

This document is intended as a guide only. The reader should be aware there are additional rules contained in the policies that were used to create this guide.

Travel, Meeting & Incidental Entertainment & Gift Expense Guide

Created for CME Event Planners.

Policies referenced:
Bus-79, G-28, G-41 & G-42

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Simon Schuster

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Guest Speakers' Conflicts Of Interest.

What Are They And How To Recognize Them?

When asking a guest to speak at a conference, it's important to be aware of any potential conflicts of interest (COI) that may arise. A COI occurs when an individual or organization has a personal or financial interest that could compromise their objectivity, judgment, or ability to act in the best interest of the conference. Here are some guidelines and examples of COI to consider:

Guidelines:

1. Identify potential conflicts of interest: When considering a guest speaker, review their background, affiliations, and previous work to identify any potential conflicts of interest.
2. Disclose conflicts of interest: If a potential conflict of interest is identified, it should be disclosed to the conference organizers and attendees.
3. Manage conflicts of interest: If a potential conflict of interest cannot be avoided, it should be managed to minimize its impact on the conference. For example, the speaker could recuse themselves from discussing certain topics or be balanced by speakers with opposing views.

Examples:

1. Financial conflicts of interest: A speaker who works for a company that is a sponsor of the conference or who has received funding from a company that is relevant to the conference topic may have a financial conflict of interest.
2. Personal conflicts of interest: A speaker who has a personal relationship with the conference organizers or who has a personal stake in the topic being discussed may have a personal conflict of interest.
3. Professional conflicts of interest: A speaker who is a member of a professional association that has taken a stance on the topic being discussed may have a professional conflict of interest.
4. Intellectual conflicts of interest: A speaker who has published research on the topic being discussed may have an intellectual conflict of interest if their research supports their point of view.
5. Political conflicts of interest: A speaker who is a politician or who has ties to a political party may have a political conflict of interest if the topic being discussed is politically sensitive.

Please be aware the above is a simple guide. There are more specific rules regarding this subject.

Key Contacts for Conflict of Interest Matters

Financial Conflict of Interest (COI) - Research

[**Ivana Neff**](#)
COI Manager

[**Alex Ross**](#)
COI Analyst For General

Questions related to COI,
contact: coiac@ucsf.edu



Declining A Task Or Ask From A Course Chair, Not In The MOU?

When asked to do a task that is not covered by the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), it is important to communicate your decision clearly and professionally. Here are some steps to help you say no politely:

1. Thank the person for the opportunity: Start the conversation by expressing your appreciation for the opportunity. This helps to establish a positive tone for the conversation.
2. Explain the situation: Be honest about the situation and explain that the task they are asking you to do is not covered by the MOU. You could say something like, "Thank you for considering me for this task, but I wanted to clarify that it is not included in our MOU."
3. Clarify your role: Remind the person of your specific role and responsibilities that are outlined in the MOU. You could say something like, "My role is to focus on the tasks outlined in the MOU, and unfortunately, this task falls outside of my scope of work."
4. Offer alternatives: If possible, offer alternatives to help the person find a solution. For example, you could recommend someone else who may be able to help or suggest renegotiating the MOU to include the new task.
5. End on a positive note: End the conversation on a positive note by thanking the person again for the opportunity and expressing your willingness to help in the future if possible. You could say something like, "Thank you again for considering me for this task. If there are any tasks in the future that fall within my role, please do not hesitate to contact me."

Overall, it is important to be polite and professional when saying no to a request that is outside of the MOU. By explaining your reasons clearly and offering alternatives if possible, you can maintain a positive relationship with the person and avoid any misunderstandings.

Can I Accept a Gift From A Vendor?

