



CONFERENCE, TRAINING AND ACTIVITY GUIDELINES

(Covering Board Rule 10701-10707, 10711, Admin Reg. PS-1) – Updated April 2019

Overview

District employees may be authorized to attend and/or facilitate seminars, conferences, classes, and other activities to enhance their job knowledge. Certain expenses related to these activities may be paid by the District. Prior to attending such events, employees are required to complete a ***Request for Conference or Activity Attendance*** form to receive travel / attendance authorization, even if there is no expense to the district. The *Request for Conference or Activity Attendance* form should include information on the type of activity, dates, place, and an estimate of expenses, and it should be completed well in advance of the scheduled activity (**at least 30-60 days** is recommended). Once the activity has been approved by the department head and the College President, the request is then sent to the College Financial Administrator (CFA) or other administrative personnel for fund encumbrance and a reference number. Funds for conferences and other training-related activities must be encumbered under **GL 586100** for the maximum amount of funds authorized by the approving official at the college.

Types of Activities

The following types of activities are covered by this guidelines document and should be processed on the *Request for Conference or Activity Attendance* form. Note that employees may qualify whether attending or facilitating training activities.

- Conferences
- Training classes
- Workshops, seminars, webinars
- Field trips
- Compliance training
- Trade certification courses (plumbing, pesticides, etc)

The following activities are **NOT** processed under the Conference guidelines:

- MOUS Training (must go through Human Resources)
- Classes for college credit (use Tuition Reimbursement rules)
- Courses or training to obtain a personal certification or designation (ie: CPA license, BAR license, nursing license)
- Student-related activities (use Student Travel guidelines)
- Self-Study programs (consisting of study materials and/or exam fees)

- Any type of training paid out-of-pocket that was not pre-authorized (must go through Tuition Reimbursement process or to Board for approval)

Processing Timeline

Conference and training requests must be initiated 30-60 days in advance to allow for all necessary approvals and fund encumbrance to be posted.

Advance, registration fee payment and reimbursement requests will be processed by the Accounts Payable Office (AP) within 10 business days of receipt.

Reimbursement requests should be submitted to the AP office no later than 60 days after the completion of the conference or activity.

Processing Options

All conference/training activities are to be processed on the "*Request for Conference or Activity Attendance*" form. There are a number of payment options, and we recommend adhering to the following guidelines:

1. ***Conference Registration Fees:*** The desired procedure for payment of qualifying conference registration fees is to have ESC AP process an advance payment directly to the vendor. Please indicate on the *Request for Conference* form if an advanced payment is being requested. Any prepaid expenses should be properly documented with invoices, conference descriptions, event flyers, vendor quotes, etc. Also, the vendor's name and remittance address should be obvious on the vendor invoice. Prepayments will only be made up to 30 days in advance of the activity or event, unless an earlier payment is necessary to take advantage of "early bird" rates. Please note that in order for Accounts Payable to prepay registration fees, the conference agency must already be an established vendor in SAP.

Payment Option 2 is for an employee to pay out-of-pocket for registration fees or course fees, however, reimbursement will be contingent upon four things:

1. The activity must be approved in advance. If it is not, then Board approval will be required for reimbursement.
2. The activity must qualify for reimbursement under the *Conference and Activity Attendance* rules. If it does not qualify (perhaps because it falls under the Tuition Reimbursement rules) then reimbursement will not be made.
3. The event must be concluded and valid confirmation is provided that the employee did in fact attend the activity.

4. Proof of payment for all out-of-pocket expenses (proof may include original invoices and receipts indicating payment with the employee's credit card, a front and back copy of the employee's cashed check, copy of the employee's bank statement or credit card statement showing the payment being made).

Cal Card holders can use their card to make payment on conference registration fees.

2. **Transportation:** Employees may arrange their own flights, train, and bus or book one through one of the District approved vendors.

Option 1: You can go through one of the District's approved travel agencies (see below). By giving them the assigned Travel Number they can book the flight and they will in turn bill the District.

Option 2: Use a Cal Card to pay for the flight, train or bus.

Option 3: Pay "out-of-pocket" and request a reimbursement on the Travel Expense Claim form after the trip is over. Again, reimbursement will be contingent upon the activity having been approved in advance and confirmation that the employee attended the activity.

