

## **Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory Conference Sponsorship Revised October 2011**

### **OVERVIEW**

This document outlines the policy and 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, a Conference Management Point of Contact (POC) has been assigned from the Accounting Division to assist and guide hosts in following the proper procedures.

Sponsorship or co-sponsorship is defined as having some control over the conduct of the conference. This includes influence over costs, venue choice, and/or program content of the proposed conference, and either having some financial responsibility for the conference or providing non-monetary, in-kind services to the conference. PPPL sponsored conferences may be conducted away from the Laboratory premises and/or may include participants who are not employees of PPPL.

This policy is applicable to all PPPL sponsored conferences with 30 or more participants and those PPPL sponsored conferences with less than 30 participants for which there are DOE allowable food charges or DOE unallowable expenses are included in the registration fee. No approvals are required for PPPL sponsored conferences with less than 30 participants for which there are no DOE allowable food charges or no DOE unallowable expenses are included in the registration fee.

In addition, there are certain types of meetings that are excluded from the formal conference sponsorship procedure. An explanation of each exclusion category, as well as examples of which types of meetings qualify for a specific exclusion, is provided in Attachment I. The exclusion listing may also be found on the Conference Management Website located on the Employee Services Homepage.

### **POLICY**

A Conference Sponsorship Approval Request Form (Attachments II-A and II-B) must be prepared by the conference host for all PPPL sponsored conferences that meet the applicability criteria above. The conference approval forms are also available on the Conference Management website. The form must be submitted to the Conference

Management Point of Contact (POC) at least 90 calendar days prior to the expected start date of the conference. The POC will perform the following actions after receiving the form:

- Prepare a site selection analysis.
- Develop a cost estimate for the conference.
- Calculate a recommended registration fee which distinguishes between allowable and unallowable costs, ensuring that food and refreshment costs are in compliance with PPPL policies.
- Track the conference form to ensure it is approved in a timely manner.

The approvals required for PPPL sponsored conferences are as follows:

- Conferences where it is estimated that 30 or more participants will attend require approval of the Conference Management POC, the Planning and Control Division, the cognizant Department Head and the Director's Office. Attachment II-A should be completed for these conferences.
- Conferences with less than 30 participants for which there are DOE allowable food charges or DOE unallowable expenses are included in the conference costs require approval of the Conference Management POC, the Planning and Control Division and the Business Operations Office (Head, Business Operations or Head, Accounting Division). Attachment II-B should be completed for these conferences.
- A Conference Sponsorship Approval Request Form is not required for conferences with less than 30 participants for which there are no DOE allowable food charges or DOE unallowable expenses included in the conference costs.
- A Conference Exclusion Form (Attachment VII) must be completed and approved by the Planning and Control Division, the Travel Office and the Head, Business Operations for any meetings excluded from conference sponsorship but hosted by PPPL where the estimated number of attendees is 30 or more.

The Conference Sponsorship Approval Request Form should be submitted to the Conference Management POC prior to obtaining any approvals. Upon review and approval by the POC (for completeness and cost reasonability), the form will be circulated to the other approvers for review and approvals. Attachment III 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 VI).

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 V).

## **Procedure**

1. Periodically the POC will send out a call for conferences being sponsored by PPPL which meet the applicability criteria to the Planning and Control (P&C) Division.
2. The P&C Division will complete the spreadsheet (in Attachment IV) with all anticipated sponsored conferences for the coming one-year period (at a minimum) and submit it to the POC.
3. The POC will enter general information into required Conference Sponsorship Approval Request Forms (see Attachments II-A and II-B) for conferences not yet submitted for approval and send them to the Conference Hosts for completion.
4. The Conference Host should complete the Conference Sponsorship Approval Request Form and return it to the POC. The POC will prepare a site selection analysis, develop a conference cost estimate and recommend a registration fee which distinguishes allowable and unallowable costs.
5. After the Conference Management POC has reviewed the Conference Sponsorship Approval Request Form, it will be forwarded to the P&C Division for review and approval. The P&C Division will review the form to ensure that it is complete and that all of the information, including the costs proposed to be incurred to hold the conference, are reasonable.
6. After the P&C Division approves the conference request, it will be forwarded to the 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.
7. Following Department Head approval the conference request form will be forwarded to the Director's Office for approval. After approving, the Director's Office will return the Conference Sponsorship Approval Request Form to the POC for further processing.

