



Laboratory-Hosted and/or Co-Sponsored Conferences

Lawrence Berkeley
National Laboratory

Financial Policies and Procedures

Part I

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Summary

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines and procedures to be used when planning a Laboratory-hosted and/or co-sponsored conference which is funded by DOE, or traveling to a conference on behalf of the Laboratory.

Scope

This policy applies to all [events](#) that qualify as a Laboratory-hosted and/or co-sponsored conference. The terms set forth in this policy are consistent with the [Department of Energy \(DOE\) Order 110.3A](#), DOE Contract 31, and the [DOE Acquisition Regulation Letter, No. AL-2005-12](#). It is the responsibility of each Division to ensure the requirements in this policy have been met.

Policy

Laboratory-hosted and/or co-sponsored conferences must be accomplished in a reasonable manner that minimizes expenditures while accomplishing program objectives.

A determination must be made for each Laboratory [event](#) as to whether it qualifies as an official Laboratory-hosted or co-sponsored conference or a Laboratory-hosted meeting.

In order to qualify as an official Laboratory-hosted conference, several prerequisites or criteria must be met as outlined in the Laboratory's [Event Approval Database](#) (see [Conference Services](#) website). For conferences with expenditures of \$10,000 or greater, the conference must involve official [domestic or foreign travel](#) of one or more attendees.

If the [event](#) does not meet the established conference criteria, it will be considered a Laboratory-hosted meeting, which involves different prerequisites and criteria (see [Laboratory-Hosted \(Funded\) Meetings](#)).

Sponsorship/Co-Sponsorship

Sponsorship (or co-sponsorship) of a conference is defined as having control over the conduct of the conference (e.g., sufficient to influence costs, venue, program content, or similar aspects) and having some financial responsibility or providing in-kind (non-monetary) services for the conference. Laboratory funds (sponsored or co-sponsored) can only be used for allowable expenses (see [Unallowable Conference Costs](#) below).

If the Laboratory does not directly organize, plan or control a conference but provides funding or in-kind (non-monetary) services, it is considered a form of co-sponsorship.

The following additional guidelines apply to the Laboratory's co-sponsorship of a conference:

- The Laboratory will not be identified as the official sponsor and will not be featured prominently in any conference literature
- The sponsoring Division is responsible for approving any contractual co-sponsorship conference agreements

Conference Planning Support

Planning support provided by Laboratory employees as part of their management-approved activities is not considered to be part of co-sponsored conference costs. However, if substantial (non-minimal) costs are incurred for employee effort and/or supplies, such costs should be approved and accounted for as co-sponsored conference costs.

Exclusions

If any of the following activities apply to the [event](#), it will not be considered a conference and will be processed as a meeting:

1. DOE employees traveling to sites where work for DOE is being performed to discuss the status of that work
2. DOE technical/business program, project, or peer review
3. Formal, structured training programs (including seminars specifically held for training purposes) that have specific objectives identified to improve certain knowledge, skills, and abilities
4. Contractor activities related to work not funded by DOE
5. Meetings requiring only local travel
6. Federal Advisory Committee meetings

Financial Policies and Procedures Manual

7. Contract pre-proposal, bid opening, and similar activities, including negotiations
8. Public hearings and associated briefings
9. Audits, inspections, and investigations
10. Activities funded through a grant or cooperative agreement, unless one of the purposes of the agreement is to *manage* a DOE conference

Approval of Conferences

All Laboratory-hosted or co-sponsored conferences must have the following approvals 45 days prior to the conference:

- Funding Division Director or designee
- Conference Services

For conference expenditures of \$10,000 or greater, the following additional approvals are required 45 days prior to the conference:

- Laboratory Director, Deputy Director or Associated Laboratory Director
- DOE [Contracting Officer](#) or designee

For additional information and guidance, see the [Conference Services](#) website.

Conference Management System (CMS)

The CMS is the DOE central database used to compile data, generate reports, and view proposed and approved conferences for planning purposes. Upon approval by DOE, estimates of conference activities, such as the final number of attendees, costs and other relevant information are entered into the CMS by DOE.

Employees Traveling to a Conference

DOE requires the Laboratory to record and track information for all employees traveling to conferences for which the total Laboratory cost is \$10,000 or greater.

Employees planning to travel to a conference must contact Conference Services at least 45 days prior to the trip (see the [Conference Services](#) website).

