

Guiding Principles for Conference Finance Chairs

This guideline presents a set of formal principles specifically for conference and workshop Finance Chairs or Treasurers. The Finance Chair is the comptroller for the conference. S/He manages the financial administration of the conference and makes the financial decisions with the guidance of the General Chair(s). As such s/he has a fundamental role in the planning of a successful conference. The Finance Chair is responsible for providing timely and accurate budget reports, and for obtaining requisite Society approvals at each budget review point.

The term "Conference" refers conferences, symposia, and workshops unless otherwise noted.

Holistic Planning

An organizing committee, in particular the General Chair, should consider holistically the key aspects of a conference such as paper quality, community building, affordable and enjoyable experience, and healthy financial performance. A good conference is one that (i) fulfills the objectives of the SP Society, (ii) provides authors with an opportunity to announce, discuss, publish and share their results, (iii) encourages authors to submit papers and attend again in the coming years, and (iv) attracts a good number attendees who find the conference useful and important.

The Finance Chair should prepare for several possible scenarios for how s/he will administer the budget. It is recommended that the Finance Chair, with the General Chair, prepare a conservative financial plan with alternatives for higher-than-expected attendance and for lower-than-expected attendance.

In case of lower attendance, there should be a contingency plan for what expenses can be cut or reduced. The timing for these decisions needs to be guided by the hotel and convention center contract(s) as well as the paper review and acceptance timeline. Expenses that can be cut without impacting the technical quality of the conference for attendees should be cut first.

In case of higher attendance that would result in a budget surplus greater than 25%, there should be a plan to spend some extra funds to the benefit of the conference and the attendees. For example, it may become possible to subsidize more student attendance, provide more speaker awards, record plenary sessions for wider availability, sponsor some regional co-event such as a factory tour, or improve menu selections within reason.

The following principles are provided as a guideline towards a financially successful conference sponsored by the IEEE Signal Processing Society. They are provided simply to help conference organizers, in particular General Chairs and Finance Chairs, the basic principles that have been proven effective by past conference organizers. They are not, unless otherwise indicated, rigid policy.

Conference Surplus/Deficit

Every conference, symposia and workshop must plan to generate (i.e., budget) a minimum surplus of 20% of the total expense (pre-loan). This surplus is important to the Society because it funds other Society expenses, such as distinguished lectures, educational materials, awards, and staff support. For a new conference, the surplus requirement can be lower, with the understanding that later

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conferences in the series will generate the required surplus. Approval for a lower surplus requirement is rare and must be granted by the Executive Committee of the IEEE Signal Processing Society.

Conferences that finally result in a surplus (, actual surplus) that is less than 10% of total expense (pre-loan) are subject to further review by the Conference Board Executive Subcommittee.

If during the course of organizing a conference, a threat that the conference may return an actual surplus less than 20% is discovered, the Conference Finance Chair or Treasurer must notify the VP-Conferences and VP-Finance immediately.

If during the course of organizing a conference, the actual conference surplus is expected to exceed 25%, it is recommended that some of the expected surplus be used to enhance the quality of the conference, as mentioned earlier. Conferences may not transfer funds from one year to the next year's conference. [IEEE Policy 10.1.9]

Society Leadership and Assistant Treasurer Support

The Society Leadership understands the demands placed upon conference organizers and places a high value on each individual's time and efforts. A conference Finance Chair in particular has the complete support of both the VP-Conferences and VP-Finance. This dual support shows that the Leadership recognizes the value of the conference business to the Society's financial health.

As such, the Society has arranged for Finance Chairs to have greater amount of support in the form of an Assistant Treasurer. The Assistant Treasurer, as an assistant to the Finance Chair, advises and guides IEEE & SPS requirements, manages the bank account(s), creates and maintains thorough and accurate financial records, submits required documents to IEEE, and fulfills the closing requirements.

The Assistant Treasurer is an IEEE employee skilled in Finance who is assigned to the Finance Chair to provide advice and logistical support the Assistant Treasurer coordinates and completes the forms and reports for conference financial coordination, ensuring continuity. The Assistant Treasurer is accountable to the Finance Chair throughout the conference planning process, including the closing of the conference. At this time, the arrangement for the Assistant Treasurer is an experiment that has been employed for a limited number of SPS conferences. During the experiment the duties and responsibilities of the Assistant Treasurer may be reexamined and evaluated.

