

# IFEA FOUNDATION BOARD

## CFEE CERTIFICATION...

# IS IT RIGHT FOR ME?



“I have worked in the industry for years, what more do I need to know?”

“I want to move up in my career, do you think this will help me?”

“Who gets this certification and why?”

“I have never heard about it, so is relevant in my industry?”

“Will I get noticed if I have this title?”

“The certification costs and travel expenses are out of my budget.

Are there solutions or ideas that can make it within my reach?”

These are all questions that either I have asked myself or others have asked me as I was thinking about taking the CFEE courses. As president of the IFEA Foundation board and recent graduate of the CFEE program (officially 2018 graduate), let me help guide you in this decision process. First let's start with the basics:

**QUESTION:** What is CFEE?

**ANSWER:** CFEE stands for Certified Festival and Event Executive. This is a professional certification designated by IFEA (International Festival and Events Association).

**QUESTION:** Are there prerequisites for CFEE certification?

**ANSWER:** Yes.

- Applicant must be enrolled in the CFEE program and have completed all requirements
- Applicant must have five years paid, full-time festival or event related industry experience at a professional level
- Applicant must be currently employed in the festival and events industry
- Applicant must be an active IFEA member in good standing before CFEE designation will be awarded.

**QUESTION:** I have been in the business for over a decade, why would I get this now?

**ANSWER:** I asked myself this very same question. In fact, I own my own business of producing some of the largest festivals in Kansas City, so wondered what this certification would do for me. So here are some of my very honest answers of why I decided to do this.

1. I entered the CFEE program in 2014 (yes it took me four years to complete the program). At that time, I was finding great benefits and connections from IFEA. I found that some of the most successful people I was meeting at IFEA had their certification. I wanted to get more involved in IFEA and thought that it would be strategic to gain the CFEE certification to show my support of the professional organization that has provided me with abundance of knowledge and connections.
2. Taking time out of my schedule to focus on my profession was one of the best investments I could have done. While there were certainly points during the classes that I was not learning anything necessarily new, I did find myself refreshed and renewed with all the new ideas and thoughts that were triggered by my peers or instructors. Setting aside time to focus on the various aspects of my job provided my events with new activations, changes to some operations and refreshed marketing and sponsorship approaches.

**QUESTION:** What do you have to do to get the CFEE certification?

**ANSWER:** CFEE Program Components:

1. Core Education Curriculum: Complete six core educational curriculum courses
2. Electives: Complete four elective courses
3. Experience: Complete minimum of five (5) years paid, full time, direct event related experience at a professional level
4. Membership: Maintain an IFEA Membership in good standing
5. Convention Attendance: Attend a minimum of two (2) IFEA Annual or affiliated chapter conventions
6. Publication: Write a minimum of at least one publishable article of no less than 1800 words for inclusion in IFEA's "ie" magazine
7. Speaking Presentation: Complete a formal speaking presentation at an approved IFEA Annual Convention, Seminar or affiliate conference
8. Final Assessment: Complete two (2) case studies that demonstrate and explain how applicant has applied knowledge learned from core classes.

**QUESTION:** What are the Core Education classes?

**ANSWER:** CFEE Core Class Details:

1. Non-Sponsorship Revenue
2. Project Management
3. Operations/Risk Management
4. Marketing & Media Relations
5. Administration & Management
6. Sponsorship/Sponsor Service

**QUESTION:** When and where do I take the courses and electives?

**ANSWER:** CFEE courses are offered at the IFEA annual conference three days prior to the start of the conference. The six courses are offered over a period of two years. My advice is to try to commit to attending two consecutive conferences so that you can complete everything in those two years. In my case, I was unable to attend the second year, so I had to wait through the cycles of classes before I could finish the remaining three classes – hence why it took me four years to complete my certification (and maybe a bit of procrastination).

**QUESTION:** What are the costs of the certification? Are there grants or suggestions on how to make the costs work with my budget?

**ANSWER:** For IFEA members, estimate about \$1,000 for course costs + travel/conference registration for two conferences. So probably at least \$3,000 depending on your travel needs. Here are a few suggestions on how to lower those expenses:

1. Bid on the CFEE Fast Track pass at the IFEA foundation auction that takes place at the conference. I did this and was able to get a better deal.
2. Review the list of Legacy Scholarships on the IFEA website. Apply to any that that you are eligible. These can help with conference expenses or CFEE expenses. Scholarship deadlines are MAY 17!
3. Talk to your employer/festival and see if they will provide financial support?

I am very happy that I did take the time to obtain my CFEE certification. I include it in my email signature and on our company website and have found it to spark conversation with many of my current clients and prospects. Continuing education is important for any profession and the CFEE program is so specific to our industry and taught by some of the best in the industry. If are thinking about advancing your career or just polishing your skills, I highly recommend going to the IFEA website now and booking your trip to Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia for the 64th Annual IFEA Convention, Expo & Retreat presented by Haas & Wilkerson Insurance, September 25-27, 2019 with CFEE Certification Classes, sponsored by Kaliff Insurance, offered September 22-24, 2019. You won't be disappointed.

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