



Association for Medical Education in Europe

Hosting AMEE Conferences

(Updated September 2009)

This document contains basic information about AMEE Conferences together with outline requirements. Responses to specific questions will be sent on request.

Part 1

Background

What is AMEE?

The Association for Medical Education in Europe is an association for medical and healthcare professions teachers, institutions, deans, administrators, researchers and students. Founded in 1972 and originally a European organisation, AMEE now is truly international, with members in over 90 countries worldwide. Members can be individuals, institutions, students and national bodies. AMEE is governed by an Executive Committee drawn from European countries and elected by the membership. The day-to-day running of AMEE is carried out by the Secretariat based in Dundee, UK.

AMEE's activities span the continuum from undergraduate/basic education through postgraduate/specialist training to continuing professional development. These include:

The AMEE Journal, *Medical Teacher*: published 12 times a year, *Medical Teacher* is one of the leading healthcare professions education journals designed for the practising medical and healthcare professions teacher, and contains peer-reviewed articles on a wide range of topics. It is available in hard copy format and online, and is provided free to AMEE individual and student members: <http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t713438241>

AMEE Education Guides: AMEE produces a series of short education guides, occasional papers and Best Evidence Medical Education (BEME) guides on a range of topical issues in medical and healthcare professions education. These practical and low cost guides are designed for those wishing to familiarise themselves with a topic, and contain many references for additional reading.

MedEdWorld: An online network for medical educators consisting of a current awareness feature, a social networking site and a collaborative learning initiative www.mededworld.org

AMEE Conferences: full details are given below.

Further information on AMEE can be found on the website: www.amee.org

What is the AMEE Conference?

Since 1973 AMEE has held an annual conference in a European city, in collaboration with a local medical school. Conferences to date have usually been held in university accommodation. Between 2003 and 2008 the number of participants increased from around 900 to 2300, meaning that university accommodation is now not large enough. In addition around 200 accompanying persons attend the social events (see below). In 2004 AMEE conferences moved to purpose-built conference

venues in order to cater for larger numbers. Because of the high fixed cost of hiring such venues, it is essential that the larger numbers are maintained.

Conference participants typically include:

- medical and healthcare professions teachers, including vets, dentists, nurses, physiotherapists, pharmacists etc;
- deans and administrators of medical, veterinary medicine, dental and nursing schools;
- medical students;
- researchers from a range of disciplines.

AMEE conferences are characterised by their inclusiveness and their friendliness. The participation of many different countries and cultures is greatly valued. AMEE conferences give the host institution the opportunity to promote their institution to an international audience, in terms of areas of expertise, facilities, curriculum, etc.

Date

AMEE conferences usually take place during the last week in August/first week in September. There is slight flexibility depending on local needs, although the AMEE conference 'time slot' is becoming well-recognised by organisers of other conferences. The conference usually lasts 3 days, with an additional two days of pre-conference workshops and half or one day of post-conference activities and courses.

Academic sessions

Conferences consist of:

- Plenary sessions: usually three sessions with no other scheduled events at these times, with a total of approximately 7 keynote speakers who are known internationally in medical/healthcare professions education. Each year at least one speaker from outside the discipline is invited;
- Symposia/large group sessions: approximately 15-18 large groups on topical issues, with panel discussions and audience interaction;
- Short communication sessions: each containing approximately 6 short presentations selected from submitted abstracts, with discussion time at the end of the session (a total of approximately 450 presentations);
- Posters: displayed on boards in a common poster area, some being included in discussion sessions (a total of approximately 650 posters);
- Workshops: interactive, hands-on workshops, conducted by an expert in the area (approximately 55 x 90 minute workshops);
- Pre-conference workshops: a range of full-day and half-day workshops on the two days immediately preceding the start of the conference (approximately 35 workshops);
- Courses: five separate courses for teachers, each with a different theme, which run throughout the conference, starting on the first pre-conference day and ending on the final day of the main conference;

- Exhibition: A range of commercial and academic exhibits, with booths (commercial) and tables/poster boards (academic). The commercial exhibition is becoming increasingly important as exhibitors recognise its value as a marketing tool. The exhibition helps defray AMEE's costs, and participants evaluate the exhibition as an important component of the conference.

