

PPPL	PRINCETON PLASMA PHYSICS LABORATORY	PROCEDURE	No. ACT-012 Rev 0 Page 1 of 8
	Subject: Planning and Approval for Conference Sponsorship	Effective Date: 5/20/16	Initiated by: Head, Accounting Division
Supersedes NEW		Approved: Director	

MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Management System (Primary): 07.00 Business Operations
Management System Owner: Head, Business Operations
Management Process: 07.02 Finance and Accounting
Process Owner: Head, Accounting
Sub-Process: 07.02.28 Travel
Sub-Process Owner: Head, Accounting
Subject Matter Expert (SME): Head of Accounting

APPLICABILITY

This document outlines the procedure that all Laboratory personnel are required to follow when they are planning to sponsor or co-sponsor a conference. The policy has been established to implement controls which ensure that conferences sponsored by the Laboratory provide a benefit to DOE and that unallowable costs are not incurred. To assure compliance with this policy, Travel and Conference Services has been assigned the role of Conference Management Point of Contact.

INTRODUCTION

A conference is defined as meeting, retreat, seminar, symposium, convention, exposition, or event that involves attendee travel. What constitutes a conference is a fact based determination using an evaluation of the criteria established by DOE. See Attachment 1 for indicia of a conference and conference exclusions.

PPPL is sponsoring a conference when it meets any of the following criteria:

1. The Contractor provides funding to plan, promote, or implement an event. support (any level) for the planning, implementation, and publicity of a conference including:
 - Purchasing “sponsorship packages” for the conference
 - Providing funds for a workshop or other components of a conference
 - Providing conference planners with more than \$10,000 to fund participation by student/speaker/early-career attendees.
2. The contractor authorizes the use of a DOE or Lab logo to promote the Conference (website, brochures, programs).

Providing funding to plan, promote or implement an event (conference) or to authorize the use of a seal or logo must be approved by the Conference Host and Travel Office prior to being processed/authorized. The Conference Host and Travel Office must ensure that funds are not expended on the specific conference by PPPL, DOE or other DOE Contractors prior to providing an approval.

3. Hosting the event in a DOE facility.

Attending a conference, giving a speech or serving as an honorary chairperson does not connote sponsorship, nor does payment of attendee registration fees, or renting booth space.

DOE Conference Management Tool (CMT)

PPPL will provide information on conferences it plans to sponsor in the DOE Conference Management Tool (CMT), including:

- 1) Conference title, description, and date;
- 2) Location and venue;
- 3) Description of any unusual expenses (e.g., promotional items);
- 4) Description of contracting procedures used (e.g., competition for space/support);
- 5) Costs for space, food/beverages, audio visual, travel/per diem, registration costs, recovered costs (e.g., through exhibit fees); and
- 6) Number of attendees.

DOE must approve all conferences where the total estimated expenditures of DOE funds are greater than \$100,000. PPPL cannot expend funds on the proposed conference until DOE approval is received.

PPPL sponsored conferences that will remain under \$100,000 in total estimated costs will be entered into the DOE Conference Management Tool (CMT) with basic conference information and a certification stating that the costs will be controlled/tracked to ensure conference expenditures will stay under \$100,000.

Type of Conference	Description	Contractor Reporting Responsibilities
Contractor sponsored (recognized and approved by lab management)	A conference hosted/sponsored by a DOE contractor (lab, plant, etc)	a) If the host can ensure DOE aggregate costs <\$100k must be entered in CMT but no approval required b) If the DOE aggregate costs approach \$100k, report all estimates in the CMT. DOE approval required if cost estimate reaches \$100k.
Contractor sponsored (unrecognized-any of these actions could result in PPPL sponsoring this event)	A conference where monetary support at any level is provided to the conference or a DOE, program, lab, or M&O logo is authorized for use by the conference	Report all costs in CMT and if DOE aggregate costs >\$100k approval needed. This type of action is not likely to be approved resulting in unallowable costs.