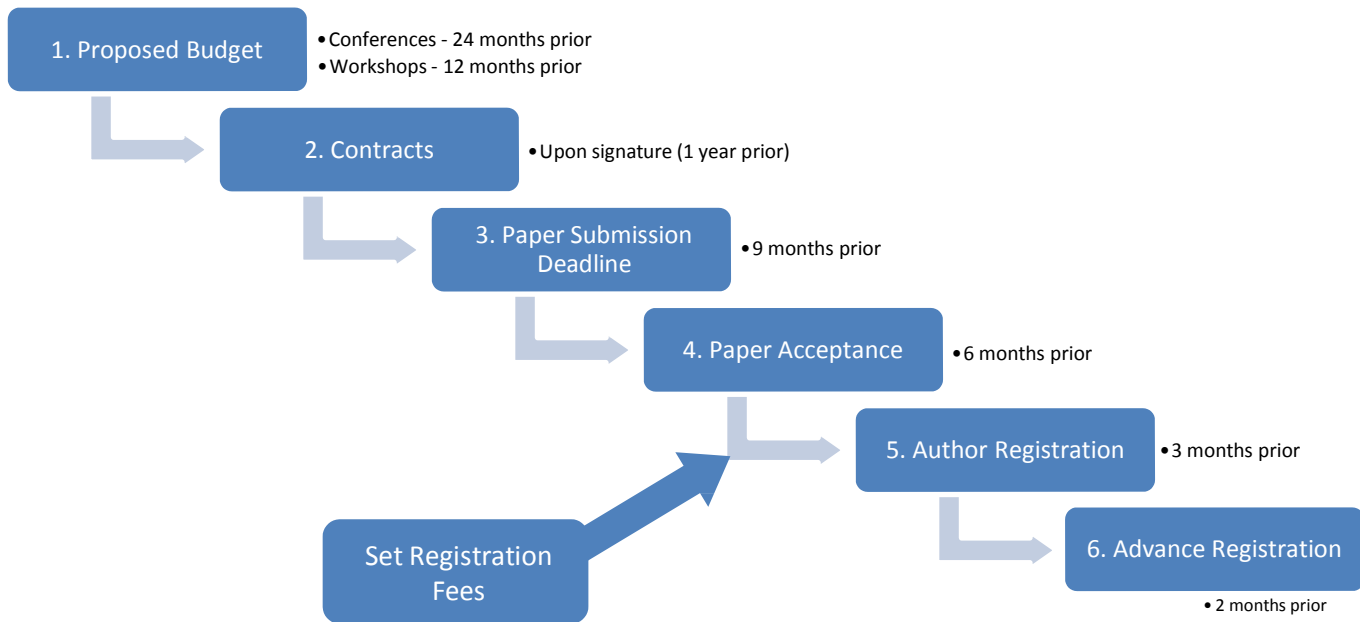
Budget Timeline & Milestones

The Budget Timeline is driven by the conference's timeline for paper submission/review and registration. The Finance Chair needs to submit a revised budget report to the VP-Conferences and VP-Finance at each milestone described herein to gain Society approval. At each budget review point, a conference committee must seek positive approval of the budget from the VP-Conferences and VP-Finance before commencing planning.

Conference Series and conference organizers that have a long history of successfully run conferences may have one or more budget review points pre-approved by the VPs, with requisite budget documentation sent for later review.

The Society reserves the right to modify the budget of, or in extraordinary cases to cancel approval of, the conference if the evolving budget becomes unacceptable to the VP-Conferences and the VP-Finance or if budget reports are not provided in a timely manner.

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1. **Proposed Budget** – (at least 24 months prior for a conference and at least 12 months prior for a workshop)
 - a. For advice on building a Proposed Budget please read the “Conference Budget Guideline” which can be found on the SPS website under Conference Resources.
 - b. Conference budgets received less than 6 months prior to the conference may not be approved. Lack of approval means the conference cannot be held.
2. **Hotel, convention center, or PCO contract(s) signed**– (approximately 1 year prior)
 - a. Adjust budget to include expenses defined in the contract(s).
 - b. Submit revised budget for review and approval.*
3. **Paper Submission Deadline** – (approximately 9 months prior)
 - a. If - Less than 80% of expected papers submitted, then:
 - i. reduce expected registrations by percent difference (e.g. Expected 750 papers, received 585 papers = expected 200 registrations adjusted to 160 registrations)
 - b. If - More than expected papers submitted, then:
 - i. increase expected registration by percent difference (e.g. Expected 750 papers, received 1050 papers = expected 200 registration adjusted to 280 registrations)
 - c. Submit revised budget for review and approval.*
4. **Paper Acceptance Deadline** – (approximately 6 months prior)
 - a. If - Less than 80% of expected papers accepted, then:
 - i. reduce expected registrations (e.g. Expected 335 papers to be accepted, accepted 250 papers = expected 200 registrations adjusted to 150 registrations),
 - ii. adjust meeting space on hold, and
 - iii. take allowable reductions in room block and Food & Beverage (F&B) guarantees
 - b. If - More than expected papers accepted, then:
 - i. increase expected registration (e.g. Expected 335 papers to be accepted, accepted 400 papers = expected 200 registration adjusted to 240 registrations), and
 - ii. adjust meeting space on hold if needed
 - c. **Set Registration fees** (See [Setting Registration Fees](#) below)

