

# Working towards FIAP Distinctions (Updated January 2018)

Dave Coates ARPS ESFIAP EFIAP/p EPSA MPAGB APAGB; FIAP Liaison Officer

## General

Taking part in International Salons (also called Exhibitions) can be most rewarding. If the bug gets you, you can become drawn in for several years. Starting out is simple. You read the instructions, complete your entry and, with a little luck and skill, you get your first acceptances. You gain a few more and then learn of distinctions granted by FIAP, PSA, or GPU who are the principle organisations involved in “Patronising” or “Recognising” exhibitions worldwide. To find FIAP Patronised Salons go to the FIAP Patronage web site at <http://patronages.fiap/salons.net.html>

*(NB:- Please take note of this link it is referred to a number of times in this document)*

I will not tell you how to take pictures; I would not presume to do that. This is about how you organise and keep records so that, when applying for a distinction, you don't have the problems that many people suffer from. I will deal mainly with matters relating to FIAP, although some reference to PSA may be helpful.

In the case of FIAP, they recognise the various sections, such as Open, General, Nature, Photo-Travel, Colour Print, Monochrome Print etc. But when it comes to working out whether you are qualified for a distinction, acceptances and awards from different sections are treated equally and are in effect lumped together. All that is required is that the particular salon is ‘patronised’ by FIAP and here can be the first trap.

It is not unusual for a salon to be patronised by FIAP one year and then not the next, something often missed by exhibitors. You should also be wary of not confusing the “Trierenberg Super Circuit”, with the “Special Themes Circuit”. Whilst organised in tandem they are totally different events with the “Trierenberg Super Circuit” enjoying FIAP Patronage, but not the “Special Themes Circuit”. So make sure of FIAP Patronisation. It will be on the salon paperwork, consisting of the year followed by a 3 digit number (Eg: - 2011/023 - do not miss out the ‘0’). Separate parts of a circuit must have different FIAP Numbers. You can also check by visiting the FIAP Patronage web site.

With PSA, there are separate divisions that are responsible for particular sections, such as Open, Nature etc, and you have to apply to each separately for many awards. If you are interested in PSA, or think you may be in the future, you need to record which sections you receive acceptances in, and their recognition number.

Be aware of the difference between a Salon and a Circuit. A salon is a single event, which is likely have different sections (eg: Open, Nature, Photo-Travel etc) into which you can enter different images and these will be judged just the once. A Circuit will comprise of more than one Salon, each having identical sections, so that the photographs you submit will be passed from one salon to another and can then gain acceptances and awards in each salon. Sometimes the different salons are registered to different countries as well.

Circuits may therefore appear as an easy way to achieve the relevant FIAP Criteria. However whilst all acceptances gained in a circuit will count towards the total number of acceptances achieved, there are restrictions placed on results from Circuits. The main one is that in many circumstances FIAP will look on a Circuit as just a single Salon, when you are applying for one of their Distinctions.

With each application for a distinction you need to submit a portfolio of images. With each succeeding application the images must be different, not resembling or similar to any of those in any previous portfolio.

There is also the question of rules and regulations to be considered. FIAP have issued new documents, taking effect from 01/01/2018. This includes the re-introduction of a formal “Breach of FIAP Regulations” policy and provision of a “Red List”. I have set out as much of the relevant information as possible in the next section of this document.

I am aware that it may seem harsh, but in reality it is considerably less draconian than the earlier policy, which had to be abandoned because of legal action. FIAP eventually lost the legal action solely on the basis that they had noted codified their policy, which is exactly what they have now done, but this time with a degree of flexibility that did not exist before.

## Rules, Regulations and Definitions

Before you start entering international salons you need to ensure that you understand the rules, regulations and definitions that you are expected to comply with. Because there are those among us who are prepared to cheat, FIAP have adopted a strong “Ethics” policy designed to enforce those rules and to impose sanctions on those who flout them. I do not propose to itemise everything in this document, but to a) summarise some of the main points and b) urge you to read salon regulations before you enter an event.

