

# SUMMER UNIVERSITIES



Summer University 2021

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# Programme

Preparing the programme of your SU at the very beginning of your organisation process is definitely the best start to creating a great SU! Filling approximately two weeks with exciting and fun activities seems like a hard task, but these guidelines will definitely help you.

**First day:** the first day should be fully dedicated to the arrivals of the participants. Bear in mind that participants will probably arrive at different times during the whole day (and most likely also during the night) so it's not a good idea to plan any trip or thematic activity, because most of participants would probably miss it. But still, don't forget to plan something for the first participants who arrive: they won't know each other, so it's very important to start creating the group spirit with ice-breaking games. The "official" program could start in the late afternoon, with an "opening ceremony" presenting the organisers team and the programme of the SU, and of course more games to get to know each other. Don't forget that dinner must be provided on the first day as well.

**Last day:** the last day should be fully dedicated to the departures of the participants. Breakfast must be provided, but then it's up to you to decide if you want to organise something with the participants who will leave later, like watching pictures and video, or sharing comments about the SU all together.

## First days

The very first days of the SU should give participants an overview of the place(s) they are visiting: it's a good idea to plan a city tour and some cultural workshops (like a basic language workshop with useful everyday sentences) during the second/third day of your SU. Moreover, these days might also be a good moment to plan the compulsory AEGEE presentation, since this will give to newbie participants an overview of how the whole association works.

## Activities

Since there are thousands of different activities that can take place during a SU. The only advice that could be useful for each one is to try to balance the programme as much as possible. First of all, the thematic part should be equally distributed among the whole SU, according to the minimum tuition hours per week requested by the SUCT (2 hours per night). Be creative and try to develop the thematic part as much as you can through workshops, tuitions, trips, cultural visits and whatever comes to your mind! Try to balance every kind of activity equally during the whole SU: try not to spend a whole week inside doing theoretical workshops and a whole week outside doing sports! Moreover, keep in mind that some activities might "affect" participants' condition making them not really ready for attending a

totally different activity right after: if you schedule a meeting with the mayor of your city at 5 pm, it wouldn't be a good idea to spend the first part of the day at the beach, since participants would probably be wet and sweaty! Remember also to schedule time for the compulsory sessions: it could be a good idea to distribute them among the SU, starting with AEGEE intro on the first days and the other two sessions further on during the SU. Please keep in mind that the compulsory sessions do not count as tuition hours.

## Free time

participants will need some free time during your SU, but you should try to distribute it equally among the SU: a whole day of free time will undoubtedly bore the participants. A free morning or afternoon once or twice during the SU will allow them to explore the cities by themselves, buy souvenirs and do whatever they want. It's better to give them free time after providing them with the city tour, so they could already have an idea of where to go. Don't forget to give them suggestions of what to do/which places to visit. Usually free time for participants is the best moment to have a briefing moment with the whole organisers team.

## Shower time

It might seem obvious, but participants (and organisers!) will want their daily shower! Keep in mind to give them some time both in the morning (the wake up call should be at least one hour before the start of the programme) and in the evening, before dinner or between dinner and social program, so they can get ready for the party!

## Sleeping time

This might seem obvious as well, but participants (and this time organisers even more!) also need to sleep sometimes! We know that you want to make your participants' experience as many activities as possible, but a tired participant usually turns themselves into a grumpy and complaining participant, even if the activity is super interesting! Try to plan a late wake-up call every now and then, especially during the second week of SU when usually the participants are more tired, and after a hard night (see suggestion for the social programme below!)

## Social programme

A party that can't be missed in a SU is definitely the European Night! Since participants will have to bring their food and drinks from home, planning it during the first days of SU might be a smart choice, because it would allow them to bring fresh food. European Nights are nice but even better is to put more focus on the thematic aspect of the activity by putting more focus on a cultural aspect - do not allow participants to eat and drink everything in the first minute,

but let everybody present what they brought, where do they come from and even perform some traditional dances or songs. As a local organiser, you also should present the country they are in - except for drinks and food, try to arrange a local folklore group or other team to show participants a bit of your traditions. The most important thing to keep in mind is that after a European Night participant will need to sleep, so try to plan an “easy” day the next day with a late wake up call. On the last night of the SU you should plan a “closing ceremony”: a very typical suggestion is the white t-shirt party, where all participants wear a white t-shirt and write farewell messages on each other.

