Events and Meals Policy

Brief

<table>
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<th>Events and Meals Policy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Publication date:</td>
<td>9/13/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective date:</td>
<td>1/11/2017</td>
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BRIEF

Policy Summary

This policy describes the requirements for:

- **Attending an event**: This includes attendance at conferences, meetings, retreats, seminars, symposiums, or similar activities that include travel.
- **Hosting an event**: This includes events where Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (the Laboratory) is serving as the host or co-host, or when the Laboratory plans and manages an event.
- **Sponsorships**: This includes events where the Laboratory provides monetary support to an event host or allows the use of a U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) or Laboratory logo.
- **Working meals**: Meals and/or refreshments provided while conducting Laboratory business, which may be as part of attending an event or hosting an event, or part of a smaller meeting.

Costs incurred for the activities above must comply with the terms of DOE Contract 31, and with the requirements set forth in applicable DOE guidance/requirements and other federal regulations, where applicable.

Who Should Read This Policy

- Employees and non-employees who attend events
- Employees who participate in the hosting of events
- Employees who wish to sponsor an external conference
- Employees who provide working meals as part of an event or meeting
- Employees who serve in the division approver roles

To Read the Full Policy, Go To

The POLICY tab on this wiki page

Contact Information

Conference Services Lead or ConferenceServices@lbl.gov

Policy

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POLICY

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A. Purpose

This policy describes the requirements for:

- **Attending an event** — This includes attendance at conferences, meetings, retreats, seminars, symposiums, or certain activities that include travel
- **Hosting an event** — This includes events where the Laboratory is serving as the host or co-host, or when the Laboratory plans and manages an event
- **Sponsorships** — This includes events where the Laboratory provides monetary support to an event host or allows the use of a DOE or Laboratory logo
- **Working Meals** — Meals provided while conducting Laboratory business, which may be as part of attending an event or hosting an event, or part of a smaller meeting

The word “you” in this document refers to you, the attendee, event host, etc. The term “division” referenced throughout this policy includes Associate Laboratory Directors (ALDs), divisions, departments, and all working units within those organizations.

Costs incurred for the activities above must comply with the terms of DOE Contract 31, and with the requirements set forth in applicable DOE guidance/requirements and other federal regulations, where applicable.

B. Persons Affected

This policy applies to all employees. You are responsible for becoming familiar with the rules and guidelines and complying with policy requirements outlined in this document.

C. Exceptions

Requests for exceptions to this policy may be emailed to the Conference Services Lead by the Event/Conference Chairperson or Division Business Manager.

*Any request for an exception to policy that includes guidance expressly stated in the DOE Acquisition Letter AL 2015-09, Conference Related Activities and Spending, requires approval by the Laboratory Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and the DOE Contracting Officer. Any other requests for an exception to policy require, at a minimum, approval by the Laboratory Conference Services Lead.*

Requests for exceptions must be submitted prior to the event/conference. The request must outline the circumstances that support the exception and contain relevant documentation.

Submission of an exception request does not mean the exception has been granted. Each exception request is researched to determine allowability, and responses are provided back to the requestor and Business Manager. The typical turnaround time is three to five business days. On occasion, exception requests may require additional research and senior management or other departmental review and determination. In these instances, the turnaround time varies.

D. Events and Meals Policy
How to Use This Document

There are many ways to locate information in this document:

- Use the Table of Contents to find the subject you are looking for
- Use the hyperlinks embedded in the text to locate information about a particular policy
- Use Control + F on your computer keyboard to search for a term

1. Attending an Event

1.1 Overview

The DOE has established requirements and guidelines for Laboratory participation in events. These requirements ensure good stewardship and appropriate use of federal funds. To comply, the Laboratory is required to:

- Review participation by employees and non-employees (e.g., affiliates and guests) prior to the event
- Ensure that approval and reporting is performed as required by DOE

Conference Services coordinates this process in partnership with Laboratory divisions. Attendees (employees and non-employee attendees (e.g., affiliates and guests) may attend events that are directly and programmatically related to the Laboratory mission as defined in Contract 31, and that have been approved in accordance with Contract 31 and DOE guidance. Attendees must request approval to attend an event from Conference Services.

- Costs to participate in the event may not be incurred until approval is received.
- If approval is not obtained, the attendee is not allowed to participate in the event. If an attendee goes to an event without proper approval, the situation (1) will be escalated to the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) and division management and (2) reimbursement of expenses may be denied.

1.2 What Is an Event?

Events include conferences, meetings, retreats, seminars, symposiums, or certain activities that include travel and:

- Registration and/or registration fees
- A published agenda
- Scheduled speakers and/or panel discussions
- Exhibitor and/or sponsorship fees

Individual events may qualify as conferences without meeting all of the key features listed above, but generally meet some of them. Examples of events that require advance approval include:

- Participation in professional society meetings
- Workshops sponsored by others in which Laboratory employees attend or participate, including as speakers
- Workshops or forums at which DOE seeks to “showcase” programs to the public or provide the opportunity for an "exchange of information" or sharing of "best practices" with other entities (whether federal or non-federal)
- Meetings to develop “best practices” or update others regarding developments in the DOE complex
- Some DOE programmatic meetings

The following are the types of events that may be exempt from DOE approval requirements. Due to the complexity of interpreting exemptions, division consultation with Conference Services is necessary so that the appropriate assistance can be provided in evaluating the event against DOE requirements.