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- i. VP-Conferences and VP-Finance must approve registration fees BEFORE they are announced.
 - d. Submit revised budget for review and approval.*
5. **Author Registration Deadline** – (approximately 3 months prior)

At this time a conference organizers can project the final number of registration. Experience shows that 80% of registrations are typically completed by the author registration deadline. Using that guideline,

 - a. If - Less than 80% of expected registrations, then:
 - i. adjust meeting space on hold, and
 - ii. take allowable reductions in room block and F&B guarantees
 - b. If - Greater than 90% of expected registrations, then:
 - i. increase expected registration, and
 - ii. adjust meeting space on hold
 - c. Submit revised budget for review and approval.*
6. **Advance Registration Deadline** – (approximately 2 months prior)

At this time a conference organizers can usually predict the final number of registration. Experience shows that 90% of registrations are typically completed by the advance registration deadline. Using that guideline,

 - a. If - Less than 90% of expected registrations, then:
 - i. adjust meeting space on hold,
 - ii. take allowable reductions in room block and F&B guarantees, and
 - iii. notify VP-Conferences of the adjustment
 - b. If - Greater than 100% of expected registrations, then:
 - i. increase expected registration, and
 - ii. adjust meeting space on hold
 - c. Submit revised budget for review and approval.*
7. **One week before and during the conference**
 - a. If during this time there is any indication that the budget will not generate the originally planned surplus the VP-Conferences and VP-Finance must be notified.
8. **One month after the conference**
 - a. The VP-Conferences and VP-Finance may request an updated budget forecast at this time. The update should note any variations that occurred during the conference than had not previously been reported.
 - b. All loans and advances must be paid back to the Society.
 - c. Steps should be taken towards closing the conference. Closing requirements can be found on the IEEE website
(http://www.ieee.org/conferences_events/conferences/organizers/organizers_resources.html)
 - d. At this time following is also due:
 - i. Submission of the proceedings to IEEE CPP for publication on IEEE Xplore®¹
 - ii. Registration count by Grade and by Advance vs. At-Conference report to the Society Conference Services Staff

¹ As agreed to in the Letter of Acquisition for the conference, all conference publication materials are to be sent no later than 30 days after the conference end date. For more detailed information on how to prepare and submit pdf files and packing list please visit the following website:
http://www.ieee.org/conferences_events/conferences/organizers/publishing_conference_papers.html

- iii. Attendee survey results report to the Society Conference Services Staff

9. Three and Six months after the conference

- a. Several closing requirements for the conference should be completed or at the very least near completion within three months of the conference. These include:
 - i. Post-Conference Forecast – a summary of Revenue & Expenses. This information can be submitted through the IEEE on-line form or emailed to Conference Finance with your conference name and record number listed in the subject line.
 - ii. Registration/Tax Documents
 - iii. Surplus Distribution
 - iv. 1099 and/or 1042 Schedules
- b. Within six months of the conference the Final report including all of the above as well as the Proof of Bank Account Closure, Certificate of Accuracy, Audit, and the CB Check Destroy Form needs to be sent to Conference Finance.

**Budgets and post-conference materials are reviewed by the VP-Conferences and VP-Finance at each interval described above. Derivations in expenses, revenue, or surplus are subject to further review.*

Setting Registration Fees

Proposed registration fees are reviewed following the Paper Acceptance date and must be submitted to the VP-Conference at least one month prior to the planned date for opening registration. The registration fees cannot be publicized until the VP-Conferences and VP-Finance grant approval as part of that budget review.

All conference series' registration fees should not vary more than +/- 5% (excluding taxes) from the norm² without approval of the VP-Conferences. The difference from the norm shall be measured in the same currency.