Conferences being sponsored by PPPL that require DOE approval should be submitted to Travel & Conference Services at least six months prior to the conference date.

Approvals

The approvals required for PPPL sponsored conferences are as follows:

- **Total cost > \$50K** or

Travel & Conference Services,
Planning and Control Division,
Cognizant Department Head
Director's Office.

[A Request New Sponsorship Conference form should be completed \(Attachment 2\).](#)

- **Total cost < \$50K** that include DOE allowable food charges or DOE unallowable expenses

Travel & Conference Services,
Planning and Control Division
Cognizant Department Head.

[A Request New Sponsorship Conference form should be completed \(Attachment 2\).](#)

- A Conference Exclusion (Attachment 6) may be required to be completed and approved by Travel & Conference Services for any meetings excluded from conference sponsorship but hosted by PPPL (see Attachment 1).

All conference sponsorship documentation packages should be submitted to Travel & Conference Services prior to obtaining any management approvals. Upon review and approval by Travel & Conference Services (for completeness and cost reasonability), the package will be circulated to the other approvers for review and approvals. Attachment 3 provides guidance to the approvers of conferences to assist them in their decision for approving a DOE-sponsored conference.

No financial commitments for a conference can be made until all of the necessary approvals have been obtained. Any exceptions to this rule require a signed Conference Approval Risk Authorization Form (Attachment 5).

Registration fees may be collected to offset costs that are associated with the conference. A distinction must be made between those registration fees that will be used to cover allowable costs and those that will be collected to offset unallowable costs. The conference host is responsible for segregating and tracking the two types of fees that may be collected.

PPPL's policies allow for the use of DOE funds to cover the cost of refreshments served during conferences (PPPL meetings are excluded) in accordance with the Conference Food Policy (Attachment 4).

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

1. PPPL Travel Manual (<http://pppltravel.princeton.edu/policies/travel-manual>)

DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

Conference	A “Conference” is a meeting, retreat, seminar, symposium, convention, exposition, workshop or similar event that involves official travel, including local travel and does not meet the Conference Exclusion criteria described in Attachment 1.
Travel & Conference Services	Individuals appointed by the Head of Accounting to assist departments in the planning and approval process for conferences.

PROCEDURE

I. NOTIFICATION OF INTENTION TO SPONSOR A CONFERENCE

RESPONSIBILITY

ACTION

Travel & Conference Services

1. Periodically issues a call to the Laboratory staff for conferences being sponsored by PPPL, which meet the criteria identified in this procedure.
2. Requests the Conference Host to enter specific information (e.g. conference name, location, dates etc.) about the event using the required [Request New Sponsorship Conference](#) for newly identified sponsored events.

Conference Host

3. Prepares documentation package for all PPPL sponsored conferences that meet the applicable criteria identified above.

This documentation package consists of:

- a. A [Request New Sponsorship Conference](#) and
- b. A detailed agenda for the conference. If a detailed agenda is not available in time to meet the submission deadline, a high level topical list or an agenda from a prior recurring conference may be submitted.

See Conference Food Policy (Attachment 4) if you are planning to serve refreshments during the conference.

4. The package should be submitted to Travel & Conference Services at a minimum of 180 calendar days prior to the expected start date of the conference. The conference approval forms are also available on the Travel and Conference Services website (<http://travel.pppl.gov>)