Note that upgraded seating is not allowed. Economy class must be utilized, unless a preapproval is granted for extenuating circumstances.

3. **Lodging:** It is recommended that employees arrange their own lodging. As with flight, there are some options.

Option 1: Use a Cal Card to pay for the lodging.

Option 2: Request a travel advance for the anticipated cost of the lodging. A ten business day lead time is required to process an advance check to the employee. Note that advance payments are not issued more than one week in advance of the event or activity.

Option 3: You can pay "out-of-pocket" and request a reimbursement on the Travel Expense Claim form after the trip is over. Again, reimbursement will be contingent upon the activity having been approved in advance and confirmation that the employee attended the activity.

Please note the following:

- Upgrades like presidential suites, room service and other luxuries are disallowed
- If available, the employee should utilize conference provided hotels which usually have a reasonable rate. The employee must exercise due diligence in sourcing reasonable hotel accommodation. Providing comparable rates at the time of booking your hotel (if conference hotel is not used and your hotel costs are significantly higher than normal) will prevent delays to your reimbursement processing.
- Please follow the table below for allowable hotel lodging:

Days of Travel	*Within 50 miles of Work Location/LA City Hall	**More than 50 miles of Work Location/LA City Hall
1 - Day	Disallowed	1 hotel night allowed
2 - Day	1 hotel night - subject to department review of funds/need	2 hotel night allowed
3 - Day	2 hotel night - subject to department review of funds/need	3 hotel night allowed
4 - Day	3 hotel night - subject to department review of funds/need	4 hotel night allowed

* Approving Official should review if hotel stay is necessary for events within 50 miles of work location

** One extra night of hotel stay is allowed for events that are more than 50 miles of work location/LA City Hall if there are necessary pre/post conference events. The extra day can be before or after the event, but not both. Approving official must review.

4. **Meal Expenses:** Reimbursements are allowed for meal expenses at all-day and overnight activities and events. The meal reimbursement is capped at \$75.00 (including gratuities) per day when detailed itemized receipts are provided. The District will only reimburse up to \$35.00 (including gratuities) per day without itemized receipts (receipt of meal payment is still required).

Food expenses incurred after a scheduled event has ended are disallowed. Meal tips and gratuities are limited to **15%** of the total cost of the meal, before applicable taxes.

There are several payment options for meals:

Option 1: Use the Cal Card to pay for meals of cardholder and direct reporting District employees while traveling.

Option 2: Request an advance check at least ten days prior to the event.

Option 3: Pay "out-of-pocket" for food expenses and request reimbursement on the Travel Expense Claim form upon return from the event or activity.

5. **Mileage Expenses:** The use of a private vehicle is allowed for attending conferences and training activities. When using private vehicle, the employee must be properly licensed and the vehicle must carry the minimum insurance required by State Law. Mileage driven for any event or activity processed on a *Request for Conference or Activity Attendance* form must be claimed on an accompanying Travel Expense Claim form, **not** on the standard Mileage Claim form.

An employee's normal commute miles should be deducted from training/travel mileage. Proper backup documentation for vehicle expenses includes trip logs, Google/Yahoo Map mileage estimates, parking stubs, etc. Note that the expenses claimed for the use of a personal vehicle cannot exceed the cost of the most economical carrier such as an airline flight, rail or bus transportation. If multiple employees carpool to an event, it is possible that the mileage expense claim, although greater than the cost of a round-trip flight for one person, would be the most economical transportation. Only the owner of the carpool vehicle may claim the mileage allowance in such situation.

6. **Rental Cars:** The use of a rental vehicle is allowed on approved travels. When renting a vehicle, the employee **MUST** include basic liability insurance coverage. The rental of luxury vehicles are not allowed.

For local travel (within Los Angeles County and other nearby cities), other forms of transportation should be used if they are more cost effective compared with renting a vehicle – these include buses and rail, Taxi/Uber/Lyft, personal automobile (see above), etc.

Here are some further considerations when planning a conference or training activity:

7. **Advance Checks** can be made payable to an employee for anticipated travel expenses. This is provided towards lodging, meals, and other incidental expenses. Incidental expenses are limited to \$20.00 per day on travel days, and \$5.00 per day on non-travel days.

