

# Reporting Standards

Digital Events



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trust in media

## CONTENTS

<u>Section</u>	<u>Page</u>
Introduction	3
Metrics and Reporting	4
General Principles and Record Keeping	6
Return Form Submission, Audit, Certification	7

## INTRODUCTION

This document contains the Reporting Standards for Digital Events.

The PDF versions of the Reporting Standards are issued at a certain point in time. As Reporting Standards are updated periodically, please check our [website](#) to ensure you are using the latest applicable standards.

Any information included in 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](mailto:info@abc.org.uk).

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## METRICS AND REPORTING

### DEFINITION

Attendance and related data for digital events. Examples include webinars, awards, exhibitions and seminars delivered online.

### PRINCIPLES

1. **Attendance to the event must be controlled**
2. **You must report event attendance**
3. **You may report additional optional metrics**

### REQUIREMENTS

1. **Attendance to the event must be controlled**
  - a) Attendance may be to a live event online and/or time-shifted attendance via a recording of the event at a later time.
  - b) Access to the event must be controlled by the Event Organiser in a manner that records attendance and enables it to be verified in accordance with these Reporting Standards. Access may be paid or free.
2. **You must report event attendance**
  - a) Attendance can be claimed once for each person attending the event. Therefore sufficient details of attendees must be captured to enable duplicates to be removed from the claim.
  - b) You must be able to demonstrate the numbers attending the event, whether live or via a time-shifted recording. No minimum time of attendance applies.
    - i) We expect this to be via a system/software solution that hosts the event and records interactions with the attendees.
    - ii) Our audit approach is to understand how the system/software solution measures and records attendees' activity and review its configuration/implementation in order to establish that it will provide the relevant information for your claim in accordance with these standards.
    - iii) You will need to provide us with appropriate information to confirm metric counts and configuration settings. This may include access to your system/software solution's dashboard (on a review/read only basis) and if necessary for more complex claims, the underlying system data (e.g. logged records) or additional records such as user registration/payment records. You must also grant us free access to the event if requested.
    - iv) Time-shifted attendance via a recording of the event may only be claimed:
      - o Where this occurs within 3 months of the date of the live event/recording.
      - o Where the recording remains substantially the same as the live event/original recording. i.e. minor edits may be made to improve the user's experience but the vast majority of the original content is retained.
3. **You may report additional optional metrics**

If you wish to report optional analyses or breakouts please discuss this with us, so we can review the additional evidence and audit work involved.

- a) Defined metrics

- i) **Registrants** - The number of individuals that registered to attend the event.
  - ii) **Attendees (live), Attendees (recorded)** – A breakout of attendance into the number of individuals that attended the live event and the number who viewed the recorded event at a later time. As individuals can only be counted once, you must apply a consistent policy for the treatment of individuals that attend both the live event and a subsequent recording, either reporting them against the live or recorded breakout figure (but not both).
  - iii) **Duration (Average viewing time)** - The average time spent by each individual attending the event (both live and recorded if applicable).
- b) Other analyses or breakouts derived from the metrics certified. *For example demographics, geographic analysis, ratios etc.*

## REPORTING

You will report Digital Events as follows, which will be broken out on the ABC Certificate:

1. The Digital Event name and date.
2. As a minimum the event attendance.
3. You may optionally report other defined metrics, analyses or breakouts.
4. You may optionally report a description of the Digital Event. Note: This statement is to be factual and not contain market comparisons or claims not supported by the data published on the certificate.
5. You may include two or more Digital Events on a single certificate (these can be from different brands). They will be listed individually with a figure for each.

## 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. **Evidence to support the claim must be retained and available for a minimum period**
2. **Transactions related to the claim must be bona fide 'arm's length' arrangements**

### REQUIREMENTS

1. **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.
  - b) You must retain the records supporting the claim until we have completed the audit of the certificate for the subsequent event unless we agree otherwise.
  - c) Records supporting the claim must be retained and made available to us on request, in accordance with the ABC Byelaws.
2. **Transactions related to the claim must be bona fide 'arm's length' arrangements**
  - a) Transactions or arrangements (such as attendance sales, if applicable) with your own organisation or Related Parties will initially be deemed as not bona fide 'arms-length' for ABC purposes, meaning they cannot be included in your claim. However, they can be included if you are able to demonstrate to the satisfaction of your auditor that these comply with the Reporting Standards and are bona fide 'arm's 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.
    - v) Transactions between contract publishers and their clients are deemed not to be arm's length in relation to a specific publication produced for that client.

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

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

## RETURN FORM SUBMISSION, AUDIT, CERTIFICATION

### DEFINITION

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

### PRINCIPLES

- 1. A Return Form must be submitted for the registered product for every applicable Reporting Period**
- 2. The Return Form must be submitted by the Submission Deadline**
- 3. ABC will issue a Certificate based on the Return Form**
- 4. Each claim is audited to verify it is in accordance with the applicable Reporting Standards**

### REQUIREMENTS

- 1. A Return Form must be submitted for every applicable Reporting Period**
  - a) You must submit a Return Form for the Reporting Period you have chosen to report. To remain registered we must issue certificates for subsequent events at least once a year. Please contact us if the event's frequency is irregular or held less frequently than once a year.
  - b) We will advise you how to submit your Return Form and by when. *For example, online via the ABC return website. However, if you have not heard from us at the appropriate time please contact us.*
  - c) You will submit your Return Form to us, authorised by an appropriate individual representing your organisation.
  - d) Whilst our systems contain some arithmetic and logic validation processes, the accuracy of the Return Form remains your responsibility.
  - e) Estimates and assumptions must not be made on the Return Form unless the Reporting Standards allow for them, or we have authorised them.
- 2. The Return Form must be submitted by the Submission Deadline**
  - a) We will inform you of the applicable Submission Deadline.
  - b) 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.
- 3. 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 your attendance figures will become publicly available, normally 5 working days after a draft Certificate has been sent to you.
- 4. 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) 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.





## Contact us

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