

THE ARTS SOCIETY'S EXPLANATION OF REVIEW FORM CATEGORIES

The Arts Society wants our accredited lecturers to stimulate, educate and entertain through their lectures and study days.

We have described what features we would ascribe to each of the categories, working our way through the aspects of the lecture to be considered when completing the lecture/study day review form, and we hope that this will prove to be helpful guidance for committees in their deliberations.

Of course, occasionally not all of these features will be present in a talk – for example a committee might judge that a lecturer's images let them down badly but still feel that overall the lecture was sufficiently inspiring to be awarded a high assessment nevertheless, or a highly inspiring talk might receive a lower grade due to a less than fluent delivery.

Outstanding

An 'outstanding' lecture is an exceptional and superlative talk, thoroughly enjoyed by members, typically the best lecture of your season. It is technically faultless with brilliant images, imaginatively used to illustrate the lecturer's narrative. The lecturer's delivery will be clear, fluent and engage and hold members' attention completely. The content of the lecture will be thought-provoking and innovative, memorable and inspire and stimulate members to learn more about the subject. Timing will be spot-on. The committee will go out of their way to recommend this lecture and lecturer to other Societies.

Excellent

The content of this lecture will be instructive, insightful, educational and perhaps surprising, and will be accompanied by high quality images used to great effect. The delivery will be clear, fluent and engaging. The timing of the lecture will be accurate and it will be easy to follow the structure and direction of the narrative. Members will feel that they have learnt a lot from listening to this lecture and will have enjoyed the experience very much. The committee will highly recommend this lecture and lecturer to other Societies.

Very Good

'Very good' lectures have informative content, are enjoyable and are accompanied by good quality images which are clearly related to the content of the lecture and well illustrate the points being made. Delivery is clear but perhaps the fluency could be improved, or the speech slowed down a little. 'Very good' lectures just lack the 'wow' factor but the committee would still recommend them to other Societies.

Good

This assessment applies where a lecturer presents a competent lecture, illustrated with decent visuals but the delivery lacks excitement and stimulation, and perhaps is not at a comfortable rate for listening. Regarding timing, the lecture might over- or under-run a little. The content is factually correct but will probably not contain new insights into the subject matter. It will not create a 'buzz' among members and might not provoke many questions to be asked.

Passable

This is a pedestrian and uninspiring lecture with a muddled or confused structure and (perhaps) inaccurate information and there is significant room for improvement in many/all aspects of this lecture. It lacks stimulation, perhaps because it is read verbatim. The accompanying images will not be good quality, possibly fuzzy or too small to be seen clearly. Time-management might not be good with significant over- or under-run. The committee might receive complaints from members and they would not recommend this lecture to other Societies.

Poor

A 'poor' lecture is one that is unacceptable for The Arts Society's standards. The delivery is inadequate, monotonous and/or inaudible and the information given is inaccurate, boring and confusingly presented. The images might be pixelated or too small to be seen clearly, or possibly dated or 'holiday snaps' rather than professional illustrative images. The lecture might be read verbatim, and badly. The committee is likely to receive valid complaints from members and would certainly not recommend this lecture to other Societies; in fact they will advise them to 'steer clear'.

It is important to remember that lecturers can request to see their reviews at any time and the Education & Directory Department does pass comments from the forms onto the lecturers in the spirit of constructive criticism. Therefore, comments recorded on the review form should relate to the lecture and lecturing style, not the lecturer personally, and should be factual and constructive. If a committee wishes to report on the lecturer's behaviour then it is advised that they telephone the Education & Directory Department.

The assessment should be at least a committee decision, discussed fully among them, rather than just the view of the person submitting the form. The discussion could be at a committee meeting, via email or over the telephone, whatever works best for your committee – e.g. one committee discusses via WhatsApp.

Wherever possible, it is good practice to canvass opinion amongst the general membership and this can be done in several ways. Some Societies have a feedback facility on their websites where members log in and leave their thoughts, others place comments cards on a few random audience seats which are completed anonymously and then handed back, other committees gather information more informally over coffee/drinks after the lecture, one operates a 'push button' system on an iPad. This interaction with your members can also be a good opportunity to ask them what subjects they would like to have lectures or study days on in the future.