II. CONFERENCE SPONSORSHIP APPROVAL

A. Approval for All Conference Sponsorships

<u>RESPONSIBILITY</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
Travel & Conference Services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Receives completed Conference Sponsorship Approval Request Form and detailed agenda from Conference Host. 2. Determines if meeting qualifies for a specific exclusion (See Attachment 1). For conference exclusions, go to Section II.D of this procedure and proceed with step II.D.1. 3. Finalizes conference form to include financial information and the registration fee. This includes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Preparing a site selection analysis (Not required if the location is PPPL or Princeton University). b. Developing a cost estimate for the conference. c. Calculating a recommended registration fee which distinguishes between allowable and unallowable costs, to ensure all expenses, including any food and refreshment costs, are in compliance with the DOE guidelines and PPPL policies 4. Reviews proposed conference documentation package to verify the package is complete and the costs proposed to be incurred to conduct the conference are reasonable. 5. Returns conference form to Conference Host for final review and approval. 6. Tracks the conference form to ensure it is approved in a timely manner.
Conference Host	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Completes final review and approval of Conference Sponsorship Approval Request Form and returns to Travel & Conference Services. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. If a financial commitment needs to be made before all approvals are obtained, a signed Conference Approval Risk Authorization Form (Attachment 5) is also required.
Travel & Conference Services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Receives completed form from Conference Host and forwards to the Planning & Control (P&C) Division for review and approval.
Planning & Control Division	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Reviews the form to ensure that it is complete and that the costs proposed to be incurred to hold the conference are reasonable.

10. Approves conference request once conference costs are deemed reasonable. (See Attachment 3 for guidance)

11. Submits conference request to Conference Host's Department Head for review and approval. The Department Head's review is to ensure that a compelling business case has been made for holding the conference and that the value received is commensurate with the cost being incurred.

Department Head

12. Reviews and approves conference request; returns approved request to P&C Division. (See Attachment 3 for approval guidance)

Planning & Control
Division

13. After obtaining the Department Head's approval, the cognizant P&C Officer will submit the request to the next level of approval.

14. For conference requests with costs of \$50K or more, go to Section II.B of this procedure and proceed with step II.B.1.

15. For conference requests with expenses less than \$50K, go to Section II.C of this procedure and proceed with step II.C.1.

Travel & Conference
Services

16. Negotiates contracts with potential vendors to provide services for the conference. These contracts must be reviewed and approved by the Procurement Division.

B. Approval for Conferences With Estimated Costs of \$50K or More

RESPONSIBILITY

ACTION

Planning & Control
Division

1. Submits conference request to Director's Office for review and approval. **[A Request New Sponsorship Conference form should be completed \(Attachment 2\).](#)**

Director's Office

2. Reviews and approves conference request. (See Attachment 3 for guidance)

3. Submits approved request to Travel & Conference Services to begin process of obtaining conference services.

C. Approval for Conferences With Estimated Costs Less Than \$50K

<u>RESPONSIBILITY</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
Planning & Control Division	1. Conference request for which there are DOE allowable food charges or DOE unallowable expenses included are submitted to Travel & Conference Services for review and approval. A Request New Sponsorship Conference form should be completed (Attachment 2).
Travel & Conference Services	2. Reviews and approves conference request. Begins process of obtaining conference services.

D. Conference Exclusions

<u>RESPONSIBILITY</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
Travel & Conference Services	1. Completes Conference Exclusion Form (Attachment 6) for meetings excluded from conference sponsorship but hosted by PPPL. 2. Submits form to the Head of Accounting for approval.

Training Section

Head of Accounting or Designee	1. Ensures the following training is provided. Target Audience: <u>Department Heads, Supervisors, P&C Officers, Administrative Support Staff</u> Training Method: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Read only routine distribution/training via Email distribution of this procedure to Supervisors by Best Practices. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Read only training via Email distribution of this procedure from Head of Accounting to P&C Officers, and Administrative Support Staff. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Announcement/Briefing by Head of Business Operations or Head of Accounting to the LMM attendees. Frequency: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Upon each revision of this procedure.
Head of Business Operations or Designee	2. Notifies the Human Resources Training Office of the training so that they will be aware of the training requirements and be able to provide assistance and guidance in the course development, implementation, tracking, and maintenance.