1. On entering any FIAP Salon you will be required to confirm that a) you have read and understood those regulations, rules and definition, b ) that you agree to comply with them and, c) agree to co-operate with any enquiry that may arise involving your entries.  
If you do not do you will be barred from entry into that event.
2. All parts of every photo that you enter must have been photographed by you and you must have the copyright to them.
3. You must retain for the purposes of any investigation, the original unaltered ‘capture file’, whether RAW or JPEG and those of the images taken immediately before and after the ones entered in the salon.
4. Once a photo has been accepted into any FIAP Salon the title that it is has been accepted with must remain with it for life and must not be changed or used for any other entry. Flouting this rule is known as “Re-Titling”.  
NB 1:- Changing a photo from Colour to Mono does not make a different photo and it **MUST** retain the same title. This can present you with a problem because PSA have a totally different ruling on this issue. One way of getting round this conflict is to add the word “Mono” to the title of the mono version when entering a salon.  
NB 2:- Also small manipulative changes to Photos do not make them different in FIAP’s eyes. I cannot give precise instructions. The best advice is **DO NOT** try to push the boundaries and remember, FIAP expect you to gain your distinctions through the camera, not just on computer skills.
5. Entries into certain Sections (eg Nature and Traditional) are severely restricted in respect of any manipulation, details of which are specified in the Definitions that must be published with each salons entry rules.
6. Failure to conform to such rules and definitions and any failure to co-operate with an investigation into any of the above is likely to result in you being sanctioned.

FIAP and PSA (who have their own procedures on this subject) will take action against breaches of their rules and definitions. The FIAP “Sanctions” structure is divided into three categories. Very briefly these are the main consequences in respect of FIAP’s Policy (there are others).

a) **Re-Titling:-**

- i) 1<sup>st</sup> proven case - written warning and put on a watch list for 3 years.
- ii) 2<sup>nd</sup> proven case - banned from salons for 3 years and Red Listed.
- iii) 3<sup>rd</sup> proven case - banned for 5 years, Red Listed and loss of all currently held FIAP Distinctions. (ie: - after the 5 years you will have to start from scratch).

b) **Manipulation:-**

- i) 1<sup>st</sup> proven case - banned for 3 years, Red Listed and loss of all currently held FIAP Distinctions. (ie: - after the 3 years you will have to start from scratch).
- ii) 2<sup>nd</sup> proven case - banned for Life, Red Listed and loss of all FIAP Distinctions.

c) **Use of Images or Part of Images not taken by the Entrant:-**

Any case - banned for Life, Red Listed and loss of all FIAP Distinctions.

NB:- The “Red List” is a schedule maintained by FIAP, and circulated to all National Federations and to all Salon Organisers (worldwide) containing the names of all person currently banned from entering FIAP Salons. Compliance with this list is compulsory for all salons.

Copies of the FIAP documents relating to the “FIAP Patronage Rules” and their “Sanctions Procedure” can be downloaded from the FIAP Pages of the PAGB web site at:-

<http://www.thepagb.org.uk/fiap/fiap-patronage/>

## RECORDS

When applying for a FIAP distinction you will be required to complete a record of your acceptances on what they call a “Dossier File”. This file, along with detailed guidelines for completing your application, will be supplied to you by the FIAP Liaison Officer once he has opened the annual process (only one batch of applications is allowed from a country in any one calendar year). You can download it from the FIAP web site but be warned that FIAP have in the past changed their rules and the design of their forms at short notice. You will also not have the benefit of the guidelines to help you through the application process. The “Dossier File” is an Excel file. You may therefore wish to keep your exhibition records on Excel.

The data you need to keep to fill in that part of the dossier used for recording your acceptances is:-

1. The title of each accepted photograph.
2. The Name of the Salon, and if a circuit, the part of the circuit you got the acceptance in.
3. The name of the country where the Salon is held.
4. The FIAP Number for the Salon or part of the circuit. This is a 4 figure year, a forward slash and a 3 figure number: eg 2018/001 (don't miss out zeros -it won't match the FIAP database if you do)
5. If any Award has been achieved with an acceptance.
6. In the case of applications for AFIAP and EFIAP (not EFIAP Levels) whether the acceptance was gained with a Print or a PDI.