When booking venues on behalf of UCSF, some rules and guidelines determine when a gift or gratuity can be accepted and when it should be declined. These rules and guidelines help ensure that the booking process is fair, transparent, and free from undue influence. Here are some examples of when a gift or gratuity can be accepted or not:

1. UCOP Policy: Integrity, Good Judgment, and Avoiding Favoritism. It is the policy of the University to comply with the provisions of state and federal law and University policy governing the acceptance of gifts and gratuities. [University Policy PPSM-82: Conflict of Interest](#). PPSM-82 also states that University officers and employees “must avoid the appearance of favoritism in all of their dealings on behalf of the University. All University officers and employees are expected to act with integrity and good judgment and to recognize that the acceptance of personal gifts from those doing business or seeking to do business with the University, even when lawful, may give rise to legitimate concerns about favoritism depending on the circumstances.”
2. Value: It is generally acceptable to accept small tokens of appreciation, such as a thank-you card or a small box of chocolates, that have a nominal value and do not affect your ability to make impartial decisions.
3. Purpose: If the gift or gratuity is intended to influence your decision-making, then it should not be accepted. For example, if a venue offers to upgrade your hotel room in exchange for booking a certain number of rooms, this could be seen as an attempt to influence your decision and should be declined.
4. Frequency: It is important to consider the frequency of gifts or gratuities. If a venue is repeatedly offering gifts or gratuities, this could be seen as an attempt to build a relationship or influence your decision-making and should be declined.

Examples:

Acceptable gifts:

- A small thank-you card from a venue after booking an event.
- A complimentary coffee or pastry during a site visit.
- A branded pen or notebook as a token of appreciation.

Unacceptable gifts:

- A large cash payment, reward points generated from conference lodging, or an expensive gift could be seen as an attempt to influence your decision-making.
- A *personal* discount or free services in exchange for booking with a certain venue.
- A frequent stream of gifts or gratuities from a particular venue could be seen as an attempt to build a relationship or influence your decision-making.

Overall, it is important to use good judgment and be mindful of any potential conflicts of interest or ethical violations when considering accepting gifts or gratuities when booking venues on behalf of a company. If in doubt, it is always best to err on the side of caution and decline any gifts or gratuities that could be perceived as inappropriate or influence your decision-making.

Important Travel Rules To Be Aware Of

40-Mile Lodging Rule

UCOP G-28 Travel Policy - page 23 - E.1.a. "Regardless of the length of time for business travel, the traveler **must** be at least forty miles from the headquarters location or home, whichever is closer, to be reimbursed for an overnight stay".

If the distance traveled is less than 40 miles the traveler cannot stay in a hotel and cannot be reimbursed for lodging or daily meal allowance expenses. Travel to and from the location can be reimbursed in accordance with the G-28 travel policy.

An exception to the 40-mile rule *may* be granted under certain circumstances. Prior approval must be sought with as much advance notice as possible from the Dean's Office exceptional expense approver *before* any bookings or reservations are made. The exception must be in writing, reasonable, necessary, and justified by the circumstances of the trip.

It is important to note that any requests for exceptions to the 40-mile rule after the fact are unlikely to be approved.

Daily M&IE Allowance (\$92) During Travel Of Less Than 24 Hours

When the entire length of a trip is less than 24 hours, the daily meals and incidental expense allowance cannot be claimed. The daily meal allowance of actual expenses up to \$92 per day can only be claimed when travel is more than 24 hours or includes an "overnight stay" as supported by a lodging receipt.

An example of travel less than 24 hours, when the daily meal allowance cannot be claimed, is when a traveler attends a conference or meeting in their hometown off campus, departs, and returns home on the same day even if the meeting or conference is out of town. The distance traveled has no bearing on whether the daily meal allowance can be claimed.

Incidental Expenses Not Part Of The Daily M&IE Allowance

A traveler is personally responsible for expenses such as toiletries, clothing, dry cleaning (unless the trip exceeds six days), gifts, family members, tourism, excess accommodation costs when conference rates are available, vehicle rental when no business is needed, etc.

Spousal Or Family Attendance At A Conference

If there are additional costs to have the spouse or family of the UCSF employee at the conference that cost is the responsibility of the employee. Costs include larger rooms, transport, hotel tourism, and/or amenity fees and meals.



Lodging

The nightly lodging reimbursement rate of \$333 plus taxes and mandatory hotel fees are for lodging within the United States (CONUS). When lodging cannot be secured at \$333 per night or less, the traveler must submit additional documentation to support the higher rate.