Contractual Agreements

Third party contractual agreements (e.g., hotel, food services, equipment rental, or transportation) held on behalf of the Laboratory for conference arrangements must be approved by Conference Services.

Any third party contract not approved by Conference Services may be considered an unauthorized procurement, subject to personal financial liability and administrative discipline.

Roles and Responsibilities

Sponsoring Division

1. Completes the applicable entries, forms and documents in the Laboratory's [Event Approval Database](#), which includes funding and budget information.
2. Maintains appropriate financial records.
3. Plans, organizes, and initiates conference arrangements.
4. Whenever possible, minimizes the number and cost of exhibits/booths by using corporate-type exhibits/booths that can be shared by DOE and DOE contractor organizations.
5. Provides a dedicated Division project ID (account) in which to charge costs associated with the conference.
6. Upon completion of the conference, reviews and verifies conference revenues and expenditures within 120 days after completion of the conference.

Division Director or Designee

1. Approves all Laboratory-hosted and/or co-sponsored conferences.
2. Approves requests for travel to a conference where the expenditures are \$10,000 or greater.

Conference Services

1. Administers and maintains conference policy and procedures. Provides guidance and training when necessary.
2. Reviews and approves all Laboratory [event](#) information entered into the [Event Approval Database](#). Ensures compliance with Laboratory policy, DOE Contract 31, Federal Acquisition Regulations, and DOE Order 110.3A, Conference Management.

Financial Policies and Procedures Manual

3. Reviews, negotiates, and approves third party contractual agreements for conference arrangements such as facility/hotel contracts, and chartered transportation services (e.g., shuttle or bus).
4. Requests the opening and closing of BZ conference accounts from the Controller's Office (General Accounting).
5. Ensures unallowable costs are tracked separately from allowable costs (i.e., two different BZ accounts).
6. Issues refunds and documents the refund information.
7. Reconciles registration payments to ensure all applicable fees have been paid and all payment information is captured.
8. Manages conference approval process.
9. Manages the conference and registration database, which provides access to automated status reports on the [Conference Services](#) website.

Laboratory Director or Designee

1. Approves all Laboratory-hosted and/or co-sponsored conferences for which expenditures are \$10,000 or greater.
2. Approves all Lab-wide travel to non-Laboratory-hosted and/or co-sponsored conferences for which cumulative expenses total \$10,000 or greater (Example: Multi-Divisions traveling to the same conference where the total expenses are \$10,000 or greater).

Contracting Officer (DOE Berkeley Site Office)

Approves all Laboratory sponsored conferences for which expenditures are \$10,000 or greater.

Controller's Office (General Accounting)

1. Deposits registration fees and/or sponsorship funding and records revenue in the Laboratory's Financial Management System (FMS).
2. Issues payment for conference expenses approved by Conference Services.
3. Reconciles conference accounts.
4. Provides general guidance on conference accounting.

Site Selection

The sponsoring Division should select a site that minimizes costs. The use of government-provided facilities is preferred. Resort or recreational sites should be avoided, unless a true cost savings will result. Conferences should be held at facilities that comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Hotel and Motel Fire Safety Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-391, as amended).

Justification

The sponsoring Division must perform a cost comparison of at least three prospective locations, unless there is a specific advantage to the Government, which must be documented in writing. A justification/impact statement must also be provided as to why the selected site provides the best overall value or is necessary in order to achieve the conference objective (see the [Conference Services](#) website).

Allowable Conference Costs

See the [Conference Services](#) website for examples of allowable costs. For food service (meals and refreshments) provided during a conference, all of the following requirements must be met:

- External participants (non-Laboratory employees) are present (at least 20%)
- Food service is *incidental* to the conference
- Attendance during meals and when refreshments are served is important for the attendee's full participation in the conference
- Work precedes any food service provided, and the food service is provided during a working session
- A detailed agenda is provided (including *events* with food and an attendee list with guest affiliations)
- The meals and refreshments are an *incidental* part of a larger conference program that includes substantial functions occurring separately from when the food is served
- Food service for the conference has been approved in advance by Conference Services

Unallowable Conference Costs

Laboratory funds **cannot** be used for **unallowable costs** (see DOE Contract 31, [DOE FAR 31.201-2](#), *Determining Allowability*). Private funds, however, may be used for unallowable conference costs. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

Financial Policies and Procedures Manual

- Entertainment (including tickets to sporting events, concerts, and other forms of public amusement)
- Alcoholic beverages (including bartender and corkage fees)
- Gifts, door prizes, or awards
- Decorative items (flowers, balloons, etc.)
- Tours of sites not directly associated with the conference and its content
- Food service associated with social events where no business is conducted
- Meals for guests or spouses

Travel

Costs for traveling to a conference will be reimbursed in accordance with the Laboratory's [Travel Policy](#). If conference accounts have been established by Conference Services, travel costs for speakers and invited guests should be charged to the appropriate conference account.

