

Army Conference Policy –

Determining the Appropriate Level Approval for Conference Hosting and Attendance

This worksheet is designed to assist command conference planners in determining the appropriate level approval for conferences sponsored by ARNORTH, or conferences that ARNORTH personnel desire to attend in furtherance of their official duties. This worksheet is prepared in accordance with the new Army Conference Policy (Army Directive 2015-01), dated 8 July 2015. If you have questions about the criteria listed below, please contact the Administrative and Civil Law Division, Office of the Staff Judge Advocate, at (210)221-2373.

I. Determination of a Conference- Does the Event Qualify as a Conference?		
<p>1. <u>JFTR/JTR definition of a “conference”</u> – “[a] meeting, retreat, seminar, symposium or event that involves attendee travel. Also applies to training activities that are considered to be conferences under 5 C.F.R. § 410.404.”</p> <p>- Indicia of a Conference: They typically involve (a) topical matters of interest, and the participation of, multiple agencies and/or non-Federal participants; (b) registration process; (c) registration fees; (d) a published substantive agenda (multiple-day agendas); (e) speakers or discussion panels; (f) affiliated social events; (g) use of official representation funds, and/or (h) use of commercial facilities. (Note: Generally, the presence or absence of any one indicator is not enough to determine whether the event is a conference; you must weigh the presence of multiple indicia.)</p> <p><i>If you cannot make a clear-cut determination, categorize the event as a conference and process it accordingly</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> YES</p> <p>Go to Section II below.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> NO</p>  <p>The event is not a conference. However, personnel must follow DoD, Army and ARNORTH TDY policies and abide by all pertinent travel policies and guidelines.</p>
II. OSD Exemptible Events which Army has determined are not Conferences- Does it meet any of the below criteria?		
<p>1. Meetings to consider internal agency business matters held in government or military facility. Includes meetings held as part of organization regular course of business.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> YES</p> <p>This event is explicitly exempted from the Army Conference Policy. Proceed IAW your command guidance.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>Go to Section III.</p>
<p>2. Meetings necessary to carry out statutory command and staff oversight functions (e.g., investigations, inspections, audits or site visits).</p>		

<p>3. Formal classroom training when one or more of the following applies: (1) held in a government/military facility, educational institution, or commercial training facility which has a primary purpose of regularly scheduled training, (2) conducted by an educational institution regardless of facility, (3) Career Program courses regardless of facility, (4) funded by Army Civilian Training, Education, and Development System regardless of facility.</p>		
<p>4. Change of command, official military award, funeral or other such ceremonies.</p>		
<p>5. Meetings of advisory committees subject to DoDI 5105.04 (DoD Federal Advisory Committee Management Program) where membership consists of one or more individuals who are not full-time or permanent Federal officers or employees.</p>		
<p>6. Bilateral/multilateral international cooperation engagements when one or more of the following applies: (1) hosted by Army and held in government/military facility, (2) hosted by Army in foreign country and held in government/military facility or commercial facility when such is determined to be safer, more cost-effective or necessary to maintain Army standing and prestige, or (3) hosted by foreign government regardless of facility.</p> <p>a. Includes activities such as international military education and training events, traditional commander’s activities and other regional assistance programs.</p> <p>b. In cases of bilateral/multilateral international cooperation engagements, should foreign participants bring spouses to participate in official capacity at the event, Army spouses may also participate in official capacity without conference approval.</p> <p>c. Does NOT include Army hosted events conducted in the US in commercial facility.</p>		
<p>7. Army Recruiting Command/Army Cadet Command/Army Marketing Group participation in military or civilian recruiting and/or recruiting advertising events.</p>		
<p>8. Special Circumstances: See Section VIII.</p>		

When in doubt, contact your legal advisor or treat the event as a conference and process it accordingly.

