**Operations - Finances and Forms**

**Budget Forms**

Budget Forms are an important part of the RA Activity/Event process; they are used for a number of reasons such as;

* To look at how many events and activities the RA are putting on
* Looking at what type of events are being run
* Making sure that events are being planned within budget
* To look at the subsidy for events

They are the very first stage of the process for organising an activity and the actual organisation of the event cannot happen until the form has been signed off and approved by a staff member.

Forms should be completed electronically and emailed to [raworker@guild.bham.ac.uk](mailto:raworker@guild.bham.ac.uk), any updated forms should be sent to the same email address and clearly labelled as an update.

You should hand the form in a minimum of **three weeks** before the date of the activity – the risk assessment MUST be attached to the budget form. If your form is handed in after this deadline or without a risk assessment, it will be declined.

This three week deadline is a minimum, and you should try to get your forms in sooner than this to allow time for it to be adjusted, signed off and publicised.

Large events, such as Summer balls, might require you to fill out a Major Event Form instead – please consult with Student Development staff members if you are thinking of running a large scale event.

Once the form has been handed in, staff will look at it and then email your Hall email address with feedback.

It will either be;

* Approved
* Declined
* Or questions asked/ amendments asked for.

You should NEVER start organising an event until the budget form is approved. If an event is declined and you have spent money on it, we will not be able to reimburse you.

**Completing the Form**

Forms must be completed electronically and emailed from your hall account so all your committee have access to it.

At the top of the form, there are some drop down menus for you to pick the name of your RA and the type of event. Type of event can be;

* Alcohol (any event which includes alcohol)
* Community/Volunteering
* Other

You should also include your contact details and the name/date of the event.

Complete the three sections labelled;

* Description of Activity
* Details of Expenditure
* Benefits to residents

Description of activity – should include as much detail as possible. Include times, transport arrangements and everything you can think off. We need to know as much about the event as possible.

Details of expenditure – particularly useful to include details of quotes which need to be supplied in line with the suppliers list, and to include the name of the company you have settled on using.

Benefits to residences – we need real benefits – not just “everyone wants to go out”. Provide evidence and survey results where possible.

The second page looks very scary, but is actually quite easy.

At the top, you need to put how many residents you expect to go to the event, if you are not sure, start with a low number. It is easier to expand an event if it sells well then it is to reduce the numbers going to an event.

Write all the details of income and expenditure in the relevant boxes on the left hand side. Next to it, write the quote you have received for that item. You need to put the price in the “vatable” or “no vat” depending on if VAT is charged on that item. Don’t panic – there is a VAT tab on the bottom of the spreadsheet which tells you which items get VAT’d and which don’t.

For the prices, you need to input the FULL price. So if a ticket for Cadbury World cost you £10 and you were taking 15 people, you would need to put £150 as the price.

Emergency fund is included on all proposals. It is up to you how much you allocate to emergency fund. The emergency fund is there to help you should something go wrong – it is not there to fix mistakes you have made i.e. if the coaches turn up, you can use your emergency fund to get alternative transport. However, if you decide at the last minute to buy some extra pizza, you can’t use your emergency fund.

The boxes towards the right hand side of the page “net VAT”, “total” etc are for office use only, so you do not need to worry about them.

At the bottom of the page, there are three boxes;

1. Subsidy/Profit per participant – this is worked out automatically, and tells you how much you plan to spend, per resident, for that event.
2. Cost Per Resident – here you need to input how much you will charge residents for that event
3. Total subsidy/profit – the total amount you will be paying for out of your RA account should you have budgeted correctly.

Once this is complete, you should email the form to [raworker@guild.bham.ac.uk](mailto:raworker@guild.bham.ac.uk) from your hall account

One of things staff members look for on forms is value for money.

* Whilst we like you to try new, different and exciting ideas, we also want all of your residents to get value for money from your events. Value doesn’t necessarily mean a cheap and highly subsidised event. It can also mean an event with lots of extras which will be memorable to residents. As such, we generally don’t approve proposals where the subsidy is more than £20 per head. There can be exceptions to the rule, i.e. if you want to do something which you think is going to be VERY worthwhile, particularly for the community, however, you will have to prove to us why. However, exceptions are few and far between, in all cases, you should try to keep event subsidy to under £20 per person.
* If you would like to do a **joint event**, you should do ONE proposal which covers all RAs involved.
* If you are organising a **Bar Crawl** (two or more venues), then the form needs to be handed in a minimum of four weeks in advance because of health and safety requirements relating to risk assessments.