Social programme

The social programme usually consists of:

- Opening ceremony/reception: A brief, formal opening of the conference with short speeches and entertainment, followed by a reception attended by participants and accompanying persons (included in the cost of the registration fee);
- Two optional evening events: informal events for participants and accompanying persons, chosen to reflect the local culture or special features of the location (charged extra);
- Tours/accompanying persons' programme: at least one daily activity from the day preceding the conference to the day after the conference, designed to take advantage of the specific attractions of the region.

The initial proposal

The AMEE Secretariat invites potential local organisers to register interest in hosting the AMEE Conference. Due to the necessity to reserve conference accommodation well in advance, the initial approach is likely to be not less than 3 years in advance of the proposed date. AMEE is at present considering bids for 2013 onwards. AMEE considers proposals at the twice yearly Executive Committee meeting, the next date for which is March 2010.

The proposal should come from an institution, either a university or a national body representing medical/healthcare professions educators. The proposal must have the support of the Dean or Head of the institution, and preferably be supported by other medical schools/professional bodies in the country/region.

A named individual (who may later become the chairperson of the local organising committee) should assume responsibility for communicating with the AMEE Secretariat over matters relating to the proposal.

The initial proposal should contain the following information:

1. The proposed location of the conference sessions (see paragraph 1 below);
2. The proposed location of the pre-conference workshops (see paragraph 2 below);
3. Availability and approximate cost of hotel accommodation in the vicinity of the conference venue (see paragraph 3 below);
4. Suggestions for venues for the opening ceremony, social events, and a list of tours that could be offered to participants and accompanying persons (see paragraph 4 below).

1 Proposed location of conference sessions

The standard model for an AMEE Conference is given below. Pre-conference activities usually take place on Saturday and Sunday, with the main conference sessions on Monday-Wednesday (usually three full days, but could be 2.5 days). Some flexibility is possible depending on the facilities available:

Day -1 (Sat)	Day 0 (Sun)	Day 1 (Mon)	Day 2 (Tues)	Day 3 (Wed)	Day 4 (Thur)
PCWs Tours Courses	PCWs Tours Courses	Plenary LGS SC Workshops Posters Exhibition Courses	Plenary LGS SC Workshops Poster Exhibition Courses	SC LGS Workshops Posters Plenary Exhibition Courses	Tours

PCW = pre-conference workshops; SC = short communications; LGS = large group sessions

The facilities required for the three main days of the conference are:

- a. Plenary hall for approx 2,000 participants;
- b. Approximately 3-4 large rooms for large groups (between 150-300 seats) (plenary hall could be used for one of these sessions);
- c. Minimum of 15 rooms (in addition to the above) for short communications and workshops (between 40-120 seats; at least half of the rooms should have flexible seating);
- d. Area(s) for display of approximately 650 posters;
- e. Area(s) for commercial and academic exhibition (space for approximately 30 x 3m x 3 m commercial, and 30 x 2m x 2m academic stands);
- f. Space for registration desks and notice boards (approx 25 m long x 3 m deep);
- g. Facilities for internet access for participants (preferably also wireless access);
- h. Speaker ready room capable of being networked to the presentation rooms;
- i. Provision of lunch and coffee for 2,300 participants for 3 days and space for consumption of these.

2 Proposed location of pre-conference workshops

Whilst there are some benefits of holding some pre-conference workshops in a University venue to maintain the academic link and to 'showcase' some educational initiatives (eg clinical skills centres) in the host Institution, it is frequently more convenient for participants if all sessions are held in the same location. AMEE therefore favours holding all academic events in the conference venue. However, there is some flexibility in this.

