

Room Set-Up Styles for Conference, Classroom and more.

Here's a helpful reference guide to the different kinds of meeting room styles and layouts and the way the conference tables can be arranged.



Theater Style

Seats or chairs in rows facing a stage area, head table, or speaker (with no conference table)

Used for

This is the most efficient set-up when the attendees will act as an audience. This set-up is not recommended for food events or if note taking is required.

Set-up hints

This is a very flexible room set-up. Rows can be circular, semi-circular, straight, or angled toward the focal point.

Offset each row so that attendees don't have to look over the person in front of them (this will increase the space required).

If using banquet type chairs, space them 3" to 6" apart as these chairs are normally narrower than most people's bodies.

If you have the space, allow for 24" between rows to allow attendees easy movement in and out of the row.

Pros

Good for large groups when reading/writing are not required

Cons

Elevation changes needed for large groups

No writing surface

Minimal group interaction



U-Shape

A series of conference tables set in the shape of the letter U, with chairs around the outside.

Used for

This layout style is often used for Board of Directors meetings, committee meetings, or discussion groups where there is a speaker, audio-visual presentation or other focal point.

Set-up hints

A minimum of 2' of table space is required per attendee.

Skirt the inside of the "U" if attendees are being seated only on the outside.

Avoid the "U" set-up for groups greater than 25, as the sides of the "U" become too long and may not promote participation from all attendees.

Pros

Good work space

Good interaction between participants

Ideal when audio-visual or speakers are involved

Cons

Not ideal for larger group



Classroom Style

Rows of conference tables with chairs facing the front of a room (and usually a speaker), providing writing space for each person.

Used for

This room set-up is ideal for note taking, meetings requiring multiple handouts or reference materials, or other tools such as laptop computers. This is the most comfortable set-up for long sessions and allows refreshments to be placed within reach of each attendee.

Set-up hints

Tables that extend beyond the stage or podium should be angled toward the speaker.

Allow for approximately 2' of space per person at each table. (More space may be required depending on the amount of materials).

Minimum space between tables is 3'. Provide 3½' if space allows, for ease of movement in and out of rows.

Pros

Presenter can see all participants

Accommodates large groups in less space

Cons

Minimal interaction possible

Participants only see each other's backs



Conference or Boardroom Style

A rectangular or oval table set up with chairs around all sides and ends.

Used for

This table layout is often used for Board of Directors meetings, committee meetings, or discussion groups.

Set-up hints

Many facilities offer rooms with permanent conference tables in a variety of shapes.

If these are not available, standard conference tables can be placed together to form a square, rectangle or hollow square.

Remember, the larger the set-up, the harder it is for attendees to see others at the end opposite them.

Pros

Good work space

Good working atmosphere

Good interaction between participants

Cons

Not ideal for audio-visual presentations

Not ideal for speakers

Not ideal for larger groups



Hollow Design

Square conference tables arranged in a square or rectangle or even octagon, leaving the center open. Chairs are placed around the outside of the tables.

Best usage: Larger meetings of 12 to 30 pax, at which group interaction among attendees is important and meetings when the event does not have a designated leader or presenter.

Useful layout design that provides workspace for each person and good communication and visual lines for each person. iian