A 10 day lead time is required for processing advances. A travel advance must be requested on the *Conference Travel Advance Request* form. Travel advances may be issued to employees no more than one week in advance of the event. If it is necessary to reserve lodging more than one week in advance of the event, then it is recommended that the employee reserve/hold the room night(s) with a Cal Card or personal credit card. Advance checks must be a minimum of \$100 and they may only be issued for up to 90% of the total estimated expenses allowed. Anticipated expenses must be justifiable and backup documentation may be requested.

Within 10 days upon return from the training event the employee must file a Travel Expense Claim listing the actual expenses incurred. If the advance check is larger than the valid expenses incurred,

the employee must write a check back to the District made payable to: *LACCD* for the amount of the difference. If the expenses incurred are greater than the encumbered amount, the employee may file an amendment to the travel request to request an increase in the approved funds. The amendment must be substantiated by original itemized receipts and must be approved by the VP of Administrative Services or the President of the college.

Note: Un-cleared travel advances will result in a hold on the processing of future advances for both conferences, student-travel activities, as well as other reimbursements.

The AP office may request for additional explanation and/or VP of Administrative Services approval for any reimbursement claim that is submitted more than 90 days after the conclusion of the conference.

Travel Agencies: Colleges may arrange airfare directly through a District-approved travel agency. District AP will then process a payment to the travel agency. Note that the District-approved travel agencies will not book the flight without a Travel Number provided by the College. Here are the travel agencies currently used by the District:

TK Travel (v# 3004515)	818-701-0100
Travel Exchange (v# 3002239)	Bill: 323-848-8022

Payments Made Out-of-Pocket: An employee may pay out-of-pocket for training or conference-related expenses and then request for reimbursement, but only on the condition that attendance authorization was received prior to the activity or event. Reimbursement amounts cannot exceed the pre-approved amount unless an amendment is filed and approved. Note that if an employee pays conference fees out-of-pocket for an upcoming conference or training event, he or she will NOT be eligible for reimbursement until after the event is over and it is confirmed that the employee attended the activity. Reimbursement claims must be filed on the *Conference Travel Expense Claim* form. Any reimbursement received by an employee from sources other than the District shall be deducted.

Students and Student Workers who attend conferences: Any conferences or training activities involving students must be processed using the Student Travel Guidelines, not the Conference guidelines, except in the case of student-workers who have an employee ID number and are processed on the *Request for Conference or Activity Attendance* form.

Charter Vans and Buses: Payments for charter vans and buses must be made directly to the vendor on an STA if under \$5,000 (or contract if \$5,000 or more).

Tour Companies: If a tour company is attained to facilitate travel arrangements for a group of individuals and the travel expenses are being paid to the tour company (as opposed to a direct payment to the airline, venue, or charter van service) then a contract must be created with that tour company and the payment will be made according to the district's contract guidelines.

One Conference Request form per person: Employees may only process their own expenses on a *Request for Conference or Activity Attendance* form or *Conference Travel Expense Claim*. They may not pay for someone else's expenses and then request reimbursement on their personal claim.

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Payments requested far in advance or in next fiscal year: District prepayments for registration fees and course fees are typically only made up to 30 days in advance of the activity or event. It is possible to process a prepayment in the current year for an event taking place in the next fiscal year by using the pre-pay account (ask ESC AP for details). Once the New Year's budget funds become available, an encumbrance should be made to cover the prepaid expenses.

Disallowed Expenses: Certain expenses are not allowed such as upgraded airline seating, deluxe lodging accommodations, alcohol, tobacco, firearms and items of a personal nature. Expenses of spouses, friends, and relatives traveling with the employee are also disallowed.

Cal Card Rules for Conferences / Training Activities

The Cal Card may be used to make travel purchases and arrangements subject to the normal limitations of the card. The card holders may arrange travel for themselves and their direct report staff only. Cal Card may not be used for covering the expenses of a superior. Qualifying purchases include conference fees (do not include activities classified under tuition reimbursement or unapproved conferences), airfare, lodging, and food expenses. Cal Card cannot be used to pay organizational membership fees.

Please consult the Cal Card Guidelines for the complete policy on the use of Cal Cards.

Exception Handling

Any exceptions or deviations from the guidelines should be reviewed and approved by the Vice President of Administrative Services or President of the college prior to the conference attendance. Evidence of such approval include an email communication or signed memo that details the nature of the exception.

Any exceptions or deviations without prior approval will not be honored by the Accounts Payable Department.