Your file should have columns for all this data, along with any others you decide to keep. The next few paragraphs, give you some idea of what sort of entry you will need in each of the columns

## Title Column

The title must be that which appears in the catalogue. The title should be the same for ALL acceptances for that photograph. If for any reason you have used a different title then, except in the circumstances set out here **you should not include that acceptance in your listing**. FIAP's current rules are quite clear and I remind you of the “Breach of Rules Policy and the consequences of ignoring it

The only acceptable exceptions are:-

- a) If the salon has entered your title up wrongly in the catalogue whether printed or otherwise, then it is **your** responsibility to check the catalogue and request a correction is made.. You should retain copies of the correspondence and attach copies of them to your application.
- b) If you have had to curtail a long title (already accepted elsewhere) due to entry form restrictions, put the curtailed title in brackets in the next line below the correct title

Sadly, there are those among us who are prepared to cheat. The use of more than one title for one photo is one method used. There are others. Therefore there is a need to protect the integrity of exhibitions.

- i) Firstly, every photograph must be given a title. The use of “untitled” (or variations of that) is prohibited in FIAP Patronised Exhibitions.
- ii) Secondly, as mentioned earlier, the title given to a photograph should be unique in your records. Once a particular photograph is given a title it must stay with that photograph. Do not change the title or give it to another photograph, no matter what sections you enter it in. Take this into account in giving it a title. Mono versions of a colour image and print versions of a PDI (and vice versa are the same image and should have the same title.

Many exhibitions place arbitrary limits on the length of titles. This can vary from 25 to 35 characters including spaces. Save yourself trouble by not exceeding 25 characters (including spaces) and don't use ampersands, apostrophes, and punctuation, which some software deletes. With ‘on-line’ entry systems that refuse a title if it does not comply, you need to bear this in mind as well. Nature section entrants can save themselves much effort and frustration by not adding Latin sub-titles. They are rarely if ever read out to the selectors and even more rarely are they included in catalogues. In fact in most countries, including some in the UK titles are never read out to the Selectors.

You are also strongly advised NOT to use the “definite article” and “indefinite article” as the first word of a title. It will cause problems with record keeping and is an unnecessary use of available letters when title lengths are restricted. Also these words can be omitted by salons causing problems with verification.

Similarly, the practice of using the same title for different images, differentiated only by a number is to be strongly discouraged. This is because a) mistakes occur with the numbers and b) again some salons do not include such numbers in their catalogues; consequently such acceptances may not be verifiable.

## Salon Column

It is unnecessary to include full details of longwinded salon names. In the case of a stand-alone Exhibition, such as say “*The 32nd Northern Counties International Salon of Photography 2011*” we don’t need all that. All we need you to put in the Salon column is **Northern Counties**. We don’t need, in fact we don’t want all the other superfluous wordage.

In the case of a Circuit we do need more information, in that we also need to know which leg of the Circuit is involved, but again it should be very basic. So for example the “*Linz*” Exhibition in the “*Trierenberg Super Circuit*” should be shown as **Trierenberg – Linz**. The hyphen identifies we are dealing with a Circuit.

## Country Column

In dealing with this please remember that England, Scotland and Wales are separate countries and should be shown as such. Do not use UK, United Kingdom or Great Britain in the Country column.

**NB:-** There are a number of Circuits that have one or more of the component Salons marked up as being in a different country; eg: Spanish Andorran Circuit. To do this the judging and exhibiting must take place in that country. In other words the location of the judging will decide on the country. You can confirm which country a salon is recognised with by checking out the FIAP patronage site.

## FIAP No. Column

This must be accurate. **I CANNOT OVER EMPHASISE THIS**. FIAP check acceptances against their Database of Salon Results. This contains only the FIAP Number and not the Salon’s Name. If you get it wrong you will lose the acceptance or award.. The number can be gained from the promotional material for any FIAP patronised Salon or from its catalogue, but this can sometimes be wrong. By far the best way of ensuring you get this information correct is to go once again to the relevant pages of the FIAP Patronage web site (link towards the top of this document). The records go right back to 1979. With circuits each component salon has its own FIAP number and this must be shown against any acceptance.

