

# Rethinking Economics

How-to Guide:

..Running an Event

This guide will show you how to:

- Come up with ideas for events
- Plan and advertise your events
- Run events on the day

## Step 1: Pick your topic

Firstly you need to decide what your event will be on, before you can contact speakers, book rooms or start advertising. You might want to do something on a particular school of thought, or on something topical like an election or trade deal that's in the news. **Hint:** Events based around a particular school of thought tend to attract more economics students and researchers whereas events based on an economic issue or event that may be in the news generally appeal to a wider audience.

## Step 2: Decide on Your Event

Once you've decided this you need to start thinking about what kind of event - do you want to do a speaker event? a film screening? a discussion group? This will determine whether or not you need to bring in lecturers or facilitators.

Do you want your event to be accessible? informative? academic? entertaining? Think about who you want to come to your event and what event would best suit them. Here are a few ideas for events:

**Film Screening:** There are a wide range of documentaries, films and dramas about economics and economic issues, ranging from short to long, serious to funny. A film screening requires the least amount of planning and is a really accessible way of reaching out to lots of different people!

You could just show a film, or also arrange a discussion for after the screening on a particular idea or event that is explored in the film to get people talking to each other. To do this it is best to appoint somebody from your group to chair the discussion and prepare a list of questions about the film - don't feel you have to get through all of these questions but it's good to have them as backup in case people are initially a bit shy!

**Workshop:** Workshops are a fun and accessible way to get people to engage with a particular topic; as workshops tend to involve discussions rather than teaching you can run them yourselves, based around a set of questions, an article, a news clip (or all three) or you could invite a lecturer or speaker from an external organisation to help you run it.

**Panel Discussion:** Panel discussions require careful planning in order to make sure you have a good balance of opinions between speakers, and also good engagement between the panel and the audience, but can be an effective way of bringing together different schools of thought and presenting a wide range of perspectives in one event; rather than

one academic speaking just about their area of expertise panel discussions mean there is debate between speakers as well as the audience.

**Lecture:** Lecture events work well for more academic subjects, particularly when the aim of your event is to plug a gap in your own syllabus e.g. a 'What you won't learn in an economics degree' lecture series, or an alternative module. As well as being a good form of self-education lectures and lecturer series can also serve as examples of what you could be learning about when asking your economics department to change the curriculum. Rethinking Economics have an extensive list of speakers and their specialist subject who have spoken at events before - this can be found on the intranet which is accessible to all organisers.

**Discussion/Reading Group:** Reading or discussion groups are, like lectures, a good way to explore ideas that you don't get chance to in your tutorials and lectures. Reading groups do require more work, both for the person chairing and for attendees so be prepared for this!

**Conference:** A conference is a huge undertaking but allows you to do all of these events at once! Logistically things become a lot more complicated as you need to think more carefully about timings, location and making sure a lot more speakers and attendees are in the right place at the right time but also are a great way of bring together academics, students and the general public.

## Step 3: Planning and pragmatics

Generally the further in advance you can confirm an event the better, as it gives you more time to plan, but bear in mind the further in advance you book a speaker, the more important it is that you maintain a dialogue with them as it gets close to the event - they are only human and do sometimes forget!

- **Booking a room** - Make sure your event is somewhere accessible and bear in mind your target audience when booking. Students Unions and pubs often have rooms that are available to book for free but these venues may be off putting for non-students or under 18s.
- **Date and time** - When you host your event may depend on when your speakers are available but as far as you can choose again think about your target audience. Students may be able to attend events on a Wednesday afternoon but if you also want to attract members of the public it's best to stick to outside normal working hours.
- **Contacting Speakers** - Do this as soon as you know what kind of event you want to host and when, people are busy and need plenty of advance notice! It is also important that you communicate clearly the format of your event; if you are still figuring out the details of your event, you may want to just ask if they are available in the first email you send, but if you want your speaker to prepare a presentation they need to know things like this in advance. Also if you are unsure about how well a format might work, tell your speaker what you're thinking and

ask them for feedback, they have probably done this before and will probably be happy to provide you with some advice.

- **Advertising** - Use whatever channels you have to tell people about your event! Facebook, twitter, instagram, email, posters, stalls, interactive TV screens. It is best not to put posters and facebook events up too far in advance as posters can get taken down and people may forget. Start advertising two weeks before an event and step up publicity on social media a day or two before.

You can find examples of previous events on facebook if you search these titles:

- [Pintonomics + FT Masterclass with Lord Robert Skidelsky](#)
- [Post-Crash Economics Open Meeting](#)  
[Ha-Joon Chang: "Let a hundred flowers bloom"](#)
- [Boom Bust Boom Bust - Why Economics is for Everyone](#)
- [Glasgow Economic Forum 2015 Saturday Reception](#)
- [Are Syriza's Political Objectives Economically Viable? A Discussion with Paul Mason and Vicky Pryce](#)

## Step 4: The Event Itself

### Introducing yourselves

At the event make sure you introduce your group and let people know how they can get involved or how to find out about future events. A quick spoken introduction along with email sign up sheets and/or flyers detailing your email address, facebook, twitter etc that can be left on seats before the event are good ways to do this. You could also hand out a schedule of events for the terms, have posters with your contact details around the room or hand out flyers as people leave.

### Facilitating

If your event is one that requires a chair or a facilitator whoever is doing this should make sure they have introduced themselves to all the speakers before the event and discussed the format of the event.

If speakers have a limited time to speak (e.g. each person on the panel has ten minutes to present before opening up to the audience for questions) agree with the speaker before hand how you are going to signal to them that their time is nearly up and when it's time to move on, otherwise you run the risk of them talking for hours! A tap on the desk or a handwave if you are easy to see is often enough.

### Post-Event Social

Events are a great opportunity for people to get to know each other, when you've got a load of people with a common interest in one place it's a wasted opportunity not to do something social afterwards. If your event is near a pub, bar or coffee shop invite speakers and attendees to carry on the conversation!