

FAQ'S

Question 25

Is **premium economy travel** acceptable considering that business class travel for HCPs is generally not acceptable?

Robyn Howes replies

- The Guideline to the Code States

"Companies may sponsor Business class travel for HCPs only for:

- a. Faculty members presenting at a congress irrespective of day of arrival
- b. HCPs attending advisory boards and clinical investigations irrespective of day of arrival

- Business class airfares may not be exchanged for two Economy tickets so that a companion/spouse may accompany the HCP.
- For any other travel, economy class travel is the standard class travel that companies may offer HCPs to attend both local and international events, including congress attendance and site visits.
- It is not appropriate to pay for travel expenses for guests or spouses/partners of HCPs or for any other person who does not form part of the trainees or invited attendees at such a meeting.
- Travel should be arranged by the sponsoring company (or their designated travel agent), and should be restricted to the designated meeting dates (dependent on the travelling time involved, this may include arriving 48 hours before the meeting, and departing soon thereafter)."
- Developments in recent times had led to classes of travel being offered which included 'economy' in their title such as premium economy and were part way between economy and business class.
- The CTAC noted that airlines' offerings differed. Some airlines offered economy, premium economy and upper class flights and therefore premium economy might be considered a version of business class. Other airlines offered economy, world traveller plus, business and first class flights so world traveller plus might be considered to be part way between economy and business class. The matter was further complicated as airlines used different terms to describe similar levels of service.
- Delegates could of course organise and pay at their own expense the genuine difference between economy travel and business class or first class.
- It was unlikely that the payment of a significantly more expensive fare than economy would ever be acceptable under the Code. The MCA's view is that the use of economy tickets put companies beyond reproach.
- The CTAC thus considered that perception and cost are important factors when deciding whether premium economy flights were acceptable. There is no mention in either the Code or the published advice that the length of travel is a relevant factor. Thus the MCA stance is that a premium economy flight may be considered in the class of economy travel, but this remains at the discretion of the member company.