

AUE Annual Conference 2022 – Delegate Feedback

As in previous years, evaluations were sent out via email to delegates post-event and asked for honest and complete answers, as this would help AUE and YourVision Events (YVE) to make improvements for next years' events. One follow-up reminder was also sent after the conference in order to maximise the number of attendees that filled out the evaluation form.

We have included below a summary of the key elements of the conference and planning, with patterns identified based on the delegates' responses. Finally, suggestions for potential changes have been recommended.

The feedback survey was completed by 43 delegates out of the 107 that attended the event, which equates to a response rate of 40.19%. Consequently, although a good representation could be formed based on this response rate, it must be taken into consideration that the results might have varied if a higher response rate was obtained.

Overall (Q1-Q8)

Overall, the feedback from delegates at this year's conference was very positive. All delegates that completed the evaluation either 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that they had enjoyed the conference, and that the conference was a good use of their time and delivered good value for money (apart from one delegate that responded N/A to the conference being a good use of their time).

When asked what the main reasons for them attending the conference, delegates responded:

- 86% networking
- 69.8% relevance to job
- 60.5% content
- 55.8% exhibitors
- 53.5% speakers
- 40.5% personal growth and development
- 11.6% awards

95% of respondents stated that the conference was the right length of time, with 2 delegates responding that they felt the conference is 'too short'. The majority of delegates also appreciated the time available to network with colleagues throughout the conference; with all delegates rating this as 'good' or 'excellent', apart from two delegates rating it as 'fair'.

When asked for further comments on the AUE Annual Conference 2022, delegates responded:

- *Excellent event can't wait for next year*
- *Great event - worth attending*
- *I now realise exactly how important and helpful the AUE network can be. The face-to-face conference is critical to this.*

Room Gifts (Q9)

A high majority of delegates (88.37%) indicated that they appreciated the quality and type of the room gifts (4.65% responded they were 'indifferent' and the remaining 6.98% responded N/A).

Conference Planning (Q10-Q12)

In terms of the information communicated prior to and during the event, the majority of responses show that delegates considered the online booking system, and the ease of making enquiries with YVE as 'good' or 'excellent' (with the remaining responses being N/A).

With reference to event planning and delivery, all respondents rated the quality of staff support throughout the duration of the event as 'good' or 'excellent'.

Conference Sessions (Q13-27)

This year's sessions were well received, with 83.73% of respondents rating the quality and relevance of sessions as 'good' or 'excellent' and the remaining responses being 'fair' or 'N/A'.

When asked to rate sessions individually, delegates rated most of the conference sessions as 'good' or excellent', with the most popular plenaries being Plenary 1 hosted by Fiona Bradley and Ruth Kerrigan and Plenary 2 hosted by Dave Pearson (both 46% excellent).

Jill Douglas was a popular conference host, over 95% rated Jill as 'good' or 'excellent' in her role. Additional comments from delegates about Jill included:

- *Jill showed real skill in adapting to the information she was dealing with and creating an enthusiasm for subjects she was non expert in, this requires flexibility and intelligence*
- *She was very approachable and friendly and interacted with each session she was involved in. Very lovely and down to earth*
- *She's very pleasant to listen to and performed the role well*

App (Q28-Q31)

The app metrics showing that 113 people downloaded the app (this number includes both delegates and exhibitors), 74% of the evaluation responders said they downloaded the app. When asked why the remaining 26% didn't download the app, they responded:

- *Prefer to read the booklet*
- *No reason*
- *Network issues*
- *I am NOT tech savvy*
- *Was unable to as my work phone is restricted.*
- *Late arrival didn't stop for a minute very full-on days and no requirement for further info. Information was readily available and on a variety of platforms people, handouts etc*

95% of respondents would like to see a Conference App in future years. When asked for any further comments on the conference app, delegates responses included:

- *Very useful, saves having to carry a lot of paperwork.*
- *I only used it to check the schedule and the location of the sessions. For this, it was great.*
- *OK but flaky mobile signal*

Exhibition (Q32-Q37)

95% of delegates rated the exhibition space as 'good' or 'excellent', with 86% of respondents saying they found at least one new supplier with whom they would like to follow up with.

79% of respondents said that time available to spend at the exhibition was 'good' or 'excellent', with 9% rating it 'fair', 9% rating it 'poor' and the remaining 2% answering 'N/A'. 90% of responders agreed that the products and services on display were relevant.

When asked what their overall opinion of the exhibition was, all responders responded with 'excellent' and 'good' (apart from one, who responded 'N/A').

