as possible from the organization to enable the approver to adequately determine whether the organization receiving the contribution from Columbia is fair and appropriate.
- Proof of the organization's 501 (c)(3) status must be demonstrated. This is usually accomplished by providing a copy of the organization's letter of determination from the IRS. Please note at this time the University does not permit donations to international organizations not registered in the United States.



- Any contribution must be related to the mission of Columbia University. As a student group, it is important to explain, via memo or e-mail, how the funds were raised and why the group decided to support the organization in question

When approval is given, what do I do next?

Contact the GSAS Business Office: Harold Ansah, ha2392@columbia.edu, Assistant Director of Budget Planning and Finance, with the following documentation.

- A memo/email stating:
 - The legal name and a brief description of the organization;
 - The amount you want to donate and how the funds were raised;
 - The account number (s) to be debited. Note – The funds MUST already be in the account.
- A copy of the organization's 501 (c) (3) letter.
- Contact information for a person in the organization who can assist the GSAS Business Office in preparing a W-9 Form for the organization.

**NOTE: US Law does not permit contributions or donations to religious or political organizations.*

RECEIVING DONATIONS

What is needed to accept a gift or donation to a GSAS student group?

- A memo must be sent to GSAS Business Office: Harold Ansah, ha2392@columbia.edu, Assistant Director of Budget Planning and Finance. The memo should indicate that the student group has a prospective donor who would like to make a gift to support your group. The memo should give an indication of how much the gift will be, and what activities the gift is intended to support.
- If the gift is a donation "in kind" (meaning in goods or services rather than in cash) and the donor wants to receive a gift receipt for tax purposes, please contact Erin Z. Hussein, Associate Director of Alumni Relations, (email: erin.hussein@columbia.edu) for approval and guidance on how to proceed.

After review of all supporting documentation, the GSAS Business Office will advise as to whether or not Columbia can accept the gift. If the gift is accepted, the University will acknowledge the gift but the student group should also send a thank you letter to the donor confirming receipt of the gift.

**NOTE: no one at GSAS can accept a donation or gift without authorization*

APPROVAL

When approval is given, what happens next?



The GSAS Business Office, Harold Ansah, ha2392@columbia.edu, Assistant Director of Budget Planning and Finance, will contact the group with an account number and can provide wire transfer information if needed.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Checks must be made payable to Columbia University. GSAS and its student groups have no legal identity and thus cannot accept gifts in their own name.
- If a gift is a cash or check, documentation from the donor as to the gift's purpose and the dollar amount needs to be submitted to the Business Office, If the gift is "in-kind," the documentation should be sent to GSAS's Office of Alumni and Development;
- All gifts are subject to a 10% administrative fee charge. This means that a \$500 gift will allow the group to spend about \$455. Gifts are restricted funds and thus can only be spent for the purposes described in the donor's letter. Thus the broader the description the better.

EVENT REVIEWS

Events that have any of the following criteria may necessitate an Event Review:

- presence of press/media (invited or otherwise)
- advertised beyond Columbia's campus
- high attendance/capacity
- serving of alcohol
- potential for significant disruption
- security concerns on the part of the recognized student group, advisers, or guest

Scheduling and timing of Event Reviews:

- The GSAS Advisor will coordinate with Student Events Manager (UEM) to schedule;
- The process of scheduling an Event Review normally takes 5 business days;
- An Event Review must be completed 10 business days prior to the event;
- All issues and arrangements discussed at the Event Review must be resolved 5 business days in advance of the event.
- Event Review Times

Tuesdays & Wednesdays: 1:30pm; 4pm

Thursdays: 10:00am; 12:30pm

GUEST LISTS

- Events inside Lerner Hall that are open to non-University ID holders, must have a guest list approved by the Welcome Desk no later than 24 hours in advance of your event. Using the Welcome Desk Guest List template, send the names to your Advisor, who will submit it to the Welcome Desk (welcomedesk@columbia.edu). (The guest list should be in alphabetical order by last name.)



- The Lerner guest list cannot exceed 30 people. Events held inside the Auditorium would use the Broadway entrance to Lerner where entry of non-CUID holders is permitted.

FUNDING OPTIONS

Arts & Sciences Graduate Council's (ASGC) Student Initiative Grants (SIG) Application

<https://council.gsas.columbia.edu/form/student-initiative-grant-applica>

The President's and Provost's Student Initiative Fund

[Download the P&P Fund application](#) and submit by the stated deadline (the Friday after the last day of classes for the semester).

Student Group Co-Sponsorship

Consult with other student organizations recognized by the University to find groups that may be interested in organizing and co-sponsoring an event with you.

VENDOR RECOMMENDATIONS

If you are interested in hiring outside vendors for your event (i.e., photographer or videographer, florist, DJ, event production company), consult with UEM for vendor recommendations: <https://eventmanagement.columbia.edu/content/vendor-recommendations>. UEM can connect you to preferred and trusted vendors or facilitate bookings on your behalf.



COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Student Activity Liability Waiver Form

First Name Last Name MI

Birthday / / UNI Cell Number

Emergency Contact Name Relationship Cell Number

I intend to participate in the activity called ("Activity") to be conducted by ("Sponsor/Organizer/Club") on or about / / (date).

I acknowledge that I must thoroughly read and understand the information contained in this registration pertaining to the Activity and the possible risks and hazards that might result from participation in this Activity.

I understand that my participation in the activities of the Club is subject to any rules and regulations outlined for me by Club officers and/or any other person(s) overseeing the activities. I acknowledge that any activities in which I engage as a member of the Club are of my own choice and judgement, and I agree to participate in a safe manner.

In consideration of my participation in Club activities, I further agree to assume all such risks and expressly release and hold harmless Columbia University, including its Trustees, faculty, employees, staff, and other agents of and against any and all liability and responsibility for any claim or cause of action on account of any personal injury, accident, damage, expenses, or other loss caused, suffered, or incurred by or to any person(s) or entity during, arising out of or in any way associated, directly or indirectly, with my membership in the Club.

I acknowledge that I have read and understand the above statements and that I am at least eighteen (18) years old and of legal age to bind myself to this release and waiver, and that signing this form constitutes a legal signature confirming that I hereby expressly waive all my rights, claims, causes of action, and the like of any nature whatsoever which I or my heirs or legal representatives may have against the University or any of the agents and employees in connection with my participation in such an activity.

Signature Date / /

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