- Statutory Oversight Meetings, such as investigations, inspections, audits, or non-conference planning site visits
- Internal DOE Business Meetings at a Federal Facility to consider internal agency business matters
- International Cooperation Engagement — bilateral and multilateral international cooperation engagement, such as delegation visits from other countries or international universities
- Other DOE/Federal Meetings, such as:
  - DOE Program Kickoff and Review meetings (including those for grants and contracts)
  - Advisory Committee and Federal Advisory Committee meetings
  - Solicitation/Funding Opportunity Announcement Review Board meetings
  - Peer Review/Objective Review Panel meetings
  - Evaluation Panel/Board meetings

Approval requirements are determined based on the type of event:

- **DOE Sponsored** — hosted or sponsored by a DOE program or DOE contractor
- **Non-DOE Sponsored** — hosted by an external organization for which no DOE or Laboratory funds have been provided as "sponsorship," and no use of official DOE or Laboratory seals/logos has been authorized
Events that do not require approval include the following:

- In-person training; however, if the training is held as part of a larger conference, it is considered an event and requires approval.
- Meetings where you are doing work (as opposed to sharing information). For example, if staff is traveling to another lab to conduct an experiment or decide on how a DOE project should be managed, that is considered “work” and not an event.

### 1.3 Request Process

#### 1.3.1 Key Points

Employees who intend to attend an event, or send a non-employee attendee paid for by the Laboratory, should request approval as soon as they are aware of the event. Laboratory employees attending an event that takes place at the Laboratory or locally must also request authorization to attend.

For those events that require DOE approval, attendance can "lock" (i.e., be restricted for new attendees) six months to one year in advance. Once DOE "locks" the event, no new attendees can be added. If a possibility of attendance exists, attendees should submit for approval. Your request does not commit you to attend, but ensures that you are not precluded from attending once the event is "locked" by DOE.

Employees must not incur costs or make financial commitments (i.e., travel arrangements) until they have received Conference Services’ approval to attend. Conference Services will provide the division’s Point of Contact (POC) with confirmation or denial of approval. Questions about approval status should be directed to division POCs.

#### 1.3.2 Process for Submitting Request

| Division | Using their division request process, the attendee submits his or her request for approval to attend. Employee attendees must provide their division POC with the:
| --- | --- |
|  | • Official name of the event
|  | • Event location
|  | • Event dates
|  | • Conference description and conference website URL (if a website does not exist, an invitation letter to the attendee with event details can be submitted)
|  | • Travel and registration costs
|  | If the employee is submitting on behalf of a non-employee attendee (e.g., affiliates and guests), he or she must submit the name of the individual, the home organization, and the business purpose for attendance, in addition to the items listed above.

| Conference Services | Conference Services will determine the applicable approval steps based on:
| --- | --- |
|  | • Whether the event is DOE or non-DOE-sponsored
|  | • Whether the event is exempt from reporting
|  | • Total net DOE costs of the event
|  | • Total Laboratory costs

If approval is not required, Conference Services will provide the division’s POC with direction to notify the attendee that he or she may participate in the event.

If approval is required, Conference Services will coordinate approval with DOE.

### 1.4 Approval Process

#### 1.4.1 DOE-Sponsored Event Approval

DOE-sponsored events with estimated net DOE complex-wide expenses over $100,000 but under $500,000 require approval by a DOE Under Secretary.

DOE-sponsored events with estimated net DOE complex-wide expenses over $500,000 are prohibited unless a waiver is granted by the DOE Secretary.

Conference Services will ensure necessary approvals are obtained.
1.4.2 Non-DOE-Sponsored Event Approvals

Non-DOE-sponsored events with over $100,000 in estimated Laboratory costs require Laboratory Deputy Director approval.

- Conference Services compiles the Laboratory attendee list based on division inputs. Costs are reviewed for appropriateness and any questions are brought to the division's attention for review and revision, if needed.
- Conference Services provides a consolidated list of attendees and their estimated event costs to the Laboratory Deputy Director for review and approval.
- The Laboratory Deputy Director may suggest or require changes in the attendee list. Conference Services notifies the division of approval and/or revisions to the attendee list.
- An attendee submitted after Laboratory Deputy Director approval may request an exception to attend with division management approval. Exception requests must be submitted to Conference Services, which coordinates review and approval with the Laboratory Deputy Director, as appropriate.

1.4.3 Approval to Attend

Once Conference Services has received DOE or Laboratory Deputy Director approval for the event, Conference Services provides the division's POC with confirmation of approval.

1.4.4 Disapproval of Request

If the attendee’s request to attend an event is denied by DOE or the Laboratory Deputy Director, Conference Services notifies the division's POC of the disapproval.

1.5 Travel and Conference Registration

- Approved attendees may book travel and registration.
- Attendees must ensure that travel arrangements (e.g., airfare/transportation, lodging, and meals) adhere to the requirements in the Laboratory’s Travel Policy.
- Events held in a foreign location require a separate DOE approval for foreign travel. Approval for travel via the Foreign Travel Management System does not constitute DOE approval to attend or host an event or conference.

2. Sponsorship of an External Event

2.1 Overview

Sponsorship of non-DOE events is generally discouraged by DOE. The Laboratory may sponsor external events in limited circumstances. Divisions must request approval to sponsor an external event:

- Costs to sponsor an external event may not be incurred until approval is received.
- If approval is not obtained, the sponsorship is not allowed.

2.2 What Is Sponsorship of an External Event?

Sponsorship of an external event occurs if the Laboratory:

- Contributes funds from a DOE funding source: contributing DOE-provided funds, including indirect funds, of any amount for an event, which includes funding to help plan, promote, or implement the event. Examples include purchasing “sponsorship” packages for a conference or providing funding to rent a conference venue.
- Authorizes use of the Laboratory or DOE logo: authorizing the use of a DOE seal, logo, or trademark, including any of the Laboratory’s logos, to promote an event. Examples include the use of the Laboratory logo on a conference’s website, brochures, and programs. For more information, see the Use of Berkeley Lab Name, Logo, Letterhead, and Brand policy.