Examples of when the nightly rate can be exceeded and what supporting documents are required:

1. The hotel stayed at is the conference hotel or a suggested hotel by the conference – The conference flyer/ communication stating the above.
2. There is a conference-negotiated rate even though above \$333 per night – Folio should state GrpRate or similar.
3. When the actual nightly rate is above \$333 within the area of the meeting location - Price comparisons within the proximity of the meeting location that support the higher lodging rate incurred. **The price comparisons MUST be performed at the time of booking. If the comparisons are obtained after the dates stayed or are insufficient to support the higher lodging rate only the maximum \$333 plus taxes per night will be reimbursed.**
4. If two or more UCSF travelers are sharing a room or lodging then \$333 per night *per person* can be used as nightly lodging rate.

The nightly lodging reimbursement rate for lodging outside of the United States (OCONUS), including travel within Alaska, Hawaii, and U.S. possessions, shall be reimbursed under the non-foreign locality per diem rates [published by the Department of Defense](#). If actual expenses that are greater than the per diem are claimed due to *special or unusual circumstances*, the traveler must document such circumstances by submitting a written explanation with the travel expense claim. The amount reimbursed, however, may not exceed 300% of the applicable federal rate established for the location of travel. The department can approve expenses up to 200% but over this amount, the Dean's Office must approve. A justification will, of course, be required explaining why the expenses exceeded the limit.

AirBnB/VRBO or a hotel.

Travelers are advised to use hotel lodging whenever possible. This is because there are industry standards and laws to protect the traveler while staying in the hotel; lodging is purposely designed for temporary lodging and usually in safer locations.

However, if AirBnB/VRBO lodging is preferred then calculating the nightly rate is achieved by adding the cleaning fee and nightly rate together. Dividing by the number of nights stayed and even the number of guests staying at the same lodging will give you the nightly rate. All other fees such as the service fee, taxes, and airbnb fee are separate from the calculation but can also be claimed of course.

Staying with a friend or relative instead of the Conference lodging.

When a traveler lodges with a friend or relative while on official business for the University, a non-cash gift, such as flowers, groceries, or a restaurant meal, may be provided to the host. The actual cost of such a gift may be reimbursed up to \$75. Under IRS regulations, a receipt must be provided for gifts costing \$25 or more. Only one gift per stay may be provided to the lodging host.

Transportation Expenses

“Transportation expenses shall be reimbursed based on the most economical mode of transportation and the most commonly traveled route consistent with the authorized purpose of the trip”.

Example: The traveler wants to travel from New York to San Francisco. The most economical mode of transportation would be to travel by plane in economy seating along the usual commercial route.

Indirect or Interrupted Itineraries

Obtaining advance approval is required when a traveler wants to take an indirect route, or interrupts travel by a direct route for other than University business. Any resulting additional expenses shall be borne by the traveler. The reimbursement of expenses shall be limited to the actual costs incurred or the charges that would have been incurred via a usually traveled route, whichever is less. The cost comparison should be based on what UC would have paid, which can be obtained from a Connexus-related travel agency **before or at the time of booking the trip.**

When comparison quotes are obtained after the fact, the cost of the flight can sometimes be unrealistically inflated due to factors such as a short lead time before the flight, the season, economy plus seating (not allowed for comparison costs), different airlines to what would have normally been used, etc. If the comparisons are ATF or are felt not comparable to what would normally have been the cost, route, or travel means, then the Dean’s Office holds the right to research a comparison and, if found to be less, to use said comparison as the basis for the reimbursement.

Business Class Seating: These may be purchased but only under very limited circumstances:

1. to accommodate a disability (redacted medical note *required*),
2. An itinerary involves overnight travel without an opportunity for rest before the first meeting*.

*Other avenues to combat a long journey, jetlag, etc. must be considered before purchasing business class seating.

1. Arriving 24/48 hours early,
2. changing a work schedule to accommodate leaving earlier.

If unable to arrive early or change a work meeting schedule, supporting justification and documentation must be included in the report. These requirements for business class are required for both outbound and return flights.