3 Availability and approximate cost of hotel accommodation in the vicinity of the conference venue

A wide variety of hotel accommodation is required, from 5* down to hostel/student accommodation. Approximately 1500 rooms in total are likely to be required for the main conference days, with a smaller proportion of rooms required before and after the main conference days. Hotels should be located either in walking distance of the conference venue or on a reliable public transport system. An indication of the cost of a single and a double room including breakfast and taxes is required for each category.

4 Suggestions for venues for the opening ceremony, evening social events, and a list of tours that could be offered to participants and accompanying persons

The opening ceremony/reception is included free with the registration fee for participants and accompanying persons, and therefore provision needs to be made for approximately 1800 participants (approximately 75% attendance). The venue could be a university, a municipal building, an outdoor venue if feasible, or the main conference venue. There should be provision for speeches and entertainment and the ability to serve light refreshments. Ambience is important.

The evening social events (except for the opening ceremony/reception) are paid separately by participants, and numbers can be controlled as dictated by the venue (suggest between 150-300 places). Again, ambience is very important, and the venue should have a local flavour if possible.

Suggestions for destination of tours and other evening social events is helpful at this stage, as is an indication of the ease of the transport network in the city – for example, is there a metro system that would assist transportation between the hotels and the conference venue?

Financial arrangements

AMEE will negotiate directly with the conference venue and sign the contract. All costs incurred at the conference centre are agreed and covered by AMEE, and any surplus is retained by AMEE. Similarly, any loss is covered by AMEE.

If any part of the preconference activities is to be held in a university or other institution, AMEE expects the local organiser to negotiate provision of the facilities required at the lowest possible cost. A draft budget will be agreed between AMEE and the local organising committee soon after final confirmation of the conference location, and will be based on the estimated costs provided by the local organising committee. Consideration of an annual increase in costs will be built into the budget.

The local organising committee receives no payment for their services, and AMEE is unable to reimburse the Institution for a proportion of salary costs. AMEE will however make a contribution to clerical costs directly related to the conference organisation at a level to be agreed between AMEE and the Institution. Clerical support from the Institution is required in the period when the conference is being set up, when the provisional programme is being prepared, and in the three months prior to the conference.

All of the local organising committee receives free registration (up to 8 members). A special registration rate may be negotiated for members of the institution/faculty hosting the conference.

Students: Students have been taking an increasingly active role in AMEE conferences, in terms of advice on programme content, input to the conference sessions and assistance throughout the event. AMEE can offer free registration and a bursary of Euros 500 to up to 20 international students, and free registration and 200 Euros to up to 20 local students who would like to help by packing conference wallets, directing participants, checking tickets and giving assistance to facilitators. Students are able to attend some conference sessions as it fits in with their duties. The local students should take the lead in setting up a Student Task Force to coordinate student activities including setting up a social programme for visiting students.

AMEE pays all costs associated with promotion, producing and printing the provisional and final programmes and mailing costs.

Part 2

Duties of the parties involved

The following groups are involved in organising an AMEE Conference:

- A Local Organising Committee (including student representation)
- B AMEE Secretariat
- C Accommodation/Tours Agency (also known as DMC)
- D Conference venue

A The Local Organising Committee

The local organiser should set up a Committee (recommended to be between 8-12 members) to represent the interests of the parties involved, locally and nationally. It is recommended that there is a student member on the Committee to represent student interests and to coordinate the student task force. The Committee should include an administrator who communicates well in English, who is readily available and who can act as a liaison with the AMEE Secretariat for the increasingly frequent communications leading up to the conference. The main periods of activity are:

- 1 October-November of the previous year: providing information for preparation of provisional programme)
- 2 May-early June: providing information for preparation of final programme
- 3 mid July to end of Conference

Working closely with the AMEE Secretariat, the main duties of the committee are:

Academic:

