BMA room layouts for meeting
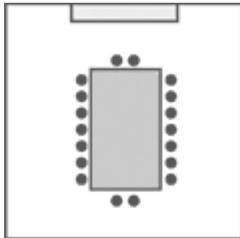
BMA Committee services department
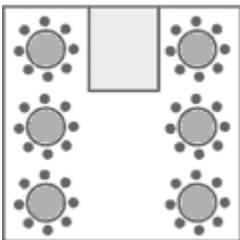
BMA Policy directorate

November 2019

Here's a helpful reference guide to the different kinds of meeting room designs and the way the tables and seating can be arranged. Of course, the purpose of your meeting, the number of delegates attending will also be important factors when deciding upon the most appropriate layout.
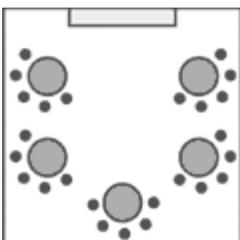
Boardroom layout

- A rectangular or oval table set up with chairs around all sides and ends.
- Popular for smaller meetings.
- Ideal for debate and discussion as every delegate can see each other.
- This layout is not recommended if there is a presentation at one end of the room.
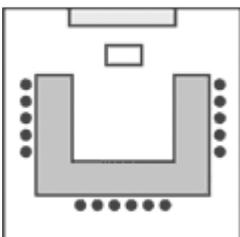
Cabaret layout

- A group of round tables, each seating 6-10 people.
- Used for product launches, presentations and social/gala events.
- Also ideal for small-group work.
- Many of the delegates will have their backs to the front of the room and so this needs to be considered according to your requirements.
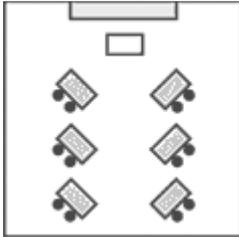
Halfmoon layout

More inclusive than a cabaret style layout as all delegates face the front of the room.
- This layout is not space efficient and so is more suitable for smaller groups.
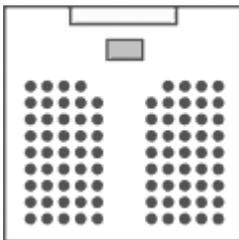
U-shape layout

- A series of conference tables set in the shape of the letter U, with chairs around the outside.
- Often used for Board of Directors meetings, committee meetings, or discussion groups where there is a speaker, audio-visual presentation or other focal point.
- The square layout is conducive to discussion/debate.
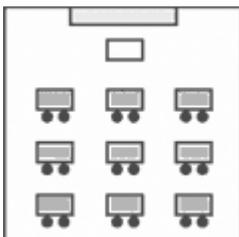- Not ideal for larger groups.

Fishbone layout

- Similar in style to a classroom layout but the tables are angled towards the centre.
- More intimate than classroom layout as this set up allows delegates to see each other as well as the trainer/presenter.
- Allows more discussion between delegates.

Theatre layout

- Chairs are placed in rows facing a stage area, head table, or speaker (with no conference tables).
- Used for product launches, presentations and displays.
- Used to present to large numbers of delegates.
- Allows for optimal room occupancy.
- The speaker can be elevated on a stage or podium and seating can be tiered to the back to ensure everyone has a clear view.

Classroom layout

- Delegates (in ones or twos) have their own workspace.
- Ideal for testing, individual training and presentations.
- Not ideal for discussion and debate as delegates only see each other's backs.