

UFI Education Policy Paper

The objective of UFI is to represent and serve the world's exhibition industry. UFI is committed to promoting the unique value of trade fairs and educating exhibition industry professionals. The UFI Education Committee has designed this education policy paper with the aim to:

- highlight the importance of training and education for the exhibition industry,
- explain the role of UFI in the field of exhibition-related education, and
- support UFI members, exhibition professionals and education institutions in the field of exhibition-related education by providing additional information and guidance.

1. The role of “Education” within the exhibition industry

Today, more than ever, exhibition companies are facing fiercer competition from new media solutions for tighter marketing budgets. Well trained employees are the critical element of every company's resources in such a competitive environment. Solid educational foundations are necessary to achieve the high level of professional service and expertise which exhibitors, visitors and the media expect from the exhibition industry. The competence of employees has become the deciding factor when judging the competitiveness and performance of a company.

UFI believes that, with the help of customized education and training programmes, the exhibition industry will be able to:

- generate well-trained and motivated staff/personnel,
- maintain high levels of industry performance,
- increase customer satisfaction, and
- ensure sustainable growth.

2. The role of UFI in the field of exhibition-related education

One of UFI's main missions is to provide quality service to its members across the globe. By supporting the exhibition industry, UFI considers the economic and financial challenges facing our industry, the differences in cultures the new ways of doing business, etc.

In 2006, UFI implemented the PIN Strategy: Promote, Inform and Network, including for UFI's education policy:

2.1. **Promote:** exhibitions as No.1 marketing tool

It is a top priority for UFI to ensure that business deciders have the necessary information and knowledge to understand and hence exploit exhibitions in their professional activities. UFI is convinced of the importance of educating the next generation of event and marketing professionals on how to use exhibitions as an effective and powerful marketing medium.

It is also essential to educate exhibitors in evaluating their exhibition participation by calculating their ROI and accurately assessing their investment. It is through a variety of educational efforts that exhibitors and visitors will be convinced that exhibitions are one of the most efficient ways of doing business.

2.2. **Inform:** report on new trends & initiatives, offer a knowledge centre, and inspire new ways of thinking

It is UFI's goal to provide topical information to the exhibition industry. In the field of education, UFI collects information on existing training and education programmes and makes this information available to both its members and the entire industry. During our meetings and events, we study real examples of best practices and highlight new trends within the field of education. In workshops during our Focus Meetings, we encourage industry professionals to consider the optimization of education opportunities – both now and in the future. UFI also provides information on the programmes developed by UFI such as the 16-hour online course or the UFI EMD, among others.

2.3. **Network:** facilitate knowledge exchange through Seminars, Focus Meetings, education programmes, etc.

UFI events not only offer topical information, but are also an excellent platform to network with industry colleagues. UFI Focus Meetings in particular allow industry experts to discuss a specific topic in detail and meet other experts in that field.

UFI education programmes enable the setup of an Alumni network through which former participants can easily keep in touch and continue to exchange their experiences with the contacts they made during the courses.

The UFI education committee believes that sharing experience based on real cases is one of the most efficient ways of learning. This is another reason why UFI encourages its members to give presentations on best practice cases during UFI events.

3. Exhibition industry-related education – Information and Guidance

Providing information and guidance in the field of exhibition-related education has become a significant task for UFI. UFI aims to provide an overview of existing education and training programmes, and to encourage institutions to dedicate more efforts into the teaching of the benefits of exhibitions.

Together with our partners, we conduct research studies to identify the changes in demand regarding education programmes, with the aim to continuously improve the existing UFI Education programmes. It is our objective to cooperate with universities/business schools and other education providers worldwide to encourage the development of new education programmes and training courses.

In October 2007, UFI published recommendations for exhibition industry-related training courses. In the near future, UFI will provide a set of quality criteria and a checklist to help companies

thoroughly analyse their needs and hence make a more effective selection among the existing education programmes.

Furthermore, UFI continues to develop, together with selected partners, UFI's own education initiatives and downloadable education materials.

