



# UFI's Auditing Rules

**June 2021**

## **For the Statistics of UFI Approved Events and UFI Approved International Events**

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### **Introduction**

The provision of data which has been verified by independent auditors is one of the cornerstones of the quality standards of UFI Approved Events and is clearly defined in *UFI's Internal Rules* (Annex 1). The current document is designed to be used alongside *UFI's Internal Rules* and the *UFI Calculation Standards and Definitions* (Annex 2) which provide detailed definitions of what UFI measures in terms of visitors and exhibitors at UFI Approved Events and UFI Approved International Events. The contents of these documents are intentionally not replicated in these Rules which focus purely on the process of auditing.

This document is designed to provide guidance on how data may be verified, who is entitled to undertake the auditing, and the frequency of audits, certification and reporting standards.

Countries which already have in place long-standing and well-respected audit systems should not need to change their own systems in any significant way. The objective of the standard is to raise the quality of the exhibition industry, not to impose new bureaucracy.

National standards and, in some cases, laws may require more rigorous standards than those described here. Additional procedures may also be prescribed in some countries. The standards described here are expected to be minimum standards and any additional work will not, of course, jeopardise the consideration of Audit Certificates for the purposes of UFI event approval.

**The cost of an audit will be borne by the exhibition organizer.** The exact cost will vary from country to country and is the subject of negotiation between the organizer and the auditor. It is not UFI's intention to require auditors to undertake audits in such a way that they become economically unviable for the organizers. On the other hand, organizers must be prepared to cover the cost of a reasonably rigorous audit if they wish to obtain, and retain, UFI Approved Event status.

Exhibition organizers can use the audited statistics for their own marketing and research purposes, hence promoting their events through credible data. UFI recommends the publication of these audited statistics.

### **1. Terminology**

In order to provide a consistent use of terms, the following are used throughout this report:

**Audit**                      The process of independently certifying data provided by an exhibition organizer or third-party registration company and, for the purposes of this standard, relating to participation at an exhibition as a visitor or exhibitor.

Audit association	An association, most likely national or international, which is responsible for the development and maintenance of exhibition industry auditing standards and, in some cases, for the selection of auditors and for the collection and publication of national exhibition statistics. Examples include FKM in Germany, ISF in Italy, Centrex in Central Europe and EEIAC in the USA.
UFI Standard Audit certificate	A standard document provided by UFI to be completed by the organizer and by the auditor which conforms to UFI's requirements for audit certificates. This forms the key component of the organizer's reporting to UFI.
Audit report	A report produced for the exhibition organizer by the auditor. This may contain more or less detailed information than is required in UFI's standard Audit Certificate and does not form part of the required reporting to UFI though it is welcome.
Auditor	A qualified, independent third party authorised to carry out an audit as defined above. The auditor will normally be contracted by the exhibition organizer to carry out this work.
Check-back procedure	A process otherwise known as the Confirmation Process whereby auditors verify by telephone and/or in writing with exhibitors and/or visitors to an exhibition that they did actually participate and that their participation is in accordance with the organizer's records.
Statistical control certificate	See UFI Standard Audit Certificate
UFI Approved Event	An exhibition organised by a UFI member that meets various criteria as specified in the <i>UFI Internal Rules</i> (Annex 1) including the provision of a UFI Standard Audit Certificate.
UFI Approved International Event	The same definition applies as for a UFI Approved Event, with the additional requirement of international status (either 5% international visitors, or 10% international exhibitors (full details in Annex 1).

For other exhibition industry terminology, users of this standard are directed to the *UFI Calculation Standards and Definitions* (Annex 2). For the purposes of simplicity, UFI Approved Events and UFI Approved International Events will be hereafter referred to under the term "UFI Approved Events".



Further information on exhibition terminology is also available in the ISO International Exhibition Industry Standards ISO 25639-1 and ISO 25639-2.

