

SIMONS FOUNDATION SUPPORT POLICY

Simons Foundation Support Policy

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Last Revised: August 2014

Responsible Officer
Treasurer

Policy Statement

This policy sets forth requirements for management of Simons Participant Support Costs (those costs paid to (or on behalf of) participants in meetings, conferences and similar events) on sponsored projects awarded to the Aspen Center for Physics (ACP). Participant Support funds help defray the costs associated with traveling to the Center to participate in conferences, meetings and other activities conducted at the center. All Participant Support charges are incurred, tracked, monitored and reimbursed in accordance with applicable sponsor regulations and all applicable award Terms and Conditions.

Reason for Policy

This policy provides information and guidance on the management of Participant Support funds and charges on sponsored projects.

Who Should Know This Policy

- Officers
- Treasurer/Simons Foundation Award Overseer
- Proposal Committee
- Board of Trustees
- Administrative Staff
- Other: Simons recipients for some aspects of the policy



Other

Contacts

Subject	Contact
Policy Questions	Treasurer Administrative Vice President Finance Manager

Applicable ACP Policies

- Charging of Direct Costs to Sponsored Projects: Policy
 - ACP Travel Reimbursement: Policy
 - Participant Support Policy
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Simons Participant Support at ACP

Introduction and Definition

Simons Participant Support is used to pay program participants non-compensatory expenses for summer housing based on the current rate for a shared (bachelor) room in an apartment, the ACP summer registration fee and the facility fee based on the number of weeks in attendance. A reimbursement will be made to the Simons recipient for a portion of travel costs incurred to support attendance at the summer program at the Aspen Center for Physics.

Participants are not required to deliver any deliverable or service to ACP in return for Participant Support. Participants are not ACP employees, but may include students, postdocs, professors, lab employees and scientists based at other institutions in countries ranked lower in scientific support, who attend the summer program offered by the Aspen Center for Physics. Applicants must go through the normal application procedure which requires that all physicists be evaluated only on their scientific accomplishments and not on their suitability for any other program or aspect of the Center.

Summer Participant Housing Support Calculation

The weekly housing rate based on the actual cost of a room in shared housing. Registration fees are based on the same current fee for all summer participants. Travel is portioned out as available in



each year's budget with a maximum coverage for economy travel reimbursed per the ACP Travel Policy. The registration fee is used to cover the facility fee. The facility fee is based on the Indirect Cost Rate times the number of participant weeks for each individual. The total facility fee minus the registration fee is the amount charged to the Simons fund for facility use. This amount is reimbursed to the NSF cognizant grant.

Charging Participant Support to Sponsored Funds

All Sponsored Participant Support expenditures (regardless of "type" of expenditure) are posted to designated Participant Support accounts in ACP's accounting system to ensure these expenditures are not comingled with non-Participant Support expenditures. This also helps ensure funds designated as Participant Support are not disbursed in other ways, if required by the sponsor.

Awarded amounts for sponsored Non-Housing Participant Support are also tracked in the ACP database. Non-Housing participant expenses may be paid for directly by the Center or reimbursed to the individual. Those costs paid directly by the Center are posted to the appropriate sponsored account and Object Code (Travel, Meals, etc.) once funds are disbursed. Receipts for expenses provide documentation for the expense.

Reimbursement support checks are only issued to the participants (and posted to the appropriate account and Object Code) once a travel receipt and reimbursement request is submitted to and approved by the ACP accounting office. (See the ACP Travel Reimbursement policy.) The reimbursement check is posted to the appropriate sponsored account and Object Code (Travel, Meals, etc.) and the provided receipts and reimbursement request provide documentation for the charge.

Documenting and Verifying Participant Support Payments to Participants

All individuals receiving sponsored Participant Support receive a statement outlining the costs and adjustments for the individual's participation, including registration fee expenses, housing costs, housing subsidies provided by Participant Support funds as well as any other monies provided to the participant as Participant Support.

Clearly outlining the sponsored Participant Support funds provided by ACP on each individual's statement will allow the physicist's home institution to be cognizant of the support provided by external sponsors. Participants and their home institutions are responsible for verifying that participants are not receiving compensation, either directly or indirectly, from Federal government sources while receiving support from ACP, and that Participant Support is appropriate considering other sources of funding for the individual.