When asked for any further comments on the exhibition space, delegates responses included:

- *No seating area, would have like to see some fire alarm manufacturers in attendance*
- *I really liked the layout as it gave plenty of room to move around without feeling pressured, but also gave a welcoming feeling and encouraged interaction*
- *Very good this year - new suppliers to talk to*
- *Could have done with more time to talk to exhibitors*

Excursions (Q38-Q39)

When asked if they value the opportunity to go on excursions, 70% answered 'yes', 2% answered 'no', 7% were 'unsure' and the remaining 21% responded 'N/A'. When asked for any other comments on the excursions, delegates responses included:

- *I think that the excursions are an important social start to the Conference and an opportunity to relax into the whole experience and a common bond*
- *I went to the Wallace Monument, and really enjoyed it. I very much appreciated the opportunity to do something informal. As well as being enjoyable on a personal level, it was also a great opportunity to network as everyone had the excursion as a common topic to start conversation*
- *Absolutely brilliant part of the conference. Especially enjoy the brewery/distillery tours as do many other attendees (oversubscribed!).*

Facilities (Q40-Q42)

The majority of the feedback shows that delegates thought the campus facilities, including accommodation, were 'good' or 'excellent'. The catering at the campus was rated 'excellent' or 'good' by 88% of respondents.

When asked for other comments about the facilities at Stirling University, delegates responded:

- *Excellent accommodation and catering apart from a very poor-quality mattress, feel sorry for the student who will sleep on it all year!*
- *The accommodation was good, but I arrived without a towel, shower gel or coat hangers. I assumed these would be provided so I didn't think to bring these items with me. I wasn't worried that they weren't provided, but I would recommend informing delegates of what they'll need to bring for future sessions, to ensure we can be prepared*
- *Very good - quite a walk to breakfast, but worth it*

- *A very beautiful and well-maintained Campus.*
- *Very basic info on what's available or not e.g no coat hangers, one towel for 3 day stay, no toiletries hairdryers or drinking water (if known would have been better prepared) and no assistance to relocate baggage to hotel baggage area from accommodation on last day. There was a number of stairs to negotiate and a fair area outside in the rain. Luckily a colleague assisted knowing my mobility limitations. Safety measure: no directional signage back to accommodation leaving the hotel wasn't aware building we cut through to get there was open. Ended up on some very dark paths (sections of path lighting were out) and walking through a number of car parks on the first night.*

Dinners (Q43-Q56)

The vast majority of responses were at the top of the scale for both of the dinners.

For the Welcome Dinner, 93% of delegates rated the catering as 'excellent or 'good'. When asked to rate the entertainment (games) 32% responded 'excellent' or 'good', '5% voted 'fair', 7% voted 'poor' and the remaining 56% responded 'N/A'. When asked if the Welcome Dinner had met their expectations 93% said it met or exceeded their expectations (with the remaining responders answering, 'I don't know' and N/A')

When asked for any additional comments on the Welcome Dinner, responses included:

- *The Oyster schucking was a nice spectacle*
- *Waited a long time to get the food, slow service*
- *Pleasant to sit down to eat*
- *Free bar was good*
- *Venue and organisation was 1st class*

For the Gala Dinner, 97% of delegates rated the catering as 'excellent or 'good' and 93% rated the theming and room dressing as 'excellent'. The entertainment was also very popular, with the pipe band at the end of the evening, the piper during the dinner and the Master of Ceremonies all being rated as 'excellent' by the majority. Delegates also enjoyed the History of AUE video, with 90% rating it as 'excellent' or 'good' and the remaining responses being 'fair' or 'N/A'. When asked if the Gala Dinner had met their expectations everyone said it met or exceeded their expectations (with one delegate responding 'N/A').

When asked for any additional comments on the Gala Dinner, responses included:

- *As a 'non-drinker' it would have been nice to have had some low alcohol beers available or a wider choice of soft drinks*
- *One of the best gala dinners I have attended with the AUE. Video was ok but a little long. Missed the after dinner speaker, however given the circumstances of the announcement of the Queens death just before the dinner a speaker would not have been appropriate. Really enjoyed the end to the evening being marched out by the piped band*
- *The team must have had a really difficult time working out how to host the gala dinner, and continue the celebrations, in light of the news about the queen less than an hour before. I just wanted to add a comment to acknowledge the excellent effort from everyone involved*
- *Very respectfully held, bearing in mind the sad news received 15 mins before event*

Brochure (Q57-Q58)

78% of respondents rated the brochure as either 'good' or 'excellent', with 73% opting for both a brochure and app to be available in future years.