Providing funds to an event host to cover participation costs may be exempt from DOE approval requirements if the funds are:

- To cover conference participation costs for non-DOE/non-Laboratory attendees (e.g., students, retirees, or speakers) and
- The total amount provided to the sponsor does not exceed $10,000

Consideration should be given to the expected benefit to the Laboratory when using this exemption.

Due to the complexity of interpreting DOE requirements, Divisions must request approval to cover participation costs so that Conference Services
can evaluate the request against DOE requirements.

Examples of activities that do not represent a sponsorship include:

- **Laboratory staff participation**, specifically:
  - Serving as an honorary chairperson
  - Participating in planning committees, review panels, or panel discussions
- Use of the Laboratory name to denote the employer of conference attendees (including committee and review panel participants)
- Speaking or presenting at a conference and the related use of DOE/Laboratory logos on material created for presentations and papers distributed at the event
- Booth rental and the related use of DOE/Laboratory logos on booths and in material created for booths
- Contribution of non-DOE funds (Strategic Partnership Program [SPP]) to an event host. In this instance, the Laboratory may not authorize the use of DOE or Laboratory logos.
- Transferring excess registration fees to future conference hosts

Note 1: Participation is subject to approval requirements enumerated in the "Attending an Event" portion of this policy.

### 2.3 Request Process

#### 2.3.1 Key Points

Divisions must not incur costs or make financial commitments to sponsor an event, nor authorize the use of DOE/Laboratory logos, until they have received Conference Services' approval. Conference Services will provide the division's POC with confirmation or denial of approval. Questions about approval status should be directed to the division POC.

#### 2.3.2 Process for Submitting Request

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>The division must provide the following information for (a) the sponsorship request or (b) funds provided to event hosts to cover event participation costs:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Conference name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Conference start and end dates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Conference description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Conference location (city, state, and country)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Conference website — This is helpful for obtaining the most accurate information about the conference.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Purpose of sponsorship funds (e.g., purchase of sponsorship package, rental of event venue, and conference participation costs for non-DOE/non-Laboratory attendees)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sponsorship amount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Justification documenting the benefit to the Laboratory</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Requests must be approved by the division director or his/her designee.

Requests must be made through the division POC, who will coordinate with Conference Services to manage submission of the request to DOE.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conference Services</th>
<th>Conference Services will determine the applicable approval steps based on whether the sponsorship is related to a DOE- or non-DOE-hosted event.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If approval is not required, Conference Services will provide the division's Point of Contact (POC) with direction to notify the division that it may proceed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If approval is required, Conference Services will coordinate approval with DOE.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2.4 Approval Process

#### 2.4.1 Sponsorship Provided to a DOE-Hosted Event

No approval is required for sponsorship of DOE-hosted conferences. However, participation is subject to approval requirements enumerated in the "Attending an Event" portion of this policy.
2.4.2 Sponsorship Provided to a Non-DOE-Hosted Event

Sponsorships to a non-DOE-hosted event will only be considered when:

- No DOE funds have been provided as "sponsorship," either directly from DOE or from a DOE contractor
- No use of an official DOE or DOE contractor seal/logo has been authorized

Conference Services submits the sponsorship request to DOE for preliminary approval. If preliminary approval is obtained, Conference Services then needs to validate with other DOE contractor sites that no DOE funds have been expended. Only when both conditions are met will the sponsorship be approved.

2.4.3 Approval to Sponsor an External Event

Once Conference Services has received DOE approval for the sponsorship, Conference Services provides the division's POC with confirmation of approval. Conference Services will send written instructions to the hosting organization stating that the sponsorship funds are only to be used for specifically designated allowable costs subject to validation and/or audit.

2.4.4 Disapproval of Request

If DOE denies the sponsorship request, Conference Services will notify the division's POC of the disapproval.

2.5 Making the Sponsorship Payment

Once sponsorship is approved, the division should prepare and submit a Request for Issuance of Check (eRFIC). The eRFIC request must include documentation from the event host supporting the disbursement (e.g., an invoice or sponsorship agreement). For more information, see the Request for Issuance of Check policy.

3. Laboratory-Hosted Events

3.1 Overview

This section of the policy applies to events where the Laboratory is serving as the event host or co-host. The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) has established requirements and guidelines for Laboratory-hosted or co-hosted events. These requirements ensure good stewardship and appropriate use of federal funds. To comply, the Laboratory is required to:

- Review hosted or co-hosted events, prior to the event occurring
- Ensure that approval and reporting is performed as required by DOE

Conference Services coordinates this process in partnership with Laboratory divisions.

Divisions may host or co-host events that are directly and programmatically related to the Laboratory mission as defined in Contract 31 and that have been approved in accordance with Contract 31 and DOE guidance.

Divisions must request approval from Conference Services to host or co-host an event:

- Costs to host or co-host the event may not be incurred until approval is received.
- If approval is not obtained, the division is not allowed to host/co-host the event.

The Hosted Event Life-Cycle includes the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-event activities</th>
<th>1. Consultation between Conference Services and the Division</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Preliminary event details and approval</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. DOE approval</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Vendor sourcing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Finalize event details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hold event</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-event activities</td>
<td>6. Payment of event costs and closeout</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2 What Is an Event?

