

ASHE Conference Reception Planning Tips

Purpose & Goals of the Reception

Consider why your group desires to have a reception at the ASHE Conference by asking yourself the following question: What do I hope to gain by having the reception? ASHE receptions have been used as an opportunity to use the host hotel to access Conference attendees and promote awareness of your institution or organization. Receptions can also serve as networking opportunities to recruit graduate students, research collaborators and/or faculty members who attend the ASHE Conference. Receptions also create an opportunity for the host's alumni and friends to reconnect during the ASHE Conference. The purpose and goals of your reception can help you determine your budget, reception type, estimated attendance, food and beverage, and AV needs.

Budget

Determine how much you would like to spend for your reception. When working with the hotel contact, provide detailed information on your reception goals, budget, and projected attendees. This can greatly assist in coordinating a successful event.

- Items to consider for your budget include:
 - The costs for food and beverage (see below)
 - The costs for Audio and Visual equipment (see below)
 - The costs for shipping items for your reception to the hotel (see below)
- Estimated Reception Costs: Receptions can range from \$2,000 to \$10,000 based on the food and beverage and AV items you order through the hotel.
- In addition to menu prices, reception hosts are required to pay a service and gratuity charge and local tax.

Reception Types

When planning your reception, consider who you would like to invite and if you would like the reception to be open to all conference attendees or a targeted group who are invited by the reception host.

- Open to all conference attendees: A reception that is open to all conference attendees doesn't have any restrictions for entrance into the reception. Many conference attendees visit multiple receptions throughout an evening if they are open to all conference attendees. Receptions that are open to all can be an effective way to increase awareness of your institution or organization and serve as a networking opportunity.

- Invite Only: An invite only reception is targeted toward a specific group of people. An example of an invite only reception is an alumni reception. These receptions are typically less than 50 people and have a registration process prior to attending the reception.

Requested Reception Date

Receptions are able to be hosted either on Thursday or Friday night. You will select your preferred date on the ASHE Conference Reception Request Form.

Length of Reception

Receptions are scheduled for the following durations: 1 hour, 1.5 hours, 2 hours, 2.5 hours, or 3 hours. Consider the purpose of your reception when selecting the duration.

Size of Group

In your Reception Request Form attempt to provide an accurate estimated group size. This estimate will allow the ASHE Staff to place you in a room that can best accommodate your attendees.

- You may also want to consider the number of faculty, graduate students, and alumni who attend the ASHE Conference and may visit your reception.
- If you're not sure, it is best to overestimate

Estimated Reception Attendance

To get a more accurate final estimated number of attendees after submitting your reception request form, consider sending invitations and/or creating flyers. Social media can also be a powerful tool to get a general idea of the interest and number of people that might attend.

The hotel will work with you to ensure you are meeting required social distancing requirements. If you and/or your attendees do not adhere to these requirements, the hotel may cancel the event and you may be prevented from hosting an event at a future ASHE Conference.

Food & Beverage

ASHE receptions have traditionally served a variety of food options or utilized food themes (e.g., desserts only, popular local food items). Review the hotel menu and ask the hotel contact if you have any questions about menu options and potential menu item adjustments to meet dietary restrictions.

- **NOTE:** The ASHE Staff will send you a separate email with the hotel menu and information for the hotel contact once you have completed your Reception Request Form.

Dietary Restrictions & Allergen Accommodations

When reviewing the hotel menu, consider dietary restrictions of attendees before making your food and beverage selections. You may also want to include a contact person for attendees to contact regarding dietary restrictions prior to the reception.

Dietary restrictions to consider include:

- Vegetarian options (e.g., no meat)
- Vegan options (e.g., no animal products)
- Gluten-free options (no wheat or grains in food products)
- Food prohibited by religious restrictions (e.g., pork or beef)
- Food allergies (e.g., shellfish or nuts)

NOTE: All ASHE sponsored conference events food options should not contain nuts or shellfish

Placing Food Order

Once you have an idea of how many people will attend your reception, coordinate with the hotel contact to select menu items which fit your budget and meet the needs of attendees.