III. OSD Exemptible Events but Army still considers Conferences

<p>1. Meetings to consider internal agency business matters held in a commercial facility. This includes activities such as meetings that take place as part of an organization’s regular course of business if held in a commercial facility.</p>	<p>These must all be processed for conference approval. Go to Section IV.</p>
<p>2. Bilateral/multilateral International cooperation engagements hosted by Army in the US and held in commercial facility.</p>	
<p>3. Events where the primary purpose of DoD’s participation is military or civilian recruiting and/or recruitment advertising when participation by other than Army Recruiting Command/ Army Cadet Command/Army Marketing Group.</p>	
<p>4. Formal classroom training held in a commercial facility that does not meet the criteria in Section II.3 above. This exemption would include activities such as regular courses of instruction or training seminars offered by government organizations, institutions of higher learning or professional licensure and certification, or other training entities.</p>	
<p>5. Meetings necessary to carry out planning or execution of operational or operational exercise activities, or predeployment, deployment or post-deployment activities held in a commercial facility. Includes activities such as planning and preparation for, as well as execution of, war games, military exercises and operational deployments when held in commercial facilities.</p>	

IV. Types of Conferences

<p>1. Is the conference Army hosted ?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> YES Go to Section V.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> NO Go to Section IV.2.</p>
<p>2. Is the conference hosted by a non-DoD/Army organization?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> YES Go to Section VII.</p>	

V. Army Hosted Conferences	Approvals must be in writing and maintained for 5 years.
1. All requests must be received by the approval authority at least <i>30 days in advance</i> of the conference or commitment of nonrefundable funds.	
2. Approval Authority: 4 Tiers	
Tier I. Costs exceeding \$500K (generally prohibited), or if it involves spouse travel at Government expense regardless of cost.	SA
Tier II. Costs \$100K or more, but under \$500K.	VCSA
Tier III. Costs \$50K or more, but under \$100K.	CG, ARNORTH
Tier IV. Costs under \$50K.	DCG, ARNORTH and DtCG, ARNORTH if/when delegated by CG, ARNORTH
3. Process: Prepare the OAA-approved request memo (Encl . 1), providing the following information: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <u>Dates (including travel days)</u> – ice breakers, receptions, socials, golf tournaments, or other ancillary activities will not be held during duty hours or used to extend the duration of a conference. Award ceremonies held during the conference may be considered official business, but may not extend the conference. b. <u>Purpose and Justification:</u> The justification for hosting the conference must overcome the presumption that face-to-face collocation of personnel is not necessary. The request <i>must contain a statement that hosting or attending the event is mission critical and fully substantiate how the event is mission critical for all proposed attendees.</i> The justification must also specifically address how hosting or attending the conference will further the Army’s mission. c. <u>Cost-Benefit Analysis:</u> Provide a detailed and credible cost-benefit analysis that includes an explanation of other options considered (e.g., VTC, or train-the-trainer), as well as information on site selection and enough data to support the selected city and venue. The overarching goal of site selection is to find the least expensive location and venue which meets requirements. Planners must consider at minimum three geographic sites (cities) for conferences with more than 30 attendees in a TDY status. Once a site is chosen, at minimum three venues in that city will be considered. <i>Government or military facilities will be</i> 	

the first choice of conference venue. If a Government or military facility is not chosen, provide an explanation.

- d. **Estimated Total Costs.** OSD requires use of the Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation cost estimating calculator (<https://www.cape.osd.mil/CostGuidance/>). However, Army policy also requires use of the cost calculator in Army Conference Reporting and Tracking Tool (ACRTT) or the cost estimation table in the request template because both provide more detailed and accurate costing information. Estimated costs for Army hosted conferences **must** include expenses for all DoD-funded attendees, not just Army-funded attendees. Host organizations are responsible for gathering cost estimate data on non-Army attendees from other DoD components. Approval authority tiers are based on total costs, which are the net of any revenue received (e.g., conference fees).

Exempted costs:

- Employee time for conference planning and preparation;
- Employee time for conference attendance;
- Security cost; and
- Costs associated with use of GOVs.

- e. **Attendees.** Using ACRTT, supply breakdown of attendees, each of whom must have a mission-critical justification.
- f. **Substantive Agenda.** Span proposed conference from start to finish. List planned speakers, programs and other activities, identify after-hours events, and explain purpose/objectives of breakout sessions.
- g. **Security Assessment.** Required for all conferences held in a commercial facility. Must include force protection assessment and specific security requirements, statement indicating whether foreign government representatives will attend (if so, coordinate with Deputy CSA G-2, 120 days in advance), and statement indicating whether will involve classified information (if so, the secure facility to be used for that portion of the conference, coordinate with Deputy CSA G-2, 120 days in advance)
- h. **Legal Review.** All conferences require a legal review addressing all fiscal, ethics, contracting and travel issues. Any legal issues must be mitigated before submission of the conference request.
- i. **Precontract Decision Documents.** The requester must include any contract-related documents that would assist the approval authority, such as the letter of intent from the hotel or a request for proposal.