Events include conferences, meetings, retreats, seminars, symposiums, or certain activities that include travel and:

- Registration and/or registration fees
- A published agenda
- Scheduled speakers and/or panel discussions
- Exhibitor and/or sponsorship fees

Individual events may qualify as conferences without meeting all of the key features listed above, but generally meet some of them.

Examples of events that require advance approval include:

- Workshops or forums at which the Laboratory seeks to “showcase” programs to the public or provide the opportunity for an “exchange of information” or sharing of “best practices” with other entities (whether federal or non-federal)
- Meetings to develop “best practices” or update others regarding developments in the DOE complex
- Federal Advisory Committee meetings, as they are advisory in nature and related to how the DOE does its work, as opposed to actually carrying out the work

The following are the types of events that may be exempt from DOE approval requirements. Due to the complexity of interpreting exemptions, division consultation with Conference Services is necessary so that the appropriate assistance can be provided in evaluating the event against the DOE requirements.

- Statutory Oversight Meetings, such as investigations, inspections, audits, or non-conference planning site visits
- Internal DOE Business Meetings at a Federal Facility to consider internal agency business matters
- International Cooperation Engagement — bilateral and multilateral international cooperation engagement, such as delegation visits from other countries or international universities
- Other DOE/Federal Meetings, such as:
  - DOE Program Kickoff and Review meetings (including those for grants and contracts)
  - Advisory Committee and Federal Advisory Committee meetings
  - Peer Review/Objective Review Panel meetings
  - Evaluation Panel/Board meetings

3.3 What Sources of Funds Can Be Used for a Hosted or Co-Hosted Event?

DOE and Strategic Partnership Program (SPP) funds can be used to host or co-host an event when the work scope related to the funding is in alignment with the purpose of the event. In addition, Laboratory indirect funding can be used if the event is consistent with the purpose of the indirect pool.

In addition, the following sources of funds can be collected and used to support the hosted event.

| Registration fees | • A registration fee may be charged to event attendees to offset the costs of an event.  
|                  | • The hosting division determines the appropriate registration fee in partnership with Conference Services. 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.  
|                  | • Registration fees may only be used to cover allowable costs.  

| Special events/excursion fees | • Separate fees may be collected for optional, unallowable activities (e.g., entertainment and excursions). Fees must be collected separate from the registration fee and are segregated in the financial system. Special event/excursion fees may be used only to cover unallowable costs.  
|                             | • Costs incurred for unallowable event costs must be conducted in a reasonable manner, minimizing excessive costs and the appearance of extravagance. |
| Exhibitor fees                                                                 | • An exhibitor is a party who participates in the event to display products and services that relate to the purpose of the event.  
• The division should coordinate with Conference Services to determine the appropriate amount to charge for exhibitor fees.  
• Exhibitor fees collected can be used for allowable or unallowable costs. The allocation of allowable or unallowable funds from exhibitor fees is determined by the division and is included in the event budget.  
• Sponsorship from other federal agencies, DOE labs, or DOE entities should be used only for allowable costs.  
• Exhibitor fees collected to cover unallowable costs will be segregated in the financial system.  
• Costs incurred for unallowable event costs must be conducted in a reasonable manner, minimizing excessive costs and the appearance of extravagance. |
| External sponsorships                                                          | • External sponsorships are contributions received from outside organizations to be used for general event costs or a specific event activity.  
• The Event Sponsorship Agreement form is used to manage external sponsorships.  
• External sponsorships can be used to support allowable or unallowable costs, in accordance with the restrictions set forth by the sponsor. The allocation of allowable or unallowable funds from sponsorships is determined by the division and is included in the event budget.  
• Sponsorship from other federal agencies, DOE labs, or DOE entities should be used only for allowable costs.  
• External sponsorships collected to cover unallowable costs will be segregated in the financial system.  
• Costs incurred for unallowable event costs must be conducted in a reasonable manner, minimizing excessive costs and the appearance of extravagance. |

Laboratory sponsorship of an event is covered in section 2 of this policy.

### 3.4 What Are Allowable and Unallowable Event Costs?

When hosting or co-hosting an event, DOE, SPP, and Laboratory indirect cost pools can only be used for allowable costs. Additional information on the allowability of costs can be found in the Cost Allowability Policy and the Allowable/Unallowable Reference Guide on the Conference Services website.

As noted in section 3.3 above, certain non-DOE sources of funds can be used for unallowable costs in limited circumstances.

Divisions must exercise discretion and judgment in ensuring that event expenses are appropriate, necessary, and managed in a cost-effective manner.

**Allowable** event costs may include, but are not limited to:

- Meeting room rental
- Audio/visual equipment rental
- Program content (e.g., printed conference programs and published proceedings)
- Ground transportation (shuttle or coach services)
- Working meals, in accordance with section 4 of this policy
- Gratuities and service charges are allowable expenses but may not exceed 25% of the total expense
- Honoraria payments for speakers and invited affiliates must be processed in accordance with the Laboratory Non-Employee Payments (Affiliates and-or Visitors) policy.

Gratuities and service charges are allowable expenses but may not exceed 25% of the total expense.