Records Requirements Specific To This Procedure

Records Custodians must assure records are maintained as follows:

Record Title	Record Custodian	Location	Retention Time
Conference Sponsorship Approval Request Form	Travel & Conference Services	Travel Office Files	Cutoff files after conference. Destroy when 10 years old. <i>Reference: Admin 16 Accountable Officer's Account Records (8.d.2.a and 8.d.3.a)</i>
Documentation package for all PPPL sponsored conferences	Travel & Conference Services	Travel Office Files	Cutoff files after conference. Destroy when 10 years old. <i>Reference: Admin 16 Accountable Officer's Account Records (8.d.2.a and 8.d.3.a)</i>
Conference Approval Risk Authorization Form	Travel & Conference Services	Travel Office Files	Cutoff files after conference. Destroy when 10 years old. <i>Reference: Admin 16 Accountable Officer's Account Records (8.d.2.a and 8.d.3.a)</i>
Completes Conference Exclusion Form	Travel & Conference Services	Travel Office Files	Cutoff files after conference. Destroy when 10 years old. <i>Reference: Admin 16 Accountable Officer's Account Records (8.d.2.a and 8.d.3.a)</i>

ATTACHMENTS

1. Conference Exclusions
2. Request New Sponsorship Conference Form
3. DOE Sponsored Conference Guidelines
4. Policy for Allowable Food and Beverage Costs at PPPL Sponsored Conferences
5. Conference Approval Risk Authorization Form
6. Conference Exclusion Form

Conference Definition: “Conference” is defined in the Federal Travel Regulations as, “a meeting, retreat, seminar, symposium, or event that involves attendee travel. The term “conference” also applies to training activities that are considered to be conferences This is only a starting point. What constitutes a conference is a fact based determination and an evaluation of the criteria established by DOE.

Additional indicia of a conference: Other common terms are conventions, expositions, symposiums, seminars, workshops, or exhibitions.

- Typically involve topical matters of interest to, and the participation of, multiple agencies and/or nongovernmental participations.
- Registration
- Registration fees
- A published substantive agenda
- Schedule speakers or discussions panels

NOTE: *Individual events may qualify as a conference without meeting all of the indicia listed.*

Exclusions

The following is a list of criteria that would allow a meeting to be excluded from the regular conference attendance procedure:

- Meetings necessary to carry out statutory oversight functions such as investigations, inspections, audits, or non-conference planning site visits.
- Meetings to consider internal agency business matters held in Federal facilities, such as meetings that take place as part of an organization’s regular course of business, do not exhibit indicia of a formal conference as outlined in the conference policy, and take place in a Federal facility.
- Bi-lateral and multi-lateral international cooperation engagements that do not exhibit indicia of a formal conference as outlined in the conference policy that are focused on diplomatic relations.
- Formal classroom training which does not exhibit indicia of a formal conference as outlined above.
- Advisory Committee and Federal Advisory Committee meetings, solicitation/Funding Opportunity Announcement Review Board meetings, peer review/objective review panel meetings, evaluation panel/board meetings and program kick-off review meetings (including those for grants and contracts) Activities concerning work not funded by the DOE, such as work for others.

PPPL Conference And Travel Services 	
Fill out form below if you would like to host a conference at PPPL (Note Required Fields *)	
* Requested By:	<input type="text"/>
* Email Address	<input type="text"/>
Name of Host > (who is attending?)	Last Name <input type="text"/> First Name <input type="text"/>
Sponsoring Organization:	<input type="text"/>
* Conference Title:	<input type="text"/>
* Conference Start Date:	<input type="text"/>
* Conference Location:	<input type="text"/>
Conference Link (if available):	<input type="text"/>
MEETING REQUEST FORM	
Hotel:	<input type="checkbox"/>
If Yes Hotel, what location?:	<input type="text"/>
Banquet: Non DOE	<input type="checkbox"/>
If Banquet, what location?:	<input type="text"/>
Abstracts (CDs or Books)	Select Abstract Media <input type="checkbox"/>
Excursions: Non DOE	<input type="checkbox"/>
Breaks:	<input type="checkbox"/>
If Breaks, dates and Times:	<input type="text"/>
Number of attendees:	<input type="text"/>
Transportation Requirements:	<input type="checkbox"/>
If Transportation Required, Dates, Times and locations	<input type="text"/>
PPPL Video Conferences	<input type="checkbox"/>
If equipment needed, what type?	<input type="text"/>
AV equipment at Hotel	<input type="checkbox"/>
If AV equipment at Hotel, List equipment type	<input type="text"/>
Security Notifications	<input type="checkbox"/>
Foreign National Notifications	<input type="checkbox"/>

