

Conference Policy



Education is for improving lives and for leaving your community and world better than you found it.

Approved by the Board of Directors on: July 2021

Review date: July 2023

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1. Introduction

At Community Academies Trust (CAT) our trust, our individual schools or our Institute of Education regularly run conferences for employees, governors and/ or trustees. These are valuable opportunities to come together for training, for strategic planning and to harness the collaborative creativity of being in a family of like-minded schools, ensuring excellence for our pupils and communities. We are mindful that we are funded with public money and are accountable to the ESFA and others for efficient financial management and ensuring value for money. This policy sets out how we do this in respect of the conferences that we run.

2. Interaction with other trust policies

This policy does not cover training or conferences delivered by a third party which our employees, governors or trustees attend as delegates following a normal procurement decision. Travel, hotel and subsistence costs for these are covered by the Staff Expenses Policy and the Trustee and Governor Expenses Policy.

This policy does not cover hospitality provided by third parties to employees as a result of their employment. This is covered by the Gifts and Hospitality Policy.

This policy does not cover hospitality provided by us to employees in the course of their employment. This is covered by the Rewards and Comforts Policy.

3. Decision to hold a Conference

Most internal conferences and training are held at low or no cost to public funds. Where the total budgeted cost exceeds £10,000, prior authorisation from a trustee is required.

4. Conference Location

Whenever possible internal training and conferences should take place in our own estate where we have many suitable venues. School facilities are available for use for internal training at no cost to colleagues from another part of the trust, whenever they are not needed for the delivery of education or previously committed to an external letting.

There can be advantages in the delivery of a conference away from the trust estate; a more suitable space and professional environment, to remove colleagues from their in-school/ office activities, to promote cross trust collaboration. The decision to hold a conference outside of our estate requires authorisation from ELT.

CAT Institute of Education may offer conferences to external organisations which are funded by a fee or grant and which also may be available to internal attendees. The Director of the Institute may authorise that these are held away from the estate where the business plan for the conference shows that the expected income will cover the cost.

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It is important that conferences are accessible to colleagues. All internal training and conferences will be held at most 1 hour commute from one of our schools. Community Academies Trust does not hold overseas training or conferences for our employees, governors or trustees.

5. Overnight Accommodation and Breakfast

Where the conference includes formal sessions than run over 2 days (eg: both in the evening and the morning of the next day) then overnight accommodation, evening meal and breakfast at the venue can be provided for colleagues who attend both sessions. Authorisation of the cost of the accommodation is required from a member of ELT.

Other costs related to an overnight stay will not be funded by the trust. This includes the cost of newspapers, phone calls, use of leisure facilities, etc. In particular, the use of public money to purchase alcohol is not allowed.

6. Evening Meal

Where the conference includes a formal session of over 2 hours that commences after 4pm, an evening meal in the venue will be provided. The cost of alcohol will not be funded by the trust.

7. Lunch and Refreshments

Where a conference is held at an external venue, the costs of lunch and refreshments (tea, coffee, soft drinks, biscuits, fruit etc) will be paid for by the trust.

8. Travel and Parking

When attending an internal conference, the costs of travel to the venue and of parking will be paid in line with the Expenses Policy.

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