The traveler may purchase business class but only claim for the equivalent economy class seat. The comparison fare MUST be sought **before or at the time of booking the trip.** If the comparisons are ATF or are felt not comparable to what would normally have been the cost, route, or travel means, then the Dean’s Office holds the right to research a comparison and, if found to be less, to use said comparison as the basis for the reimbursement.

First Class Seating may only be purchased when it is the only additional class offered above economy. Supporting documentation **MUST** be provided when requesting exceptional approval.



Vehicle Rental

Before renting a rental vehicle, it must be determined as a cost-effective business expense against other modes of travel and not just a want or convenience for the traveler.

For example, a taxi vs a car rental will probably see the taxi as the lesser cost from/ to the airport to the hotel.

If a rental is more cost-effective (all associated costs, such as tolls, gas, parking, etc., are part of the comparison calculation), only a mid-range model, not an SUV, deluxe, etc., can be rented. The driver should request the UC contract which includes collision damage waiver insurance at no extra cost. If the UC contract is not used CDW or other vehicle insurance cannot be reimbursed.

If a rental vehicle cost is **not** determined cost-effective, a request for reimbursement will be restricted to an amount equal to the cost of a more cost-effective vehicle, e.g., a taxi. Use taxifarefinder.com to determine this cost.

Travel Insurance

All University travelers (employees, residents, students, fellows, and non-UCSF guests) are covered worldwide, 24 hours a day, for a wide variety of accidents and incidents **while on official travel status**. The coverage includes accidental death, accidental dismemberment, paralysis, and permanent total disability. The coverage also includes travel assistance services when the traveler is 100+ miles from their home or headquarters, such as:

- Security extraction (security extraction is not subject to mileage limitation),
- Emergency medical evacuation and repatriation,
- Repatriation of remains,
- Out-of-country medical,
- Loss of personal effects (employees only).

Travelers must register all out-of-state and foreign-country business trips to ensure coverage. Booking travel through Connexus' preferred travel agencies (except SWABIZ (Southwest)) automatically enrolls the traveler in the insurance program for travel outside of California; otherwise, the traveler must register on the [Risk Services website](#) before an out-of-state or international trip occurs.

Travel Cancellation and COVID-19

While airlines offer the cancellation of a trip often it's with a non-transferable voucher rather than a full cash refund which can complicate reimbursements when the traveler is a UCSF guest.

1. **Don't** buy a ticket unless you are certain to travel.
2. **Don't** buy a fully refundable ticket as these are often 3 x the cost of an ordinary ticket.
3. **Don't** reimburse the ticket until after the conference.

Further and more specific details on reimbursing canceled tickets to travelers can be found on the [UCSF Supply Chain Management website](#). If all else fails please reach out to Simon Schuster.



Meeting Entertainment CME Conference Meals

Meals and light refreshments provided to students and funded by self-supporting educational programs are exempt from the per-person maximum rates below.

Meal Type (Decided by the time of day the food is served and/or food type)	Non-Exceptional Per Person Max (Calculation includes : Food & Beverages, Tip, Tax, Labor, Delivery & Service Fees)	Exceptional Per Person Range – Requires Dean's Office Exceptional Approval Exceeding this range requires Chancellor's approval
Breakfast until 10:00 am	Up to \$31	\$31.01 to \$62.00
Lunch from noon to 1:30 pm	Up to \$54	\$54.01 to \$108
Dinner from 5:00 pm	Up to \$94	\$94.01 to \$188.00
Light Refreshments 10:00 am to noon & 1:30 to 5:00 pm	Up to \$22	\$22.01 to \$44.00
Non-F&B costs all meals	Up to \$100	\$100.01+

Being fiscally responsible when planning a conference's meals is crucial. Even if there are no per-person meal limits we should still endeavor to use them as a guide.

Daily M&IE Allowance (\$92) During Travel Of More Than 24 Hours

Whether a UCSF guest or UCSF employee, a traveler may claim actual expenses for meals and incidental expenses such as tips and fees for services, e.g., for waiters, baggage handlers, etc., up to \$92 per day within the USA (CONUS). The equivalent allowance while traveling internationally outside of the United States (OCONUS), including travel within Alaska, Hawaii, and U.S. possessions, shall be reimbursed under the non-foreign locality per diem rates [published by the Department of Defense](#).