- Returning reception hosts should consider previous years attendance,
- The deadline for reception requests is August 31.
- Never hesitate to ask the hotel about desired food options that may not be on the menu.
- Be creative!

Bar for Reception

Having a bar is common for many groups hosting a reception. A few key terms to understand when considering adding a bar to your reception:

- Open Bar: The host orders and pays for select alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages from the hotel menu and the bar is open for the attendees to consume beverages as they enjoy the reception.
 - Typically serving only beer, wine, soda, with cash required for other alcoholic beverages
- Bar with tickets: The host orders and pays for a certain amount of alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages. Attendees receive drink tickets as they enter the reception from the event coordinator. The attendees exchange the tickets at the bar for beverages. Once drink tickets are exhausted, the open bar will close and/or become a cash bar.
 - **NOTE**: Some reception hosts request a table from the hotel to require attendees to sign in prior to receiving their drink ticket. This technique is used to monitor attendance and track consumption amounts.

- Cash Bar: The host makes a bar available during the reception, but attendees must pay for their own beverages.
- Some reception hosts pay only for non-alcoholic beverages and require attendees to pay for their own alcoholic beverages.
- If you choose to have alcoholic beverage options, you should also have non-alcoholic options.

Audio & Visual Equipment

During receptions, it is common for the host to use a microphone to welcome attendees, acknowledge faculty, alumni, and friends, and provide information about their organization or institution.

If you have any remarks or announcements, you are required to use a microphone.

AV Equipment Considerations:

- Projector Package which includes projector and cart, wires, and screen for displaying logos or flyers.
 - The hotel's AV team will charge for these items and provide a quote sheet for the service during your reception.
 - If you are using a projector, you will need to bring your own laptop.
- Sound for Music or Videos
 - You will need to coordinate with the hotel's AV team to receive a quote sheet if you would like additional speakers for music or audio.
 - NOTE: Sound from a laptop is insufficient.

Reception Accessibility Considerations

If someone is speaking during your ASHE reception, you should consider:

- Requesting a podium for your reception from the hotel and a microphone from the hotel AV team.
 - A wireless mic is strongly suggested if you have multiple people speaking during the reception and everyone is not in the same location in the room, or you do not want to use a podium.
 - All AV charges and fees are the responsibility of the reception host.
 - If you have any remarks or announcements, you are required to use a microphone.

Layout & Ideas/Logistics

Each ASHE reception is typically set up with tall cabaret tables, roundtables, or in reception style. Cabaret tables in a reception typically do not have chairs. Roundtables in a reception

typically has 6 to 8 chairs per table. A reception style setup does not include any tables or chairs.

Cabaret Table



Roundtable



Flow of Reception & Attendees

- Consider if you want someone to greet reception attendees and/or have a sign-in sheet. If you would like a sign-in sheet, be sure to request a table and chairs for your reception or bring clipboards and pens
- Consider what happens once an attendee arrives and signs in. Determine if you want the attendee to receive a handout with information, giveaway item, or drink ticket.
- Do you have an agenda or time when you expect someone to speak or present any information? How and when do you plan to get the attendees attention before the speeches during the reception? If you have any remarks or announcements, you are required to use a microphone. Ensure all your speakers know to use the microphone.

Items for Reception & Shipping

You should also consider any items you may need to ship to the hotel for your reception. Examples of items to ship or bring to your reception are: signs with the host organization or institution's information, sign-in sheets with pens and clip boards, banners with the host's logo, and giveaway items.

- If you are bringing items to the reception, consider the process for packing up, or disposing of items you do not wish to keep.
- If you need to ship items to the hotel, the ASHE staff will provide the shipping information by October 1.
- The hotel contact can assist with any questions you may have regarding the shipment process.