All conferences and workshops must offer a discounted registration fee for IEEE members. It is IEEE policy that the IEEE member fee be set 20 – 25% less than the Non-member fee.

All conferences and workshops must offer a discounted registration fee for SPS members. It is recommended that the SPS member fee be 15 – 20% less than the IEEE member fee.

"At-Conference" registration fees should be 25% higher than "Advance" registration fees.

The fees listed in the tables on the next page are provided only for example purposes. Each conference or workshop will determine the registration fees based upon the budget and the particular demographic of the attendees.

² The SPS office keeps records of the normal registration for each conference series. Please contact the staff to obtain the conference series profile which contains registration fee history, normal budget parameters and other useful information about the conference.

Conferences

Total Expense:	\$1,090,000
Estimated number of paid registrations:	1800
Cost/Person:	\$605
Multiplier:	1.75 (†)
Base for Advance Non-member Fee:	\$1,059
Multiplier for On-site Registration:	1.25
Base fee for On-Site Non-member Fee:	\$1,324

Grade	Differential Range	Advance	At-Conference
Non-member	See formula above	\$1,060	\$1,320
IEEE Member	20 – 25% less than Non-member	\$800	\$990
SPS Member	15 – 20% less than IEEE Member	\$640	\$790
Non-member Student	70 - 75% less than Non-Member	\$270	\$330
IEEE Student Member	20 – 25% less than Non-member Student	\$200	\$250
SPS Student Member	15 – 20% less than IEEE Student Member	\$160	\$200
IEEE Life Member	Same as or 10% less than IEEE Student Member	\$200	\$250

Workshops

Total Expense:	\$ 67,000
Estimate paid registrations:	125
Cost/Person:	\$ 536
Multiplier:	1.50 (†)
Base for Advance Non-member Fee:	\$ 804
Multiplier for On-site Registration:	1.25
Base for On-Site Non-Member Fee:	\$ 1,005

Grade	Differential Range	Advance	At-Conference
Non-member	See formula above	\$800	\$1,010
IEEE Member	20 – 25% less than Non-member	\$600	\$760
SPS Member	15 – 20% less than IEEE Member	\$480	\$610
Non-member Student	50 - 55% less than Non-Member	\$360	\$450
IEEE Student Member	20 – 25% less than Non-member Student	\$270	\$340
SPS Student Member	15 – 20% less than IEEE Student Member	\$220	\$270
IEEE Life Member	Same as or 10% less than IEEE Student Member	\$270	\$340

†The multipliers noted above are on the low end of the range of multipliers for most SPS conference and workshop budgets held in 2012. Conference organizers when determining registrations fees will need to modify the multiplier as well as the differential ranges for each grade of membership to meet the surplus requirements for the budget. The calculations above are provided to demonstrate the desired differential between the non-member, IEEE member and SPS member grades.

Likewise, some workshops attract a greater ratio of SPS Members and/or a smaller ratio of students to the meeting. It is important to know the conference's history and the ratios of membership grades before setting the fees. It may be that if your workshop is more attractive to non-members than members that you may need to adjust the differentials to reach a satisfactory result.

Taxing Registration Fees

Conferences held outside of the U.S., no matter where the funds are collected, are likely to be subject to Value-Added Tax (V.A.T.) or Goods and Services Tax (G.S.T). VAT or GST should be added to the above calculation of registration fees. The tax must to be collected from each registrant no matter his/her country of origin or residence. Everywhere the registration fees are publicized, the tax rate must be clearly stated and each registrant must be provided instructions to reclaim the taxes paid, if applicable. Before applying VAT or GST please check with the IEEE Indirect Tax department for more detailed information.

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Performance Recognition

To recognize and promote organizers who meet or exceed Society expectations, the Society Conference Board Executive Subcommittee will periodically review an internal conference report containing organizers' names, conference budget review dates and results, budgeted and actual surplus, and conference attendance feedback.

Conference Loans & Advances

A General Chair or Finance Chair may request a conference loan or advance from the Society at any time during the planning cycle. Conference loans must be repaid in full within one month after the conference.

The total of the loans to any one conference should not exceed 25% of the total budgeted expense for that conference. Requests for loans or advances greater than 25% of the total budgeted expenses require explicit approval from the VP-Conferences and VP-Finance.

Transparency

A finance chair shall be prepared to provide a complete disclosure of all financial transactions giving a clear, concise, and complete view of a conference's financial situation within four business days of a request. The need for such accounting transparency is critical to the Society's ability to meet IEEE requirements as well as government regulations. Lack of such transparency may result in replacement of the Finance Chair or cancellation of the conference.