([http://www.iso.org/iso/iso\\_catalogue/catalogue\\_tc/catalogue\\_detail.htm?csnumber=43910](http://www.iso.org/iso/iso_catalogue/catalogue_tc/catalogue_detail.htm?csnumber=43910))

## 2. **Basic principles**

The basic principles by which event data is to be audited are as follows:

- 2.1 In order for an exhibition to **become** a UFI Approved Event, the member organizer must provide the UFI Membership Committee with a UFI Standard Audit Certificate by an approved auditor working according to the *UFI Internal Rules* and the rules outlined in the current document. The event must have taken place twice. Audited statistics must be provided for the last edition of the event. If the event has been audited for the first time to obtain UFI Approved Event status, the next session of the event must also be audited.
- 2.2 In order for an exhibition to **remain** a UFI Approved Event, the member organizer must provide the UFI Headquarters with an updated audit certificate for every other edition of the event. The only exception is for those events which take place once every three years, or less frequently. For these events, **each** edition must be audited.  
Examples: an event takes place once every two years: an audit must be conducted once every four years. An event takes place once every three years: each edition must be audited.
- 2.3 A successful audit does not determine acceptance as a UFI member or granting of UFI Approved Event status. In accordance with the *UFI Internal Rules*, all membership applications and UFI Approved Event requests should be submitted for acceptance to the UFI Membership Committee and then to the UFI Executive Committee for the final decision.
- 2.4 If audit certificates are not provided to UFI according to these minimum requirements and within six months of completion of the relevant event, that event will lose its UFI Approved Event status. It may only regain that status by submission of audit certificates issued according to this standard. Renewal of UFI Approved Event status remains at the discretion of the UFI Membership Committee. If this is the only UFI Approved Event of the member organizer, then the latter may lose their UFI membership status (Articles 6.1 of the Statutes and 3.6 of the *UFI Internal Rules*).
- 2.5 The current UFI Auditing Rules are applicable immediately for all new UFI Approved Event requests, and for those events that have already been approved by UFI.
- 2.6 If the member organizer encounters some difficulty enforcing these rules, they should inform the UFI Headquarters of this difficulty before the next session of the event. The UFI Headquarters will take note of all the difficulties encountered by the members and will, where possible, help the members resolve any problems.

### 3. **The Audit**

#### 3.1. **The Process**

The audit should include, as far as is possible and reasonable, the following four elements:

1. Systems appraisal
2. Exhibition inspection
3. Database review and check-back
4. Issuing of Audit Certificate.

##### 3.1.1 Systems appraisal

###### *3.1.1.1 For first time audits*

Prior to an exhibition taking place, the auditor must perform a verification methodology by reviewing the systems used by the exhibition organizer to administer registrations or ticket sales, to control entrance to the exhibition itself and to manage databases of registrants or ticket sales **for only physical, only digital, or hybrid events (offering physical, and digital components)**.

In order to do this, the organizer may provide the auditor with a description of the system(s) in place and provide access to the managers involved in implementing these systems.

This standard does not require any particular system to be installed. It simply requires the auditors to be satisfied that the system used, whether manual or automated, is sufficiently rigorous that it can generate data which is accurate and complies with the terms set down in the *UFI Calculation Standards and Definitions*.

At least one visit to the **physical**, exhibition by the auditor is compulsory to ensure that **the on-site** registration is being managed according to the organizer's plan and that access control is adequate to ensure an accurate count.

###### *3.1.1.2 For follow-up audits*

Where an auditor is undertaking a follow-up audit for an event they have previously audited, it is sufficient that the exhibition organizer either:

- a. Confirms to the auditor that systems for managing registration ticket sales and verification methodology (access control) of visitors have not changed since the previous audit or;
- b. Provides information to the auditor on what has changed and, as appropriate, access to the organizer's managers to review those changes if required.

If a substantial change occurs in the verification methodology (access control), registration company or show organizer ownership, a new visit should be suggested by the auditor and may be requested by UFI.

The auditor must verify this information and should at all times retain the right to visit and inspect the exhibition without prior notice. **For this reason, the audit cannot take place in its entirety after the event.**

##### 3.1.2 Exhibition inspection

In addition to the systems' appraisal outlined above, the auditor should also spot check listed exhibitors against exhibition directory listings and the floor plan to ensure that they are present and have rented the space claimed. Under normal circumstances, a visual check by auditors will be sufficient and UFI does not require that exhibition stands are measured by auditors unless there is reason to believe that they do not match claimed sizes.