The POC will provide assistance and guidance to conference hosts regarding the various steps that must be completed to host a conference (e.g., site selection, developing a registration fee, etc.). Conference hosts may contact the POC for a further explanation of these steps.

NOTE: For conferences with less than 30 participants for which there are DOE allowable food charges, or DOE unallowable expenses are included in the registration fee, steps 6 and 7 are not required.

## Attachment I

### Exclusions

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

1. Formal, structured training programs, including seminars held specifically for training purposes and when an employee is attending a conference for training purposes only.  
NOTE: Training is an event that includes all the following characteristics:
  - The event's purpose is educational or instructional; the event has specific objectives to improve knowledge, skills, and abilities;
  - The content of the event will be used to improve the performance of employees and/or organizations and assist in achieving the organization's mission and performance goals.
  - The organization will benefit from the development that its personnel derive from attending the event and
  - More than half the time is scheduled for a planned, organized exchange of information between the presenters and the audience. These exchanges generally take place in a classroom-style setting.
2. Activities concerning work not funded by the DOE, such as work for others. Examples include other federal agencies such as NASA and non-federal sponsors such as universities.
3. Meetings that do not require overnight travel.
4. Contract pre-proposal, bid opening and negotiations. Examples include any pre-award vendor visits or pre-bid meetings by vendors/organizations or the DOE.
5. Public hearings and associated briefings. Examples include EA/PSAR/IFSAR meetings or other environmental public meetings.
6. Audit, inspection and investigation activities. Examples include vendor inspection visits, vendor audits and all audits conducted by external audit agencies.
7. DOE technical program/project peer/business reviews. Examples include formal program or project reviews of DOE sponsored programs or projects. This exclusion also includes PAC meetings, formal peer reviews, formal business reviews, etc.
8. Routine events of DOE and/or DOE contractor personnel working in the same field, on the same project, or at the same location where the purpose of the event is to discuss the status of work being performed for the DOE, such as discussing solutions to common problems and issues. Included are DOE technical/ business program, project, or peer reviews; routine meetings of functional experts such as financial, procurement, or HR managers; and meetings of technical staff to discuss execution of work being funded by the DOE.

Conference Sponsorship Approval Request Form for 30 or more Participants

**I. General Information**

**Date of Request:**

**Requested by:**

**Sponsoring Organization:**

**Co-Sponsoring Organization(s):**

**Conference Organizer:**

**Name and Title:**

**Phone Number:**

**Conference Title:**

**Conference Date(s):**

**Conference Location: (Include a rationale for the location chosen, cost comparisons for alternative locations, and a statement about possible security concerns if applicable.)**

**Purpose and Objectives: (This section should include one paragraph that summarizes the conference and one paragraph that states how holding the conference will benefit DOE and fulfill the mission of the lab.)**

**Impact Statement: (Provide a one paragraph explanation of the impact to the lab if the conference is not held.)**

**Estimated Total Number of DOE-Funded Conference Attendees:**

**DOE Employees (HQ): Traveling Non-Traveling**  
FM  
HR  
etc.

**DOE Employees (Field):**  
CH  
AL  
etc.

**Contractor Employees (HQ):**

**Contractor Employees (Field):**  
PPPL  
etc.

**Others: (please clarify which organizations these attendees are coming from)**

**TOTAL DOE FUNDED ATTENDEES:**

**Estimated Total Number of non-DOE-Funded Conference Attendees: (please clarify which organizations these attendees are coming from).**

**II. Financial Information**

**Travel and Per Diem Costs: (This number should only include the costs for the host organization. Please also provide a cost breakdown/explanation)**