Request New Sponsorship Conference Form

Attachment 2

Request New Sponsorship Conference

Page 2 of 2

Participant Gifts: Non DOE	<input type="checkbox"/>
If gifts, budget and types:	<input type="text"/>
Materials Printing Services/Meeting supplies	<input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, list supplies needed:	<input type="text"/>
Catering? Non DOE	<input type="checkbox"/> OnSite <input type="checkbox"/> Offsite
What type of catering services required? Non DOE	<input type="text"/>
Additional Comments:	<input type="text"/>
NON DOE means items may not be paid for by DOE - Please request discretionary funds.	
Print Form For Your Records	
Return to Main Menu	
THIS NEW CONFERENCE WILL BE ADDED TO THE MASTER CONFERENCE LIST PENDING APPROVAL.	

PPPL	PRINCETON PLASMA PHYSICS LABORATORY	PROCEDURE	No. ACT-012 Rev 0 page 1 of 1
Guidance for Conference Approvals			Attachment 3

The following areas should be reviewed and considered prior to approving a DOE-sponsored conference:

Program Mission:

How is the conference related to the mission and goals of the organization? Specifically, how essential is the conference to those goals and missions?

Purpose and Objectives:

What is the purpose of the proposed conference? Are alternative means available for achieving the same expected results? Are other conferences planned or scheduled with the same objectives? Could this conference be combined with another? If the conference is recurring, is the need for the latest one justified at this time?

Location:

Is the conference location the most cost-effective? Is there a basis for criticism? Have cost comparisons of other locations been considered? Is the location necessary to accomplish the conference goal? Is the conference site reasonably central to the majority of participants to lessen travel costs?

Number of DOE/Contractor Employees:

Is the total number of DOE and DOE contractor conference attendees necessary to achieve the purpose for which attendance at the conference is being approved? Is there any basis for criticism from external entities such as Congress, the General Accounting Office, the Office of Science, or the Inspector General? What is the cost per participant? Who will attend and what roles will each proposed attendee play? Can attendance be reduced without adversely affecting the objective?

Expected Benefits:

What benefits will derive from conducting this conference?

Estimated Support Costs:

Are support costs such as printing, mailing, graphics, travel expenses, conference facilities, honorariums, etc. reasonable and necessary?

Anti-Deficiency Act: To ensure compliance a Non-DOE/Contractor Conference cannot become a DOE/Contractors conference once any funds have been expended.

Policy for Allowable Food and Beverage Costs at PPPL Sponsored Conferences

The DOE has issued guidance with respect to allowable food and beverage costs at PPPL sponsored conferences. The DOE Princeton Site Office has approved the implementation of this guidance. As a result, PPPL has modified applicable policies to allow certain qualifying costs of food and beverages served as an integral part of a sponsored conference to be a DOE contract charge. Below is the policy modification that has been made to PPPL's Conference Management policy and Unallowable Costs Guidelines:

The requirements necessary to allow the cost of any meals or refreshments provided at a DOE or PPPL sponsored conference to be charged against contract funds are as follows:

