

Business Services Training

Unit of Competency

Plan and manage conferences

BSBADM503B

Unit Descriptor

This unit describes the performance outcomes, skills and knowledge required to plan, promote and coordinate conferences, ensuring follow up procedures are incorporated. No licensing, legislative, regulatory or certification requirements apply to this unit at the time of endorsement.

Employability Skills

The required outcomes described in this unit of competency contain applicable facets of Employability Skills. The Employability Skills Summary for the qualification in which this unit of competency is packaged, will assist in identifying Employability Skills requirements.

Pre-requisite Units

Nil

Application of the Unit

This unit applies to individuals employed in a range of work environments who are required to plan and manage conferences. They may work as senior administrative staff, or may be other individuals who have been delegated responsibility for planning and managing a conference.

Unit Sector

No sector assigned

Plan and manage conferences

This book supports and BSBADM503B, Plan and manage conferences in the Business Services Training Package.

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4.6 Manage administration requirements during conference

“Manage *administration requirements* during conference in accordance with conference plan/schedule”

If any cash is taken by the official registrars for conference dinner bookings, late registrations, excursions and other events, precautions should be taken to ensure the cash box is safe at all times. If large amounts of money are accumulated, the venue management may be able to provide facilities to store it for a few hours in a safe or a lockable office area so it can be collected at the end of the day and banked.

These arrangements should be made before the beginning of the conference so there is no confusion about how the cash will be handled and to satisfy the organisers that the money will be secured appropriately.

Keeping records

All copies of receipts and credit card dockets issued to delegates should be set aside carefully. If time allows, a list of the cash items could be compiled and entered under headings such as Registration, Dinner, Excursion, etc. and kept in a file for later transfer to the accountant or accounts department of the organisation along with the receipts.

Should some delegates who have paid fail to attend the conference, their names should be recorded and kept in the conference files.

Organisers' checklists

If checklists have been prepared for those involved in implementing different aspects of the conference, these should be used and monitored to ensure everything has been done according to the conference plan and administration requirements, and that nothing has been overlooked.

There will be a variety of different checklists required, depending on the planning stage of the conference and the particular aspect or aspects that are being dealt with. For example, different checklists will apply to those actually at the conference venue helping with the administration, registration, speakers' schedules and so on.

The co-ordination of a large conference takes great skill and attention to all the tiny details, and checklists are essential tools for all personnel involved. Once a checklist is completed it should be signed off and dated and then filed for future reference.

Duties of chairpersons and moderators

As well as announcing each session, introducing the speaker and moderating the session, the chairperson or moderator should also ensure each speaker keeps to their allotted time and does not run over the scheduled period of their presentation. The chairperson will sometimes sum up after the talk, particularly if it is that of a keynote speaker, and request questions from the audience to the speaker or panel of speakers, if that is the agreed format of the session.

Announcing breaks

When a break is due for morning or afternoon tea or lunch, the chairperson will announce this and the duration of the break as well as the time when the conference proceedings will resume.

If an exhibition or trade show has been arranged, the chairperson should regularly remind delegates to visit it, particularly at the lunch break and after the formal part of the conference has finished for the day, or in the morning before sessions begin. It is important exhibitors feel they are getting their money's worth in terms of delegates' visits and exposure to their products.

Housekeeping

Another duty of the chairperson is to read out so-called 'housekeeping' notices concerning any changes to the program or other announcements which concern delegates such as requesting them to turn off their mobile phones whilst the conference is in session.

Closing the conference

At the end of the conference, the chairperson should move a vote of thanks to all concerned: visitors, speakers, keynote speakers, sponsors and exhibitors.

Other administrative requirements

One registration desk should remain 'open' throughout the conference. Its function after the registration period is over would be to answer delegates' questions, provide tourist or sightseeing information, direct delegates to the locations of rooms as well as facilities such as the dining room or the toilets. There should be up-to-date copies of the conference program, maps of the venue and other conference papers available for any delegates who require a duplicate set. As well, extra copies of the evaluation questionnaire should be available with pens and a box for returning them.

Other helpful information to keep at the desk would be contact numbers for taxi services, the railway enquiry office and airlines. It goes without saying that the area will be kept neat and tidy at all times.

Signage

If the conference is being held at a university campus where some sessions are to be conducted in different buildings, signs should be set up at strategic points to direct delegates between sessions and to the catering areas and other facilities. If the conference is of several days' duration, someone should be assigned to check that the signs remain in place and legible.

Assistance at sessions

If a roving microphone is to be used for delegates to ask questions at some sessions, arrangements should be made to ensure a member of the conference committee or a staff member will be available to perform this duty.

All personnel operating the registration desks and otherwise assisting at the conference should wear identity tags or badges.

EXERCISE 9

1. When delegates arrive on the first morning of a very large conference, describe the required steps for registration.

2. What is the reasoning behind deciding to have a registration period of 45 minutes rather than 15 minutes?

3. For what reasons would the nametags for delegates not be set out on a table for easy identification?

4. List the three uses a third registration desk would provide on the first morning. What other equipment would this desk require?

5. Apart from providing a welcoming atmosphere and refreshment on arrival, what other activity could the provision of tea and coffee bring about?

6. Why would it be important to brief the personnel manning the registration desks?

7. If there were some late changes to the published program, describe the methods you would use to make sure all delegates know of these changes.

8. If, due to unforeseen circumstances, the venue suddenly could not accommodate the conference you had arranged, what would be the first step you would take to find another suitable venue?

9. In your own words, describe what 'contingency arrangements' means.

10. List the three different types of microphones that could be available to presenters at a conference and their particular advantages.

11. What contingency plans should be in place to ensure the security of any large amounts of cash that are accumulated during the registration period?

12. List 10 of the many duties of a chairperson or moderator at a conference.
