



Setting the standard

Reporting Standards

Business Events

Version 1 2019

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INTRODUCTION

This document contains the Reporting Standards for events registered in the Business Events sector.

The PDF versions of the Reporting Standards are issued at a certain point in time. As Reporting Standards are updated periodically, please check the website www.abcstandards.org.uk to ensure you are using the latest applicable standards.

Each category of attendance in the Reporting Standards has the following:

- Definition
- Principles
- Requirements
- Guidance

If you are after a quick understanding of the key points of any section then the definition and principles will provide an overview – you can download an Executive Summary containing just these sections from our website.

The guidance sections provide examples of how the requirements might be complied with. We will add to or amend these over time where we consider there may be a benefit following the identification of specific circumstances or requests for advice.

If you have any queries regarding how the Reporting Standards affect you or any specific queries please contact the ABC Client services team on 01442 870 800 or email info@abc.org.uk

GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND RECORD KEEPING

INTRODUCTION

This section sets out some key requirements relating to the overall reporting and auditing of your ABC claim.

PRINCIPLES

1. **The event must be eligible to report under the Reporting Standards**
2. **Your claim must comply with the Reporting Standards**
3. **Transactions related to the claim must be bona fide 'arms length' arrangements**
4. **Evidence to support the claim must be retained and available for a minimum period**

REQUIREMENTS

1. **The event must be eligible to report under the Reporting Standards**
 - a) You may apply to register an event under the Business Event Reporting Standards if entry to the event is controlled in a manner that records attendance and enables it to be verified in accordance with these Reporting Standards.
 - b) Each occurrence of an event will be certified separately.
 - c) Once we have issued an event's first ABC certificate we must continue to issue certificates for subsequent events (i.e. so there is no gap in certification) while the event remains registered.
2. **Your claim must comply with the Reporting Standards**

No additional requirements.
3. **Transactions related to the claim must be bona fide 'arms length' arrangements**
 - a) Transactions or arrangements (such as sales of entrance tickets or stand space) with your own organisation or Related Parties can be included if you are able to demonstrate to our satisfaction that these are bona fide 'arms length' arrangements.
 - b) Related Parties for ABC purposes will include where:
 - i) One party has direct or indirect control of the other party; or
 - ii) The parties are subject to common control from the same source; or
 - iii) One party has influence over the financial & operating policies of the other party to an extent that the other party might be inhibited from pursuing at all times its own separate interests; or
 - iv) The parties, in entering a transaction, are subject to influence from the same source to such an extent that one of the parties to the transaction has subordinated its own separate interests.

This means the following are considered Related Parties for ABC purposes:

- The organiser, its subsidiary, parent and fellow undertakings (and Directors of these)
- Associates and Joint Ventures (and their investors)

4. **Evidence to support the claim must be retained and available for a minimum period**
 - a) You must retain and be able to provide all records supporting the claim, including but not limited to:
 - i) An attendance list that includes all individuals that attended the event.

- ii) An analysis of the event attendance by day by attendance type. *i.e. Visitor Attendance, Exhibitor Attendance.*
 - iii) Evidence supporting the number of attendees claimed by attendance type
 - iv) Evidence supporting additional information certified. *For example: Stand Space if claimed.*
 - v) Financial records relevant to the claim.
- b) Records supporting the claim must be retained until we have completed the audit of the certificate for the subsequent event unless we agree otherwise. There is an exception for registration documents, tickets and vouchers collected in paper form which may be disposed of once we have confirmed the audit is complete.
- c) Records supporting the claim must be retained and made available to us, on request, in accordance with the ABC Byelaws.

GUIDANCE

G1. The event must be eligible to report under the Reporting Standards

- a) Each occurrence of an event will be certified separately: What determines the occurrence of an event is a mixture of time and location, influenced by how it is promoted. *For example: Event X running from 1st to 5th March and Event X running 1st to 5th September would be certified separately. Similarly Event X running 1st to 5th January held in London and Event X running 1st to 5th January held in Manchester would be certified separately.*

CERTIFICATE TYPES

DEFINITION

The ABC Certificate is published by ABC for a specific event and contains the data and information that is subject to audit.

