

IAPCO's Code of Quality Control

1. Introduction

There is a consensus within IAPCO that – in addition to the quality verification process upon application – a continuous process for Quality Control for members is required

2. Process

This process should be equally applied to all members. It should be practical in its application, and affordable, and should be supported by a process for taking appropriate action towards those members who fail to meet the Quality Control standards set by IAPCO.

3. Quality Committee

To manage and oversee IAPCO's Quality Control processes, a Quality Committee (QC) is appointed.

4. IAPCO's Quality Control process consists of the following elements:

- Step 1: All members should annually submit data on two congresses which are "in progress", following the format of a so-called "Congress Checklist", as proof of continued PCO activities
- Step 2: All members should do an annual self-assessment by means of a so-called "Self-assessment Checklist"
- The QC will verify that each member submits the Congress Checklist and the Self-assessment Checklist annually. In addition, the QC will verify the accuracy of the data submitted on the Congress Checklist, and that it meets the criteria set for this list.
- IAPCO will hold an annual "Quality Seminar" explaining its quality philosophy and Code of Quality Control.

5. Step 1: Congress Checklist

- IAPCO members are to annually submit a Congress Checklist, providing details on two congresses to be organised during the forthcoming year. These congresses should either be national or international, with a minimum duration of 3 days, and they should have been attended by at least 400 participants. The Congress Checklist shall include details such as name of the congress and client organisation, date and venue of the event, number of participants etc., and all deadline dates, such as abstract submission, reduced registration, exhibition application cut-off etc. A pre-defined format for this Congress Checklist is provided by IAPCO.
- The member should specify which PCO services were provided (to be selected from a series of 16 main PCO services indicated on the form): for the congresses included in the Congress Checklist, the member should have provided at least 10 of the 16 PCO services.

6. Step 2: Self-assessment Checklist

- Every member should fill out a Self-assessment Checklist once a year.
- This list includes statements on a range of topics (abstract handling, speaker & programme management, marketing & promotion, budgeting, financial management, exhibition, sponsorship, registration, on-site management etc.) and there are multiple statements per topic. The statements are "multiple-choice", and answers are linked to scores.
- Based on their total scores, members will be "ranked" in relation to each other and will be grouped in one of three segments: 0-10%; 11-49%; and 50-100%. Members will be informed individually in which segment they scored.
- As such, the self-assessment is a tool for identifying potential weaknesses compared to a market average, and helps members to constantly improve their level of services.
- The self-assessment will be done by means of an on-line database, to which each member will have unique access. Data submission will be anonymous: only the member submitting the data will know what information was submitted. A computer programme managing the database will calculate the scores, rank the companies and group them into one of the three segments. An automatic e-mail will be generated which informs the member in which segment they scored. Neither the Council, nor the QC, nor any other member will have access to the data within the database at any time.

7. Submissions

The submission of the "Congress Checklist" and the "Self-assessment Checklist" is mandatory. Dates for submission will be specified by the Council. A list of all members indicating whether they did, or did not, submit (a) the Congress Checklist, and achieve the approval of the submission by the QC, and (b) the Self-assessment Checklist, will be published on IAPCO's website so that information about member compliance with "IAPCO's Code of Quality Control" is public and accessible to members, suppliers and clients alike.

8. IAPCO Quality Checks

The QC will oversee adherence to the Quality Control standards and processes, and if required they will take action as defined below. Their activities include:

Verifying the Congress Checklist

Verifying the Congress Checklist as submitted annually by each member and checking that the member performed at least 10 of the 16 PCO services as indicated on the pre-formatted forms.

- In order to check that congresses meet the pre-established criteria and that the services listed by the member were indeed handled by this member, the QC can select one or both congresses listed and verify the congress format and the services provided by consulting web sites, looking at printed congress material or by asking the client organisation.
- In case of doubt or concern, the QC will double-check with the member and may request further proof that the services have indeed been provided as indicated on the Congress Checklist.

- In case a member is unable to comply with the rule of submitting the minimum required number of congresses and/or the minimum number of PCO services per congress, the QC reports this to the Council in writing.
- The Council will contact the member in writing and will ask the member if they wish to give further information regarding their non-compliance with the Congress Checklist requirements.
- The Council will evaluate the situation based on the available information, and will formulate a recommendation to the General Assembly. This may lead to exclusion of the member.

Verifying the Self-assessment Checklist

Verifying that members submit the Self-assessment Checklist annually.

- All self-assessments need to be completed by a date set by the Council. Failure to comply may lead to membership exclusion.
- The QC will verify that all members have submitted the Self-assessment annually. If this is not the case by the deadline set by the Council, the QC reports this to the Council in writing. The Council will contact the member in writing and will ask the member if they wish to give further information regarding their non-compliance with the Quality Control process. The Council will evaluate the situation based on the available information, and will formulate a recommendation to the General Assembly.
- The computer programme managing the on-line database will compile the total scores of all members in one list and will identify three segments of scores: 0-10%, 11-49%, and 50-100%. Members will be informed automatically in which segment they ranked.
- If a member scores in the bottom 10% they may request a “Quality Assessment” by the QC. A Quality Assessment involves a meeting between one or more representatives of the QC and the member, aimed at doing a more detailed analysis of its PCO services with as the objective to identify areas which require improvements, accompanied by advice for the member if so desired.

9. Quality Assessment

Members may contact the QC at any time for information and advice on how to improve the quality of their services.

9. Quality Seminar

IAPCO will design a “Quality Seminar”, aimed at explaining the IAPCO Code of Quality Control, as well as serving as a forum for discussions about what constitutes quality in congress organising.

- The Quality Seminar will take the format of a short session including Q&A, and will be presented by a designated member of the QC.
- It will include a general overview of IAPCO and the importance of quality as a key constituent of the Association. The Seminar will cover issues like “how is quality measured”, and “how is quality safeguarded within IAPCO”. Where possible, FAQ’s and recent case studies will be part of the presentation.
- The Quality Seminar will be held in conjunction with the Annual Meeting and General Assembly of IAPCO, thus enabling every member to attend at least once every three years (in line with membership requirements, every company member should attend a General Assembly at least once every three years and every international office member at least once every four years). Non-attendance of the Quality Seminar for three/four consecutive years may lead to exclusion of the member.

- An adapted version of the Quality Seminar may be developed for external communication purposes (such as the promotion of IAPCO as a quality-driven PCO association, and as a tool for recruiting members).

10. Committee of Ethics

The IAPCO Quality Control process as managed by the QC is “member-driven” and is a continuous process. If a third party (a client, a supplier, another PCO, etc.) reports concerns about quality of services as provided by a member (a “complaint”), this is referred to the “Committee of Ethics” who will follow the general guidelines of “IAPCO’s Code of Conduct”, as approved at the General Assembly held in Chiba, Japan, February 21, 1997.

SECRETARIAT

Sarah Storie-Pugh
IAPCO, Brambles House
Colwell Road, Freshwater
PO40 9SL, United Kingdom
E-mail: info@iapco.org

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