



SECRETARY OF THE ARMY
WASHINGTON

17 OCT 2012

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Interim Guidance for Implementation of New OSD Conference Policy

1. References:

a. Memorandum, Deputy Secretary of Defense, 29 Sep 12, subject: Implementation of Conference Oversight Requirements and Delegation of Conference Approval Authority (enclosure).

b. Army Directive 2011-20 (Department of the Army Conferences), 14 Oct 11.

2. Reference 1a established new DoD-wide policy for conferences. It significantly altered conference approval authorities for Army-hosted conferences and established new approval authorities for non-DoD conferences Army personnel attend. The policy requires that only I or the Under Secretary of the Army act as the approval authorities for:

- Army-hosted conferences with total costs exceeding \$500,000;
- all conferences, regardless of total cost, that involve a cosponsorship relationship or a no-cost contract with a non-Federal entity and/or a request for approval of spouse travel; and
- Army attendance at all conferences hosted by a non-DoD entity when the total cost of attendance to the Army exceeds \$20,000.

The intent of this interim guidance is to ensure compliance with the policy while we develop a more detailed and comprehensive approach that will be codified in a new Army directive. The goal is to publish the updated Army directive during the first quarter FY 13 with an effective date of 1 January 2013.

3. The Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Army (AASA) will lead and manage the Army conference effort on my behalf. The AASA will draft new Army conference policy; develop internal processes to analyze, track and report conference activities; and prepare conference packages for my action as required. The AASA may task Army Commands, Army Service Component Commands, Direct Reporting Units and Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA) Principal Officials as functional leads to assist in reviewing, tasking and/or managing attendance for any conference the Army participates in.

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4. All previous delegations of authority for conference approval are rescinded. However, the policy elements in Army Directive 2011-20 remain in effect to the extent they are consistent with reference 1a. Direct any questions on this issue to the AASA.

5. Army-Hosted Conferences

a. Army-hosted conferences with a total cost exceeding \$500,000 require a waiver and will be routed through the AASA for my decision. In my absence, the Under Secretary of the Army can act on these requests. Waivers will be granted only in exceptional circumstances.

b. Army-hosted conferences (regardless of cost) that involve a cosponsorship relationship or a no-cost contract with a non-Federal entity and/or a request for approval of Government-funded spouse travel must also be routed through the AASA for my decision. In my absence, the Under Secretary of the Army is the decision authority for these actions. Reference 1a prohibits further delegation of this authority.

c. Pending publication of the new Army directive, I delegate approval authority for Army-hosted conferences with a total cost between \$100,000 and \$500,000 (not specifically excluded by paragraph 5b) to commanders of Army Commands for conferences hosted by their respective commands, organizations or activities and to the AASA for all other Army-hosted conferences. They may not further delegate this authority.

d. I hereby delegate approval authority for Army-hosted conferences with a total cost less than \$100,000 to commanders of Army Commands, Army Service Component Commands and Direct Reporting Units (headed by a general officer or member of the Senior Executive Service) and to HQDA Principal Officials for conferences sponsored or funded by their respective commands, organizations or activities. They may not further delegate this authority.

e. Reference 1a explicitly defines and outlines the definition of a conference, exemptions, prohibited costs, reporting requirements and an appropriate legal review for the approving official. In addition, reference 1b details specific conference request requirements, which remain valid.

f. Reference 1a also lists seven categories of potential exemptions to the definition of a conference, stating that these exemptions "should be granted sparingly and only when the events fully meet the definition and intent of the criteria." To ensure consistent application as we implement this new guidance, if an event appears to meet an exemption, forward the event with a legal review and justification for exemption to the AASA for decision. Contact your legal advisor or the AASA with any questions about the applicability of an exemption.

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g. Any Army-hosted conferences scheduled to occur between the date of this memorandum and 31 December 2012 that were previously approved by an appropriate authority may proceed unless the conference involves a cosponsor relationship or no-cost contract with a non-Federal entity and/or a request for approval of Government-funded spouse travel. Previously approved conferences in these three categories (regardless of cost) must be forwarded through the AASA to me for approval in accordance with reference 1a.

6. Army Attendance at Non-DoD Conferences

a. I am the decision authority for Army attendance at any non-DoD conference where total Army costs exceed \$20,000. In my absence, the Under Secretary of the Army is the decision authority for these actions. I delegate decision authority to the AASA when Armywide total costs are less than \$20,000.

b. This aspect of the policy will require us to take the data from the existing decentralized process for conference-related individual travel and aggregate it to the Army level to allow for centralized decisions. The mechanics to execute this will be established by the AASA and will likely include (i) a data call to identify planned Army attendance at non-DoD conferences, and (ii) the designation of functional leads with Armywide responsibility and authority to manage and control attendance and package conference requests for decision.

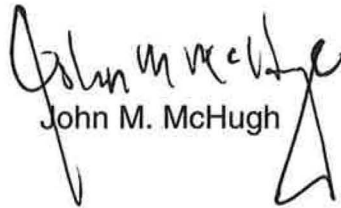
c. To ensure compliance with the policy, I am suspending Army attendance at non-DoD conferences between now and 31 December 2012 unless I previously approved attendance (for example, the AUSA Annual Meeting) or an exception is granted. Send requests for exceptions to the AASA immediately. Exception requests must be endorsed by commanders of Army Commands, Army Service Component Commands and Direct Reporting Units (headed by a general officer or member of the Senior Executive Service) or HQDA Principal Official.

7. You will review and adhere strictly to all applicable law, regulation and policy, including the provisions of this memorandum. We must continue to implement more cost-effective and efficient methods to train, plan, collaborate and disseminate information. Experience has shown that conferences are an expensive means of accomplishing these goals, and the need for each conference must be indisputable in the current environment of declining resources. Before acting on conference requests, authorities at the command and Principal Official level should begin their respective reviews by presuming that the physical collocation associated with a conference activity is not required in most cases. I expect you to disapprove conference requests that do not comply with this guidance.

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8. For further questions or concerns, contact a member of the AASA's conference team at 703-545-8227 or hqda.conferences.inbox@mail.mil.

Encl



John M. McHugh

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