SREV AND GUIDELINES *ON JUDGING AND EXHIBITING OPEN PHILATELY*

SREV are in italics, Guidelines in normal font

1: Competitive Exhibitions

These SREV and Guidelines *have been drafted with regards to Open Philately to help the jury judge the individual exhibits and to help exhibitors develop their exhibits.*

2: Rules

Open Philately seeks to broaden the range of exhibiting and to allow philatelists to display philatelic material as well as non-philatelic material from other collecting fields in order to develop an understanding of the chosen subject.

An Open Philately exhibit must tell a story. Open Philately provides an opportunity to present the range of research undertaken by showing both philatelic and non-philatelic material in its cultural, social, industrial, commercial, or other context and to show wider and deeper knowledge of the subject.

By allowing an extended range of material, Open Philately has the further objective of bringing new collectors to the skill and enjoyment of exhibiting and of demonstrating its attractiveness as a hobby.

2.1 The philatelic material must be half or more of the total material in the exhibit.

No counting items or measuring areas is involved in assessing the majority; a step back from the frames will allow it to be estimated.

2.2 The non-philatelic material may be up to half of the exhibit, but the variety of the non-philatelic material will influence the evaluation of Knowledge and Research.

2.3 An item is considered philatelic if

a. the item was issued, intended for issue, or produced in the preparation of any item valid for paying a postal charge or for a revenue issued by an official authority, or

b. the item has been indisputably carried by postal or other duly commissioned authorities carrying mail.

The picture side of a picture postcard is considered non-philatelic. However, the franking side of a used picture postcard is considered philatelic.

An item is considered philatelic if it is

a) postal and/or was

- issued,
- intended for issue,
- prepared for issue, or
- produced in the preparation of any item (e.g. essays, proofs) valid

to pay the postal charge for any item carried by a postal service whether by government or by a duly commissioned private contractor. Any free-franking or pre-philatelic item carried by a postal service whether by a government or by a duly commissioned private contractor, is also philatelic.

b) Revenue

If it was issued by a government, national or local, or by an official or intermediate governmental authority for the purpose of paying a revenue charge.

c) Picture Postcard

- where the franking side is used as part of the treatment of the exhibit, including maximum cards where the stamp and cancel are on the picture side.
- when showing the picture side of a picture postcard, it is considered non-philatelic even if it was sent through the mail and/or printed by the Post. However, showing the franking side of a used picture postcard is considered philatelic.

All other items are considered non-philatelic.

2.4 For an item to be treated as philatelic, it must have at least one aspect that is philatelic according to section 2.3. In this case, it does not matter which aspect (postal, revenue or private) of the item is referred to by the exhibitor in Development.

2.5 It is expected that exhibitors will exploit the possibilities available using non-philatelic material in the development of the topic. A wide variety of non-philatelic material should be used and not only pictorial items such as picture postcards.

3: Principles of Exhibit Composition

An Open Philately exhibit shows the dual aspects of philatelic and non-philatelic material, and the exhibit should develop the chosen subject in an imaginative and creative manner.

3.1 Open Philately exhibits may include all types of philatelic material. Significant philatelic items should be described in proper philatelic terms, as they would be in a Traditional, Postal History, Postal Stationery, Revenues, etc., exhibit. Philatelic descriptions should include a description of the primary philatelic aspect used in the development. Other philatelic aspects can be described as well.

3.2 Open Philately exhibits may include all types of non-philatelic material, excluding dangerous or prohibited material. Significant non-philatelic items should be described using appropriate terminology.

3.3 Concise and clear texts are appreciated. Items should be associated with both story-line texts and descriptions of the material.

3.4. The importance of understanding an Open Philately exhibit can mean that necessary texts will be included to provide background information on the chosen subject.

4: Criteria for Evaluating and Judging Exhibits

Open Philately exhibits will be judged by accredited or appointed jurors of Open Philately.

Jurors allocate points according to the following criteria:

Treatment (Title & Plan, Development) 30
Title and Plan 10
Development 20

Philatelic and Non-Philatelic Knowledge, Personal Study and Research 35
Subject Knowledge, Personal Study and Research 15
Philatelic and non-philatelic Material Knowledge, Personal Study and Research 20

Condition and Rarity (Philatelic and Non-philatelic) 30

Condition 10
Rarity 20

Presentation 5

Total 100

***5: Treatment** (Title & Plan, Development)*

5.1 A total of 30 points can be given for Treatment.

5.2 10 points are related to Title and Plan: the relationship between the title of the exhibit and the plan, the scope of the story, and the structure of the exhibit.

All Open Philately exhibits must contain an Introductory or Title Page which should include:
- The title of the exhibit
- The purpose of the exhibit (an appropriate and concise introduction to the subject being developed)
- A plan explaining the development of the exhibit. The plan should not include an extensive text, but a logical division of the subject into sections to provide an understanding of the contents of the exhibit for the jury and the public. Plans should preferably read as a short summary of the story being told in the exhibit.
- An indication of how items of rarity or special interest are highlighted in the exhibit

Additionally, the title page can provide further information such as:
- An indication of personal research, if appropriate
- A brief bibliography, e.g., main reference(s), main literature, personal publications (if relevant).

A well-thought-out introductory page will assist the exhibitor, the judges, fellow exhibitors**,** and the public.

5.3 20 points are related to Development.

An Open Philately exhibit may be developed chronologically, geographically, or in any other way that the exhibitor may feel appropriate for the subject treated.