***For the digital component of an event, the auditor should virtually visit the event and spot check those listed companies represented by the organizer as exhibiting are in fact digitally present at the event.***

Auditors are expected to conduct their work during an exhibition in such a way that it does not disrupt the workload of the exhibition organizer's staff and in no way affects the experience of the event for either exhibitors or visitors. The organizer is also responsible for retaining such records until the successful completion of the subsequent audit and, where available, physical evidence such as tickets and/or registration documents, as would allow the auditor to verify the attendance claims after the event has finished. They should be able to visit the exhibition as many times as needed.

### 3.1.3 Database review and check-back (Confirmation Procedure)

After an exhibition has taken place, auditors are expected to carry out a review of registration databases and/or ticket sales records (according to the nature of the event under examination) to ensure that they are in accordance with the organizer's own claims for attendance and actual visitor entries. **To justify the number and percentage of international visitors, each international visitor should be registered.** Where feasible, a telephone or written check-back procedure should be implemented to ensure that entries are legitimate.

### 3.1.4 Issuing of Certificates and reports

Once the auditor has completed the three steps outlined above, the auditing firm can issue one or two documents as follows:

1. If the data is to be supplied to UFI for event approval purposes, a UFI Standard Audit Certificate conforming to UFI's requirements must be issued, signed and stamped by the member organizer and the auditing firm. The main statistics contained in the audit certificate are considered as being public information. Are considered as main statistics: the total number of international/national visits/visitors (or the breakdown of the statistics on attendance), the total number of international/national exhibitors and their respective number of square metres of exhibition space.
2. The auditor may also, if requested to do so by the exhibition organizer or by other national audit organizations, produce a more detailed audit report. This will normally be used by organizers for the promotion of their events or by national exhibition data organizations for the compilation of national statistics. It may be transmitted to UFI for information but is not required for the purposes of event approval.

## **3.2. Frequency**

At a minimum every other edition of the event must be audited, except for events that take place once every three years, or less frequently. For these events, each edition must be audited. The only exception is for events that have been audited for the first time in order to obtain UFI Approved Event status. In this case the next edition must also be audited.

However, UFI's preference and recommendation is that events are audited every time they take place.

## 4. **The Auditors**

### 4.1. **Organizations authorised to audit**

These include organizations undertaking audits, whether companies, chartered accounting firms, or suitably-qualified associations and which must be approved in advance by UFI to undertake audits for the purposes of certifying data for UFI Approved Events.

The following organizations are authorised to audit exhibitions for the purposes of providing data to UFI:

1. An internationally-recognised independent firm authorised to perform financial audits.
2. An independent firm specialised in conducting audits for media industry including exhibitions.
3. Associations or organizations which are formed for the specific purposes of managing exhibition data audits and the collection and dissemination of national/international exhibition statistics. Normally, however, a national exhibition industry association alone and with no special audit function, will not be considered a suitable organization to provide audit certificates.

### 4.2. **Approval of auditors**

If one purpose of an audit is to provide UFI with an Audit Certificate for the purposes of event approval, the auditor must be approved in advance by UFI to conduct this work.

The person in charge of exhibition audits for these organizations should be suitably experienced or work closely with UFI to be fully informed of the requirements.

Once approved, an auditor may continue to audit exhibition industry data and produce audit certificates which are considered acceptable to UFI for a period subject to UFI's discretion.

In order to be approved by UFI, the auditor should provide:

1. Evidence of the auditor's authority to issue audit certificates.
2. A statement of the organization's experience in exhibition industry audits (or in carrying out similar work).
3. A declaration that the auditor is aware of UFI's Auditing Rules for the Statistics of UFI Approved Events (this document) and of the *UFI Calculation Standards and Definitions* and that audits will be carried out in accordance with these standards.
4. The name of the specialists authorised to do the work and their email address: they will be informed by UFI on any updates of its auditing rules.
5. Where possible, it is hoped that those specialists will participate in education and information sessions for auditors which will be organised from time to time by UFI.

## 5. **UFI Standard Audit certificates**

A Standard Audit Certificate is provided by UFI and should be completed in English by the organizer and by the auditor. This standard certificate contains the following:

### General information

- Name of the exhibition
- Name of the exhibition organizer (company or other organization)
- **Format of the exhibition (physical, digital or hybrid)**
- Venue of the exhibition
- Dates of the exhibition
- Number of times the exhibition has been previously organized
- Dates of the previous editions and indication of whether audited or not
- Name and address of the auditing organization

- Name and signature of the senior manager (partner) responsible for overseeing the audit together with the auditing organization's official stamp.

