

THE BARBER INSTITUTE OF FINE ARTS

VENUE HIRE POLICY

Our Mission

Our mission derives from the far sighted vision of our founder, Lady Barber, who established the Barber Institute of Fine Arts ‘for the study and encouragement of art and music’. The jewel in the cultural crown of the University of Birmingham, the Barber uses its world-class collections to create inspirational opportunities for learning and enjoyment for students, staff and the wider public.

Context and Policy Principles

The Barber’s primary activity is the display and interpretation of its outstanding permanent collections and the organisation of temporary exhibitions and displays in order to increase visitors’ understanding and enjoyment of them. It is also responsible for the maintenance and care for the building in which the collections are housed and for managing access to, and the use of, its public rooms and facilities, including the galleries, concert hall and lecture theatre.

Since the early 1990s, the Barber has been available for hire to other departments within the University and to external groups. This policy was introduced to generate income for the Barber’s core activities and to create opportunities for organised groups to hold special events in a unique setting. Venue hire also allows the Barber to reach new audiences, for example in the corporate sector, who would not otherwise visit the collections.

The Barber is an attractive venue for many types of public and private events, from concerts and lectures to private views and conferences; however, it is also a listed building of considerable age and heritage value and home to a priceless art collection and other University departments and libraries. The suitability and availability of the Barber for events is constrained by the size and layout of its rooms and – during term-time in particular – by its core activities and those of the University. All enquiries for venue hire are carefully assessed and bookings are only accepted if events are appropriate to the venue and can be delivered without disruption to core activities and/or risk to the building and its collections.

Public Rooms and Facilities

There are four public rooms available for hire: the concert hall (capacity 340), the lecture theatre (capacity 132) and the foyer (capacity 200), all located on the ground floor of the building, and the galleries, which are on the first floor. The rooms are exceptional examples of the style of architecture and interior design of the 1930s, now known as Art Deco, with period fixtures and fittings to match. Like the rest of the building, these rooms are Grade II listed and are recognised as being of significant heritage value. Additional facilities include a lift to all floors of the building, toilets and a gallery shop.

The concert hall and lecture theatre are available for hire for events, such as small conferences and seminars, during the day and in the evening, throughout the year (availability subject to teaching and other programmed activities). The galleries and foyer are available for hire for private views and receptions in the evenings only. The lecture theatre is fully equipped for audio-visual presentations and audio-visual equipment for the concert hall can be supplied by prior arrangement. Catering for events can also be supplied by the Barber and other providers.

Enquiries and Bookings

Venue hire enquiries and bookings are handled on behalf of the Operations team by the Commercial Sales Officer. Once accepted, routine bookings are confirmed in writing and hirers are sent a booking form for signature, together with the Barber's terms and condition of hire. Non-routine bookings, such as concerts or other public events, are referred to the Director of the Barber Institute and/or the Barber Professor of Music for assessment and approval and may be subject to a separate contract or heads of agreement.

The Director of the Barber Institute has the ultimate responsibility to approve venue hire and bookings; the Head of Operations has the responsibility to ensure that events are delivered safely and in accordance with the terms and conditions of hire (see below).

Charges

The Barber operates a scale of charges for daytime and evening venue hire. These charges are reviewed on a regular basis by the Barber's Operations team and reflect the high costs of staffing and securing the building and its collections, particularly outside public opening hours. Venue hire charges vary according to the scale and timing of each event and do not include catering and equipment hire costs, which are calculated separately. Anyone interested in hiring the Barber is asked to contact the Commercial Sales Officer to obtain a full quotation.

Terms and Conditions of Hire

The Barber's terms and conditions of hire reflect the unique nature of the building and its collections and its high public profile. For example, the Barber does not allow food and/or drink to be taken into the galleries, the concert hall or the lecture theatre and it does not serve red wine, which can cause permanent damage to materials such as fabric, wood and stone. The terms and conditions of hire also express the policies and legal responsibility of the University with respect to Health and Safety, Data Protection and Freedom of Speech. For example, hirers are required to comply with the University's safety directives while on the premises and to disclose full details of any event or meeting where the topics or speakers may produce a reaction that threatens Freedom of Speech and/or public safety.

A full version of the terms and conditions of hire can be downloaded from the Barber website
<http://barber.org.uk/venue-hire/>