**Rules on Subsidising Alcohol**

Whilst RAs CAN buy alcohol or drinks vouchers through their account, they should get this money back from ticket sales. RAs cannot have direct expenditure on alcohol. So, if you want to give people £4 worth of drinks vouchers, you MUST charge a minimum of £4 for the event.

**Changes to Proposals**

We are not mind readers, although we wish we were! If an event changes, please let us know by emailing the updates to [raworker@guild.bham.ac.uk](mailto:raworker@guild.bham.ac.uk) clearly identifying what changes have been made.

**Evaluation Forms**

Evaluation forms need to be submitted two weeks after the date of your event. They are in place so both you, and the Guild, can see whether the event was successful or not.

If an event is cancelled, you STILL NEED TO EVALUATE IT. This is because we need to know why it was cancelled, and if you spent any money on it.

If a form does not get handed in in time, your account will be frozen, and we will not be able to accept new budget forms.

Evaluation forms are really easy to complete because a lot of the information is carried across from the budget form – this is why you need to save your budget form. They can be found by using the “evaluation” tab at the bottom of the budget form.

The only sections you need to complete are the following;

1. Actual number of participant, and comments.
2. Actual expenditure – if you used anything extra – add it in
3. Actual income – if you get additional income – add it in
4. Comments
5. Signatures

It’s really important that you include as much information in the comments section as you can so we can find out what events work will, and what events don’t work so well. This way, we can offer more advice and guidance in the future.

Once completed email to raworker@guild.bham.ac.uk

**What Happens When Your Account Has Been Frozen**

If you have not handed in your evaluation on time, you will be informed that your account has been frozen. In order to unfreeze your account, you will need to attend a meeting with the SGC(RA) to discuss what has happened.

If this situation were to arise, the whole of the RA Committee in question will be required to attend a meeting with a member of staff, where you would talk about what has happened, and how we can all work together to prevent this from happening in the future.

**Risk Assessments**

Risk Assessments are legal documents required under Health and Safety law. This form must be filled in for any activity you do. If it is a regular activity, such as intra-league sports, you can do one generic risk assessment for a whole term – but it will need resubmitting each term. If you are holding a one off activity or event, you must fill out a form just for that activity.

All activities will have risks and despite the best planning, accidents still happen. We want you to maximise the fun you have on an event whilst being safe. Knowing how to respond to situations is important. The reporting of near misses is also important as it helps others to plan and prepare to avoid any possible dangers in the future. Notification of incidents or near misses should be made using the Incident Report Form.

You must make sure all participants are aware of Health and Safety implications before partaking in your activity, and what they need to do in order they allay the risks. This protects them and it protects you.

In completing your form, you need to first think about all the hazards associated with your activity and then think about who might be harmed and how. You should list these hazards on the risk assessment, and then evaluate and decide on precautions to prevent them from happening – there are some control measures at the bottom of the form that you can copy and paste and/or expand on to help you.

Once completed, please email your risk assessment to raworker@guild.bham.ac.uk with your budget form – three weeks before the date of the activity. You will then be contacted by student staff to let you know if your risk assessment has been signed off or not.

Once it has been signed off, you should share the risk assessment with the rest of the group and its members, so that they are aware of the hazards and what they need to do should something happen.

**Bar Crawls**

Risk Assessments for Bar Crawls should be completed no later than four weeks before the date of the activity – which means your budget form ALSO needs to be handed in earlier. If organising a Bar Crawl, you also need to complete an additional page to your Risk Assessment called a Cover Sheet. A Cover Sheet includes details of where you are visiting on your Bar Crawl. This gets forward to the local police force so that they are able to organise their patrols for that night. If the cover sheet is sent to them after the four week deadline, you may be asked not to run the event – don’t risk it.

**Inventories**

An inventory is a list of equipment that is owned by a group, in your case, the RA. Each time you purchase a new piece of equipment, you should add it to your inventory and include the following pieces of information (the Guild will monitor new purchases through your budget forms and make a note of which items should be being added by yourselves);

* Equipment Name and Description
* Date of Purchase
* Estimated Life (years)
* Estimated value
* Normal place of storage
* General condition

The inventory should be checked regularly so that faulty or missing items are recorded.