Funding Sources

Laboratory-hosted and/or co-sponsored conferences may be funded from a number of external and internal sources including registration fees, co-sponsorships, and Laboratory funding. All funds and revenue used to support conferences must be deposited in Laboratory accounts established by the Controller's Office.

Registration Fees

A registration fee may be charged to attendees (including DOE and DOE contractor employees) to finance any or all allowable or unallowable expenses.

The sponsoring Division determines the appropriate registration fee to be charged. The registration fee should be set at an amount that generates sufficient revenue to cover the specified items to be financed through registration fees, but not an amount that would lead to excess revenue.

Payment for registration fees from non-Laboratory employees can be made by check, cash or credit card. Checks should be payable to the "UC Regents."

It is at the discretion of the sponsoring Division to waive or reduce registration fees for speakers, invited guests, students or others.

Financial Policies and Procedures Manual

Refunds

The sponsoring Division may offer refunds to conference sponsors or participants. Conference Services approves and processes all refunds requested by the sponsoring Division.

Payment of Conference Expenses

Conference related invoices and receipts must be reviewed and approved by the sponsoring Division and Conference Services. The sponsoring Division should ensure that all allowable and unallowable expenses are separated and identified on the final invoices/receipts prior to submitting to Conference Services for payment.

Records Retention/Maintenance

Conference Services will maintain conference records in accordance with applicable DOE and Laboratory retention policies. The retention of conference records ranges from three years to permanent, depending upon the significance of the conference, the conference sponsor, and the relationship between the Laboratory and the sponsor (see [DOE Administrative Schedule 16, Administrative Management Records, Item 8 \(d\).](#)).

The following reflects specific records to be maintained by the responsible organization for each conference:

Conference Services

- Approved forms and documents from the Laboratory's [Event Approval Database](#)
- Copies of invoices paid by Conference Services for allowable and unallowable conference costs
- Documentation of all refunds requested by the sponsoring Division and processed by Conference Services
- Copies of allowable and/or unallowable payments made by third parties for costs contracted by the Laboratory
- Copies of collected revenue and registration payments (checks, cash receipts, credit card payments, and resource adjustment documentation) if applicable
- Documentation of closing account reconciliation

Financial Policies and Procedures Manual

Sponsoring Division

- Copies of paid invoices for both allowable and unallowable conference costs
- Approved copy of the Laboratory Sponsored Conference Approval Request Workbook
- Copies of contractual agreements approved by Conference Services

Glossary

- **Conference Management System (CMS):** The DOE central database used to compile data, generate reports, and view proposed and approved conferences \$10,000 or greater.
- **DOE Contracting Officer:** The Laboratory's DOE Contracting Officer is located at the Berkeley DOE Site Office.
- **Event:** Any formal activity that involves the dissemination or exchange of trade, business, professional or technical information with employees or peers.
- **Incidental:** Minor or subordinate in significance or nature; i.e., secondary.
- **Laboratory-Hosted Meeting:** An event or activity conducted at Laboratory expense using federal funds, during which Laboratory employees, supplemental labor employees, and/or visitors hold work-related discussions, exchange or disseminate technical information, or conduct structured training.
- **Official Travel** (per [Travel Policy](#)):
 - **Domestic:** Travel within United States and its possessions, or travel from a foreign country to the United States.
 - **Foreign:** Travel from the United States to a foreign country (including Canada and Mexico) and return, or travel between foreign countries.

Authority

- [Department of Energy \(DOE\) Order 110.3A](#)
- [DOE Acquisition Regulation Letter, No. AL-2005-12](#)
- [DOE Administrative Schedule 16, Administrative Management Records, Item 8 \(d\).](#)
- DOE Contract 31

Financial Policies and Procedures Manual

Contacts

- [Conference Services hotline](#)
- Manager, Operations