- 1 To make suggestions to the AMEE secretariat on appropriate themes for the conference, and on possible programme content;
- 2 To suggest appropriate local speakers and workshop organisers to promote the institution or the country/region more widely;
- 3 To liaise with other faculties/institutions in the country or region to ensure “shared ownership” of the conference and gain wide participation;
- 4 To arrange with the local and national student bodies to attract student involvement both in the conference and in its organisation, and to provide some student help during the conference;
- 5 To promote the conference (publicity material will be provided by AMEE) at other local/national/international conferences, meetings and workshops leading up to the conference;
- 6 To assist in provision of letters of invitation to participants where requested. (Whilst AMEE always provides these as necessary, sometimes Embassies require that letters of invitation come from within the country hosting the conference rather than from the conference organisers before issuing visas);

Where university/institution facilities are being used in addition to conference centre facilities:

- 7 To negotiate with the university/institution re costs, provision of facilities (including audio-visual arrangements), staffing arrangements, provision of catering, etc, for the supply of these at the lowest possible cost;

- 8 To provide AMEE with a budget containing a breakdown of all the costs of holding the conference (or part of the conference) at the university/institution, ***including taxes where appropriate.***

Domestic/social:

- 9 To advise on an appropriate agency to arrange accommodation and tours;
- 10 In collaboration with the agency, to suggest a social programme which will allow participants to enjoy the attractions of the surrounding area;

General:

- 11 To negotiate sponsorship as appropriate, either from the university/institution, municipality, government or commercial organisations, either in cash, or in kind, including provision of a conference wallet. The sponsorship raised will be used in an appropriate manner as suggested by the local organising committee in consultation with AMEE (i.e., to fund a reception or to bring keynote speakers to the conference). All sponsors are listed in the conference programme and are entitled to free exhibition space (assuming a significant contribution in cash or kind).
- 12 To enlist at an early stage participation from senior members of the university/institution and government (if considered appropriate) and to invite their participation in the opening ceremony and elsewhere in the conference if appropriate;

If part of the conference is to take place in the university/institution:

- 13 To organise signage etc to direct participants to the conference venue and to the conference sessions, and to display these appropriately.

B AMEE

- 1 To decide on programme content, taking advice from the local organising committee;
- 2 To invite speakers and workshop organisers and to communicate directly with these throughout;
- 3 To pay all costs of holding the conference: any costs incurred by the local organising committee in relation to the university venue, goods or services must be agreed in advance by AMEE;
- 4 To set up the conference website, organise the preparation and mailing of publicity materials, including flyer, provisional programme and final programme and abstract book;
- 5 To deal with registrations, registration fees, communication with participants, receipt of abstracts and composition of the final programme;
- 6 To set up and run the registration desk during the conference and to work with the local organising committee and venue to ensure the smooth-running of the conference.

C Accommodation/tours agency

- 1 To advise on and to arrange block bookings of hotels/hostels in categories listed above, at the lowest possible price, and one that is competitive with internet bookings;
- 2 To organise appropriate pre- and post-conference tours, an accompanying persons programme during the conference, and to advise on arranging conference social events as appropriate. All costs must be agreed with AMEE to ensure that they are at an appropriate level that participants can afford;
- 3 To receive all bookings direct from the participant for accommodation and tours and deal with receipt of payment;
- 4 To hire coaches and make all transport arrangements from hotels to the conference venue if requested;
- 5 To provide a member of staff at appropriate times during the conference to assist participants with hotel/tours arrangements, and to provide advice on local places of interest;
- 6 To help the AMEE Secretariat and Local Organising Committee to promote the venue in the conference materials by providing expert advice as appropriate.

Note: Payment to agency: AMEE needs to know at an early stage whether the agency requires payment from AMEE for its services, or whether their costs will be covered by charging a booking fee to participants for accommodation and other services. The cost of the accommodation, tours and social events must be agreed by AMEE in order to ensure costs are likely to be acceptable to participants.

D Conference venue

Conference venue staff will have contact only with AMEE in all negotiations relating to the Conference.

AMEE
www.amee.org
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