**Unallowable** event costs may include, but are not limited to:

- Entertainment
- Promotional items and gifts
- Décor
- Non-working meals
- Alcoholic Beverages — the Laboratory’s policy on serving alcohol at Laboratory events provides additional details as to restrictions on serving (see the Serving Alcohol at Berkeley Lab Events policy)

### 3.5 Cost Allowability Crosswalk to Sources of Funds
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of funds</th>
<th>Allowable event costs</th>
<th>Unallowable event costs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DOE direct and indirect</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPP</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration fees</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special event/excursion fees</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibitor fees</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External sponsorship fees</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.6 Surplus Revenues and Deficits

Surplus event funds should be minimized when planning and budgeting the event. In the circumstance where third-party receipts (registration, exhibitor, and sponsorship fees) result in surplus funds, the following methodology applies:

1. If the event is recurring (e.g., an annual or biennial event) and there is an expectation that a portion of the surplus fees will be carried forward for use in the next occurrence of the event, the surplus funds may be forwarded to the subsequent host or retained for future use if the Laboratory is the subsequent host.
2. If funds were collected from exhibitors or sponsors and were originally identified for unallowable purposes, surplus funds will be used to offset allowable costs.
3. If the surplus funds are immaterial, the excess funds will be transferred to the Conference Reserve.
4. Excess funds will be refunded to the applicable third party (sponsors/exhibitors) who provided the funding.

The balance of the Conference Reserve will be utilized at the discretion of the Laboratory Deputy Director.

3.7 Hosted Event Life-Cycle

3.7.1 Consultation

The Conference Services team provides consultation and guidance to divisions in the planning of Laboratory-hosted events including:

- Budget creation
- Sourcing of event-related vendors:
  - Venue(s)
  - Guest room blocks (Divisions may book the Berkeley Lab Guest House directly.)
  - Catering and menu planning
  - Audio/visual
  - Ground transportation (shuttles and coaches)
  - Event equipment rental (tents, poster boards, tables, chairs, etc.)
- Registration website management

Please visit the Conference Services website to review the most current required lead times and service response times.

3.7.2 Preliminary Event Details and Approval

The Event Approval Database (EAD) captures the preliminary event details and is the repository for the agenda, attendee list, and budget for Laboratory-hosted and co-hosted events.

Laboratory-hosted and co-hosted events with an associated cost must be entered in the EAD. Events exceeding DOE mandated thresholds require additional lead times for DOE approval.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Events in excess of $75,000</th>
<th>Should be submitted as early in the planning process as possible. Events at this threshold level may reach the level requiring DOE approval. 6 – 9 months should be the expected lead time required.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If the planning process dictates a longer lead time, then divisions should factor in additional time for submission.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No DOE funds, including indirect funds, can be committed or spent, or contracts entered into until DOE approval, as applicable, is secured.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Events between $25,000 and $75,000
Events at this threshold level do not require DOE approval. 4 – 6 months should be the expected lead time required.

Events between $5,000 and $25,000
Events at this threshold level do not require DOE approval. 2 – 4 months should be the expected lead time required.

Events less than $5,000
Events at this threshold level do not require DOE approval. These events should be entered prior to the event occurring.

Note 2: All hosted and co-hosted events that have the potential to exceed $100,000 in total net DOE costs require submission to DOE for approval. Total net DOE costs include costs related to hosting the event as well as attendee travel for attendees throughout the DOE laboratory complex.

As each event is unique, divisions are strongly encouraged to submit events into the EAD as early as possible.

Information required in the EAD includes the following:

| Agenda | • Listed business topics  
| • If working meals are to be served during the event, the agenda should include specific topics to be addressed during food service. |
| Attendee list | • An attendee list with affiliation/home organization of each participant |
| Location | • Divisions are encouraged to conduct events on site whenever possible to minimize event costs.  
| • For any off-site event, the rationale for meeting off site must demonstrate that the decision to conduct the event off site was reasonable.  
| • For the purpose of the EAD, the term “on site” refers to Laboratory-owned or leased facilities located in the San Francisco Bay Area. |

Event budget
An event budget is composed of a cost budget and a revenue budget.

Cost budget:
• A cost budget is required for events with costs over $5,000.  
• Cost budgets include all costs associated with hosting or co-hosting the event, including the applicable burdens. Example costs include:
  • Venue(s)  
  • Working meals/catering  
  • Audio/visual  
  • Ground transportation (shuttles and coaches)  
  • Event equipment rental (tents, poster boards, tables, chairs, etc.)  
  • Speaker honoraria and travel

Revenue budget:
• A revenue budget is required for events that include registration fees, special event/excursion fees, exhibitor fees, or external sponsorship fees. The revenue budget assists in ensuring cash is appropriately segregated in the financial system.  
• The budget must be entered into the EAD using the template provided by Conference Services, available on the Conference Services website. For on-site “meals only” budgets, the food grid contained within the EAD is sufficient. For the purpose of the EAD, the term “on site” refers to Laboratory-owned or leased facilities located in the San Francisco Bay Area.  

As it relates to food service during the event, criteria identified in the “Working Meals” section of this policy must be adhered to for the costs to be allowable. Funds from other sources (e.g., exhibitor fees or external partnerships) may be used to cover the cost of food service deemed to be unallowable.

Estimated DOE attendee travel costs are needed to determine if DOE approval is necessary. The division is responsible for estimating:
• Airfare costs based on point of origin  
• Lodging at per diem  
• Meals not provided at the conference, at a per diem rate

Estimated attendee travel costs are not included in the event budget but are included in determining if DOE approval is necessary.

All events must be approved by the division approver and then by Conference Services.

3.7.3 DOE Approval

All hosted and co-hosted events that have the potential to exceed $100,000 in total net DOE costs require submission to the DOE for approval. Total net DOE costs include:
A list of bullet points:

- Costs related to hosting the event as well as attendee travel for attendees throughout the DOE laboratory complex
- Registrations, which offset the event costs and DOE travel costs

Working in partnership with the division, Conference Services will prepare the package required by DOE and work with DOE to facilitate approval.