## Awards Column

Space is limited and only the barest of details is required here, ‘Gold medal’, or ‘HM’ or ‘Ribbon’ is enough.

## Media used

Whilst applying for AFIAP or EFIAP you will need two small columns to denote whether the acceptance was obtained as a “PDI” salon or as a “Print”. If your acceptance is from a film slide mark it as PDI.

## General Information on Record Keeping etc

You should aim to collect and record your data as you go along, remembering that it does need to be set out in a specific order in the dossier.

- a) All acceptances for any one given photograph must be grouped together.
- b) The acceptances for each photograph need to be ordered as per the FIAP Number.
- c) FIAP instruct that groups of titles must be set out in ALPHABETICAL ORDER

Providing you maintain your records tidily you may be able to ‘copy & paste’ results into the FIAP dossier file but you must be careful not to disturb the formatting of the Dossier, it is likely to be rejected if you do, because FIAP have to be able to copy and paste your data into their own database.

The columns contained in the Dossier file for recording your results are as follows, from left to right:

Acceptance number ) *You will not be copying & pasting date into these two columns, because*  
Title Number ) *the data is either already there or cannot be put in until after the data is input.*  
Title  
Salon  
Country  
FIAP Salon Number  
Award  
Media used - PDI ) *You only need to place an ‘x’ in the appropriate column.*  
Media Used - Prints )

When pasting into FIAP forms you can try this. Use 'paste special' (rather than 'paste') and then select the 'values' option. This will paste the values only, without altering the format of the destination spreadsheet.

If you are not comfortable with this, then another way is for you to ensure the file you are copying from (your records) is IDENTICAL in formatting to the one you wish to paste into. The list below gives the properties and formatting for the dossier file..

Programming:-	- Do not use NO formulas to automate or simplify numbering and ordering. Do not use filters or 'freeze pains. <b>Leave the file as it is.</b>
Background:-	set no properties formula or calculators for backgrounds
Font Properties:-	Arial size 10, type set bold/normal
Columns & Borders:-	Single thickness line

## ACHIEVING THE CRITERIA AND MAKING AN APPLICATION

As previously stated we are only allowed one batch of applications in any one year. The Liaison Officer for PAGB regularly has a batch of in excess of 100 applicants each year and therefore it is necessary to follow a strict procedure. In August of the year preceding the submission, he will publish on the PAGB web Site and on PAGB 'e-news' a timetable and guideline document for prospective applicants. This will involve an initial 'registration' starting later that autumn and completion by the end of the following March. Please do not contact the Liaison Officer to register except in line with these instructions.

You have to achieve the relevant criteria BEFORE you register for a FIAP Distinction. **However it is also worth noting that NO title, acceptance or award will count towards any application for a distinction until the salon involved has submitted their Salon Report, which contains all the results, to FIAP.** Salons are required to submit these files within a specified length of time, but many are tardy (even up to and over 3 months is common and in longer in a few cases). Report Cards, Email or Website notifications are not acceptable. You can check whether FIAP has received the salon report by visiting the FIAP Patronage web site.

## **KEEPING UP TO DATE**

If you have not already done so, you are strongly advised to subscribe to **PAGB 'e-news'** as we are now using that and also the PAGB website at [www.thepagb.org.uk](http://www.thepagb.org.uk) to circulate information. You can subscribe to PAGB 'e-news' very simply via the web site, and it is free of charge.

## **FINALLY**

The above may seem complicated, but it is really quite simple and largely commonsense. I can speak from experience and say that once you get your organisation correct you should find it relatively straight forward and the lack of consequent hassle will hopefully enable you to enjoy Exhibition Photography all the more.

Dave Coates ARPS ESFIAP EFIAP/p APSA EPSA MPAGB APAGB