### Statistical information

In order to be used as an audit certificate to support UFI Approved Event status, the certificate must include the following information:

- Total number of visitors and/or visits as defined in the *UFI Calculation Standards and Definitions*.
- Breakdown of origin of visitors/and or visits (international vs. national).
- Total number of exhibitors as defined in the *UFI Calculation Standards and Definitions*.
- Breakdown of origin of exhibitors into international vs. national.
- Total net exhibition space (with separate figures for indoor and outdoor space).

This audit certificate must reference **use and the** date of the UFI Auditing Rules taken into consideration, in order for UFI to check that the audit has referred to the latest updated version of the rules. It must also mention the visitor registration system in place at the exhibition and indicate whether the system is manual or electronic.

## **6. Dispute resolution**

### **6.1. Irregularities**

Where UFI is concerned that there may be irregularities in the statistics provided, or that the correct audit procedure has not been respected, the following steps will be taken:

1. The exhibition organizer will be asked to answer specific questions submitted to them by UFI regarding the data submitted or the audit process.
2. A response to those questions should be submitted to UFI within one month.
3. After receipt of the response or in the case of non-response, UFI's Membership Committee reserves the right to require a re-audit of the data with another firm. The cost of this re-audit will be borne by the member. UFI's Membership Committee can propose the cancellation of the approval and the possible eventual termination of the membership.

### **6.2. Complaints**

If a UFI member has cause to believe that audited statistics provided for a UFI Approved Event by another member are incorrect, they may bring that complaint to the attention of the UFI Membership Committee.

Such complaints are to be handled in confidence according to the procedures outlined in 7.1 above.

When UFI is satisfied that the complaint is not justified and that the audited statistics appear to be reasonable, the complainant will be informed of this and no further action will be taken.

When changes are made to the statistics and/or a re-audit is organised, the complainant will be informed of the final outcome but will not necessarily be entitled to be informed of the details of the investigation.

Each complaint will be carefully investigated by UFI and the appropriate action taken. It is recognized that certain complaints may require a specific approach which will be determined by UFI if judged necessary.

## **7. UFI Internal Rules**

### **ARTICLE 3. - UFI EVENT APPROVAL**

#### **Article 3.1. - Conditions to be fulfilled to obtain UFI Approved Event status**

UFI event approval can only be requested by UFI member organizers or applicants for membership in the organizer category.

These events must meet the criteria below.

- Audited statistics must be provided regarding the total net exhibition space **of physical, or hybrid events** and the number of **national** and international exhibitors as well as for visits or visitors, as the case may be, in accordance with the decision of the UFI Membership Committee, and in conformity with “UFI’s Auditing Rules for the Statistics of UFI Approved Events”. This document includes the definitions and counting methods for exhibitors, visitors and visits.

These statistical data must be objectively confirmed by a specialized audit organization, by an independent audit company or by a certified accountant who has obtained prior approval from UFI to conduct the audit. At a minimum every other edition of the event must be audited, except for the events which take place once every three years, or less frequently. For these events, each edition must be audited. The only exception is for events which have been audited for the first time in order to obtain UFI Approved Event status. In this case the next edition must also be audited.

- In order for the audit to be valid, the organizer must use a registration system with entry controls.
- The exhibition must have taken place at least twice at the moment of the application.
- The event should occur in appropriate permanent installations with appropriate visitor and exhibitor services including clear signage, WC, catering, transport, disabled access, and provide users with all the services they may require, notably reception, assistance and information services for exhibitors and international visitors.
- The venue should be fully functioning and well-maintained with effective health and safety procedures in place.
- Application forms, advertising material and the fair catalogue should be published not only in the host country's language, but also in at least one other foreign language, preferably English. This material can be in digital form.
- The organizer must have a clear list of rules and regulations for the exhibition, and a concise list of goods that are acceptable as exhibits.
- The event should have a regular schedule **when synchronous interactions between visitor and exhibitor can take place. The show organizer defines the official dates and times the show is open not to exceed three weeks. During these dates, and to allow for visitors from all time zones to access, the digital event will be deemed to be open 24 hours a day, unless the organizer stipulates otherwise.**
- **When digital asynchronous access to content occurs such access is, by definition, outside the dates and hours that synchronous interactions with exhibitors can occur and thus the event is considered closed. As such, this access does not meet the definition of a “visitor” to the event and should not be included in the visitor count.**