**No DOE funds can be committed or spent or contracts entered into until DOE approval is secured.**

### 3.7.4 Vendor Sourcing

#### 3.7.4.1 Contract Management Requirements

Conference Services and Procurement are the only Laboratory departments authorized to source, negotiate, sign, and approve third-party contracts. Conference Services manages event-related third-party contracts, including but not limited to:

- Venue(s)
- Hotels
- Transportation
- Rentals
- Working meals, including Banquet Event Orders
  - For events where working meal costs are below $5,000, the division may arrange catering with the vendor directly.
  - Further requirements pertaining to working meals can be found in section 4, "Working Meals."

As it relates to unallowable activities that may be included in an event, the division consults with Conference Services to determine the appropriate sourcing mechanism.

**Division staff are not authorized to source or negotiate with vendors for event-related services on behalf of the Laboratory.**

For events requiring a contract or contracts, division staff must submit a request to Conference Services. Please visit the Conference Services website to review the most current required lead times and service response times. Preferred venues or vendors can be identified in the request.

#### 3.7.4.2 Off-Site Venue Selection

"Off-site" venues refer to non-Laboratory-owned or leased facilities. The University of California, Berkeley, campus building space is considered an off-site facility.

For events with 30 or more attendees, Conference Services performs a cost analysis comparing three venues and recommends the most appropriate site. Overall pricing (guest room, audio/visual services, etc.) and cost reasonableness are primary factors, but space function, proximity to transportation, audio/visual capabilities, and other factors are considered as part of the review process.

Any site visits to determine or select an off-site meeting venue require that a Conference Services Planner be in attendance.

### 3.7.5 Finalize Event Details

For events greater than $25,000, the division uploads the final agenda, attendee list, and budget to the EAD 30 days prior to the event.

### 3.7.6 Payment of Event Costs and Closeout

Payment of event costs is processed through the Laboratory's existing Pcard and Request for Issuance of Check (RFIC) processes.

- To ensure appropriate segregation of costs, Request for Issuance of Check (RFICs) for unallowable costs utilize a paper-based, manual process. Please see the Conference Services website for specifics.
- For working meals, the Meal Eligibility Form is required. The Meal Eligibility Form outlines actual participants, their affiliation, confirmation of 10% required external participation, and substantiation that the meal does not exceed meal per diems.
- Invoices submitted for payment from the unallowable project will not be paid if there are insufficient funds.

For events exceeding $25,000 in total Laboratory costs, vendor contracts, where applicable, will be reconciled by Conference Services against corresponding invoices prior to payment.

The division is responsible for closeout of the event within 90 days after the event is completed.

Event Closeout includes:

- Entering final costs in the EAD, to include an upload of detailed actual costs
- Uploading the final agenda and attendee list into the EAD
- For events exceeding $25,000 in total Laboratory costs, actual cost variances exceeding 10% of the budget must be explained in the EAD.

Subsequent to division event closeout, General Accounting will:
• Process disposition of event-related surplus funds in accordance with section 3.6 of this policy
• Close the unallowable activity related to the event

3.8 DOE-Required Event Cost Reporting

On an annual basis, the Laboratory is required to submit actual costs for certain DOE-selected events. Conference Services leads this process with inputs from divisions, as requested.

3.9 Co-Hosting an Event

Agreements for co-hosted events exceeding $25,000 in total Laboratory costs require appropriate documentation outlining the financial responsibilities of both the Laboratory and the co-host and must be obtained prior to significant costs being incurred. Significant changes to these agreements must also be appropriately documented. The Co-Host Agreement template should be used to document the partnership.

3.10 Other Hosted/Co-Hosted Event Requirements

• Events Held in Foreign Locations. Conferences held in foreign countries require separate approval. Additional information on foreign travel requirements can be found in the Laboratory Travel Policy. Approval for travel via the foreign travel approval process does not constitute DOE approval to host an event or conference.
• External (Non-Laboratory) Meeting Planning Services. Contracting of external meeting planning services requires Conference Services review and approval.
• Expenses Incurred for Event Management Staff Working During the Event. Laboratory staff performing event management functions at an event may be provided working meals, consistent with those working meals provided to event attendees. For purposes of calculating the external participation rate, event management staff should be excluded.
• Project/Activity Set Up and Funds Control
  • Segregating event costs assists in ensuring that (1) proper burdens are applied to events and (2) allowable and unallowable components of an event are properly accounted for. To properly segregate event costs, the hosting division must:
    • Open a separate activity for allowable costs related to the event
  • Request, from General Accounting, that an activity be opened for unallowable costs related to the event
    • The Division is responsible for ensuring that appropriate funding sources are used to cover unallowable costs. See further information in sections 3.3, 3.4, and 3.5 of this policy.
• Public Relations Events. When conducting any type of community event where information is released to the public, the Laboratory must comply with Contract 31 guidelines (Clause I.64). This requires advance coordination between Strategic Communications and the DOE Berkeley Site Office. Please contact Strategic Communications when planning this type of event.
• Registration Website. Conference Services will build, test, and manage the registration website on behalf of the division. Divisions are required to utilize the Laboratory registration website platform, managed by Conference Services, for events that require attendees to pay a registration fee.

4. Working Meals

4.1 Overview

Working meals may be provided when they contribute to the achievement of the Laboratory's mission and the criteria outlined in section 4.2, "Criteria," are met.

Meals provided while conducting Laboratory business are supplied in a reasonable manner that minimizes costs and remains consistent with the public perception of appropriateness wherever possible. The number and cost of meals provided must be reasonable as they apply to the circumstances of the event's professional activities and goals.

