# University of California, Irvine

Room Layouts

Which type of room layout should you use for your event or meeting? The answer depends on the objectives of the function. Use the information below to help you decide which room layout will work best for your event.
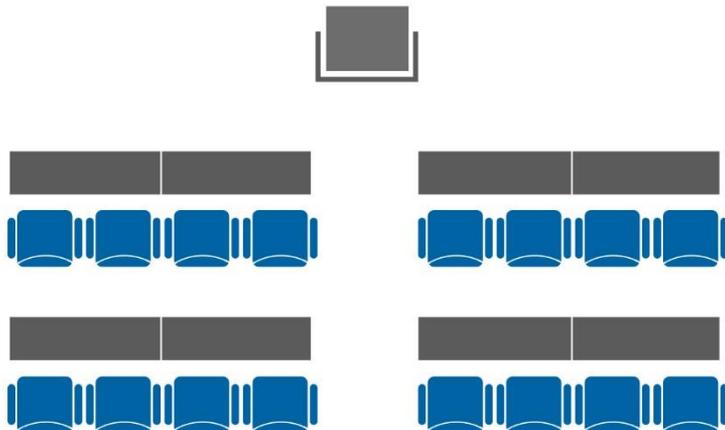
Theater Style

Chairs are lined up in rows facing the speaker. The rows can be straight, semi-circular, or herringbone (angled toward the front of the room). If space isn't an issue, it's best to offset each row or create elevation change so that guests are not sitting directly behind one another. Two feet between rows is ideal. This setup is best used for audiences that will be listening to a speaker or watching a slide presentation. It is not recommended for taking notes, referring to materials in binders, or any event at which food is served and eaten in chairs.
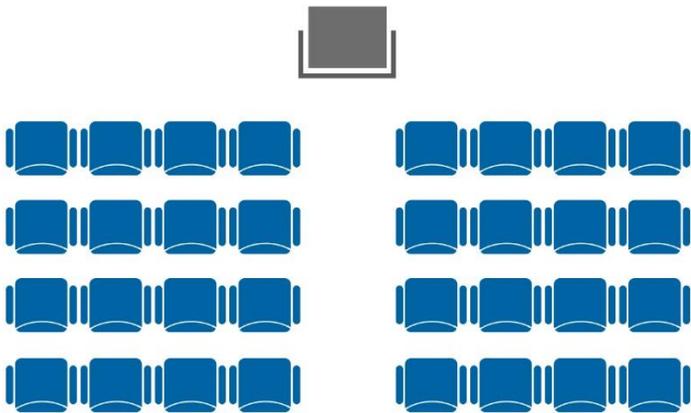
Classroom Style

Long, narrow tables are positioned in front of rows of chairs facing the speaker. The tables are usually connected to one another. When the tables extend beyond the stage on both ends, it is a good idea to angle them toward the speaker to provide better viewing. Water pitchers and glasses are typically placed on tables. In some cases, a notepad and pen or speaker materials are included on the table as well. This is the most comfortable layout for long sessions with note taking, multiple handouts, or tools like laptops. There should be three to three and a half feet between rows of tables for ease of movement in and out of rows.

U-Shape Style

Rectangular tables are positioned to form a "U" shape. Seating is usually on the outside of the U only. This layout is often used for committee meetings or discussion groups where there is a speaker, audio-visual presentation or other focal point. The format encourages good interaction between participants since they can all see each other and allows flexibility for the speaker to move around. Always skirt the inside of the "U" if attendees are being seated only on the outside. Avoid this layout for groups over 25.
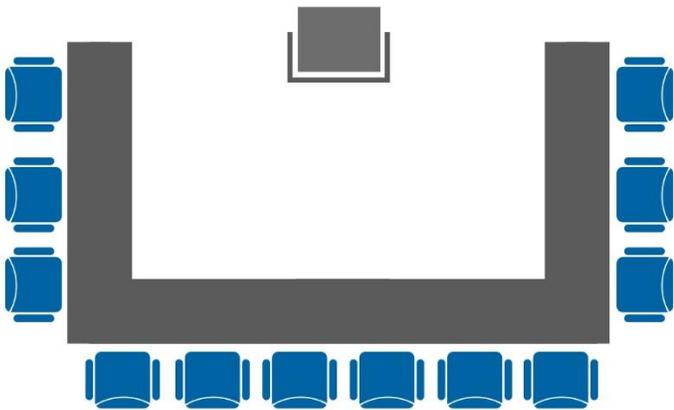
Boardroom Style

