

MDEON NEWS

Ethical Health Platform



News & Clarifications

This newsletter discusses what will change as of July 1, 2024 regarding hospitality.

Next, the sponsorship of events will be explained.

Finally, we would like to give you some tips when submitting a visa application.

WHAT'S NEW

1. HOSPITALITY: NEW RULES AS OF 1/7/24
New rules
2. CLARIFICATIONS V2
Three types of events
3. TIPS
Some tips from the Visa Office

1. Hospitality: new rules

Given the difference between the roles of participants versus consultants, there are certain areas of hospitality where differentiation is needed.

This will apply to visa applications submitted as of July 1, 2024.

Meals on the eve of a scientific meeting

As of July 1, 2024, there will be a distinction between participants and consultants

A **participant** is a healthcare professional who participates in a scientific meeting to learn.

A **consultant** is a healthcare professional who, in the context of a scientific event, performs scientific services on behalf of the event organizer or on behalf of a pharmaceutical/medical device company. Usually (but not always) this person receives an honorarium for this. Examples: speaker, researcher, expert meeting, etc. Is not a consultant: poster presentation, reporting afterwards, etc.

May a meal be offered on the eve of a scientific meeting?

1) On the eve WITH a scientific program

Participants

If there is a scientific program on the eve of a scientific meeting, dinner may always be offered with a maximum price calculated at 23€ per full hour of scientific content (for more info, see FAQ 8.1 on the Mdeon website).

Consultants

If there is a scientific program on the eve of a scientific meeting, dinner may always be offered.





A scientific program on the eve for consultants may consist of scientific presentations, but also, for example, a pre-meeting or a slide rehearsal. This should be evidenced by a program or other supporting document.

The **price** of the dinner offered must always be reasonable/legitimate and comply with the authorized amount described in FAQ 8.1, **unless** there is a reason **justified** by circumstances to offer a more expensive dinner and provided this is **contractually** stipulated.

A justifiable reason is, for example, a dinner with foreign consultants to avoid that only the Belgian consultants have to get another (cheaper) meal or are completely excluded from a meal, thus not being able to eat together with their peers and therefore not being able to talk about science. This reason must be explained in the visa application.

2) On the eve WITHOUT a scientific program

Participants

No dinner may be offered to participants on the eve of a scientific event if there is no scientific program.

If there is a scientific program, a dinner can be offered according to the rules explained in FAQ 8.1.

Consultants

Consultants **may** be offered dinner on the eve of a scientific meeting if there is no scientific program on this eve provided it is **contractually** stipulated.

Caution !

- The **status** of consultant must be evidenced by supporting documents.
- Meals that do **not directly follow** the scientific program (or meals offered on the eve) and/or are **more expensive** may be offered provided they are **justified** and described (amount to be specified) in a **contract**.
- This contract will be attached to the visa application, which will also include the **reference** to the **relevant** article of the contract.
- The rules for consultants apply only to meals that can be directly linked to services performed in their **capacity as consultants**. If a consultant presents a topic at a conference but then further participates in his **capacity as a participant**, a difference should be made in hospitality offered.

The **price** of the dinner offered must be reasonable/legitimate and comply with the authorized amounts described in FAQ 8.1, **unless** there is a reason justified by circumstances to offer a more expensive dinner.

A justifiable reason is, for example, a dinner with foreign consultants to avoid that only the Belgian consultants have to get another (cheaper) meal or are completely excluded from a meal, thus not being able to eat together with their peers and therefore not being able to talk about science. This reason must be explained in the visa application.

Another justified reason is a consultant who is going to give a training of several hours in several hospitals ("speaker tour"). In that case, this consultant will also be able to get meals at times that are not directly related to the training insofar as this is contractually provided for (e.g. giving training every evening will henceforth also entitle him to receive a lunch).



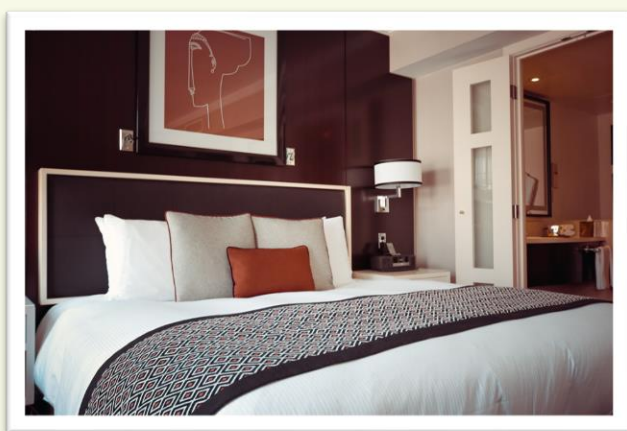
FYI

Meals or additional expenses can always be covered by the healthcare professionals themselves.