Providing meals to Laboratory affiliates, visitors, or sponsors, where the primary purpose is or may appear to be social rather than business, is unallowable and not reimbursable.

4.2 Criteria

Meals provided while conducting Laboratory business may be reimbursable for Laboratory events when all six criteria are met:

1. The event is conducted for a purpose that supports the Laboratory's mission.
2. The event requires work to be conducted during food service without a break; attendance during the meal is essential for full participation in the event/meeting.
3. The event is at least 4 hours in duration.
4. At least 10% of the total event attendees must be external (non-Laboratory employees).
5. The event is not routine.
6. The event is not a ceremony or celebration.

The number and cost of meals provided must be **reasonable** as they apply to the circumstances of the event/meeting's professional activities and goals. For example, for a full-day meeting, it may be reasonable to provide lunch and snacks. For a four-hour meeting through the lunch hour, it may be reasonable to provide only lunch. Working meals are not provided for regular routine activities. Examples include staff/department/division meetings, employee orientation, and training.

4.2.1 Limitation on Cost

Working meals must comply with the maximum allowable reimbursement amount for meals and will be reimbursed at the lesser of either (1) actual costs or (2) 150% of the locality's meals and incidental expenses (M&IE) rate for daily meals. Daily refreshment costs, if determined allowable, will be reimbursed at the lesser of (1) actual costs or (2) 25% of the locality’s per diem M&IE rate. Current meal per diem rates can be located on the Conference Services website and the GSA website for cities outside the Bay Area.

4.2.2 Strategic Planning Working Meals

For strategic planning meetings, the 10% external participation requirement is not applicable. The objective of a strategic planning meeting is to discuss goals and strategies that affect the division (or a department within the division). Specifically, strategic planning meetings are limited as follows:

- **Division Strategic Planning**
  - Each division (or department reporting directly to the director's office) is allotted three strategic planning meetings during the fiscal year.
  - Each division (or department reporting directly to the director's office) is responsible for tracking the number of strategic planning events to ensure the limit is not exceeded.

- **Associate Laboratory Director (ALD) Strategic Planning**
  - Each ALD is allotted three strategic planning meetings during the fiscal year.
  - Each ALD is responsible for tracking the number of strategic planning events to ensure the limit is not exceeded.

- **Institutional Strategic Planning**
  - Institutional strategic planning meetings are meetings that are led/called by the Laboratory Director, Laboratory Deputy Director, or Chief Operating Officer.

4.3 Request Process

Working meals must be requested and approved through the Event Approval Database (EAD). Information required in the EAD includes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agenda</th>
<th>The agenda should include specific topics to be addressed during food service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendee list</td>
<td>An attendee list with affiliation/home organization of each participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Divisions are encouraged to conduct events on site whenever possible to minimize event cost. For any off-site event, the rationale for meeting must demonstrate that the decision to conduct the event off site was reasonable in cost and nature. For the purpose of the EAD, the term “on site” refers to Laboratory-owned or leased facilities located in the San Francisco Bay Area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget</td>
<td>Cost budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If the meeting is held on site, completion of the food grid within the EAD is required. If the meeting is held off site, an appropriate cost budget should be uploaded using the template available on the Conference Services website.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4 Approval Process

Working meals require approval by the EAD division approver and by Conference Services.

4.5 Catering Contract Management Requirements

As it relates to catering:
• For events where working meal costs are below $5,000, the division may arrange catering with the vendor directly. However, contractual agreements may only be signed by Conference Services.
• For events in excess of $5,000, Conference Services and Procurement are the only Laboratory departments authorized to source, negotiate, sign, and approve third-party contracts. Conference Services manages event-related third-party contracts for working meals, including Banquet Event Orders.

4.6 Payment of Working Meal Costs

Payment of working meals is processed through the Laboratory's existing Pcard and RFIC processes. For working meals, the Meal Eligibility Form must be submitted with payment requests related to food costs. The Meal Eligibility Form outlines actual participants, their affiliation, confirmation of 10% required external participation, and substantiation that the meal does not exceed meal per diems.

4.7 Working Meal Closeout

The division is responsible for the closeout within 90 days after the working meal is completed. Closeout includes:
• Entering final costs in the EAD
• Uploading the final agenda and attendee list into the EAD

E. Roles and Responsibilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conference Services</td>
<td>Attending an event:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Reviews event participation, prior to the event occurring and employees or non-employees (e.g., affiliates and guests) attending, and ensures that approval and reporting is performed as required by DOE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Manages the approval process for attending conferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provides consultation and guidance to divisions, and functions as a liaison to DOE and other labs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ensures conference attendance and expense information received from divisions is aggregated and entered into iPortal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Maintains conference reporting website information for division access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ensures approval packages are managed in accordance with DOE requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ensures non-DOE conferences for which Laboratory costs are estimated to exceed $100,000 are approved by the Laboratory Deputy Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Completes required annual reporting of actual costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Manages the approval for Laboratory external sponsorships and participation cost requests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hosting an event:</td>
<td>Provides specialized event planning and management services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reviews, approves, and manages all Laboratory event information entered into the EAD to ensure timeliness and compliance with Laboratory policy and DOE Contract 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sources, negotiates, reviews, and approves third-party contractual agreements for event services, such as hotel contracts, audio/visual services, chartered transportation services, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reconciles vendor contracts, where applicable, against corresponding invoices prior to payment for events exceeding $25,000 in total Laboratory costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oversees the registration website process and reconciles registration payments to ensure all applicable fees have been paid and all payment information is captured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reviews invoices and receipts against allowable projects to ensure allowable and unallowable costs are separated appropriately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reports event data to DOE as required</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Attending an event:
- Identify a POC to manage the request approval process to attend an event with Conference Services
- Ensure funds are not committed prior to obtaining DOE approval
- Control costs to ensure costs are reasonable and do not exceed the reported estimate
- Ensure the division POC submits attendance and expense data for each conference to Conference Services
- Ensure conference reporting requirements are communicated broadly within their division
- Submit the requests for approval for Laboratory external sponsorships and participation cost requests to Conference Services