Meeting Entertainment Events During The Conference

When ONLY UCSF Employee conference attendees wish to meet together during a meal to discuss the conference or department projects the cost of the meal will fall under their individual Daily M&IE Allowance (G-28 Travel Policy) and NOT the Meeting & Entertainment BUS-79 Policy.

When Employees Host Business Guests at a meal this is allowable as long as there is an underlying business purpose in support of the University's mission. This could be for collaboration, enhancing a business relationship, etc., and falls under the BUS-79 Policy meal limits and rules. Unless specifically associated with the conference (i.e. to thank guest speakers), the cost of the meal should **not** be charged to the conference chartstring but be paid for via MyExpense, BearBuy, P-card, or corporate travel card.

Spousal Or Family Attendance At A Meeting Entertainment Meal

The cost of meals or light refreshments provided to the spouse or partner, of a guest or the official host may be reimbursed, provided the expenditure serves a bona fide University business purpose. When a spouse or partner attends a function, the individual's presence is considered to serve a business purpose if he or she has a significant role in the proceedings or makes an important contribution to the success of the event. If no significant role or such expenses are not allowable/ reimbursable.



Attendee Activities During The Conference

Social activities can be scheduled into the conference agenda during breaks or after-hours and can be designed to appeal to a wide range of interests and preferences. The extent of the activities may depend on the purpose and theme of the conference, as well as the available resources and budget. Overall, incorporating social activities into a conference can enhance the overall attendee experience and create a more memorable and enjoyable event. The maximum spent on each activity should not exceed \$100 per person, no more than 1 activity per day, and should be risk averse.

Third-Party Event Planners.

Using a third-party event organizer for a business dinner or conference can be appropriate in some situations. Here are some examples of when it may be appropriate to use a third-party event organizer:

1. Lack of expertise: If the event you are organizing requires different expertise a third-party event organizer may be a good option. For example, if you're planning an event in a new location or a country where you're unfamiliar with the local customs and regulations, a third-party event organizer with experience in that location can be beneficial.
2. Time constraints: If you have a tight deadline to organize the event, a third-party event organizer can help streamline the process and ensure that everything is done on time. For example, if you need to organize a last-minute conference or business dinner, a third-party event organizer can handle the logistics quickly and efficiently.
3. Budget constraints: If you have a limited budget, a third-party event organizer can help you get more for your money. Event organizers often have established relationships with vendors and venues, which can help them negotiate better rates.

Why we Shouldn't Use A Third-Party Event Organizer:

1. Lack of transparency: If the third-party event organizer does not provide clear information about their fees, services, or qualifications. It's important to work with an event organizer who is transparent about their process and who can provide a clear breakdown of costs.
2. Control issues: If you want to maintain complete control over the event, a third-party event organizer may not be the best option. Event organizers often have their own vision and approach, which may not align with yours.
3. Cost: If the cost of hiring a third-party event organizer is prohibitively high, it may not be cost-effective to use them. You should compare the cost of using a third-party event organizer with the cost of organizing the event in-house to determine which option is more cost-effective.



FAQ:

Travel

University travelers – anyone, employee, or business guest traveling on behalf of the university.

Q: Can a University traveler depart from somewhere else other than San Francisco?

A: Yes. This is classed as indirect travel. Exceptional approval is required (pre-approval advised).

Before Purchasing A Ticket, the University travelers MUST obtain a comparison of what the cost would have been from SFO to the destination and leaving on the date they would have departed on to attend the business meeting. The ticket can only be economy and not economy plus. Business class is only allowed as a comparison when covered by a medical note. Only the actual costs of the flight taken to a maximum of the comparison cost will be reimbursed. The employee traveler can depart and return to the original start point or return to SFO from the meeting destination.

Q: Can a University traveler return to a different destination than where they came from?

A: As in the previous answer, this is considered indirect travel, and the same rules apply. Exceptional approval is required (pre-approval advised).

Q: Can a traveler stay more days than the length of the business purpose?