Closing the Conference

Conferences should close their books within 6 months of the last day of the conference. Conferences that do not close within 6 months or are closed non-compliant ([Definition 1](#)) are reported by IEEE to the Society President, VP-Conferences and VP-Finance each quarter. Future conferences in that series are subject to further review by the Conference Board Executive Committee.

The Society is charged a penalty by IEEE for each conference that has not closed its financials within twelve months of the conference's end. The Society deducts these penalties from the Society's general ledger against the surplus for the offending conference. Future conferences in that series are subject to further review by the Conference Board Executive Subcommittee.

Know and Follow Policy

SPS Policies that every conference finance chair should know are:

[7.2 Finances](#)

[7.2.1 Merchant Services](#)

[7.3 Budgets](#)

[7.3.6 Administration Services Fee](#)

[7.7.2 Payments to Professional Conference Organizers](#)

[7.12 Monetary Gifts to Local Signal Processing Society Chapters](#)

IEEE Policies that every conference finance chair should know are:

[10.1.4 General Approvals, Endorsements, & Notifications](#)

[10.1.6 Conference Budgets](#)

[10.1.7 Conference Advances](#)

[10.1.9 Distribution of Surplus and Deficits](#)

[10.1.10 Auditing of Conference Finances](#)

[10.1.11 Conference Closings](#)

[10.1.15 Registration Fee Requirements](#)

[11.6 Business Expense Reporting](#) [\(See Appendix\)](#)

A conference organizing committee member cannot change or amend IEEE or Society policy and regulations. Such changes require discussion and approval of an exception to policy at a formal Conference Board meeting.

What to do when a member of a conference organizing committee does not follow the guiding principles or policy?

If you discover a colleague who is not following the guiding principles or has gone against policy, please ensure they are aware of these items and their importance. If the incorrect behavior continues, contact the VP-Conferences or the President of the Society. The matter will be handled discreetly and confidentially. If it is deemed necessary that the matter requires further resolution, the SPS Conflict Resolution Process will be instituted (Bylaw 206 <http://signalprocessingsociety.org/volunteers/signal-processing-society-bylaws>)

APPENDIX:

The policies below are abridged for simplification purposes and are current as of the date on this document. To read the full and most current policy please visit:

<http://www.signalprocessingsociety.org/about-sps/governance/policy-procedure/part-2/>

7.2. Finances.

Each Conference Organizing Committee shall submit, prior to each Conference Board meeting, a conference status report.

The Organizing Committee for a technical meeting shall open an IEEE Concentration Bank account for deposit and disbursement of all funds related to the technical meeting. In turn, the Vice President-Conferences shall be advised of names of signatories, which shall include:

1. one General Chair;
2. one Finance Chair or equivalent;
3. one staff member designated by IEEE as required by IEEE policy must be included as a signatory on Society technical meeting accounts.

A contractor cannot be a signatory on Society technical meeting accounts.

Technical meetings sponsored with other technical societies may be excluded from the above provisions provided a charter of operations for those organizations is approved by the SPS Board of Governors and the IEEE, and an exclusion is granted by the Society's Vice President-Conferences.

7.2.1. Merchant Services.

An Organizing Committee that hires a professional conference organizer (PCO) for a technical meeting must engage the PCO, as part of the contracting process, to use the IEEE Merchant Services if they are integrated with the IEEE Payment Gateway.

If the PCO is not integrated with the IEEE Payment Gateway special provision must be made to secure the funds.

7.3. Budgets.

Meetings and events that have been convened or approved by the Board of Governors or Executive Committee to occur in conjunction with ICASSP, ICIP, or other Signal Processing Society technical meetings will be considered part of the administrative series and will be absorbed into the technical meeting budget.

If the Board of Governors will be meeting in conjunction with a Society sponsored technical meeting, the technical meeting organizers are responsible for budgeting and providing wireless internet access for the Board of Governors meeting. It is the responsibility of the technical meetings to assure this service is provided.

7.3.6. Administration Services Fee.

All conference and workshop budgets shall include as an expense item an administration fee which will be equal to 2% of the total (pre-loan) expense budget.

7.7.2. Payments to Professional Conference Organizers.

Professional conference organizers shall submit a detailed, enumerated invoice to the Society Conference Services Department staff and the Organizing Committee.