Hosting an event:
- Have overall responsibility for the financial management of the event
- Designate an Event Host/Organizer who has responsibility for working closely with Conference Services to plan and manage the event
- Provide administrative support for the event
- Establish appropriate project and activity accounts or requests as necessary
- Complete the submission in the Laboratory’s Event Approval Database (EAD), which includes agenda, attendee, and funding and budget information, for approval by Conference Services
- Develop and maintain the event budget and appropriate financial records
- Within 90 days of the conclusion of an approved event, burdened actual costs will be reviewed against estimated costs (i.e., the event budget) and all variances exceeding 10% must be documented in the events database with final agenda and attendee list uploaded.
- Identify allocation of allowable and unallowable costs and income from exhibitors and/or sponsors in the event budget

Employee/traveler
- Notifies division POC of the upcoming conference/event as soon as the event is known
- Coordinates with the division POC to determine if DOE approvals are required
- Does not incur costs or commit funds until all necessary approvals are obtained
- Submits timely expense reports within 30 days of travel

Division approver (or designee)
- Approves all Laboratory-hosted or co-hosted events in the Event Approval Database (EAD)

Laboratory Director (or designee)
- Approves all non-DOE conferences for which Laboratory costs are estimated to exceed $100,000
- Approves all Laboratory-wide Strategic Planning Meetings

Note: The designee for the Laboratory Director is the Laboratory Deputy Director, Associate Laboratory Director for Operations, or Laboratory Director’s Chief of Staff.

Controller’s Office/General Accounting
- Deposits registration fees and/or sponsorship funding and records revenue in the Laboratory’s Financial Management System
- Upon approval from Conference Services:
  - Opens unallowable project for the event
  - Sets up an allowable project for the event
  - Issues payment for event expenses approved by Conference Services
  - Closes and reconciles event project(s)
  - Provides general guidance on event accounting
  - Prepares final resource adjustments to zero out the projects at closeout

F. Definitions/Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affiliates</td>
<td>Non-Laboratory employees engaged in on-site Laboratory activities. Affiliates are subject to training in safety and other subjects. They are also issued a Laboratory identification badge. Affiliates may receive system accounts, research access to facilities, and a per diem allowance for housing and living expenses. Examples: facility users, scientific collaborators, students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-host</td>
<td>An organization that shares event hosting responsibilities with another organization (see “Host”). An event co-host exists if more than one organization shares control of the conduct or management of the event, or provides some form of non-monetary services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-sponsor</td>
<td>An organization or individual that provides support to the event and shares in the planning and/or decision-making. A co-sponsor is an official co-lead for the event.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division POC</td>
<td>Division point-of-Contact for conference reporting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOE-sponsored event</td>
<td>An event hosted or sponsored by a DOE program or a DOE contractor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Event**

Events include conferences, meetings, retreats, seminars, symposiums, or certain activities that include travel and:

- Registration and/or registration fees
- A published agenda
- Scheduled speakers and/or panel discussions
- Exhibitor and/or sponsorship fees
- Individual events may qualify as conferences without meeting all of the key features listed above, but generally meet some of them.

**Exhibitor**

An individual or organization that participates in the event to display or present products and services relative to the purpose of the event.

**Host**

An organization that has control over the conduct or management of the event (e.g., sufficient to influence costs, venue, program content, or similar aspects).

**Non-DOE-sponsored event**

An event hosted by an external organization for which no DOE or Laboratory funds have been provided as "sponsorship," and no use of official DOE or Laboratory seals/logos has been authorized.

**Sponsor**

An organization outside the Laboratory (i.e., a benefactor) that makes a voluntary contribution to support the event.

**Unallowable project**

Allowable and/or unallowable project established for each Laboratory-hosted/co-hosted event. The unallowable project is used to collect registration fees and other external funds and to pay invoices for event costs. Overhead costs (i.e., burdens or taxes) within an unallowable project are applied to travel, procurement, and event expenses.

**Strategic Partnership Program (SPP) funds**

The performance of work for non-DOE entities by DOE/contractor personnel and/or the utilization of DOE facilities that are not directly funded by DOE appropriations.

### G. Recordkeeping Requirements

None

### H. Implementing Documents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document Number</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11.03.003.000</td>
<td>Serving Alcohol at Berkeley Lab Events</td>
<td>Policy</td>
</tr>
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<td>Reimbursement eRFIC (for payment of allowable expenses)</td>
<td>Form</td>
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<td>Guidance</td>
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### I. Contact Information

Conference Services Lead or ConferenceServices@lbl.gov

### J. Revision History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Revision</th>
<th>By whom</th>
<th>Revision Description</th>
<th>Section(s) affected</th>
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<td>More</td>
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Document Information

Title: Events and Meals Policy

<table>
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<th>Effective date</th>
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<td>9/13/2017</td>
<td>1/11/2017</td>
<td>11/30/2018</td>
<td>Events and Meals</td>
<td>Events</td>
<td>Section 11.02</td>
<td>Financial Management</td>
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Source Requirements Documents

- Contract 31, Section H, Clause H.49 — Conference Management

Implementing Documents

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