Participants are seated on all four sides of a conference/boardroom style table. This layout is often used for board meetings or smaller functions that encourage significant interaction between participants. It can also be used for high-level dining functions with a smaller group of guests. Many facilities offer rooms with a permanent conference table, but if not available, rectangular tables can be placed together to create the layout. For dining purposes, 8'x40" or 8'x48" rectangular tables are recommended over the standard 8'x30" to offer more room for table setup and guest comfort. A boardroom style layout is best suited for 20 or less guests as interaction among participants on the opposite side of the table becomes more challenging with larger groups.
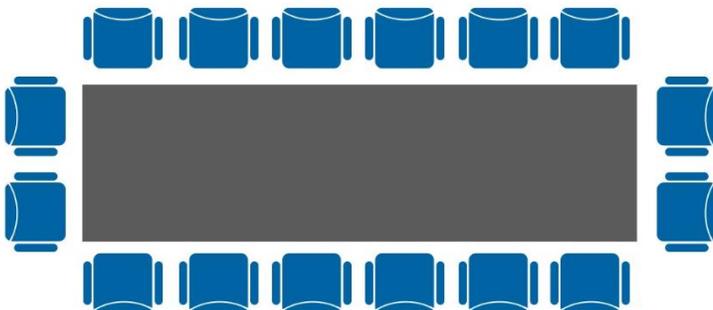
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Room Layouts

Banquet Style

Guests are seated at round tables – typically 60", 66", or 72" in diameter. This layout is the setup of choice for most meal functions. It is also appropriate for small committee meetings and small breakout or study groups involving group interaction and/or note taking. If guests are viewing a speaker or presentation, a crescent-style layout, which involves seating around ½ of the table, is best because it allows everyone to face the front of the room. A 60" round table seats 6-8 guests, a 66" round seats 8-10 guests, and a 72" round can accommodate 10-12 guests.
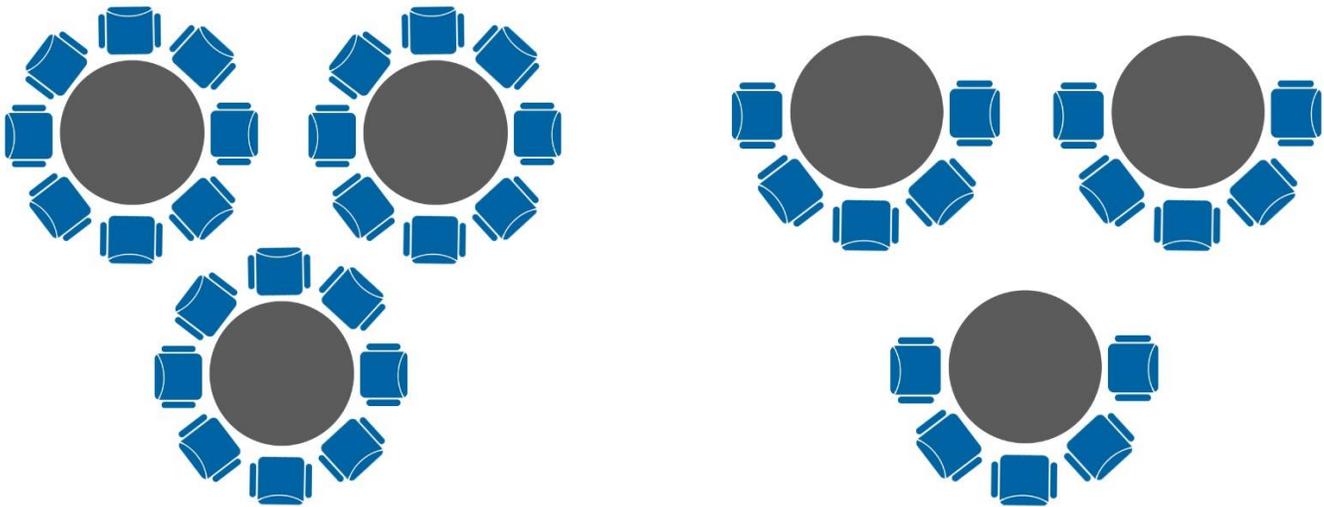
Reception Style

Small, round cocktail tables are commonly used for a reception. These tables are typically 3 ½ to 4 feet high with a 36" diameter top. If space is an issue, the round top can also be rented in 24" and 30" diameter. The cocktail tables should be scattered around the room as this layout is designed to encourage mingling and movement throughout the space. It is appropriate to accommodate seating for 1/3 of guests at a reception. This can be accomplished by incorporating several 48" round tables (standard 30" high) with chairs into the layout with the cocktail tables.