Attendance Justification Toolkit

Tips and tools to justify the value of attending the meeting
 Attendance Justification Toolkit

By now you already know that at the 2017 ACR/ARHP Annual Meeting, you will get first-hand access to the latest innovations, science, and best practices that will transform rheumatic care delivery, as well as have numerous opportunities to network with rheumatology professionals from over 100 countries.

But how do you share the value of this meeting with your supervisor in order to help justify your attendance?

This toolkit includes:
• General Tips
• Reasons Why Your Employer Should Send You to the 2017 ACR/ARHP Annual Meeting
• How to Justify Conference Attendance
• Sample Expense Worksheet
• Sample Cost Benefit Worksheet
• Sample Justification Letter
General Tips

Things to consider that will help justify your travel and meeting expense:

- Check out the registration page and determine the various rates listed and see if you qualify for any discounted rates. Be ready to present the exact amount.

- Focus on specific benefits/value that you will bring back to your office as a return of investment.

- Share your experience. Propose to deliver a short presentation to your colleagues to share what you learned and offer possible applications and recommendations relevant to your office.

- Share relevant meeting materials to colleagues that will benefit from the handouts and other learning materials from the meeting.

- Prepare a plan that will show your supervisor who will cover for you and how your workload will be handled while you are attending the meeting.

- If you are interested in obtaining continuing education credits, remind your supervisor that the ACR/ARHP Annual Meeting is a great meeting to earn up to at least 50 hours.
Reasons why your employer should send you to the 2017 ACR/ARHP Annual Meeting

- The ACR/ARHP Annual Meeting brings together over 16,000 domestic and international participants from over 100 countries. You wouldn’t want to miss this gathering of rheumatology professionals and the opportunity to learn best practices from your colleagues.

- The 2017 meeting has something for everyone and offers a wide range of sessions to educate professionals in every segment of the field--- clinicians, researchers and academicians, practice managers, fellows, and other health professionals. Educational tracks are available to help identify content targeted to your area of specialty and interest.

- Extensive learning opportunities with over 450 educational sessions to choose from and opportunity to earn at least 50 hours of continuing education credits. The meeting will showcase cutting edge and timely topics in the clinical and basic science of rheumatologic care, as well as the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of rheumatic diseases and its comorbid conditions.

- You will experience diverse learning formats, including didactic lectures, debates, and interactive session designed to maximize learning and delivered by rheumatology experts from over 30 countries.

- Face-to-face networking opportunities. Rheumatology professionals from around the globe gather to share their knowledge and experience, allowing you to meet people that you can rely on for support and information. Professional relationships motivate and enhance your impact to your own organization, and the 2017 ACR/ARHP Annual Meeting will provide you with invaluable opportunities to make connections.

- See the latest technology in rheumatology. The meeting brings together over 100 exhibiting companies and the exhibit hall will showcase the very latest products and services for you to see, touch, and learn.
Attendance Justification Toolkit

How to Justify Conference Attendance

- Expense or investment?
- Return on Investment ("how much benefit/profit will your organization make relative to the expense it will incur, if your organization sends you to the meeting?")

Understand Your Conference Expenses

Complete an Expense Worksheet to develop a cost estimate for attending the 2017 ACR/ARHP Annual Meeting. See sample worksheet.
# Attendance Justification Toolkit

## Sample Expense Worksheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expense</th>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registration Fee (include any additional fees associated with courses or events you wish to attend)</td>
<td>Registration Fee includes 1. Pre-meeting courses? 2. Early bird member registration fee? 3. Etc.</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting Materials Fee (if any)</td>
<td>Books? Software?</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Airfare</td>
<td>Air mileage points available to offset airfare?</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lodging</td>
<td>Number of nights; room rate; taxes</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation Fees</td>
<td>Taxi/Car rental/Airport Shuttle</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mileage/Parking reimbursement</td>
<td>Driving to conference or to the airport for your flight? Other modes of transportation?</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Per Diem</td>
<td>Refer to your company’s policy on food per diem</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous reimbursable expenses (e.g., tips, internet fees, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUBTOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of employees attending</td>
<td></td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Attendance Justification Toolkit

Understand and Identify the Benefits

List the most important benefits of attending the 2017 ACR/ARHP Annual Meeting, such as:

- Earning CME credits or continuing education credits
- Enhancing competencies that will allow you to make changes to improve clinical or office practice and/or patient care delivery
- Networking opportunities to enhance knowledge base and to form connections for professional support
- Engaging with thought leaders in rheumatology and learning latest research findings
- Sharing your gained knowledge with others in the workplace

Clearly outline specific aspects of the meeting and why it would be beneficial for you and your team/organization.
### Sample List of Needs and How the Meeting Will Meet these Needs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your needs and/or organization’s needs:</th>
<th>How the 2017 ACR/ARHP Annual Meeting will meet these needs:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compliance with the ABIM Maintenance of Certification (MOC) requirements.</td>
<td>Designated MOC sessions and an associated MOC module will be offered—at no additional cost to attendees. You can earn ABIM Maintenance of Certification (MOC) points.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep current with medical coding updates, compliance rules and Federal regulations. Sessions specific for practice managers.</td>
<td>The 2017 Business/Administration track will cover healthcare policy at state and federal level and what you can do to effectively advocate in this environment, as well as provide tools to assist with efficient practice operations; other sessions include MACRA and how to thrive in the new era of MACRA, MIPS ad APMS, and legislative and regulatory update that may directly affect how rheumatologists and rheumatology health professionals care for patients and the viability of their practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education: Will continuing medical education credits be available? Which of these sessions would allow you to bring valuable knowledge or skills back to work?</td>
<td>The 2017 meeting will offer continuing education credits. Over 450 educational sessions to choose from that are categorized according to educational tracks, such as basic science, clinical science, business/administration, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn about new products and technologies.</td>
<td>Over 100 companies will be exhibiting to showcase the latest rheumatology products and services.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Education on latest research data on the many rheumatic diseases and potential complications that rheumatologists encounter. | The following are examples of specific sessions for 2017:  
  - Opening Lecture - Emerging and Re-Emerging Infectious Diseases: From AIDS to Zika  
  - Update in RA: Benefits & Harms of Biologics & Small Molecules & Imagine Strategies - will review emerging comparative effectiveness research in small molecule and biologic therapies  
  - Clinicopathologic Conference (CPC) – Fever and Cytopenia in a Lupus Patient: Nothing is as Simple as it Seems – will cover differential diagnosis, including autoimmune, infectious, and malignant causes  
  - Adiposity and Arthritis – will cover relationship between metabolic syndrome and inflammation  
  - Throw Me a Bone!: Update on Important Concepts in Bone-Related Diseases  
  - Pharma Update: Safety, New Indications, Latest Approvals – will cover FDA developments, new medications, safety issues and biosimilars  
  - Immunology Updates: these sessions bring the latest data on advances in immunology, crucial to understanding the mechanisms of rheumatic diseases  
  - New ACR/AEULAR Classification Criteria for SLE – will cover the focus, limitations and unmet needs of previous SLE criteria, highlight development and validation, and demonstrate its use in real cases |
| Hands-on training on the following: structure of electronic health record and design for rheumatology-specific order sets; interpreting findings in biopsy reports, learning ultrasound scanning techniques. | Over 30 workshops scheduled that will provide hands-on training utilizing microscopes, ultrasound machines, and computers. |
| Networking with peers. | Over 30 networking opportunities available including study groups, opening reception, first-time attendee orientation, networking forum, etc. |
Date __________

Dear (Supervisor's Name) _____________________________,

I would like to request approval to attend the 2017 American College of Rheumatology/Association of Rheumatology Health Professionals Annual Meeting, to be held on November 3-8, 2017, in San Diego, CA.

The meeting will enable me to attend a number of educational sessions that are directly applicable to my work and will allow me to network with a variety of rheumatology experts and colleagues from around the world. My participation will allow me the opportunity to expand my knowledge and give me tools and resources to enhance my performance at ______________.

After reviewing the program in detail, I have identified a listing of sessions that I feel are most relevant and would provide the most value to my professional growth at ____________.

I am seeking support of my attendance to this meeting, which would include the registration fees, travel expenses and living expenses while at the meeting. A detailed cost breakdown is attached. I anticipate the total expense to be approximately $__________.

The opportunity for me to enhance competencies and to establish connections with rheumatology experts makes my attendance at the 2017 ACR/ARHP Annual Meeting a very wise investment, and a benefit on both personal and professional levels.

Thank you for considering support of my attendance at the 2017 ACR/ARHP Annual Meeting.

Sincerely,