In order to verify individuals receiving sponsored Participant Support are indeed active and contributing participants, all participants must sign in and out at the beginning and ending of each session/conference. Sign-in sheets will be retained as documentation of each participant's attendance at specific workshops, symposia, etc.



Procedures for Administering Simons Funds

WHO QUALIFIES

1. Selection of Countries: Based on IMF (International Monetary Fund) rankings of countries by GDP per capita. UK (#22) and France (#19) were excluded so for 2013 #23 (Brunei) and lower were included. ACP will review rankings on a bi-annual basis to update. In 2014, the ACP will use the World Bank's rankings of per capital expenditures on Research and Development and the World Bank's listing of number of scientific journals published each year. These ranks will then be averaged in with the original IMF list of GDP per capita to achieve a new index on which to base Simons funds.
2. After the ACP admissions process in late February, the staff will review the Simons budget of \$100,000 against the total Simons award for the past year's qualifying countries. Countries may be added or subtracted in order to stay within budget.
3. Any physicist from a qualifying country will be offered a Simons grant.
4. Participants who are in a non-qualifying-for-Simons country during the winter before the grant would be awarded, and who are moving to an institution in a qualifying country may request via email that they be offered the Simons grant. The physicist must include a letter from the new institution indicating that the physicist will be working there.
5. Participants who are in a qualifying-for-Simons country during the winter before the grant would be awarded, but are moving to an institution in a non-qualifying country will no longer qualify for the Simons grant.
6. When the budget allows, a smaller grant will be offered to qualifying countries. Housing costs will be fully supported from the Simons funds so that the participant will be considered a non-NSF supported participant.

ADMINISTRATION OF FUNDS

7. Monies will not be sent to the physicist prior to arrival. Physicists must arrive in Aspen in order to receive their travel reimbursements.
8. Funds will cover the ACP's cost (excluding support from NSF) for bachelor housing for each week of participation, registration fees and a fixed amount for travel based on the availability of funds for that year. Travel reimbursements may be adjusted annually.
9. The facility fee is based on NSF's formula as of 2013 for determining ACP's indirect cost rate. The NSF is ACP's cognizant agency. The registration fee goes to help pay the facility fee. In 2013 the indirect cost rate was \$272 per week. So a participant staying two weeks would have a facility fee of \$544. \$400 of this would be covered by the registration fee, so the Simons grant would be charged an additional \$144 to comply with NSF requirements. Staff time spent on Simons Foundation business is included in this ICR reimbursement. The Indirect Cost Rate varies by year and will cause the Simons facility fee to vary slightly each year.
10. To discourage participants from canceling because they have not paid a deposit, starting in 2014, the acceptance letter outlining Simons funds will include a sentence indicating that the participant must pay a cancellation fee of \$200 if not canceled by April 30.
11. The ACP Treasurer is the ACP Simons point of contact. The President will be kept informed of Simons activity.



ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION OF GRANT IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

12. ACP will search for potential institutions in developing countries that currently have no ACP presence, in addition to the contacts we already have. Emails about the Simons grant will be sent to these institutions each fall, explaining the grant and listing our upcoming workshops. Regular mail will be used when an email address is unavailable.
 13. ACP will also email individuals from qualifying countries that the Simons grant is available.
 14. ACP will include information about the Simons grant on its website.
 15. The Admissions Committee will not make an effort to fill a quota based on the availability of Simons Funds. Participants will continue to be selected based on their scientific accomplishments.
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Roles & Responsibilities

Principal Investigator: Responsible for developing sponsored project budgets for Participant Support, designating participant Support charges as appropriate for a given sponsored project, reviewing reports and source documents (containing Participant Support charges) to ensure these charges are appropriately posted and that the participant support funds are being expended according to sponsor regulations and the terms of the agreement.

Administrative Staff: Responsible for maintaining the ACP database to track participants, Participant Weeks and other Participant Support allowances and costs, posting and reviewing Participant Support Charges on sponsored awards, tracking individual's participation and attendance at ACP sessions, providing individuals' statements of costs incurred and Participant Support allocations.

Conference Organizers: Responsible for awarding Non-Housing Specific Participant Support and providing planned Participant Support disbursement details to the Administrative Staff.

Participants supported by non-NSF sources pay the full cost that ACP pays for summer housing without the NSF subsidy. These physicists are not listed in the NSF summary of support. They receive no NSF funds whatsoever, and the NSF is reimbursed for their overhead expense using the indirect cost rate.

