# NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH
# NIH Ethics Office

## Procedure for Requesting Approval of Official Duty Activities
## (November 2004)

The format and timeliness of some official duty requests have been a significant problem lately. To improve our management of the approval process for activities that must be reviewed by the NIH Ethics Office and approved by Dr. Kington, please follow the guidelines below.

**Last-Minute Requests**

- Every effort should be made to avoid submitting last-minute requests. Those that are urgent should state the reason for being so.
- Emailing an official duty request is acceptable ONLY in an absolute emergency, defined as a situation where an employee receives a last minute invitation for an event on the same day. The email must contain the supervisor's approval (unless the NIH DEC is the supervisor). It must also state when the invitation was received. EVEN THEN A FAX IS PREFERRED.

**More Than One Activity for An Employee**

- For separate activities, use separate requests. Activities with different outside organizations should be on separate memos even if they are included in the same trip (travel order).

**More Than One Employee Per Activity**

- When more than one person is attending the same event, use separate requests for each person, and send them together in one grouping.

**Travel Date**

- The time frame section of the request memo should include travel days.

**Nature of Activity**

- Include enough information to show the relevance to the NIH mission. For instance, provide the title of the talk to be given.

**NIH-Sponsored Activities**

- Do not prepare official duty memos for NIH-sponsored activities.

**Travel Orders**

- Do not include travel orders to be forwarded to the Deputy Director for Management, NIH with the official duty request memo---except in emergency situations.

Distributed by NIH Ethics Office, 11/19/04
ODA-procedure-11-04.pdf