

Procedures for Events on Campus

Pursuant to Southern Methodist University [Policy 6.4 Use of University Facilities by University Non-University Individuals and Organizations](#), the University adopts the following Procedures for Events on Campus.

Educational Purpose / Mission of the University

The Facilities of Southern Methodist University (the “University”) are private property and are to be used to carry out the mission of the University, creating, expanding and imparting knowledge through teaching, research, and service. Use of University Facilities will be permitted when consistent with the University’s mission and with the University’s status as a tax-exempt, non-profit education institution. Facilities use must conform to all applicable laws and regulations. The University reserves the right to deny use of its Facilities to any individual or organization.

Definitions

Casual Catering: consists of boxed lunches, and/or grab-n-go setups. This definition does **not** include served buffets. Examples include but are not limited to sandwiches, pizza, and meal trays. See a [complete list of pre-approved vendors](#) from SMU Purchasing under the Casual Catering tab. The use of this preferred provider list only applies to SMU Departments using a University budget fund and org.

Student groups should refer to the information on Mobile Food Units (MFUs) and outside caterers described below.

Certificate of Insurance (COI): a document prepared by a vendor’s insurance carrier detailing the coverages, limits and effective dates of the vendor’s insurance.

Event: any event or other activity of University and non-University individuals and organizations scheduled in a Venue. Events include but are not limited to meetings, conferences, study groups, rehearsals, practices, receptions, catered meals, screenings, ceremonies, performances, athletic games, and lectures. Events are further categorized by SMU’s Public Safety Standards. Credit and non-credit academic classes are not “Events”.

Event Types:

Internal Event: any event or activity held on the SMU campus in any SMU facility, building, or space that is organized by an academic or business unit/division/department, faculty/staff group, University administration, chartered student organization where the participants are SMU employees or students.

SMU Funded External Event: any event or activity held on the SMU campus in any SMU facility, building or space that is organized, contracted and paid via SMU funds, where the attendance includes external attendees.

External Event: any event or activity held on the SMU campus in any SMU facility, building or space that is organized, contracted and paid via external funds by a non-SMU affiliated group or individual. For purpose of these procedures, this includes third parties such as SMU alumni, vendors, donors, non-profit and/or for-profit organizations and businesses.

Event Lead: any person who is the main contact for Venue operations for a school, department or division.

Event Planner: any person who schedules, plans, facilitates or organizes an Event.

External Vendor: a vendor that does not perform services on campus on a daily basis. ABM, Southern Botanical and Allied Security are examples of vendors who perform duties on campus on a daily basis.

Facilities: the land, buildings and other facilities of Southern Methodist University.

Facility Use Agreement: an agreement for the use of a Venue.

Hard Costs: fees paid to an external vendor that does not perform services on the SMU campus on a daily basis (ABM, Southern Botanical and Allied Security are examples of vendors who perform duties on campus on a daily basis).

Mobile Food Unit (MFU): a vehicle-mounted, self or otherwise propelled, self-contained food service operation designed to be readily movable (including catering trucks, trailers, and pushcarts) and used to store, prepare, display, serve, or sell food to an ultimate consumer that is operated by any entity other than SMU Catering. The four classes of MFUs are described on the [Dallas County Health and Human Services website](#) (scroll to bottom of page).

Outside Caterer: any requested caterer who is not SMU Catering or Casual Catering as defined in this policy. Use of an Outside Caterer requires advance approval by the Director of SMU Purchasing prior to event.

Pre-Packaged Food/Drinks: food or non-alcoholic beverages that are typically purchased from a grocery store that have been heat-treated. They are canned, or packaged in bottles, flexible pouches, bags or boxes.

Self-Prepared/Handled Food: food or beverages that are prepared, or served in any SMU facility, building or space by SMU employees or students. See full explanation and guidelines outlined by the Office of Risk Management under the [Food Safety tab](#).

SMU Catering: SMU's officially designated vendor for the sale and/or service of seated, plated or buffet meals for all events held on the SMU main campus.

Space: any area that can be reserved for an Event. This includes but is not limited to classrooms, conference rooms, study rooms, seminar rooms, training rooms, labs, lobbies, atriums, porticos, lounges, auditoriums, theaters, lecture halls, courtyards, plazas and outdoor spaces including the Historic Main Quadrangle.