7.12. Monetary Gifts to Local Signal Processing Society Chapters.

Each Society sponsored conference and workshop has the opportunity to provide a donation to the local Signal Processing Society (SPS) Chapter, where the event is taking place. However, there are several criteria that must be met before the donation can be made.

IEEE Policy & Procedure

The policies below are abridged for simplification purposes and are current as of the date on this document. To read the full and most current policy please visit:

http://www.ieee.org/documents/ieee_policies.pdf

10.1.4 Budgets

IEEE Conference Services shall approve all conference budgets exceeding \$25K (USD) in revenue/expenses. This approval is obtained by submitting a detailed budget to IEEE Conference Services at least one year in advance of the conference, but earlier submission is strongly recommended.

10.1.6 Conference Budgets

All conference budgets submitted for approval should be set to generate a minimum surplus of 20% over projected expenses. Audit fees shall be incorporated in the conference budgets and displayed as a separate line item.

10.1.7 Conference Advances

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Conferences are not allowed to transfer advances from one years' conference to the next. All conference advances are to be repaid one month after a conference is held.

10.1.9 Distribution of Surplus and Deficits

The distribution of any surplus or the allocation of any deficit resulting from a conference will be apportioned to the sole sponsor or co-sponsoring organizational units of a conference. Surplus is to be distributed within 6 months of the conference. Conferences may not transfer funds from one year to the next year's conference.

10.1.10 Auditing of Conference Finances

Co-sponsored conferences, where IEEE has a 50% or less financial responsibility shall be encouraged to participate in the audit process.

Conferences where IEEE has greater than a 50% financial responsibility, including conferences that are solely IEEE sponsored, and where the actual or budgeted income or expense is \$100,000 or more must be audited by a professional independent source, outside the sponsoring organizational unit.

Conferences where IEEE has greater than 50% financial responsibility, including conferences that are solely IEEE sponsored, and where the actual or budgeted income or expense is less than \$100,000 will be audited on a periodic basis.

10.1.11 Conference Closings

All IEEE solely sponsored and co-sponsored conferences must within six months of the conference date:

- close the bank accounts,
- distribute the surplus,
- repay advances,
- complete the detailed final financial reports,
- complete the audit, if required.

10.1.15 Registration Fee Requirements

IEEE solely sponsored and co-sponsored conferences must have a member/nonmember individual registration fee differential. The amount of the differential shall be at least 20% above the IEEE member fee. Conferences may establish a registration fee lower than the IEEE member fee for sponsoring organizational unit members.

Conferences where IEEE is the sole sponsor must have a reduced fee for Student members and Life Members. Reduced fees, waiver of fees, or fee differential for unemployed IEEE members, retired members, and for special registrants (e.g., guests, speakers, and exhibitors) are permitted at the discretion of the Conference Organizing Committee. The individual registration fee for Life Members must be no more than that for Students.

At the discretion of the Conference Organizing Committee, the IEEE member registration rates may apply to members of non-IEEE co-sponsoring, cooperating organizations, or sister societies.

11.6 Business Expense Reporting

Airfare. All persons traveling on IEEE business who are seeking reimbursement for airfare or for which airfare is provided for them by IEEE [including conferences], shall book only the most economical airfare, i.e., non-refundable, economy-class, coach-fare tickets; provided, however, the reimbursement or purchase by IEEE of business class fares shall be permitted only (i) when the flying time is over eight consecutive hours for a single segment or over eight hours flying time where a layover is required, (ii) when it is budgeted by the organizational unit, and (iii) with permission of the Major Boards Vice President or President.

Definitions:

A conference is deemed to be closed compliant when it submits all required pre-conference documents prior to the beginning of the event and all post-conference documents after the event has concluded. These required documents include but are not limited to:

Pre-Conference: Budget, Sponsoring Entity Approval of Budget, Banking Information, POBC/COI for Chair and Treasurer, Committee List, Signature Cards where applicable, Sponsorship/Technical/Fiscal Agent MoUs where applicable

Post-Conference: Final Financial Report, Certificate of Accuracy, Loan Repayment where applicable, Surplus, Proof of Bank Account Closure, 1099 & 1042 Tax Forms, Audit Report where applicable.

ⁱ At the time this document was written IEEE Policy 10.1.6 stated in part, "All conference budgets submitted for approval should be set to generate a minimum surplus of 20% over projected expenses." If the policy is amended the sections of this document where the minimum surplus is mentioned shall be understood to mean the minimum required by IEEE or as stated in IEEE Policy 10.1.6.