1. When the principle purpose of the conference is to disseminate business, professional, or technical information, or to stimulate research opportunities per PPPL's contract requirements.
2. When the provided refreshments or meals are an integral part of the conference and conference participants must be in attendance when the refreshment or meals are served in order to receive full benefit from the conference or participate fully in the conference.
3. The conference organizer must submit the following information for all meals that are proposed to be provided and refreshments proposed to be served as part of the conference sponsorship form:
 - a. A detailed list of the attendees by name and the organization they represent the type (e.g., lunch or dinner) and number of meals provided and the costs.
 - b. The type and frequency of refreshments served (e.g., coffee breaks, etc.) and the total costs.
 - c. A detailed explanation that provides the business to be conducted during the meals/refreshments and why the meals/refreshments are an integral part of the conference agenda. Requirements for allowability are summarized below:
 - i. Reasonable refreshments served during the conference are generally allowable (note: refreshments are defined as including but not limited to, coffee, tea, milk, juice, soft drinks, donuts, bagels, fruit, pretzels, cookies, chips, and muffins).
 - ii. A continental breakfast served prior to the start of the meeting would generally be considered unallowable.
 - iii. Working lunches or dinners served as part of the meeting must be supported by an agenda that outlines the meeting activities that will be conducted during the meal.
 - iv. Dinners or lunches provided offsite (e.g., a restaurant) would be unallowable unless: 1) there is a planned business agenda to be conducted during the meal; 2) the meal is served in a separate room, outside of the main restaurant room; and 3) the restaurant must be in close proximity to the conference location

- v. A documented agenda for working lunches and dinners must be provided as part of the conference sponsorship approval submission.
- 4. The cost of the meals and refreshments must be reasonable. Determination of reasonableness of food and beverage costs charged to DOE contracts in support of contractor sponsored conferences will be determined by the following:
 - a. The cost per person of any meal provided must be less than 150% of the locality's meals and incidental expenses (M&IE) rate for that meal. For example, if dinner will be provided at a locality with a \$56.00 per day M&IE rate with a \$29.00 per dinner M&IE rate (see www.gsa.gov/mie), the cost of the dinner provided at a conference cannot exceed \$43.50 ($\$29.00 \times 150\%$) per person. The amount by which the cost of any meal exceeds 150% of the locality's M&IE rate for that specific meal will be unallowable.
 - b. The number of meals provided as part of the conference must be reasonable based on of the conference's professional activities and goals. Reasonableness will be determined by the Head of Accounting or Head, Business Operations based on the information provided with the sponsored conference approval form.
 - c. The cost per person for refreshments provided in one day must equal to or less than 25% of the localities per day M&IE rate. For example, if the locality's per day M&IE rate is \$56.00; the cost per person of refreshments provided at a conference cannot exceed \$14.00 ($\$56.00 \times 25\%$) per day. Cost for refreshments in excess of this amount will be unallowable.
 - d. If the cost of the meals was fixed by contract and the number of attendees was too low driving the meal cost per person over 150%, the excess cost is unallowable.

The reasonableness guidelines provided above will also be used to determine the allowability of the meals included in the conference registration fee when a PPPL employee is attending a conference where the cost of meals and/ or refreshments are included in the conference registration fee. If a working meal is provided, a PPPL employee on travel status is normally required to deduct the meal from their M&IE rate for the day. If the Lab has preapproved that an Unallowable meal will be paid for with Lab funds, that meal must be deducted as well.

Note: "Business meetings" are distinguished from "conferences" as defined by DOE Conference Management Guidance and PPPL's Conference Sponsorship Procedure. As a result, the cost of the meals and refreshments at PPPL "business meetings" are unallowable.

Conference Approval Risk Authorization Form**Attachment 5**

Conference Approval Risk Authorization Form

Date:

Cost Center:

Title:

Risk Authority Requested:

Risk Period:

Justification:

Conference Host_____
P&C Officer_____
Department Head_____
Director's Office

***PLEASE ATTACH A COPY OF THE CONFERENCE
SPONSORSHIP/ATTENDANCE APPROVAL REQUEST FORM***

Conference Exclusion Form
(Required if the estimated number of attendees is 30 or more)

Conference Title/Description:

Conference Location:

PPPL Program/Project:

Exclusion Number:

Justification for Exclusion: (Please include a brief explanation of how the exclusion applies.)

Travel & Conference Services

Head of Accounting

*Required if costs for excluded travel exceeds \$10K