**TOTAL TRAVEL & PER DIEM COSTS:**

**Other Expenses: (please provide an explanation for each applicable segment)**

**Logistics (facility arrangements):**

**Supplies and support:**

**Equipment:**

**Other: (provide breakdown and explanation of any costs in this segment)**

**TOTAL OTHER EXPENSES:**

**Total Estimated DOE Costs:**

**Estimated Cost Recovery Revenue:**

**Estimated Co-Sponsor Costs:**

**Potential PPPL Liability (Includes penalty/occupancy related costs)**

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**P&C Officer**

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**Department Head**

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**Director's Office**

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**Conference Management POC**

Attachment II-B

**Conference Sponsorship Approval Request Form for less than 30 Participants  
(DOE Allowable Food Cost or DOE unallowable expenses are part of  
the registration fee)**

**I. General Information**

**Date of Request:**

**Requested By:**

**Sponsoring Organization:**

**Co-Sponsoring Organization(s):**

**Conference Organizer:**

**Name and Title:**

**Phone Number:**

**Conference Title:**

**Conference Date(s):**

**Conference Location: (Include a rationale for the location chosen, cost comparisons for alternative locations, and a statement about possible security concerns if applicable.)**

**Purpose and Objectives: (This section should include one paragraph that summarizes the conference and one paragraph that states how holding the conference will benefit DOE and fulfill the mission of the lab.)**

**II. Financial Information (Estimates Only)**

**DOE Contract Allowable Conference Related Costs:**

**Logistics (facility arrangements):**

**Supplies and support:**

**Equipment:**

**Allowable Food:**

**Other: (please provide an explanation for each applicable segment)**

**TOTAL DOE CONTRACT ALLOWABLE COSTS:**

**Unallowable (Non-Contract) Conference Related Costs:**

**Unallowable Food:**

**Other: (provide breakdown and explanation of any costs in this segment)**

**TOTAL NON-CONTRACT COSTS:**

**Registration Costs:**

**Conference Related Allowable Costs:**

**# of Attendees:**

**Allowable Registration Fee per Attendee:**

**Non-Contract Costs:**

**# of Attendees:**

**Non-Contract Registration Fee per Attendee:**

**Total Estimated DOE Costs:**

**Estimated Cost Recovery Revenue:**

**Estimated Co-Sponsor Costs:**

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**P&C Division**

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**Business Operations**

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**Conference Management Point of Contact**

## Attachment III

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?

### **Support Contractor Performance:**

What assignments will the contractor perform? Do the contractor's responsibilities include any government functions such as exercising discretionary authority or making final value judgments that affect the day-to-day or long term development, execution, and evaluation of government programs?

### **Estimated Support Costs:**

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

CONFERENCE SPONSORSHIP WORKSHEET

Attachment IV

Conference Host(s)	Conference Title	Conference Date	Conference Location	Purpose & Objectives (optional)	Estimated # of Attendees

Attachment V

**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 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.
  - The type and frequency of refreshments served (e.g., coffee breaks, etc.) and the total costs.
  - 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:
    - 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).
    - A continental breakfast served prior to the start of the meeting would generally be considered unallowable.
    - 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.

- o 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
  - o 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:
- 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](http://www.gsa.gov/mie)), the cost of the dinner provided at a conference cannot exceed \$43.50 (\$29.00 x 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. Examples are listed below.
  - 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.
  - 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 x 25%) per day. Cost for refreshments in excess of this amount will be unallowable. Examples are listed below.
  - 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. Reasons may be given for consideration.

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 pursuant to DOE Order 110.3A and PPPL's Conference Sponsorship Procedure. As a result, the cost of the meals and refreshments at PPPL "business meetings" are unallowable.**

Meals example:

A working lunch at a PPPL conference hosted here with 100 attendees of which 25 PPPL employees and students are attending. The local M&IE Lunch value is \$15.00. If lunch was \$2,000.00 what breakout occurs? The M&IE at PPPL is \$61.00.

On site

$\$2,000.00/100$  Attendees =  $\$20.00$ /person. Max value is  $\$15.00*150\% = \$22.50$ .  
The  $\$2,000.00$  is all Allowable.

