

10 STEPS TO PLANNING A QUEER ORIENTATION EVENT

Is your group/ department planning an event for the 2017 QO Week? Here are some steps to follow and some things to keep in mind!

What is Queer Orientation (QO) Week?

Queer Orientation (QO) is an annual week of LGBTQ-focused programming across all three campuses of U of T during the month of September. QO is an opportunity for new and returning students, staff and faculty to make connections, engage in activities and have discussions related to LGBTQ+ communities.

What is different about this year's QO planning process?

Over the past few years the amount of Queer Orientation (QO) events has increased significantly. While it is incredible to see so much enthusiasm and support, the large number of QO events hosted in the span of just one week often presented a problem with attendance. This year's QO planning process was developed in response to this issue around low turnout rates.

This year's planning process centres accessibility, diversity and cross-campus collaboration. Within this process, QO organizers from various groups/ departments are encouraged to work together as much as possible in order to focus our collaborative energy on maximizing the quality of QO events, rather than the number of QO events. By having more people involved in planning fewer events, we are hoping that QO events can be bigger and more impactful to participants.

We want to make sure that organizers, especially student organizers, are able to enjoy QO Week themselves, as participants as well as organizers. We hope that planning fewer, more collaborative events, can allow organizers to participate even more during QO Week.

Check out the QO planning process outlined below and be sure to come to a QO Planning Meeting on your campus! If you have any questions about this process, please contact Kathy Vi Mac (Program Coordinator, Sexual & Gender Diversity Office) at sgdo@utoronto.ca.

Step 1: Attend QO Planning Meetings on your campus

QO Planning Meetings are a great way to connect with other group/ department representatives and foster collaboration. We strongly encourage each LGBTQ+ student group

or interested campus department to send one or two representatives to be a part of the QO Planning Meetings.

QO Planning Meetings will take place on all three campuses. Check the events calendar on the Sexual & Gender Diversity Office (SGDO) website to find information on these meetings. There will be multiple meetings throughout the summer.

These meetings will allow you to network with other group representatives, brainstorm ideas for events, find partners to collaborate with, give feedback on the 2017 QO poster design, keep up-to-date with other events being planned, etc.

Step 2: Submit a QO Planning Application

This is a short application that will help to collect your group's information so that we can all stay in touch throughout this process. You can fill this out online or at a QO Planning Meeting.

Step 3: Sign up to organize a specific kind of event

To encourage collaborative events, we are asking folks to sign up to organize a particular kind of event, suggestions of which will be determined in the first QO Planning Meetings. For instance, if you are interested in organizing a film screening then you would sign up to organize a film screening. There may be other groups/ departments that have signed up to organize a film screening. We encourage that you all work together to present a film screening during QO week that highlights all of your groups/ departments as hosts.

Step 4: Organize event content and logistics with your partners

Take the initiative to meet-up with your event organizing partners. Get to know each other, find out what is important to all of you and brainstorm some great ideas together! Check out this list of questions to consider while you plan together.

Step 5: Submit a QO Event Application that includes just the event date, time and title (Due Friday, August 11 at 12 pm)

In order to get students to attend our events, we have to make them aware of it so that they can plan ahead and get excited about attending. It often takes a long time to plan out all aspects of an event, especially with multiple partners involved. However, it is important that

we have three pieces of information early on: the date, time and title of your event. These are the three pieces of information required to submit a QO Event Application.

The QO Event Application will be due on Friday, August 11th at 12 pm (noon). Your application must meet this deadline for your event to be included on the QO printed promotional materials that will be available just in time for U of T's Orientation Weeks starting at the end of August at UTM and UTSC and the first week of September at St. George.

Step 6: Send your full event description to sgdo@utoronto.ca (Due Wednesday, August 23 at 12 pm)

Besides printed promotional materials, QO Week is also promoted online. Once students receive the printed QO promotional materials during Orientation Week, they will look for more event details online. It is important that this information is ready for students to access. Send your event description to sgdo@utoronto.ca in order to have your event promoted on the SGDO website as well as on the Queer Orientation Week Facebook event managed by the SGDO.

Please note that these event descriptions *do not* need to be complete outlines of your event. This is simply a description that is meant to promote your event to potential participants. Along with your event description, please include the accessibility of the space you have chosen for you event (i.e. Is this space accessible to wheelchairs and scooters?).

Step 7: Promote your event and QO Week as a whole

As you and your partners are working out the final details of your event, be sure to continue promoting QO Week as well as your specific event online and in person. There is quite a bit of time between Orientation Weeks and the end of September, so it is important that we maintain the interest of potential participants.

Step 8: Host your event

After all your work developing and promoting the event, the day is finally here! Be sure to follow through with all the work and thinking that you put into making your event as welcoming and inclusive as possible.

Step 9: Join in on the fun and enjoy your QO Week!

As organizers, QO Week is as much for you as it is for other potential participants and it is important that you get a chance to enjoy it. Be sure to check out some other events as a participant.

Step 10: Submit your feedback as organizers of QO

Submit feedback on your experience as organizers of QO. We want to hear from you. This year, we are trying to plan QO Week a bit differently and we want to know what you think of your experience so that we can improve this process in the future. What did you find helpful? What do you think should change?