Cape Peninsula University of Technology

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP) FOR THE VETTING PROCESS OF NATIONAL, INTERNATIONAL, AND VIRTUAL CONFERENCES

Externally funded research grants, department, faculty, and individual research funds

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is to outline the vetting process and provide clear guidelines for participation in national, international, and virtual conferences related to:

- Externally funded research (e.g., NRF, industry, or other external sources).
- Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) department and faculty research funds.
- Individual research publication funding.

This SOP applies to **all researchers**, including academic staff, postgraduate students, and research fellows, who intend to participate and present at national or international conferences. The procedure ensures compliance with institutional policies and promotes accountability and research quality across the university.

This SOP must be read in conjunction with the **CPUT Conference Attendance Policy, Travel Policy and Procedures**.

2. Scope and Responsibility

The vetting process applies to all researchers who intend to attend a conference in which they will **present a full research paper**. The process must be facilitated within each faculty and department or research institute(s) by department and faculty research coordinators.

Department and Faculty research coordinators are responsible for ensuring that:

- All required supporting documents are attached and signed by the relevant authority (Head of Department, Director, Assistant Dean: Research, or Dean).
- All submissions comply with the requirements outlined in this SOP.

3. Eligibility Criteria

The following rules govern the vetting process for conference participation:

3.1 Applicants must present a *full research paper* that contributes to tangible research outputs as defined by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) Research Outputs Policy.
3.2 Applicants who seek support to attend the conference for a second time must have achieved audited and approved DHET Research Output Units (ROUs) within the past three-year period (e.g., 2022–2024).
3.3 Applicants must be permanently employed at CPUT or on a fixed-term contract of more than two years.

3.4 Postgraduate Students:

3.4.1 Must be registered at CPUT for the current academic year.
3.4.2 Must be in at least their second year of study at the master's or doctoral level.
3.4.3 Research Fellows must be registered and have a valid contract with CPUT for the current academic year.

3.5 DHET Conference Requirements:

3.5.1 Conference meets DHET subsidy criteria
3.5.2 Peer-reviewed full proceedings / accredited journal
3.5.3 Conference has editorial/scientific committee with multi-institutional membership
3.5.4 Valid ISBN/e-ISSN
3.5.5 Authors' affiliations stated

4 Required Supporting Documents

Each application for conference vetting must include the following supporting documents:

4.1 A signed Conference Vetting Form.
4.2 A signed Travel Request Form, including quotations for flights, accommodation, ground transport, and visa (if applicable). Quotations must be obtained through CPUT Corporate Traveller.
4.3 A signed manual EFT requisition and corresponding invoice for conference registration fees.
4.4 A signed manual EFT requisition form for subsistence allowance (refer to CPUT Subsistence and Travel [S&T] rates for local and international travel).
4.5 A copy of the conference paper and the acceptance letter from the conference organisers.
4.6 The conference programme (if available).
4.7 Confirmation of total conference costs and the corresponding funding source(s).
4.8 Online Special Leave approval (for staff members).
4.9 Proof of registration for the current academic year (for postgraduate students and research fellows).
4.10 All papers to be presented at conferences must have an ethical clearance/ethics

approval certificate or letter from a CPUT Faculty-based research ethics chairperson. If ethics not applicable official confirmation letter from Faculty Research Ethics Chairperson must be provided.

5 Exclusions

The vetting process does **not apply** to the following activities:

5.1 Attendance at workshops.
5.2 Professional or academic upskilling for developmental purposes.
5.3 Writing retreats or seminars.
5.4 Exhibiting research at a conference (without presentation of a full paper).
5.5 Participation as an invited speaker or session chair.
5.6 Mini-forums or institutional research week events.
5.7 Symposiums or potential collaborative meetings.

6 Roles and Responsibilities

The **Faculty Research Coordinator or department or research institute coordinators** are responsible for verifying that all applications are:

6.1 Complete and accurate.
6.2 Supported by the required documentation.
6.3 Compliant with the rules outlined in this SOP.

All travel and conference-related documentation must be **signed** by the relevant **Head of Department (HoD)**, **Director**, and **Assistant Dean or Dean** before submission to the **Directorate of Research Development (DRD)** for final review and approval.