



2023 CANADIAN UNDERGRADUATE PHYSICS CONFERENCE BIDDING GUIDE



Created by: CUPC 2022 Organizing Team

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Event Overview

If you are thinking about CUPC, here is a bit of background information to get the ball rolling!

What is CUPC?

The Canadian Undergraduate Physics Conference (CUPC) is an annual conference organized solely by a team of undergraduate students from the host university. It is the largest and longest running undergraduate science conference in Canada, and the largest undergraduate physics conference in North America. At the end of each conference, a vote is held to determine the location of the next conference. Since its inception, the conference has not been in the same location for two consecutive years.

History

The idea for the Canadian Undergraduate Physics Conference was born in 1964 when C.S. Kalman, of the McGill Undergraduate Physics Society, met L. Rosen, of the University of Toronto Mathematics and Physics Undergraduate Society, whilst Kalman was working at U of T. The two undergraduate students presented the idea of a national conference for students to assemble. At this conference, students will be able to discuss ongoing projects being done at various institutions across the country.

In March 1965, Rosen sent a letter to 20 universities announcing that “a number of student chapters of the Canadian Association of Physicists in Ontario and Quebec are considering an inter-provincial conference for undergraduate students.” Since it was late in the academic year, the first conference was not held until late 1965 in the new academic year. Because McGill University was able to fund external speakers, it was chosen to be the location of the first conference.

Adopted from: <https://www.cap.ca/congress-conference/cupc/cupc-history/>

Institutional Hosts of CUPC

Since 1965, 24 Canadian universities have acted as hosts or co-hosts (denoted with asterisks below) of the CUPC. The University of Alberta is currently the record holder after hosting the CUPC on six separate occasions, most recently in 2018.

University of Guelph (2022, 1996)	University of Toronto (2008, 1983, 1977, 1966, 1965*)
Toronto Metropolitan University (2021)	Simon Fraser University (2007, 1974)
Western University (2020, 2005, 1973)	University of New Brunswick (2006, 1984)
McGill University (2019, 2003, 1986, 1965*)	University of Victoria (2004, 1982*)
University of Alberta (2018, 2009, 1999, 1991, 1979, 1970)	University of Manitoba (2001*, 1985, 1968)
Carleton University (2017, 1976)	University of Winnipeg (2001*)
Dalhousie University (2016, 2010, 2002, 1988, 1978)	Université de Laval (2000, 1990, 1975)
Trent University (2015)	University of Calgary (1995, 1987)
Queen’s University (2014, 1998, 1981*)	University of Ottawa (1992)
McMaster University (2013, 1994, 1972, 1967)	University of Waterloo (1989, 1969)
University of British Columbia (2012, 1997, 1980, 1971)	Royal Roads Military College (1982*)
University of Saskatchewan (2011, 1993)	Royal Military College (1981*)

Partners

The Canadian Association of Physicists (CAP) has been a long-time supporter of the CUPC. The CAP aids the CUPC planning team with financial aspects of the conference (such as creating the sponsorship form, providing a space to hold CUPC funds, etc.), as well as providing ideas and feedback on ongoing conference logistics and planning. CUPC also has a long-standing relationship with many external sponsors, such as the Canadian Astronomical Association (CASCA).



So Why Should You Consider Bidding to Host CUPC 2023?

Hosting CUPC is a fantastic opportunity for the undergraduate students in the hosting institution. While planning the conference can be a fair bit of work, it facilitates team building and networking within your department. Previous organizing teams have found that the hours spent planning CUPC led to lifelong friendships. Volunteering opportunities are plentiful, and this is exactly the kind of activity that looks fantastic on your resume when applying for jobs or application when applying to graduate schools or for scholarships!

The organizing team will get an opportunity to interact directly with leading physicists from across the Canadian physics community and will become more aware of the diversity of Canada's amazing physics community.

The conference itself is a great opportunity to meet undergraduate peers from across Canada that share your passion for physics and astronomy, while showcasing your institution and city to the rest of Canada. If your institution hasn't hosted CUPC in a while (see above), this would be a great time to submit a bid!

Most importantly, CUPC is all kinds of fun!