AUE 2023 (Q59-Q62)

When asked whether respondents intend on attending next year's conference, 74% of respondents answered yes, with the other 26% undecided.

When asked for any comments on what would encourage them to attend future annual conferences, delegates responses included:

- *Keep the days Wednesday to Friday*
- *Changing the Friday sessions to the Wednesday*
- *CPD hours to encourage more attendees*
- *For me in my role, compliance is the most important topic. However, gaining knowledge in other areas of engineering and FM are almost as important, to give me an overall understanding. The days are not important to me. I'd be happy with any days. The most important thing is to gain buy-in from senior management and directors, to sell the conference to our teams and approve the time out of the business. The more people we can get attending, the better.*
- *Days and duration are fine. A mix of items would be good. Maybe have panel discussions on a topic. Options to engage with social media during event*
- *Time of year due to holidays and volume of per start of semester workloads. Jan or Feb conference, break from Student accommodation to conference accommodation*

Recommendations for future conferences

- Feedback shows the majority of delegates are happy with the length of the conference and with it being held Wednesday-Friday and so we would recommend sticking to these days/format for future conferences.
- The room gifts were popular with delegates and so we would recommend continuing to offer this and sticking to the usual format of offering items that are local to the area of the conference.
- Jill Douglas was a popular conference host, however we might consider getting someone that has more of an engineering background as there were a few comments from delegates that they liked the enthusiasm Jill showed, but it may be good to have a host that would know more on the topic and be able to engage in the topics more.
- Delegates liked the app and gave good feedback on it, there was a few comments however of delegates requesting for the physical brochure to remain in the future, to avoid issues with internet connections and as some delegates enjoy having the physical copy of the brochure as well as the app. Therefore, we would recommend having both the brochure and app available for the 2023 Conference and continue to judge whether the brochure is needed based on feedback given at future conferences.
- Delegates gave good feedback on the exhibition space and the companies exhibiting. There were a couple of comments about having more time in the exhibition and so this could be something we look into at next year's conference.

- Feedback for the excursions shows that delegates still value being offered to attend the excursions and enjoy the opportunity to network informally, therefore, we would recommend continuing to offer optional excursions as part of the conference programme.
- Delegates were happy overall with the conference facilities apart from a few comments about the mattresses being uncomfortable and there not being any toiletries in the bedrooms. We will make sure we highlight what is included in the rooms more in the joining instructions.
- Both the Welcome Dinner and Gala Dinner were popular with delegates. They enjoyed the range of food available at the Welcome Dinner, but some gave feedback that they weren't aware there was games. We would recommend having more signage, possibly on the tables, to promote the games if they are in a separate room again next year, or getting the host to make an announcement.
- The Gala Dinner had very positive feedback, with multiple delegates commenting on how well the evening was managed with the news of the Queen passing away, there were a few comments that delegates missed having an after-dinner speaker – this was obviously replaced with the History of AUE video for this year's conference and so we would recommend having an after-dinner speaker again for the 2023 conference.
- We would also recommend ensuring that soft drinks are available for anyone that doesn't drink at future dinners to ensure we are catering to everyone's needs.

Suggested Topics for 2023

When asked if there are any particular topics and/or themes delegates would like to propose to be discussed at next year's conference, responses included:

- *Control of contractors*
- *How to encourage young engineers into sector?*
- *Compliance*
- *Sustainability, smart campus, heritage building improvements and new technologies*
- *Engineering compliance, the difference between management and operations*
- *Resilience to Climate change (severe weather, in all its forms including the threat from local fires). Resilience / capacity of local HV network to support electrification. Design considerations e.g. external temp rating for A/C units and chillers. Is 35°C enough or should we increase up to 40°C, accepting the much higher capital costs etc.?*
- *The benefits of Quality Management Systems in universities, and the best methods for implementation.*
- *BMS & monitoring*
- *Alternative heat sources. solar thermal*
- *Energy and carbon costs*
- *1-Gas network. 2-Understanding the relationship with procurement, frameworks and contract managers in setting up new suppliers*
- *University Standards - Are these detailed enough?*
- *solar and PV*
- *Some link to AUDE agenda/themes would be good to show directors of Estates that we are following the main issues of the day*
- *Sustainability and resilience of services*

- *Future of IOT and condition-based maintenance*