

# Professional Meetings and Business Travel

After one full contractual year has been completed, and upon acceptance of the subsequent offer for renewal of appointment, each faculty member in the basic sciences at the rank of Instructor and higher becomes eligible to receive financial support for participation in one professional meeting per year according to university guidelines and policies.

While attending a professional or business meeting, each member of faculty in the SOM basic sciences is allowed to purchase textbooks. Sums up to the allowed maximum in any year will be reimbursed upon approval of the submission of an acceptable reimbursement form and all necessary associated receipts. Reimbursements are issued only for the term in which the actual purchases are made. A request for reimbursement must be made within 30 days after the meeting.

For research fellows, attendance at an international medical conference is strongly encouraged within their first year of employment and will be reimbursed by SOM. Research fellows must obtain the approval of the Director of MSRI and the senior associate dean of basic sciences prior to submission of an abstract, associated conference registration and the making of travel plans.

Reimbursement for travel and expenses incurred by a faculty member during university business e.g., teaching, will be as per the [Travel & Expense Policy](#).

## **Responsible evaluation of conference validity**

Faculty must evaluate whether or not a scientific or educational conference is potentially predatory, prior to registering, booking flights, making hotel arrangements and applying for a Leave of Absence.

Before authorizing use of the conference allowance by a member of faculty, Department chairs must similarly evaluate the conference, review the provided conference schedule and then determine if: 1) attendance at the conference directly benefits department teaching or educational activities; 2) attendance benefits the scholarly and/or research activities of the faculty member (particularly if the faculty member will be applying for promotion); 3) appropriate coverage of the faculty member's educational responsibilities is possible during the time of the conference and 4) the expected benefits of the trip justify the travel time and the overall use of the conference allowance. A department chair may refuse to authorize the conference allowance if their assessment finds that the conference is likely to be predatory, and/or if they are not satisfied that items 1) - 4) are being appropriately met.

Guidelines for evaluating whether a conference is legitimate or predatory:

- a. Does each day have an appropriate number of scientific or professional sessions?
- b. What is the duration of the conference?
- c. Where is it being held?
- d. Is it being organized by a known professional society or organization?
- e. Does it have a suitably detailed website and schedule relative to when it is scheduled for?
- f. Did the organizers contact/reach out to the faculty member via email?

Signs that a conference might be predatory therefore include:

- Very vague or very general scope (multiple specialties; listed sessions and topics are wide ranging, e.g., from neuroscience to anatomy to public health, etc)
- More breaks or "social sessions" than there are scheduled workshops, lectures, or seminar
- Unusually short duration (1.5 to 2 days): most major conferences are around 3-4 days
- Held in a popular tourist destination (London, New York, Paris, Tokyo)
- No society or professional organization links or affiliations
- Generic or vague website

- Schedule does not contain specifics of the keynote speakers and a detailed schedule close to when the conference is scheduled to occur. Most legitimate conferences will finalize the details at around 4-6 months prior.
- The organizers contacted you to invite you to attend!
- The website or organizers state guaranteed fast acceptance of papers or posters (no mention of a peer-review process should also be a red flag).