Specific Contacts

Organizers of the 2023 CUPC will require some information from the previous year's bid committee as well as staff members at the CAP. Their contact information is included below.

CAP Contacts

Francine Ford – Executive Director | execdir@cap.ca or cap@uottawa.ca

CUPC 2022 – University of Guelph (Hybrid)

Ashley Geddes (Co-Chair) | ageddes@uoguelph.ca

Wesley Schlenker (VP–Finance) | wschlenk@uoguelph.ca

Grant Doherty (VP–Logistics) | gdoherly@uoguelph.ca

Bid Requirements

Departmental Support

The first thing you should do before submitting a bid to host CUPC is getting support from your institution's physics department. Their support is crucial as the conference will likely be held in venues at your institution, including lecture halls and conference rooms. Their support will also likely be needed throughout the planning process in terms of financial support, shipping & receiving, finding relevant contacts (for sponsors, speakers, volunteers etc), and general advice.

Duties and Responsibilities of the Host

The host is responsible for organizing and executing all the conference events. Hosts create their own conference budget, seek out and apply for sponsorships and funding opportunities, recruit speakers and team members, all while promoting their conference! Basically, you are creating a conference from scratch. This is great because it provides room for tons of creativity and new ideas.



What to Include in Your Bid

For a successful bid, you need a skeleton of a conference breakdown and the basic logistics. Things you should include are:

- your team and their roles
- proposed conference dates
- possible venues
- possible accommodations
- rough budget
- rough idea of the kind of events you want to plan
- how you will keep delegates engaged
- how you will promote the conference

Generally, the more you have planned and thought through, the better chance you have of being selected to host CUPC.

The Vote

The current CUPC organizing team has the choice of how they would like the bidding process to take place. However, bids are traditionally presented at the end of the conference. For bids placed during the conference, all delegates in attendance at the time of the bid will have a vote.

Organizing Team

Usually, whoever places and wins the bid will become the chair (or co-chairs) of the next CUPC. You will also need a core team to help with the planning of the conference, sub-teams to focus on specific planning aspects of the conference, as well as a group of volunteers to help facilitate events and organize delegates. We recommend that your core team consists of 5-8 members.

Suggested Team Roles

When planning an event with so many moving parts, an organizing team may decide to have executive members who manage a small group of team members dedicated to tasks related to the executive's role. Some executive team roles we suggest you fill are:

- **Chair/Co-Chairs**
 - responsible for interacting with staff at the CAP
 - ensures that the organizing team's members are managing their assigned tasks in a timely fashion
 - organizes the tasks to be accomplished between meetings
- **Internal Executive**
 - responsible for coordinating and maintaining team meetings and inside logistics, including volunteer training and weekly meetings
- **Finance Executive**
 - responsible for tracking funding, finding and applying for sponsorship funds and other funding opportunities
- **Events Executive**
 - responsible for planning event logistics, finding speakers, venues, etc.



- **Communication Executive**
 - responsible for email communications including incoming inquiries, outgoing inquiries (such as speaker invitations), CUPC email announcements, etc.
- **Web and Design Executive**
 - responsible for updating the CUPC CAP website, creating delegate-only websites (if needed), and managing social media channels

These are only suggestions. You do not have to have these specific roles on your team; include the roles your team needs to facilitate the completion of tasks in a timely fashion. All members of your organizing team should have a “back-up” if illness or academic/work commitments takes them away from their organizing duties for any length of time. It is crucial that planning not grind to a halt while you wait for that member’s return!

Finances

Sample Expenses

Below is a sample budget for hosting an in-person CUPC. The items on the left are common categories of expenses for the CUPC hosts, and the ranges in the expenses of such categories from various CUPC’s have been approximated and summarized on the far right.

Expense	Details	Approximate Cost
Accommodations	Hotel costs, transportation	\$24,000 - \$96,000
Catering	Delegate meals and beverages throughout the day (e.g. coffee and water stations)	\$30,000 - \$44,000
Venue	Conference and meeting spaces	\$5,000 - \$10,000
Delegate Experience	Gift bags and items, social events	\$10,500
Judges/Speakers	Travel accommodations for guest speakers, speaker honorariums, appreciation gifts	\$500 - \$3,000
Miscellaneous	Volunteer appreciation gifts, set-up, etc.	\$5,000 - \$17,000
TOTAL:		\$70,000 - \$180,500

Table 1: Sample CUPC expenses budget, broken down by category.