STABLE: an integrated work management system that supports SMU's technology, assets, buildings, logistics and events.

University Park Temporary Event Permit (TEP): permitting process required for food vendors serving food on campus that are not a properly permitted MFU. The application can be found on the University Park, Texas [website](#).

Vendor: any company providing goods or services for an event.

Venue: any building or Space within the University Facilities.

General Process Requirements

Alcohol

Event Leads are responsible for ensuring that Events are held in accordance with University alcohol policies and procedures:

- [University Policy 1.15](#) – Alcohol Policy
- [University Policy 1.16](#) – Alcohol Sponsorship Policy
- [Guidelines for the Service of Alcohol on the SMU Campus](#)
- [SMU Student Handbook](#) – alcohol & drug abuse prevention
- [Student Conduct and Community Standards](#)
- [Student Boulevard Guidelines](#)

Audio-Visual

Audio-visual equipment required in addition to equipment permanently located in a Venue must be requested through the indoor or outdoor event support request form in STABLE.

Catering

Indoor and Outdoor Events must use SMU Catering unless an exception is pre-approved by the Director of Purchasing and the Associate Vice President of Campus Services. SMU Catering is the exclusive caterer for Events in Moody Coliseum, Miller Event Center, McFarlin Memorial Auditorium and the Martha Proctor Mack Grand Ballroom. No other catering companies are allowed in those Facilities.

See a [complete list of pre-approved vendors](#) from SMU Purchasing under the Casual Catering tab. Requestor must use the comment box in STABLE to provide the name of the vendor(s), if the food is being delivered to campus or picked up at an off-campus location, and the source of funds for the event (SMU departmental budget, funds allocated by Student Senate, or other). Any other documentation needed will be requested via email to the requestor.

External, SMU Funded External or Internal Events where the food is **not** being provided by SMU Catering should review and follow the requirements for Mobile Food Units (MFUs) or Outside Caterers described below.

Sterno (or any other brand of jellied, denatured alcohol burned directly in a can) is not allowed on campus unless serviced by SMU Catering.

Conferences/Camps

SMU Conference Services must be engaged when hosting events that span more than one day or more than one venue and meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Events include attendees under the age of 18 years (minors)
- Events that include non-SMU participants
- Third party organizations with sponsorship wishing to host events on SMU's campus

SMU Conference Services provides coordination services throughout the year. Conference Services is operated by the Director of Operations throughout the year and offers booking of resources, coordination of parking, dining and catering, work orders as well as compliance management, invoicing and contracting. During the summer conference season (typically Memorial Day through the last business day of July), SMU offers a “one stop shop” and maintains a staff of Conference Ambassadors to offer assistance with conference check-in, connection to on campus resources and provides a single point of contact throughout the conference during business hours and emergency assistance after hours.

Contracts and Insurance

A contract and certificate of liability insurance (COI) are required for all External Events, such as:

- Events held by organizations or individuals who are neither funded nor controlled by the University;
- Events which are not part of the course of regular University business;
- Events where the primary benefit is for an unaffiliated organization or individual and the secondary benefit is for the University, or other Events identified by the Office of Risk Management.

When facilitating an External Event, the Event Lead will reserve the space and submit the Indoor Event Support Request in STABLE. They will then provide the Event Planner with a University Facility Use Agreement via DocuSign that includes confirmation of the spaces to be used, dates/times of use, scheduled resources such as equipment or personnel, all fees associated with space and resources and other unique Venue policies or procedures. Each Venue will use the same standard Facility Use Agreement approved by the Senior Vice President for Business and Finance and Chief Financial Officer and Vice President for Legal Affairs and Government Relations, General Counsel and Secretary. Event Leads may customize the Facility Use Agreement for their facility in accordance with their own policies and procedures with approval from the Senior Contracts Administrator and Office of Legal Affairs.

Emergency Response

All Event Planners and Event Leads must have an emergency response awareness plan in the event of natural hazard, or other emergency resulting in bodily injury or property damage. Please review the information provided on the Emergency Management & Fire Safety [website](#). VIP and complex Events may require an Emergency Operations Plan. Inquiries for VIP and complex Events require a minimum advance notice of one month and may be made to the SMU Police Department or the Office of Risk Management (ORM)/Emergency Management.

