The Outlook Scheduling Assistant is a quick and easy way to schedule appointments with multiple participants. All of us have a default permission of “Free/Busy” on each other’s calendars. This allows us to see only that something is scheduled, not what is scheduled.

These examples are from Outlook 2010, but this also applies to Outlook 2007, 2011, 2013 with small modifications.

Launch Outlook

On Windows computers, Outlook can be found by clicking the Start icon and navigating to the Microsoft Outlook folder under All Programs.

On Macintosh computers, Outlook can be found by navigating to the Applications folder in Finder and Selecting Outlook under the Microsoft Office 2011 folder.

If you are not currently using Microsoft Outlook, please contact the SAIT Helpdesk or your local IT staff for assistance.

Switch to your Calendar View

In the left Pane of Outlook, click the Calendar option.
Scheduling a Meeting

To schedule a meeting with multiple participants, click the New Meeting button on the Microsoft Office Ribbon.

A new meeting window will appear

Fill out the basic information

To: Enter the email addresses or names of the people you want to invite to the meeting
Subject: Give a descriptive name of the meeting
Location: Enter a proposed location for the meeting, this can be updated later if you do not know it. We do not use Outlook room scheduling/Room Finder.

Then click on the Scheduling Assistant in the Ribbon
Using the Scheduling Assistant

The Scheduling Assistant will bring up another window with the names of the folks that you have invited to your meeting on the previous screen.

This screen has a lot of data on it, so we will break it down into pieces.
The most important feature is the list of attendees and their schedule information.

On the left, you can see Michelle, Bruce and Joel are all included here, as we put them in the TO: field on the previous screen.

On the right, you can see their schedules. Since I am looking at my own calendar here, I can see the titles of my events. You will notice however that I do not see the titles of Bruce or Joel’s events, simply that there is a purple bar. Next to “All Attendees” you can see the gaps in the schedule that are open for all participants.

At the bottom of the window you can see a legend that will indicate what different colors in the schedule mean.

On the right side, under the Room Finder heading is a larger scale calendar that can help you find days that work better.

You can see that the 27th, 28th (currently selected) or the 29th are good meeting days. The 30th – 5th are poor choices (I’m on vacation!).

In addition, at the bottom right, Outlook offers some suggested times.

You can see that there are many options for meeting times that have “No Conflicts” and that means that the other invitees have no calendar items scheduled.
Proposing the Meeting

After you have identified a time that looks good on all schedules you can propose the meeting time.

If you are happy with the meeting as is, you can press the Send Button. OR if you want to add more details, such as in the description pane, you can click appointment button on the ribbon.

Meeting Request Recipients

If you receive a meeting request, you will see a meeting request object in your inbox.
Open the meeting request for more information about the meeting subject, participants and time.

You are offered a few different responses to this request.

Accept the meeting – Just click the check mark to accept the meeting at the time offered.

Tentative – Click the question mark to accept the meeting tentatively.

Decline – Click the X to decline the message. It sends a message back to the proposer that you have declined.

Propose a new time – This allows you to use the Scheduling Assistant to propose a new time. Clicking that button will bring up a new window that is a small version of the one we saw earlier.

That covers the basic use of the Outlook Scheduling Assistant. For more help, please contact Student Affairs IT Helpdesk at 346-1130 or sait@uoregon.edu, or your local IT professional.

Please note: These examples are all dependent upon a user being in the Exchange mail system, using Outlook and entering their free/busy information on their calendars. All staff and faculty are entitled to Exchange mail accounts and student employees can also be added in special cases (contact SAIT for more information).

These examples DO NOT require users to grant any additional calendar permissions to anyone. They DO NOT give other users permissions to add items to your calendar without your approval. They DO NOT allow other users to see information about what is scheduled nor do they allow other users to see your private calendar items.