Price overnight stays

- The **maximum price** per night is **250 €** (including breakfast and taxes).
- There is an **exception** for **countries for which**, according to the Ministerial Decree of January 10, 2023 (see FAQ 8.1 to consult this decree), **the limit exceeds the maximum accommodation fee of 250 €**. For these countries (**and only for these**), **exceptions** can be granted under the following **cumulative conditions**:
 - At least 5 hotel offers are attached to the visa application showing that it is not possible to comply with the €250 price, and the cheapest offer is chosen;
 - The hotels must be located within a reasonable distance (max. 10 km) from the place of the scientific event;
 - The chosen hotel meets the reasonableness criteria as described in the Mdeon Code (article 5); for example, not known for its luxurious reputation.

Please note that the members of the Visa Office will verify that there are no reasonable cheaper options.

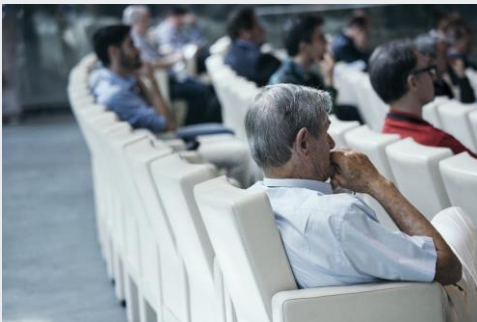


Summary



Participants may not be offered a meal on the eve of a scientific meeting unless there is a scientific program that evening.

Consultants may be offered a meal on the eve of a scientific meeting provided it is contractually stipulated. The reference to the relevant article of the contract must be mentioned in the visa application, and the contract must be attached as an appendix. The maximum prices for meals must be respected (see FAQ 8.1) unless there is a justifiable reason for a more expensive meal. This must be motivated in the visa application and the price must be mentioned in the contract.



2. Sponsorship of events (V2)

Multi-day scientific meetings organized by a third party (classically congresses) are often sponsored by various pharmaceutical or medical device companies.

The question is when an event may be sponsored and to what extent.

Below we look in more detail at different types of events that exist and provide some important points to consider.

Three types of events

In practice, three types of events largely occur:

- Exclusively scientific events;
- Mixed events;
- Pure promotional events.

Caution !

- Always ensure an appropriate agreement with the organizer.
- Make sure you obtain the visa number V2 before sponsoring, including confirmation that your company is part of the visa number obtained.
- Do you have a booth?
Moderation is key!

1) Exclusively scientific events

These are scientific events organized by a third party (not a pharmaceutical or medical device company) whose **program is exclusively scientific**.

In that case, the organization of and participation in the **scientific** event is its main purpose.

The **organization of the scientific part of these conferences may be sponsored**. This includes speaker fees, room rental, logistics, staff rental, catering, invitations, etc.

As the sponsoring company, you must ensure that you have an **appropriate agreement** with the organizer stating exactly what the sponsorship money will be used for.

Please note that the presence of booths is tolerated but the sponsorship itself must relate to the organization of the scientific part of the congress. Moreover, booths may only be present in a separate room and therefore not in the congress halls.



2) Mixed events

These are events organized by a third party (not a pharmaceutical or medical device company) whose **program is not exclusively scientific**. This is the case, for example, when the publicity stands are not ancillary to the scientific part.

In such events, **science is not the main reason** for the event.

Such events **may not be sponsored at all**, even if the participants themselves would pay for the non-scientific part.

Pharmaceutical and medical device companies may **not have a booth** because this is a sponsorship of a benefit in violation of article 10 of the Medicines Act dated March 25, 1964.

3) Pure promotional event

The aim of these events is not to pass on scientific information, but **purely promotional**. Examples include trade fairs and exhibitions.

At such events, companies **may attend with a booth** if the following conditions are respected:

- There can be no scientific program (otherwise it is considered a mixed event, see point 2);
- No benefit (such as a workshop or non-scientific program) or gift may be given to participating healthcare professionals, nor may hospitality be provided at the booths;
- Booths are neutral and sober;
- No social activities may be offered (no party, reception, etc.) nor organized.





Tip 1: Do not submit last minute!

Keep in mind the submission deadlines ([click here](#) for a general overview). Keep also in mind that these are working days and not calendar days.

The Visa Office notes that many companies submit their applications so late that in the event of refusal, no resubmission is possible. Many people assume that the Visa Office will then put the application on hold to give them another chance to make a correction in due course. This reasoning is wrong and will result in a refusal.

So start preparing and submitting your application in good time, and reread everything carefully before submitting!

In case of questions, please do not hesitate to contact us prior to submitting your visa application.

Take a look at our website for contact hours or send an email to secretariat@mdeon.be

3. Tips from the Visa Office

About 75% of the submitted visa applications are approved immediately. After resubmission, the approval rate rises to 96%. Despite this, some visa applications are still refused. The Visa Office would like to give you some tips on how to get as many approvals as possible.



Tip 2: Use the Checklist for completing a visa application

Mdeon has a checklist that can help you fill out a visa application V1 and V2. This checklist provides "Tips & Tricks" for each section of the visa application V1 and V2 to make sure you don't forget anything. In addition, the corresponding FAQ number is mentioned, so that in case of doubt you know where to go for more information.

Click [here](#) to view the checklist V1 and V2.