Fees

No fees will be charged for any Internal Event if the attendees are SMU students, faculty or staff. Only hard costs (as defined previously) may be charged.

A Venue fee will not be charged for any SMU Funded External Event, only hard costs (as defined previously), may be charged. However, if an event anticipates an attendance of over 1000 people and sells tickets/generates revenue, due to significant usage of essential services, cross charges from internal University departments will be allowed.

A Venue fee will be charged for External Events. The fee charged is determined by the management of the facility in which the Event is being held. All costs associated with the Event such as: labor, set-up, technical rentals, etc. will be charged for these Events.

It is at the discretion of the management of the Venue to determine which category an Event falls under and to grant any exceptions to the procedures above. If the Event Planner would like to appeal the Venue's decision an appeal may be sent to the Senior Vice President of Business and Finance and Chief Financial Officer. The Venue's school, department or division will not subsidize the cost of the Event. A cancellation fee may apply as determined by the management of the Venue.

Fees related to any External Event that require the assistance of the Office of Facilities Planning and Management with regard to the areas of custodial and housekeeping support, maintenance technician support, general services support or any set-up required beyond the Venue staff, will be determined by the Office of Facilities Planning and Management. Visit <https://www.smu.edu/BusinessFinance/facilities> for additional information.

Health and Safety

All regulatory safety requirements must be met. For information regarding Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) to include occupational safety and health and safety, see the [website](#) for the Office of Risk Management. Fleet and Sub-Compact Utility Vehicle (SCUV) safety requirements are also on this website.

Inclement Weather Policy

Events held on the SMU campus must adhere to University policy in times of inclement weather or other emergency conditions. When the University alters operations, all events are cancelled. Please see [University Policy 9.12](#), for additional details:

Mobile Food Unit (MFU) Classifications & Requirements (commonly referred to as food trucks)

MFUs must meet the requirements set by Dallas County Health and Human Services and SMU. To receive approval in STABLE to operate on SMU property, the Requestor must attach the following documents to the indoor or outdoor event support request in STABLE:

1. Dallas County Mobile Food Permit
2. A Certificate of Insurance meeting SMU's requirements [Insurance Requirements](#)
3. Most recent Health Department inspection report (must have received a score of 90 or above)

SMU Catering must approve ALL MFUs prior to an event. SMU Hospitality will acknowledge receipt of the request within three business days of the Indoor or Outdoor Event Support Request submission.

- The requestor should carefully review the Outdoor Reservable Spaces on the [campus interactive map](#) prior to submitting an outdoor event request that will have one or more MFUs:
- MFUs are not permitted at all outdoor reservable locations.

If requesting Class III or IV MFUs for an indoor event, the requestor must receive approval from SMU Hospitality, Parking, *and* the Office of Risk Management PRIOR to submitting an Indoor Event Support Request form in STABLE.

- See the Event Management website [FAQs](#): “May I have a food truck or food cart at my indoor event?”
- These types of requests should be made at least 3 weeks prior to the event to ensure each department has sufficient time to review.

If a Vendor cannot produce a Dallas County Mobile Food Permit, please see the requirements under Outside Caterer.

Sterno (or any other brand of jellied, denatured alcohol burned directly in a can) is not allowed on campus unless serviced by SMU Catering.

Outdoor Events

University Facilities include several outdoor areas which are, in a general sense, “open to the public.” University Facilities are private property and outdoor spaces are not available for rent. Outdoor Events on the SMU campus must be submitted for approval through STABLE. Only active SMU faculty, staff and students have access to STABLE and all Outdoor Events must be submitted and approved prior to the event.

Outside Caterer

The use of outside caterers for both Indoor and Outdoor Events must be approved in advance by the Director of Purchasing and the Associate Vice President for Campus Services. If the **vendor will be present on campus** preparing or serving food or drinks, the vendor must provide the following documentation:

1. Approved application for a University Park Temporary Event Permit (at their expense):
 - Permit will trigger an onsite Dallas County Inspection during the event
 - Permit has a 2-week minimum lead time per University Park
 - Permit will require the vendor to rent a hand washing station (triple sink), and potentially other items
2. A Certificate of Insurance (COI) meeting SMU's requirements.