Same example at a PPPL conference in Sacramento, CA (Same M&IE) (PPPL employees deduct lunch from their Travel Voucher)

$100*(\$20.00) = \$2,000.00$  All Allowable

Same example Off Site at the Wyndham

The  $\$2,000.00$  is all Allowable

A working lunch at a PPPL conference hosted here with 100 attendees of which 25 PPPL employees and students are attending. The local M&IE Lunch value is \$15.00. If lunch was \$2,500.00 what breakout occurs?

On Site

Max value is  $\$15.00*150\% = \$22.50$

$\$2,500.00/100$  Attendees =  $\$25.00$ /person, exceeds policy by  $\$2.50$  per person. .  
 $100*\$22.50 = \$2,250.00$  is Allowable at Max      $\$250.00$  is Unallowable over Max

Same example at a PPPL conference in Sacramento, CA (Same M&IE)

$100*\$22.50 = \$2,250.00$  is Allowable at Max      $\$250.00$  is Unallowable over Max

Same example Off Site at the Wyndham

$100*\$22.50 = \$2,250.00$  is Allowable at Max      $\$250.00$  is Unallowable over Max

Refreshments example:

A PPPL conference hosted here with 100 attendees of which 25 PPPL employees and students are attending. The local M&IE rate is \$61.00. What breakout needs to happen for refreshments that cost \$1,400.00 per day?

On Site

$\$61.00*25\% = \$15.25$ /person

$\$1,400.00/100$  attendees =  $\$14.00$  per person      $\$1,400.00$  is Allowable

Same example at a PPPL conference in Sacramento, CA (M&IE)

$\$1,400.00/100$  attendees =  $\$14.00$  per person      $\$1,400.00$  is Allowable

Same example Off Site at the Wyndham

\$1,400.00/100 attendees = \$14.00 per person      \$1,400.00 is Allowable

A PPPL conference hosted here with 100 attendees of which 25 PPPL employees and students are attending. The local M&IE rate is \$61.00. What breakout needs to happen for refreshments that cost \$2,000.00 per day?

On Site  
 \$61.00\*25% = \$15.25/person

\$2,000.00/100 attendees = \$20.00 per person, exceeds policy by \$4.75 per person  
 100\*\$15.25 = \$1,525.00 as Allowable      \$100\*\$4.75 = \$475.00 as Unallowable over policy.

Same example at a PPPL conference in Sacramento, CA (Same M&IE)  
 \$2,000.00/100 attendees = \$20.00 per person, exceeds policy by \$4.75 per person  
 100\*\$15.25 = \$1,525.00 as Allowable      \$100\*\$4.75 = \$475.00 as Unallowable over policy.

Same example Off Site at the Wyndham  
 \$2,000.00/100 attendees = \$20.00 per person, exceeds policy by \$4.75 per person  
 100\*\$15.25 = \$1,525.00 as Allowable      \$100\*\$4.75 = \$475.00 as Unallowable over policy.

**Food Policy  
 Daily Maximum Values**

M&IE	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Refreshments
\$ 46.00	\$ 10.50	\$ 16.50	\$ 34.50	\$ 11.50
\$ 51.00	\$ 12.00	\$ 18.00	\$ 39.00	\$ 12.75
\$ 56.00	\$ 13.50	\$ 19.50	\$ 43.50	\$ 14.00
\$ 61.00	\$ 15.00	\$ 22.50	\$ 46.50	\$ 15.25
\$ 66.00	\$ 16.50	\$ 24.00	\$ 51.00	\$ 16.50
\$ 71.00	\$ 18.00	\$ 27.00	\$ 54.00	\$ 17.75

**Attachment VI**

**Conference Approval Risk Authorization Form**

**Date:**  
**Cost Center:**  
**Conference Title:**  
**Risk Authority Requested:**  
**Risk Period:**  
**Justification:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Conference Organizer**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**P&C Officer**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Department Head**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Head of Business Operations**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Director's Office**

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

Attachment VII

**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.)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**P&C Officer**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Travel Office Manager**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Head, Business Operations**