PRINCIPLES

1. **You must report using a mandatory Certificate type**
2. **You may choose to report using an optional Certificate type**

REQUIREMENTS

1. **You must report using a mandatory Certificate type**
 - a) The mandatory Certificate may be either:
 - i) A Certificate of Attendance
 - ii) A Certificate of Attendance with Demographics
 - ii) A Profile Certificate of Attendance
2. **You may choose to report using an optional Certificate type**
 - a) An optional Certificate, available in addition to the mandatory Certificate, is:
 - i) A Group Certificate that combines the attendance from 2 or more Business Event Certificates providing the events are not running concurrently at the same venue.
 - ABC will produce Group Certificates from the data submitted for the constituent events.

GUIDANCE

None.

REPORTED DATA

INTRODUCTION

This section sets out other data and information that is reported on the ABC Certificate.

REQUIREMENTS

MANDATORY INFORMATION

The following will be reported on each Certificate:

1. Total Unique Attendance

a) You must report the Total Unique Attendance for the event, analysed into:

- i) Total Visitor Attendance
- ii) Total Exhibitor Attendance

Note: Unique Attendance means duplicate instances of the same attendee must be excluded from your claim.

2. Event name

a) The name must reflect the event certified. This will take into account how the event is promoted to visitors and/or exhibitors. *For example: two co-located shows where there are no physical barriers between the two and no means of identifying attendance at either of these. In this case the registered name of the event for ABC purposes may include both of the shows.*

3. Date(s) and Venue(s) of event

a) You must report the date(s) and venue of the event certified.

4. Date(s) and Venue(s) of next event

a) You must report the planned date(s) and venue of the next event.

5. Year the event was established

a) You must report the year the event was established.

6. Event frequency

a) You must report the event frequency. *For example: Annual.*

OPTIONAL INFORMATION

The following may optionally be reported on the Certificate:

7. Repeat visits

a) If you opt to report Total Repeat Visits, this is a stand-alone figure and not included in the Total Unique Attendance figure.

8. Demographic data

a) You may opt to report Demographic analyses by reporting a Certificate of Attendance with Demographics or a Profile Certificate of Attendance.

9. Exhibiting Company Data

a) If you opt to report exhibiting company data the following will be included on the ABC Certificate:

- i) Total Net Stand Space Occupied (square metres); and/or
- ii) Number of Stands

10. Main Product Groups/Services Exhibited, Target Audience – Organiser Statement

- a) You may opt to report these statements, which are to be used to describe the Main Product Groups/Services Exhibited and Target Audience.
- b) The statements must be restricted to a reasonable description of these items and not include other information or claims.

Examples of statements that will not be permitted include:

- *Claims that attribute numbers or percentages to a description or profile of the target audience, e.g. 25,000 AB's attend, 70% male 30% female etc*
 - *The reproduction of what appears to be visitor research e.g. average spend per visitor at the show £242*
 - *Quotes from exhibitors/others*
 - *Comparative claims in relation to the market/other shows e.g. The largest/market leading show etc ...*
- c) We do not audit the accuracy of the organiser statements. However we will review them to ensure that they are reasonable and meet the above requirements.

11. Event Attendance affected by circumstances outside the organiser's control

- a) If the event attendance is affected by circumstances outside the organiser's control, then you may apply for a statement to be added to the certificate detailing the circumstances that have affected the attendance figures.
 - i) We will confirm if we approve the inclusion of the statement or provide reasons if we reject it.
 - ii) The circumstances and information surrounding the statement are subject to audit.

GUIDANCE

None

UNIQUE ATTENDANCE

DEFINITION

Individuals who have attended the event.

PRINCIPLES

1. **Individuals have attended the event**
2. **Reported by type**
3. **Optional reporting**

REQUIREMENTS

1. **Individuals have attended the event**

- a) You must be able to demonstrate the individuals have attended the event.
 - i) An individual may only be counted once for the event, except within the optional Repeat Visits figure if claimed.
 - ii) You must retain an attendance list containing a record of all individuals that attended the event (both Visitors and Exhibitors) that includes, as a minimum, their name and either:
 - Their full postal address including postcode (for all records); or
 - Their email address (for all records)

Note:

- o You must exclude from your claim any attendee where the details captured are insufficient to enable them to be contacted for audit purposes.
- o The record of individuals must be coded to distinguish between those claimed as Visitor Attendance and Exhibitor Attendance.
- o You must remove duplicates of the same attendee from the list.

2. **Reported by type**

- a) Visitor attendance
 - i) Individuals who are attending not for the purposes of manning a stand (includes members of the press).
- b) Exhibitor attendance
 - i) Individuals who are attending for the purposes of manning a stand.