If the food or drinks **will be delivered by or brought to campus** from vendor:

1. They must have a Food Establishment Permit
2. Their most recent Health Inspection Report must be 90 or above

Requestor must use the comment box in STABLE to provide the name of the vendor(s), if the food is being delivered to campus or picked up at an off-campus location, and the source of funds for the event (SMU departmental budget, funds allocated by Student Senate, or other). Any other documentation needed will be requested via email to the requestor.

Sterno (or any other brand of jellied, denatured alcohol burned directly in a can) is not allowed on campus unless serviced by SMU Catering.

Parking

Events held on the SMU campus are expected to comply with all [policies and procedures](#) established by the Office of Parking and ID Card Services. All requests for Event parking must be entered into STABLE for approval.

Photography and Video

All SMU Marketing and Communications digital assets are subject to copyright terms set by the University. Permission is granted for use by the University community only and is not transferable for further use – print or electronic – without the approval of the University's Office of Marketing and Communications. Assets may not be given or sold to other parties without the permission of the University's Office of Marketing and Communications, in consultation with the Office of Legal Affairs. Outside production companies, photographers, filmmakers, and others interested in using the SMU campus for filming or photography must contact [SMU Photography Services](#) to make a request.

Promotion and Marketing (Use of SMU Identifiers)

All SMU logos are owned by the University, and available for license exclusively through the University's Office of Marketing and Communications. Logos must not be produced independently. The SMU logo may not be used with any product, Event or organization not sponsored or sanctioned by the University. Use of the logo for Events or initiatives co-sponsored by the University and outside organization requires the permission of the University's Office of Marketing and Communications. Please refer to [SMU Brand Guidelines](#) for questions pertaining to the use of logo, school colors, and trademark.

Protection of Minors

Any employee, camp operator or other person working on a program that offers recreational, athletic, religious, or educational activities for those not enrolled at SMU and that is operated by or on the SMU campus must successfully complete an approved training and examination program on sexual abuse and child molestation. Texas Education Code, [Section 51.976](#), outlines those legally required to complete the training. More information can be found at on Risk Management's website relate to [Protection of Minors](#).

Security Requirements

Individuals and organizations conducting events that require police or security resources must complete security needs with the SMU Police Department by completing the [SMU PD Security Event Request form](#).

SMU Police Department personnel are available to assist with planning and coordinating event security needs.

Signing Authority

The Board of Trustees, President, Senior Vice Presidents, or Vice Presidents establish contract signature authority for Event Leads and their supervisors. The Vice President for Legal Affairs, in consultation with the Senior Contracts Administrator and the appropriate Dean and Vice President, will provide information about the extent of each Event Lead's authority. This will allow the Event Lead and Dean or Vice President to execute Facility Use Agreements on behalf of the University, using the standard form approved by the Office of Legal Affairs. Any agreement not in standard form must be approved by the Office of Legal Affairs.

Smoking

Per [University Policy 1.19](#), smoking is prohibited in all University buildings and in other campus locations where a no smoking sign is posted.

Software

Event Leads are required to use STABLE for all events. Doing so will allow the Office of Risk Management, SMU Police Department, and the Office of Facilities Planning and Management to view the details of the event.

Sponsorship

Any Event held on campus by a non-campus entity (any group that is not a chartered student organization, division/department, faculty/staff group or University administration) must be sponsored by an appropriate entity on campus. Sponsorship must be obtained in writing and provided to the appropriate Event Lead. Sponsorship by a chartered student organization will require a signature from the organization's faculty/staff advisor.

VIP Events/VIP on Campus

If organizers of Events sponsored by campus departments and units wish to include 1) members of the SMU Board of Trustees, 2) major donors to the University, or 3) large groups of alumni and parents, they are required to confer with the leadership of the DEA units *Program Services and Donor Relations* and *Alumni Giving and Alumni Relations* to ensure the appropriateness of including these groups as well as the accuracy of the invitation data.

Vendors

Any vendors used must be approved by Purchasing. [Preferred and exclusive providers](#) have met SMU's contracting and insurance requirements. Any vendor not designated as a preferred or exclusive provider must have either a contract or purchase order and provide a Certificate of Insurance to the Office of Risk Management.

- Each Venue may have additional building specific procedures.
- These procedures do not apply to the SMU-in-Taos campus.

Revised: September 2025