

Hosted External Activities - Frequently Asked Questions – 8/17/06

1. How does AU officially define ‘external’ activities?

The Event Scheduling Policy (2003) defines external activities as follows:

“A meeting, an event, or a series of meetings or events brought to campus on behalf of a non-AU organization, contracted directly with American University, and coordinated by an American University Cabinet officer, department, or recognized student organization.”

2. How does this differ from a departmental or student organization activity?

The Event Scheduling Policy defines a departmental activity as follows:

“A meeting, an event, or a series of meetings or events hosted and coordinated through academic or administrative departments of American University for the benefit of the campus community.”

A student activity is defined as follows:

“A meeting, an event, or a series of meetings or events hosted for the benefit of the AU campus community and coordinated through an AU student organization that is recognized and in good standing with Student Activities, Greek Life, or Club Sports.”

3. Why does AU distinguish between internal and external activities?

When the Event Scheduling Policy was approved in 2003, the Cabinet emphasized assessment and accountability as desired outcomes for event scheduling. The Cabinet was interested in two broad questions:

- How fully are AU spaces being used?
- Who is using AU spaces and for what purposes?

The Cabinet was aware that space for events on campus was tight throughout the year and that space should be assigned or distributed to those events which are most closely aligned with the mission of the University. It was determined that space rental fees should be assessed to activities held on behalf of off-campus individuals or organizations.

In addition, many units providing event support had reported providing free service for activities on campus at which no university representative was present, and no university staff, faculty or students were in attendance. This resulted in AU units routinely subsidizing the activities of off-campus groups.

University Event Scheduling acts as the interpreter of the Event Scheduling Policy. The office adopted the principle of assigning AU space for AU purposes.

4. Does the signature of an AU faculty member, staff member, Dean or Director automatically place an event in an ‘internal’ category?

No. Each requested activity is evaluated according to the degree of AU control of and participation in the planning and implementation of the proposed activity.

5. Can my professional association conduct its meetings or activities at AU free of charge with my signature?

No. Professional associations, like all external entities, must be hosted by an AU department or student organization, but their activities need to be contracted and space rental fees still apply. For example: Fraternity/sorority national chapters pay for the privilege of having their activities on the AU campus, even though there are local chapters on the AU campus.

6. What does my signature on a request mean?

Under the Event Scheduling Policy, all activities occurring on campus are the responsibility of an AU 'host.' The host responsibilities are defined as follows:

“The responsibilities of the host include, but may not be limited to:

- coordination of all campus services needed for the proposed activity
- compliance with all AU policies and procedures and applicable laws
- ensuring the execution of contracts between AU and any non-AU organization
- representing the activity and any non-AU organization to the AU community
- ensuring that all fees assessed for the activity are paid in full”

7. Our department has created a conference which will be attended largely by non-university people. Is this a ‘hosted external activity?’

If the event is created, owned and operated by AU faculty, staff, or recognized student organizations, and the benefits of the activity can be demonstrated to accrue principally to AU, the event should not be subject to space rental fees. Current examples of these activities include:

Lavender Languages Conference
Intercultural Management Institute
Latino Youth Conference.

8. How do external activities become contracted with AU?

When your department of organization agrees to host an external organization you agree to assume the responsibilities of ‘host’ as outlined in question #6 above. The primary event schedulers on campus – University Event Scheduling, Bender Arena, Katzen Arts Center, Greenberg Theatre, and the Kay Spiritual Life Center – all have contract templates with the appropriate language defining:

- The relationship between AU and the external organization.
- The host responsibilities.

- Risk management/insurance responsibilities.
- The responsibilities of the external organization.

You will work with the schedulers to complete the contract for each event. These contracts are then signed centrally at the University – through Contracting and Procurement. As host, you then have the responsibility of enforcing the contract.

9. Our department has a mutually beneficial relationship with various external entities which provide us with resources for our programs. Why should we ask these groups to pay space rental fees?

Space use at AU for external activities is not a commodity to be traded on a departmental level. While it may be true that some external organizations provide services or other benefits to specific AU departments, only Cabinet officials have the authority to ‘waive’ space rental fees.

10. If I host an external organization, must it be related to my department or recognized student organization?

The presumption is that you are choosing to host in accordance with the role(s) you have within an existing AU department/student organization. Responsibility for the activity accrues to your unit as well as to you. It is advisable that you involve the proper person within your unit before hosting and external organization.