The inventory should be kept at the Guild, but you should also have a copy for your own records. Email [raworker@guild.bham.ac.uk](mailto:raworker@guild.bham.ac.uk) if you don’t have a copy.

**Finances**

The Guild of Student looks after all your finances and has bank accounts set up for each of the RA Committees. All transactions must be carried out through this bank account.

**Making Payments to Companies – does not apply to paying student groups or Guild services**

There are several different ways that you can make payments to companies, for each method of payment, you need to complete a **purchase order**.

Purchase orders should be completed for **every payment** that you need to make BEFORE the event takes place – the only exception to this rule is when you are paying a Guild service or a Guild student group (such as Joe’s Bar or PhotoSoc). Purchase orders should be complete a minimum of;

* Two weeks before the date of the activity
* **OR**
* Two weeks before the company wants payment
* **Whichever is sooner**

Once you have completed your purchase order, you can choose between the following payment methods;

*Invoice (Purchase Ledger)*

Purchase orders should be completed for every payment that you need to make BEFORE the event takes place.

When a purchase order is approved, an electronic copy will be sent to your Hall email address. You should then send this copy on to the company.

When you pay by invoice/purchase ledger, the company should be fine to organise your activity on “good faith”. When they are ready for payment (before or after the event), they will send you an invoice – which is a bit like a posh receipt. When you get that invoice, you should bring it to the Student Development counter, and tell them you have completed a purchase order. This invoice will be sent to finance and the company paid according to the terms on the invoice (i.e. if the invoice says payment within 28 days, finance will aim to pay it before then).

When you pay this way, once the invoice is handed in, you shouldn’t have to worry about anything else in terms of payment

*Individual BACS Payment - (bank transfer)*

Purchase orders should be completed for every payment that you need to make BEFORE the event takes place.

Sometimes, a company might tell you they need paying straight away. When this happens, you should ask for the invoice from the company and ask them if they will accept a BACS payment. BACS payments take three working days to go through from the day they are processed by the finance department.

If this isn’t soon enough, an emergency BACS payment can be made, but only when it is an emergency. This is a little bit quicker, but there will be a charge of £20 per payment.

*Cheques*

Purchase orders should be completed for every payment that you need to make BEFORE the event takes place. At the same time as this, you should complete a Business Claim Form – make sure the business claim form and the purchase order are attached together so they do not get lost.

On the back of the Business Claim Form, you should attach confirmation of cost from the supplier – i.e. a copy of the invoice.

This should then be returned to the counter so that the relevant checks and signatures can be made. Once this has been done, the forms will be sent to finance so they can raise the cheque. This whole process can take a few weeks – so make sure you allow a plenty of time before coming back to Student Development to ask if the cheque is ready to be collected. If it is, then you send it on to the company, or take it to them.

When paying by cheque, some companies will want a few days to let it clear – so bear this in mind.

*Credit Card*

Credit card payments can only be made in emergencies, and requests can be declined. So you should avoid using this method and try and find a supplier who will accept other payment methods.

Credit Card payments can only be made when no other means is accepted and there are no alternative companies for you to use.

**Making Payments to the Guild**

*Paying in money*

You shouldn’t need to pay money into your account too often. This is because cash handling is not allowed.

HOWEVER

If an exception is made, such as when you are doing a charity collection, then you will need to pay the money into your account before sending it to the charity.

To pay money in, you need to collect a “Paying in Slip” from the Student Development counter. Staff there will talk you through how to complete the form.

*Paying another student group*

To do this, you need to complete a Transfer slip – this slip pays the group directly and cuts out a lot of the other paperwork. The Guild has well over 100 different groups which you can work with, and/or, use at your events.

You can only complete these at the Student Development counter – staff will help you complete the form.

*Paying the Guild*

To pay a service at the Guild, such as the Print Shop, or Tech services, you need to complete a Retail Voucher. Like the Transfer Slip above, you can only complete these at the counter, and staff will help you.

**Spending Criteria**

You must not directly spend money on alcohol – this means that if you want to provide £4 worth of alcohol per person, the ticket for the event must be a minimum of £4.

We allow RAs to spend;

* £20 per person per term on an RA Social – this money does NOT carry over to the next term. Any spend on alcohol cannot be reimbursed.
* You must complete a budget form for every social you do – these must be handed in **one week** before your social.