Headlines, and possibly sub-headlines, on the individual pages corresponding to the Plan are strongly recommended to assist in following the storyline.

Understanding an Open Philately exhibit requires that concise and clear texts are included to ensure the necessary links between the items and that appropriate information about the subject treated is provided.

The text should flow smoothly and describe the development of the story. Ideally, every item should have an associated text making it clear why it helps to tell the story.

6: Philatelic and Non-philatelic Knowledge, Personal Study and Research

6.1 Philatelic and non-philatelic Knowledge is documented through the choice of material and the use of brief but sufficient text.
Research should be interpreted in a wider sense and generally show the exhibitor's thorough knowledge of the subject and the material.

6.2 A total of 35 points is given for Philatelic and Non-philatelic Knowledge, Personal Study and Research.

15 points for Subject Knowledge, Personal Study and Research and
20 points for Material Knowledge, Personal Study and Research.

6.3 Subject Knowledge, Personal Study and Research refers to the thorough knowledge of the subject as shown by the choice of items, their mutual relationship, and the degree of appropriateness and completeness of the accompanying text and story told.

6.4 Knowledge, Personal Study and Research of the Philatelic and Non-Philatelic Material should be at the highest level to get excellent marks. This is most likely to be achieved when exhibitors make full use of the potential offered by both philatelic and non-philatelic material in the development of the subject, and when they use a wide variety of non-philatelic material.

6.5. Knowledge, Personal Study and Research of the Philatelic and Non-Philatelic Material are documented by proper descriptions, the choice of material, and its variety and significance.

7: Condition and Rarity (Philatelic and Non-philatelic)

7.1 30 points can be given for Condition and Rarity, for both philatelic and non-philatelic material.

10 points are related to the Condition of the material and 20 points for its Rarity.

7.2 All philatelic material must be original.

7.3 All non-philatelic material, including photographs, should be original wherever possible.

7.4 Points for Condition are assessed with respect to the typical condition of the relevant type of material, e.g. the typical condition of common mint stamps is perfect.

To obtain good points in Condition, some of the material should be challenging to find in good condition, and such philatelic and non-philatelic items should also be in the best available condition. For the non-philatelic items, condition is considered in accordance with the typical criteria for those collectables, e.g. for coins and medals the degree of wear is important.

7.5 To obtain high points in rarity, some of the material should be rare and significant. The reasons for rarity/significance should be described on the individual page.

Rarity is judged from a broad perspective. Rarity is based on the number of items recorded or known to be in existence. Nevertheless, the significance of an item from a broad perspective should also be considered. The reasons for the rarity of both the philatelic and non-philatelic material should be described in the text. Artificial narrowness of definition should be avoided. For example, one item of five known from an entire country may be scarce or rare, while a common type of item with only one known sent from a specific village is not.

Rarity for the non-philatelic items should also be judged from a broad perspective as it can be difficult to assess the rarity of the many varieties of such material. Therefore, it is important that exhibitors explain why the individual items are rare and/or significant.

8: Presentation

8.1 5 points are related to Presentation. A clear presentation is important. The exhibit should appeal to the eye. Each page, as well as the overall impression of the frames and exhibit, should be well-balanced.

8.2 Due to the large or unorthodox size of some non-philatelic material, mounting on larger than traditional pages can often be advantageous to achieve a more attractive presentation.

8.3 The material should be no more than 5 mm in thickness, so that it can be mounted in standard exhibition frames.

8.4 Reproductions should be at least 25% different in size from the original and be clearly marked as a copy or scan.

9. Narrow Theme Exhibits

9.1 A Narrow Theme exhibit of Open Philately is intended to be an exhibit with a very narrow subject that fits into three frames at most. If a subject can be shown in more than three frames, it is not best suited to a Narrow Theme exhibit.

9.2 A selection of items from a multi-frame exhibit may be suitable only if the selection can completely treat a sub-subject of the exhibit within at most three frames. An extract from a multi-frame exhibit showing only the best items ('cherry picking') is not going to score well as a Narrow Theme exhibit.

10. Closing remarks

In the event of any discrepancies in the text arising from translation, the English text shall prevail.

These SREV and Guidelines *on judging and exhibiting Open Philately were approved at the Open Philately Working Group Zoom Conference, on 25 April 2026. The SREV* and Guidelines *were approved by the FIP Board during the 203rd Conference meeting on 8 September 2026.*

They come into force on 8 September 2026 and apply to exhibitions which will take place after 1 January 2027.

APPENDIX FOR SYNOPSIS

Although the FIP does not demand a Synopsis at international exhibitions, several organising committees for individual exhibitions (international, regional, or national) do so. In such cases**,** a Synopsis should be sent together with the exhibition application form and title page to the organising committee to be forwarded to the appointed juror in advance of the exhibition.

A Synopsis gives the exhibitor an opportunity to inform the jurors of additional information that does not necessarily belong in the actual exhibit. The content of the Synopsis is not considered when the jurors are allocating points for the exhibit, but it is an important part of the juror's preparation for judging the exhibit.

A Synopsis may explain how the treatment was decided, provide background information to the story, give historical references, and show why the exhibit is structured in a particular way.

It is also an opportunity to indicate personal research, to reference rare and significant items, and to give a more expanded bibliography than the shorter one listed on the title page.

A Synopsis should never be longer than 2 pages of size A4 paper, and it may contain illustrations and/or tables.

If an exhibit has been shown before, it is useful to indicate where new material has been added, and that amendments/corrections have been made following juror feedback.