Participants usually like “thematic parties” including dress code (traffic light party, oldies party, dress like a star party, navy party, strange party, etc.), but do not put too many of them in your programme, keep in mind that some participants might travel only with cabin luggage.

Another option is to have 1-2 nights completely without a party, to let everybody rest. You can watch movies together, prepare massage workshops, cook together, play games in a gym and schedule earlier sleep. Some party animals will oppose, but in the end they will be happy.

### **Tips for organising the best programme**

- Everything has to be planned well and clearly, and all the organisers must know the exact contents of the programme. It's very important to give accurate information to the participants. Don't invent strange or unclear information/answers when you don't know what to say and don't say “I have no idea, ask the main organiser”! Ask the other organisers before saying things that you don't know.
- Go for a cooperation with another AEGEE-Body (such as the Working Groups, Projects, Interest Groups, ...) in order to make a really interesting thematic SU. Cooperation with a Body is actually a big help for local organisers, since you will have less programme to arrange yourselves. You can rely on experienced trainers, and participants can deepen their knowledge in a particular topic.
- Organise every detail before the SU, not during! You don't know if you will have time during the SU. Don't tempt fate, do it before!
- Organise interesting & fun activities, in which also organisers can take part. The SU should also be for organisers, they must enjoy the SU together with participants.
- DON'T FORGET to try all the activities before the SU! It's necessary to know how certain activities are, if they are boring, too hard, etc. In order to avoid seeing the bored faces of the participants, test all the activities before the SU with the other organisers.
- Avoid too much free time. It's not good if you write in your programme “Free Time” several times. Decide to write the activity they can do/choose in that time, for example shopping time, ice cream time, etc.
- Expect to surprise the participants with activities outside the programme. The element of surprise is a useful tool to make participants happy... Run free with your imagination!

- Bring some useful tools to use during free time or downtime. A little speaker to put music or something useful to organise funny games. Unexpected events happen, and you must be ready to solve it in some way.
- Intersperse workshops, city tours and other serious activities with other physical or entertaining activities. Don't kill participants with long walks in the sun, or with never-ending boring workshops, decide to split these activities, and organise a not so difficult or straining programme for everyone.
- Choose activities and parties that are likely to appeal to the majority of participants. Sometimes simple parties are the best choice.
- Provide the time for the pre-party. Participants prefer to spend more time together , before going in the club, drinking and laughing. Don't take away this time!
- Give exact meeting points and respect them. Usually participants don't like it when organisers are late in the programme. Try to respect the timeline of your programme as best as you can.

## Timing

Timing is one of the crucial things in order to have a happy organiser team, satisfied partners and well-behaved participants. As an organiser you have to show from the very beginning that no time is going to be wasted on waiting for last lazy participants to get out of accommodation and they all should know that you mean it. Don't be afraid to establish this by leaving a few last participants in the gym/hostel to teach them that by being late they will miss the programme and all the fun (but don't do this while you are on an empty island). However, do never forget to make sure that all your participants (and organisers!) are aware of the departure time, especially if there had been some changes in programme. Writing big flip chart papers schedules and hanging them in a common place the day before is a good practice.

While being in the preparation phase, think a lot about the timing. Keep in mind that travelling with approximately 40 cheerful and excited people with public transport can take more time than it usually takes when you are alone. Most probably they won't fit into one bus and you will need to divide them into groups. Also, be prepared that you will always have participants who decide to go to the toilet the same second as your departure.

A good practice is to always add some "buffer" time in your schedule, e.g. 15 minutes more, which only you and few other organisers will know about and to participants you present the version without this planned extra time. This way you will ensure that you will not miss your bus/meeting/activity and you will be way less stressed. Shortly waiting at the bus stop/in front of a museum is better than running and you can always use this time for some quick energisers or get to know each other games.