3. **Optional reporting**

- a) You may choose to report Repeat Visits of Visitor Attendees.
 - i) Repeat Visits are defined as subsequent visits by a Unique Visitor on different days, i.e. any more than one repeat visit on the same day does not count as further Repeat Visits. Exhibitors cannot be included in the repeat visit figure.
 - The attendance list will need to identify the Repeat Visits claimed

GUIDANCE

G1. Individuals have attended the event

- a) For ease of auditing and to avoid additional costs the attendance list supplied for audit should be presented in a format agreed with us. One agreed format is:
 - i) One file per event in a comma-delimited format
 - ii) One line per attendee
 - iii) Each attendee coded to identify whether they are claimed as a Visitor or Exhibitor
 - iv) Separate fields for name, job title, postal/email address (as appropriate), telephone number etc

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

DEFINITION

You can choose to report demographic information about your Visitor Attendance on a Certificate of Attendance with Demographics or Profile Certificate of Attendance.

PRINCIPLES

1. You can optionally report demographic analyses
2. Visitors' demographic data analysed must be collected for the event

REQUIREMENTS

1. You can optionally report demographic analyses

There are two types of certificate for reporting demographics:

- a) A Certificate of Attendance with Demographics which can include up to three tables that analyse single or multiple responses per attendee.
 - i) If you wish to report more tables, a cross-analysis table or graphics you will need to use a Profile Certificate (see section 1b below).
 - ii) We will calculate and report percentages against analysed demographics based on the total visitor attendance (i.e. exhibitor attendance is not included in the breakdowns).
- b) A Profile Certificate of attendance:
 - i) Which will include three mandatory tables:
 - Geographical Analysis
 - Job Title/Function analysis
 - Company Activity analysis
 - ii) You may optionally include other analyses including graphics.
 - iii) We will calculate and report the percentages against analysed demographics based on the total visitor attendance (i.e. exhibitor attendance is not included in the breakdowns).

2. Visitors' demographic data analysed must be collected for the event

- a) You can only analyse demographics that the visitor attendee has provided whilst registering to attend either:
 - i) The show being certified; or
 - ii) A show running concurrently at the same venue from which the attendee has transferred into the show being certified.
- b) Each demographic analysis is a census of the analysed data for the visitor attendees (i.e. not sample based or extrapolated).
- c) When completing demographic information during the registration process, the visitor must not be led to particular answers through a lack of choice. This can be achieved by the use of opt-outs such as 'Other' or 'None of the above'.
- d) Demographics captured during the registration process for a Profile Certificate must include the information required for the mandatory tables (i.e. geographical, job title/function, company activity).
- e) Demographic information must be provided by the visitor and not pre-populated by the organiser or their bureau.

- f) If analysing a particular demographic table, you must include all the data provided by visitor attendees when registering (i.e. you cannot be selective in what you include).
- g) If no demographic has been collected for any particular visitor attendee (either because they have not responded or not been asked) then this must be claimed as 'unspecified' in the analysis.
- h) The attendance list containing a record of all individuals that attended the event must also include appropriate coding to identify and reconcile the demographics claimed for each individual visitor attendee against the event claim.

GUIDANCE

G1. There are mandatory and optional demographic analyses

None.

G2. Visitors' demographic data analysed must be collected for the event

- a) You may capture visitors' demographic data online, by email, over the telephone or by written registration card. The following gives examples of ways this information can be demonstrated at audit as being supplied by the visitor:
 - i) Information captured online, by email or telephone: Asking the individual providing the data to provide their name and the answer to ABC's Personal Identifier Question (PIQ) - a memorable question set by ABC and changed each calendar year (available on our website).
 - o If you commence a registration process for a particular event using the current PIQ and that registration process continues into the next calendar year you may opt to continue using the same PIQ for the duration of the registration process. If this option is used:
 - You must tell us
 - The event registrations that use a PIQ issued in relation to the previous calendar year will not be acceptable as a valid source in support of an ABC magazine claim, where the start of that previous calendar year is more than three years from the date of distribution of the magazine's audit issue
 - ii) In the case of information obtained via telephone: Recording the telephone calls in a manner that can be made available for review at audit. If you would like our advice on whether a call recording system might be acceptable please contact us. Note: It remains your responsibility to comply with any legislation regarding the recording of telephone conversations.
 - iii) It may help if a copy of the information captured online by email or telephone campaigns is kept in its original state as once this data is entered or merged onto a main database the audit trail evidencing the collection of the data can be lost. You may also consider retaining orders/invoices from external contractors evidencing the work carried out in this regard.
 - iv) You are advised to retain copies of online forms/screenshots or telephone scripts to provide evidence of questions asked and responses recorded.
 - v) In the case of information captured by written registration card, retain copies of the original cards for the audit, separated into pre-registered registrations and on-site registrations.