3.1. Terminology – types of training and education:

The UFI Education Committee is convinced that it is an impossible task to create a 'one size fits all' education programme on a worldwide level. UFI recognizes that a variety of different levels of educational programmes is needed to meet different training needs. The following list provides an overview of the different categories and levels which should be considered when choosing an education programme:

a. University level

- Business schools/Marketing/Tourism/Hospitality programmes with a MICE focus
- Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) 2-3 years (Marketing, Event organizers, etc.)
- Master of Arts (M.D.) 2-3 years (e.g. Marketing)
- PhD programmes

b. Vocational training

- short term training programmes (exhibition and event organizer, venue or facility managers)
- long term training programmes (exhibition and event organizer, venue or facility managers)

c. Short training courses and seminars with a duration up to 1 week

- internal/in-house: on-site at exhibition companies
- external: programmes organized by specialist training firms
- distance learning (online courses) & webinars
- courses organized by national or international associations

d. Short courses for exhibitors' staffs, visitors

Courses of a few hours' duration on:

- exhibition ROI
- exhibition targets
- working on exhibition stands

The key issues to be examined by a company or individual interested in further education are therefore:

- whether the training or desired qualification is for a specific job position, or if it should be more general in nature;
- What is the desired level of qualification, and what type of education will enable the individual to attain this level?
- How much time can the company or the individual invest in training, and when?
- What is the most appropriate format best suited to the individual's needs?
- What financial resources are available for training purposes?

3.2. UFI programmes and UFI partner programmes

UFI offers its own educational opportunities together with highly acknowledged partner institutions.

- UFI-EMD
- International Summer University
- UFI events like Focus Meetings, Regional Days, Open Seminars, etc.
- 16-hours online course on the role of exhibitions in the marketing mix

UFI's Potential Partners:

Most of the above mentioned programmes would not be possible without an educational institution partner. In general, potential partners for further joint education programmes include:

- Universities, business schools, faculties, departments
- Vocational training institutions
- Training course organizers
- Distance learning units
- National and international associations of exhibition industry

The choice of partner depends on the respective course, the target group and the reputation and/or acknowledgement of the institution. Selections are made on a case by case basis. UFI does not have any preconceived preferences regarding the type of educational institution.

Target Groups:

Education and training programmes in the exhibition industry should be separated into two main target groups:

- members of the industry (exhibition and event organizers, venue or facility managers)
- clients of the industry (exhibitor staff)

Furthermore, UFI distinguishes between the following groups concerning exhibition industry-related education:

- Exhibition organizers/venue managers
- Exhibitors, stand staffs, visitors
- University/business school students
- Future MICE industry specialists, exhibition/event managers; venue management experts; engineers
- Marketing specialists in general

Education programmes must be tailored to suit the relevant needs of each target group.

3.3. Guidance in the assessment of education programmes

The UFI Education Committee published **Recommendations** on exhibition industry related training and education in 2006. This UFI document provided an insight into the most important elements in terms of content for a training or education course. These recommendations could help to judge the substance of the course.

UFI will continue to offer high quality education projects together with selected partners. In these co-branded programmes UFI will play a major role in the quality control. Our main intention is to ensure the quality of different education initiatives to and hence support the continuous development of the exhibition industry.

UFI is convinced that the industry needs a quality assessment capability in relation to industry-oriented training programmes, as a service for UFI members, companies and associations.

- 3.3.1. UFI will publish this policy paper on its website and use additional tools to inform the industry community. The UFI Education Committee intends using various new media channels such as the UFI blog as a platform to collect more information on existing education programs and best practices. UFI can also receive feedback through the same channels on how these new initiatives are perceived by the industry. It is UFI's target to create a quality sensitive "buyers approach" toward training and education institutions.
- 3.3.2. In addition, UFI will issue a framework of questions for a self-analysis by education providers and programmes. This catalogue should help interested companies, industry professionals, students to make their choice based on their educational needs. It should also enable interested individuals and companies to assess and select courses according to their learning preferences, available time and desired qualification.
- 3.3.3. The UFI Education Committee will consider how to create a framework for the proposed training approval process for implementation in the coming years.
- 3.3.4. UFI Education Committee will prepare a scoring model to support this assessment process and give orientation to training service providers and users.