In order for an exhibition to be considered as an **UFI Approved International Event**, the following additional criteria is required:

- They must be "international" according to one of the following requirements:
  - Either the number of direct foreign exhibitors and multinational exhibitors must be at least 10% of the total number of exhibitors (both categories should be clearly indicated on the audit certificate);
  - Or the number of foreign visits or visitors must represent at least 5% of the total number of visits or visitors, respectively. For public fairs, this percentage is to be counted on the basis of professional visits or visitors, if they are identified.

The exhibition must have taken place as an international exhibition at least twice at the moment of the application.

An event that was previously "international" according to the criteria above, but ceases to be after two consecutive audit reports, will be considered as a UFI Approved Event, and no longer as a UFI Approved International Event.

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## **8. UFI Calculation Standards and Definitions**

### **A. Calculation Standard for the Surface Area of a Physical Exhibition**

For an Organizer, the figure to be certified and provided is the "total net exhibition space", defined as follows: total floor space - indoors and outdoors - occupied by exhibitors. This is also called "contracted space", and may include both paid and unpaid space. It also includes space allocated to special shows having a direct relation to the theme of the exhibition.

For an Exhibition Centre operator, the figure to be provided is the "total gross exhibition space". This is the total space provided by the venue operator for use by the organizers or, the total space used by the fair, including circulation. Catering areas, offices, storage, etc. are excluded.

*When exhibition space figures are communicated, they must always be specified as "total net" or "total gross".*

***Size of digital space occupied by an exhibitor is not a required metric. It is sufficient to note the number of exhibiting companies and if they are national or international companies.***

### **B. Calculation Standard for the Number of Exhibitors**

#### **B.1. Exhibitors ("direct" exhibitors)**

Only the exhibitors ("direct" exhibitors) will be counted. Considered as such are both the main exhibitors and the co-exhibitors.

The main exhibitors are those bodies contracting directly with the organizer.

The co-exhibitors are those organizations/companies present on a main exhibitor's stand, with their own staff and their own products and/or services. They must be clearly identified via several means, e.g. mentioned on the application form of the main exhibitor or declared by an official coordinating body, or in the exhibition catalogue forms.

In the case of a collective participation, the space must be rented and paid for by the exhibitor organising the collective participation. The area is shared by several participants who are considered to be co-exhibitors if they occupy their own area, appear under their own name and present their own products/services by their own staff.

If each of these conditions is not fulfilled, they are considered as "represented companies" ("indirect" exhibitors), and may not be counted in the exhibitor tally.

***In any communication with reference to the UFI standard, or to the UFI approval of an event, only the figures related to direct exhibitors may be used.***

#### **B.2. Represented companies ("indirect" exhibitors)**

Represented companies are those organizations/companies not present with their own staff, and whose products or services are present on a main exhibitor's or co-exhibitor's stand.

*These represented companies are excluded from the calculation of the total number of exhibitors.*

**B.3 To avoid any confusion**, it must be clearly mentioned which category of exhibitors were counted.

### **C. Nationality of an Exhibitor**

The nationality of an exhibitor is determined by the address of the exhibiting company/organization as written on the contract with the organizer.

In the case of an address not representing the true nationality of the exhibitor, the organizer may accept the nationality mentioned by the exhibitor on a self-declaration. A declaration by the Organizer alone is not acceptable.

Where a doubt may exist about the nationality of an exhibitor, the exhibiting company's/organization's headquarters should provide a declaration stating that the subsidiary is acting on its behalf.

