

On Friday June 19th a SLAC Today article was released to the SLAC workforce with the following message regarding Virtual Conferences:

“Virtual conferences

Conference participation must be approved by submitting a [Concur](#) travel authorization request, even if the conference is virtual.”

Per our valued customer feedback, Travel@SLAC is providing additional clarifying guidance below:

What is a Conference?

General Definition: “Conference” is defined in the Federal Travel Regulation as, a meeting, retreat, seminar, symposium, or event that involves attendee travel. Conferences subject to this guidance are also often referred to by names other than “conference”. Other common terms used include conventions, expositions, symposiums, seminars, workshops, or exhibitions. They typically involve topical matters of interest to, and the participation of, multiple agencies and/or nongovernmental participations. Indicia of a formal conference often include but are not limited to registration, registration fees, published substantive agenda, and scheduled speakers, or discussion panels. Individual events may qualify as conferences without meeting all of the indicia listed above, but will generally meet some of them.

Due to COVID-19 many conferences are being provided as virtual conferences. Although travel reimbursements may not be required or conference fees may be waived, please follow the below guidance:

DOE Sponsored Conferences- Conferences which are sponsored, co-sponsored, or hosted by the DOE. SLAC must report costs and the number of SLAC affiliated persons attending these conferences in the DOE iPortal conference management tool. These conferences must be entered into Concur for travel request approval even if no travel or cost will occur to ensure DOE compliance.

Non-DOE Scientific/Research Conferences- Conferences which are not sponsored, co-sponsored, or hosted by the DOE but consist of presentations or information exchange of materials from scientific publications. These conferences must be entered into Concur for travel request approval even if no travel or cost will occur to ensure DOE compliance.

Conference Exemptions:

Non-DOE Sponsored Conferences- Conferences which are not sponsored, co-sponsored, or hosted by the DOE and do not consist of presentations or information exchange of materials from scientific publications. These conferences do not need to be inputted into Concur if no travel or costs will be incurred. Examples of conference exemptions include:

- Operational meetings such as peer reviews, program reviews, and construction project reviews are, generally speaking, not considered a conference because they are aimed at evaluation of discrete program projects or initiatives of DOE.
- Another example of an “operational” function is DOE program officials meeting with DOE contractors concerning particular work under a contract.
- Activities associated with “CMS week” have special exemption from the Office of Science and is NOT a conference.
- Operational events that focus on being engaged in actually carrying out the work.

- One day tech conferences, trainings etc.