

Center for Judicial Education & Research (CJER) Attendance Policy

For an educational experience to be most effective, participants need a psychologically safe environment in which they can freely express opinions, ask questions, and share experiences without concern for repercussions. The safety of the learning environment is enhanced if participants in a course have similar responsibilities, encounter the same kinds of situations, and truly understand the work done by other participants.

To ensure this kind of learning environment, the Center for Judicial Education and Research (CJER) Governing Committee determined in 2001 that attendance and participation at education events should be limited to the members of those groups for which the event was designed (e.g., only court clerks may attend CCTI, only appellate justices may attend the Appellate Justice Institute).

Exceptions to this policy may be granted if an individual, who is not a member of an event's target audience, has a substantial, business-related need to attend the event. To request an exception, the individual submits a written request following the procedure set forth below.

A business-related need might be that the work of the requestor is directly related to and/or dependent on the specific area of content, and learning more about the content would enhance the requestor's ability to serve the courts in that specific area. But mere professional interest in an education event or a personal desire to attend it is not a business-related need and will not qualify for an exception.

Faculty

This policy also applies to faculty. Sometimes individuals who are not members of the target audience are invited to serve as faculty for a particular course based on their subject matter expertise; they are not participants in the course and are not eligible to attend other courses. For example, a scientist serving as faculty in a forensic evidence course for judges would not be eligible to attend any other courses designed for judges.

Spouses, Domestic Partners, and Guests

This policy also applies to spouses, domestic partners, and guests. Spouses, domestic partners, and guests who are invited to attend social functions at an education event are not eligible to attend courses or sessions at that event unless they are members of the target audience.

Procedure for Requesting an Exception

The requestor submits a written request for an exception to the education attorney or education developer responsible for the course or event. The request should outline the business-related

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reasons to support an exception. Requests should be submitted two weeks before the event to allow the chair and director sufficient time to review them.

The education attorney or education developer forwards the request to his or her manager/supervisor, who a) makes a recommendation for action and, b) indicates a date by which a decision needs to be made. The education attorney or education developer forwards the request, along with the manager/supervisor's recommendation, to the education committee chair for consideration and action. The manager/supervisor forwards the request and his/her recommendation to the CJER director for consideration and action.

The education committee chair responds to the request through the education attorney or education developer who forwards the response to his/her manager/supervisor. The CJER director responds directly to the manager/supervisor.

If chair's and director's responses are the same (to grant or to deny), the education attorney or education developer conveys the decision to the requestor.

If the responses differ, the chair and director may choose to discuss the matter.

If they do not agree to grant an exception, the policy of limiting attendance prevails and no exception is granted. The education attorney or education developer conveys that decision to the requestor.

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