***To determine the national or international status of an exhibitor for an only digital event, when the count of exhibiting companies yields companies from more than one country, an “international” event may be occurring. The country from which the most visitors come shall be considered “national”; using the address of the exhibiting company/organization, exhibitors from that country will be declared to be “national”. Exhibitors coming from all other countries shall be considered ‘international’.***

***For hybrid or only physical, events, the country in which the physical aspect of the event takes place will be deemed to be the host country. Using the address of the exhibiting company/organization, those from the host country will be classified as “national” exhibitors. The balance of exhibitors from other countries will be counted as “international”.***

### **D. Calculation Standard of the Number of Visitors and Visits and Entries**

***The intent of visitor calculations is to provide exhibitors with an idea of the potential number of customers accessible during his exhibition participation.***

#### **D.1. Timeframe for visitor calculations**

The counting of visitors will take place **only** during the event's official opening hours **when synchronous interactions with exhibitors can take place. “Open hours” are declared by the organizer separately for the digital and physical, portions of the event. (See Article 3.1)**

#### **D.2 “Entry” or “admission”**

Each individual who enters the site of the exhibition event during hours officially open to the public.

#### **D.3 “Visits” (sometimes referred to as “Visitor Entries”)**

A visit is the action of a person who, on any official open day and hour, enters the **physical**, event with an access document **or enters the digital event via a unique identifier** and who is representative of the market audience expected by the organizers and exhibitors.

Included in the calculation of “visits” to a **digital or physical**, event are:

- persons who purchase their tickets at the event,
- persons who purchased their ticket before the event AND who attend the event,

- persons with a complimentary invitation or a reduced tariff ticket AND who attend the event,
- persons attending with a season ticket.

A person may only be counted once per day.

Excluded from the calculation of “visits” to an event are:

- staff of the exhibition venue and organizer,
- staff working for service providers,
- staff of exhibiting companies/organizations,
- speakers during the event,
- media representatives.

#### D.4 Visitor

A visitor is a person attending a **digital or physical**, exhibition. **The visitor** is counted only once for the entire duration of the fair, regardless of the number of visits.

**When an organizer offers a visitor the opportunity to attend both a digital and physical, event, counts should be provided as follows (separately):**

- **those unique visitors who attend only the digital event**
- **those unique visitors who attend only the physical, event**
- **If available, the unique visitors who attend both the digital and physical, event, i.e. an unduplicated count of both sets of visitors (net visitor number).**

#### D.5 Repeat Visits

A repeat visit is each additional visit of a visitor after the first visit that can be controlled. Here also only one visit per day is counted.

#### D.6 Total number of Visits (addition of items D4 and D5)

The total number of visits is equal to the total number of visitors plus the total number of repeat visits.

#### D.7 Total attendance

The total attendance is equal to the unique visitors plus the exhibitors’ staff plus the speakers plus the media representatives.

To summarize D.6 and D.7:

<b>Visitors</b> <i>(to be counted only once)</i>	<b>+ Repeat Visits</b>	<b>= Total Visits</b>
<b>+ Exhibitor Staff</b>		
<b>+ Speakers</b>		
<b>+ Media Representatives</b>		
<b>= Total Attendance</b>		

## D.8 Communication of statistics and UFI Certification of Approved Events

Figures related to either “visits” or “visitors” are accepted by UFI.

In either case the definition of the applicable term (“visits” or “visitors”) must be clearly understood in the context of its application. This is true for statistics communicated in declarations, media information or promotional information.

### E. National (Domestic) and International Visitors or Visits

The “Nationality” is determined on the basis of a visitor’s place of residence and must be stated on visitor registration forms with mention of the address abroad. Foreign or international visits are those visits by visitors of places of residence other than the country in which the event takes place\*. ***If the event is only digital, the “country in which the event takes place” is that country which has the most visitors at the digital event. All other visitors are determined to be “international” visitors.***

If a system of individual registration is not possible, the organizer may be authorized by UFI, upon request and solely for the UFI international approval of a fair, to determine the total percentage of foreign visits through a sampling. This survey should be carried out by a market research company and certified by an independent audit company. The certificate must mention the methodology of the sampling. When the exhibition is a public show, it is acceptable that only foreign professionals should be counted and compared to the total number of visits by professional visitors, preferably with a registration system for each foreign visitor. The auditor’s certificate must identify the method of calculation used.

\* EU countries are counted as individual nations.



#### **For your information:**

*The above mentioned standards and definitions are used by UFI and its members worldwide in the frame of the UFI approval of a fair/exhibition/show, “UFI approval of an event”. 921 events are approved by UFI (March 2021).*