VI. DoD Hosted Conferences

For conferences hosted by a DoD organization external to the Army, the host DoD component is responsible for estimating and reporting total DoD attendance and costs. The hosting organization is responsible for obtaining conference approval from its appropriate approval authority. Army attendees must follow DoD, Army and their organization's TDY policies for approval and abide by all pertinent travel policies and guidelines.

VII. Non-DoD Hosted Conferences	Approvals must be in writing and maintained for 5 years.
1. All requests must be received by the approval authority <i>at least 30 days before</i> the start date of the conference or before the obligation of nonrefundable funds (such as registration fees) regardless of approval authority.	
2. Approval Authority: 4 tiers	
Tier I. Costs \$75K or more.	SA
Tier II. Costs \$20K or more, but under \$75K.	VCSA
Tier III. Costs \$10K or more, but under \$20K.	CG, ARNORTH
Tier IV. Costs under \$10K.	DCG, ARNORTH and DtCG, ARNORTH if/when delegated by CG, ARNORTH
3. Process: Prepare the OAA-approved request memo (Encl . 2), providing the following information: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <u>Dates (including travel days)</u> – ice breakers, receptions, socials, golf tournaments, or other ancillary activities will not be held during duty hours or used to extend the duration of a conference. Award ceremonies held during the conference may be considered official business, but may not extend the conference. b. <u>Purpose and Justification:</u> The justification for hosting the conference must overcome the presumption that face-to-face collocation of personnel is not necessary. The request <i>must contain a statement that hosting or attending the event is mission critical and fully substantiate how the event is mission critical for all proposed attendees.</i> The justification must also specifically address how hosting or attending the conference will further the Army’s mission. c. <u>Cost-Benefit Analysis:</u> Provide a detailed and credible cost-benefit analysis that includes an explanation of other options considered (e.g., VTC, or train-the-trainer). d. <u>Estimated Total Costs.</u> OSD requires use of the Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation cost estimating calculator (https://www.cape.osd.mil/CostGuidance/). However, Army policy also requires use of the cost calculator in Army Conference Reporting and Tracking Tool (ACRTT) or the cost estimation table in the request template because both provide more detailed an accurate costing information. 	

Exempted costs:

- Employee time for conference planning and preparation;
- Employee time for conference attendance;
- Security cost; and
- Costs associated with use of GOVs.

- e. Attendees. Using ACRTT, supply breakdown of attendees, each of whom must have a mission-critical justification.
- f. Substantive Agenda. Span proposed conference from start to finish. List planned speakers, programs and other activities, identify after-hours events, and explain purpose/objectives of breakout sessions.
- g. Legal Review. All conferences require a legal review addressing all fiscal, ethics, contracting and travel issues. Any legal issues must be mitigated before submission of the conference request.

VIII. Conferences with Special Circumstances

1. Spouse Travel. Any event involving spouse travel must be processed under conference procedures unless it meets the criteria of Section II.6.b of bilateral/multilateral international cooperation engagements.
2. Local Conferences. Local events for which no attendee will claim reimbursable travel costs do not need conference approval. If any participant in a local conference will claim reimbursable travel costs on an official travel voucher, the event will require conference approval.
3. No-Cost Conferences. Events which require travel, but which will be attended at no cost to the Army (e.g., waived registration fees, local attendance or “gifted” travel benefits under 31 USC § 1253, etc.) do not need conference approval. These must involve absolutely no reimbursable cost to the Army (e.g., no per diem on travel days, parking or local travel costs, etc). If an Army attendee claims these expenses as reimbursable travel costs on an official travel voucher, the attendee is no longer “no cost,” and the attendee’s participation in the event will require conference approval.
4. Virtual Conferences. If participation in a virtual conference requires absolutely no attendee travel, it is not a conference, even if participation incurs a registration fee. Participation in virtual conferences which require attendee travel must be processed as a conference.
5. Co-sponsored Conferences. A conference is considered a co-sponsored conference if ARNORTH develops the substantive aspects of the event, provides substantial logistical support, or provides 50 percent or more of the speakers/panel members at a single conference. Requests for co-sponsored conferences must be processed and approved as Army hosted conferences IAW Section V above.

2 Encls.

1. Army Hosted Conference Request Template.
2. Non-DoD Hosted Conference Request Template.