A: The traveler (employee or guest) can arrive 1 day before and should depart on the same day as the last meeting. If there are no flights after the meeting or it is a lesser cost to depart the next day (say on a weekend) then they can stay an extra night. All costs associated with an extra day, such as lodging, car rental, daily meals allowance, etc., are part of the cost calculation. If they wish to extend their trip for a personal vacation the indirect travel rules apply. Exceptional approval is required for 1 extra day after and for personal time with pre-approval advised.

Q: Can the UCSF host pay for travel Expenses on Behalf of Others – Airfare and lodging?

A: University travelers normally shall not be reimbursed for expenses paid on behalf of other persons; however, limited exceptions are permitted such as in the case of co-travelers who are sharing a room. For the airfare, Connexus should be used if the traveler doesn't want to seek reimbursement after the conference. For lodging BearBuy and or Connexus may be used, and cash advances can be made for both airfare and lodging.

Q: Is Hawaii OCONUS for per diems or CONUS? Do we add the local meals and local incidental allowance together? What does 'Proportional Meal Rates' mean?

A: While Hawaii is part of the United States we can use the OCONUS [Department of Defense per diem rates](#) for foreign locations. Exceeding the per diem rates is not allowed for Hawaii, Alaska, and the US Territories. Add the local meals and local incidental allowance together and the PMR is a meal rate used when one or two Government meals are available or provided at no cost to the traveler i.e. the amount to be removed from the per diem daily rate when a meal is provided at no charge.

FAQ:

Meeting Entertainment:

Q: If there is a meal during or at the end of the conference for thanking the guest lecturers can spouses attend also?

A: If the spouse of the guest lecturer has accompanied the guest to the conference, while we cannot pay for any travel costs we can invite them to 1 dinner for the above reason. If the guest(s) attend the dinner with their spouse then the host (and possibly other UCSF employees if the group is small – under 5) may also bring their spouse. Usual meal rules under UCOP BUS-79 apply. Exceptional approval is required.

Q: Can employee conference attendees have a business meal separate from the conference?

A: When there are UCSF attendees only, the University will not pay for or reimburse costs for meals taken with individual colleagues at the same work location unless the participants were unable to accomplish the business purpose during working hours. University policy does not permit reimbursement when two or more employees choose to go to lunch together to continue their business...when the meeting could have been conducted during regular working hours*. If the attendees are traveling they should use their daily meal allowance to pay for their own meal.

*FAU recognizes that there may be times when combining business meetings and meals are necessary to conduct University business and believe that the non-exceptional per-person limits are sufficient in these circumstances.

Q: Can employee-only morale meals and activities take place during but not part of the conference?

A: Yes. It might be the case that many of the same team of colleagues are at the conference and it would make a good opportunity while altogether to have a meal or activity. Usual policy rules apply.



FAQ:

[Gift Giving.](#)

Q: Can we provide a gift to conference participants and or the guest speakers?

A: yes. The maximum dollar value pre-taxes is \$600. However, the cost and type of gift should be in line with the purpose of why a gift is being provided and in the case of a guest lecturer we should not use this as a form of honorarium payment.

Q: A conference manager wants to gift a panelist/ community speaker a \$600 gift card for speaking at the CME conference. Is this a reasonable amount?

A: The maximum gift value to a nonUCSF employee is \$600. However, the amount should be commensurate to the task and recipient. For example, providing a \$500 GC for answering a questionnaire might not be appropriate, While giving a \$500 gift card to a professional person for giving a lecture when they are not being paid an honorarium might be. A Visa card should not be given unless the recipient is unable to use an allowable non-negotiable equivalent GC.

Q: Can gift cards be given to minors for speaking or other reason at the CME conference?

A: Yes, and as in the previous answer the maximum gift value to a non-UCSF employee is \$600 and the amount should be commensurate to the task. As the gift is going to a minor we should also get approval from the parent or guardian and choose an appropriate gift rather than cash or a gift card and a Visa card is unallowable. An appropriate gift might be to aid learning, travel, or an amount towards a laptop, sports gear, hobby items, or similar.

