



Training for hosting face-to-face events

November 2023

Introduction

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Schedule:

- Guidance on setting up and running face-to-face events and meet-ups
- Safety checklist



Purpose of the training

- So you can host face-to-face meet-ups and events for students in your geographical area, or based on subject or interests
- Help build the student community.
- Student Leadership Team (SLT) members can also host events and meet-ups for students.
- Clubs and Societies can host events as well.



Birmingham meet-up, September 2023



Setting up face-to-face events

Organise the name of your event, date and time, a description, and a venue

Event name

Keep the name short and clear

Time

Choose a time that works for you. If it'll be a regular event, you can ask attendees what time/days they'd prefer, and perhaps alternate between options.

You could promote the event as a drop-in e.g. between 1-3pm

Description

Explain what students can expect from the event e.g. if it's just an informal chat, drop-in etc.

You could consider alternating between a face-to-face Meet-up and an online Meet-up to ensure those who are unable to, or are uncomfortable with meeting in person, still have a regular opportunity to connect with fellow students.



Setting up face-to-face events: venue

When choosing a venue, consider:

WHERE Popular places for meet-ups in the past have been coffee shop or pub meetups. Informal settings work well so people can arrive and leave when they like.

ACCESSIBILITY Is this venue accessible to everyone attending? Somewhere with wheelchair access would be ideal.

TRANSPORT LINKS Make sure the venue has good public transport links.

PRICE Check the venue has inexpensive food and drink options.

SAFETY Does the venue have Public Liability Insurance and is it displayed in the venue?

COVID-19 Have you checked local Covid guidance? Only arrange an in person Meet-up if supported by local/regional guidance in place at the time.



Promoting your event

Letting us know about your event:

- Once the details are sorted, [fill in this form](#) or email us at oustudents-meetups@open.ac.uk. Please try and give 2 weeks notice for events if you can.
- Your event will then be published on our [website events page](#)

Promotion:

- We encourage you to promote your event on spaces such as forums and Facebook groups. If you don't have social media and would like help with promotion, please just let us know. We can also create an image for promotion if you ask in the event form.
- We promote the events happening each week on our social media channels
- You could also write an article on [The Hoot](#) to promote your event, e.g. if it's a regular meet-up



Promoting your event (cont.)

Please don't share the venue address on social media – just share the link to the event page on our website. This reduces the risk of non-OU students attending.

Please note, currently most events on our website are open to all to attend and all can view the event details, they are not behind a log-in screen. Attendees also usually do not need to register in advance. If you'd prefer for attendees to register in advance and receive the event details afterwards, please let us know.



Running your event

On the day:

- Arrive nice and early. You could put a sign on the table to show students where you are. Welcome students and encourage them to introduce themselves and take part in the discussion
- Remember that some students might not have attended an event before
- Discuss with students how regularly the meet-ups could be (if not a one-off), and if there will be online meet-ups too
- Please ask students if you can take some photos/videos to share with us – making sure you ask attendees permission first for the photograph to be taken and for it to be used on Association platforms (website, social media, newsletter, etc).

After the event:

- Please let us know how your meet-up went and how many students turned up. You can do so by emailing us at oustudents-meetups@open.ac.uk or filling in our [feedback form](#).
- Share your photos and stories from your meet-up with us, via the email address above or our social media channels.



Claiming expenses

Event & Meet-up Hosts can claim back their expenses for running in-person events, which includes reasonable expenses for mileage and parking or for public transport to and from the meet-up venue, and for a tea, coffee or soft drink when you are hosting your event.

Simply have a read of our [Travel and Subsistence policy](#), complete the Expense Claim Form and Bank Details Form ([available on the Volunteer Zone](#)) and submit your receipts (scans/photographs are acceptable) by email to oustudents-meetups@open.ac.uk.



Safety

- Accessibility of the venue
- Good transport links
- Public Liability Insurance
- Is the venue in a public place?
- Letting someone know about the meet-up
- Check local Covid guidance
- Ventilation and room for social-distancing

Important documents:

- [Hints, tips and guidance for hosting face-to face events](#)
- [Face-to-face Guidance for Accessing Meetings, Events and Activities](#)
- [Values and Behaviour Policy](#) – if someone is not adhering to this, remind them of the policy or ask them to leave. Note down their name and any other details and let the Community Team know afterwards if you have had any incidents at oustudents-community@open.ac.uk. Ask attendees if they are ok – let them know they can email the Community Team at oustudents-community@open.ac.uk to have a debrief or discuss the issue if they'd like to.

Safety checklist for face-to-face events

Please use this checklist to help your event to be safe and accessible for all.

- Is the venue accessible, particularly for wheelchair users?
- Does the venue have good public transport links?
- Does the venue have Public Liability Insurance* and is it displayed in the venue?
- Is the venue in a public place?
- Have you let someone (a family member or friend) know about the meet-up?
- Have you checked local Covid guidance? Only arrange an in person Meet-up if supported by local/regional guidance in place at the time.
- If possible, is the venue well-ventilated and is there room for social-distancing if appropriate?

Please see the [Hints, tips and guidance for hosting face-to-face events](#) and our [Face-to-face Guidance for Accessing Meetings, Events and Activities](#) for more information and guidance.

*or the equivalent insurance in your country if you are outside of the UK. Contact us if you are unsure.



Students who may need more support

From time to time, event hosts find that students access our events at times of crisis. It is important to be clear about the boundaries here, and that our events are not a therapeutic space. Empathy and understanding are important, but it is not your responsibility to support any students who find themselves in that situation.

Have some key support links on hand: [TalkCampus](#), [Shout 85258](#), and [Samaritans](#)

Should you respond to a difficult situation like this, we ask you to report it to us (at oustudents-community@open.ac.uk), so we can take the necessary steps from our end, and best support you.



Helpful training recordings

The training was delivered by Emma Greenstein, who is a Mental Health Adviser at the Open University. The intention of the training is that it should help you feel better prepared should you find yourself in a difficult situation when hosting an event or meet-up with students online or if you need to respond to a student who is in severe distress or is suicidal.

This training covers some sensitive and upsetting topics, including suicide and self-harm. Please look after yourselves and get in touch if you need to talk anything through or if you need help accessing support.

[Dealing with Difficult Situations](#) (45 minutes)

[Responding to Distressed and Suicidal Students](#) (60 minutes)



Feedback

After the event, please give us feedback on how it went. You can do so by [filling in this form for each event](#) or email us at oustudents-community@open.ac.uk.

Please also send us photographs from any in-person events, making sure you ask attendees permission first for the photograph to be taken and for it to be used on Association platforms (website, social media, newsletter, etc).