EXHIBITING COMPANY DATA

DEFINITION

You can choose to report, as an option, the number of stands and/or total net stand space occupied.

PRINCIPLES

1. **You can optionally report the number of stands**
2. **You can optionally report total net stand space occupied**

REQUIREMENTS

1. **You can optionally report the number of stands**
 - a) You must be able to provide contractual evidence for each stand claimed.
 - i) This includes companies occupying event stands, whether paid for, free or obtained through contra deal.
 - b) You must be able to provide a list of exhibiting companies and details of their stands.
2. **You can optionally report total net stand space occupied**
 - a) Net stand space occupied (in square metres) will:
 - i) Include all event stands that are available for attendees to visit, whether paid for, free or obtained through contra deal.
 - ii) Exclude rest areas, restaurants, conference rooms, exhibitor lounges etc.
 - b) You must be able to provide contractual evidence for each stand included in the claim.
 - c) You must be able to provide a list of exhibitors and details of their stand number(s), stand dimensions and stand space occupied

GUIDANCE

None.

RETURN FORM SUBMISSION, AUDIT, CERTIFICATION

DEFINITION

The Return Form is a submission in which the event claim is reported to ABC for certification. Each attendance claim is subject to audit.

PRINCIPLES

1. **You must submit a Return Form by the Submission Deadline**
2. **ABC will issue a Certificate based on the Return Form**
3. **Each claim is audited to verify it is in accordance with the applicable Reporting Standards**

REQUIREMENTS

1. **You must submit a Return Form by the Submission Deadline**
 - a) You will submit your Return Form to us, authorised by an appropriate individual representing your organisation.
 - b) Estimates and assumptions must not be made on the Return Form unless the Reporting Standards allow for them, or we have authorised them.
 - c) The Submission Deadline is 30 days from the last day of the event.
 - d) It is your responsibility to ensure Return Forms are submitted by the Submission Deadline. Failure to do so can result in a penalty and/or cancellation of your product's ABC registration under the ABC Byelaws.
2. **ABC will issue a Certificate based on the Return Form**
 - a) We will publish the certified data on our website subject to any timing criteria applicable to the sector. We may also make arrangements to provide our data to be published via commercial data providers and to those who subscribe to our data services.
 - b) We will confirm when attendance figures will become publicly available, normally 5 working days after a draft Certificate has been sent to you.
3. **Each claim is audited to verify it is in accordance with the applicable Reporting Standards**
 - a) The audit must be carried out by ABC Staff Auditors.
 - b) Requirements in relation to the auditor and audits will be covered by the ABC Byelaws, ABC Audit Programmes and contractual arrangements.
 - c) Your first event claim will be audited prior to certification.
 - d) Once an event is registered you are committed to the completion of the audit and issue of the certificate unless the event is cancelled.
 - e) If following an audit we identify material problems with the Return Form or Certificate then we will propose to revise the claim. If a Certificate has already been issued we will issue an updated certificate that identifies the changes. This replaces your original Certificate and must be used in its place. The process is as follows:
 - i) We will send you a letter detailing the reason/problem giving rise to the amendment.
 - ii) You will have 10 working days from the receipt of this letter to provide any further information to us, or object to the revision of the claim.

- iii) If you wish to object to the revision of the claim you must do this in writing to the Director of Audit who will investigate and provide a decision within 10 working days. If the objection is to a decision by the Director of Audit or the Chief Executive then the first level of appeal will be in accordance with the Review Procedure detailed in the ABC Byelaws.
- iv) Subsequent Certificates will not be issued until we have resolved all queries on a previous audit and issued the updated Certificate, if applicable.
- v) We identify updated certificates on our website.
- f) Subsequent Certificates of Attendance will not be issued until all audit queries on a previous certificate have been resolved and the Audit Report issued, if applicable.

GUIDANCE

None.

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