In terms of the venue, past CUPC events often made use of lecture halls or classroom space at the host institution for conference presentations and events. In some cases, student housing may also be used for accommodations. For events run during an academic semester, this is increasingly difficult so you may need to look at conference facilities in your host city.

Accommodations and travel costs can vary wildly from conference to conference, depending on the host city and the speakers your team chooses to bring in. For host institutions located in larger population centres, the density of nearby universities provides a large local pool of candidates for keynote speakers and panel members. For universities in more remote locations, be aware that the travel and accommodation costs can add up quickly!



Sample Revenues

The organizing committee raises funding in the method of their choosing. Most years, teams choose to charge a conference registration fee, charge for Grad and Industry Fair booths, and apply for sponsorships. Sponsorships and Grad Fair booths are typically administrated through a secure form created through the CAP, where funds will go directly to their bank account. The CUPC team can use the CAP's bank account to hold their finances, where the team will have to submit receipts from expenses for reimbursement. To discuss other options, please consult with Francine Ford.

Sponsorships are critical, so you will want to have a small team of volunteers contacting companies and organizations. Reach out early to solicit funding for your event! In many cases, potential sponsors need to allocate their funds by December 31st (year-end) or April 31st (common fiscal year-end). Your own university will be a good source of funding – contact your Department Chair/Head, your Dean, and possibly the Vice-President (Research) and Provost, as these are all potential sources of funding. Your university's Alumni Advancement department could also be a source of funding.

Numerous Canadian physics organizations and societies are traditional sponsors of the CUPC, so make sure to reach out to them. The successful bidder for CUPC 2023 will be given access to a Google Drive where the organizing team can review the organizations and companies that provided sponsorship to CUPC events dating back to 2013 – this is a great starting point for your team's fundraising efforts.

Events

Traditionally, CUPC consists of keynote lectures, workshops, panels, student presentations, and a graduate school and industry fair. Many CUPC events have included a tour of the research labs/groups at the host institution. There is usually an opening banquet to kick off the CUPC, and a closing banquet where award winners are announced. Bids to host the next CUPC are frequently presented and voted upon during the closing banquet.

You can refer to past CUPCs to decide on which events to include, but it is ultimately up to the host to decide the number and types of events that will be offered at their conference.

Tips for a Successful CUPC Bid

You can place a bid on behalf of your institution on your own, but we recommend that you place your bid with another student from your institution, with a maximum bidding team of 3 members. Please remember that you should not bid without first contacting your Department Chair/Head! CUPC is a hefty financial commitment, so you need to make sure that your Department will be onboard with supporting your conference. Some universities may also require risk management plans and/or authorization from entities other than your Chair/Head, so make sure you do your homework before bidding!

We suggest that you not only include events related to physics, but some social events as well. These are ways for delegates to stay engaged throughout your conference and create a fun and enjoyable experience overall. For instance, a popular activity in past conferences has been a pub crawl planned by the hosts for the delegates who are of legal drinking age.



Remember that the CUPC is a national conference celebrating all Canadian undergraduate research in physics! Make sure that your proposed conference represents the diversity of Canadian physics research., including (but certainly not limited to):

- nuclear and particle physics
- biophysics and medical physics
- nanoscience and materials science
- astronomy and cosmology
- physics education research
- photonics
- gravitational physics and general relativity
- condensed matter physics
- quantum information

Ensure that at least some of your proposed events will appeal to students interested in experimental, computational, and theoretical physics. It may be a good idea to think of events that could appeal to delegates that have not yet had the opportunity to conduct their own undergraduate research.

Students interested in putting together a bid should network as much as possible during this year's CUPC – if the conference is making use of a chat platform (e.g. Discord or Slack), ensure that you are an active and visible participant before the conference kicks off. You are more likely to earn delegates' votes in support of your bid if they know who you are and recognize your passion for CUPC!

The delegates at the live bid will be voting for the next host, therefore your bid should be engaging, and you should try to get the audience excited for what you have planned!