

# Justification Toolkit

Making the case for support of travel, funding, and time off—especially in times of tight budgets and reduced staff—to attend any conference requires a solid understanding of the potential benefits of attending. NCTM’s conferences are not just an opportunity for you to improve your instructional practice and gain ready-to-use teaching and assessment strategies. They are also an opportunity to benefit the professional development of your colleagues, supervisor, and district. Use this toolkit to help define and clearly communicate these benefits in order to make the case to attend.

## Table of Contents

<b>Why You Should Attend</b> .....	2
<b>Expenses &amp; Benefits</b> .....	3
<b>Benefits Worksheet</b> .....	3
<b>Conference Strands</b> .....	4
<b>Expenses Estimate</b> .....	6
<b>Opportunities to Save</b> .....	6
<b>Registration Rates &amp; Dates</b> .....	7
<b>Testimonials</b> .....	8
<b>Justification Letter</b> .....	9



## Why You Should Attend

NCTM's conferences are a great opportunity to expand both your local and national networks, and they can help you find the information you need to prepare your pre-K–grade 12 students for college and career success. Classroom teachers, administrators, math coaches, supervisors, college professors, and preservice teachers can all benefit from the sessions and learning at this event.

Participants attend these conferences to—

- improve their knowledge and skills with high-quality professional development and hands-on activities;
- gain insights by connecting and sharing with like-minded educators;
- collect free activities that will keep students engaged and excited to learn; and
- learn from industry leaders and test the latest educational resources.



## Expenses & Benefits

Beyond fulfilling your personal professional development goals, you can rightly claim that attending NCTM’s conferences will also enable you to bring expertise and knowledge back to your school or district. When you propose a conference for approval, be sure to *focus on what you will specifically bring back to your school or district*. You’ll also want to connect your responsibilities, goals, and challenges to your conference experience. To help you make a strong case for attending, here are some goals common to our attendees and the ways in which NCTM’s conferences meet these goals.

## Benefits Worksheet

GOAL	How NCTM’s Conferences Support Your Goal
<p>✓ Gain insight into successful implementation of <b>college- and career-ready standards</b>, including the <b>Common Core State Standards for Mathematics</b></p>	<p>Meetings feature experts in mathematics education who can help you correlate the Common Core State Standards, as well as other state standards, to your curriculum and give you research-based strategies to assist with implementation. A variety of sessions provide tools to help you make the connections that you can take them back to your classroom.</p>
<p>✓ Stay on top of <b>current (and future) trends</b> in mathematics education</p>	<p>NCTM’s conferences offer concurrent sessions, workshops, and bursts to keep you ahead of the trends in mathematics education. You will gain new and effective intervention methods, refine your assessment techniques, discover the latest technologies, and acquire strategies to address the needs of each and every student—including those considered “high needs.”</p>
<p>✓ Expand your <b>professional network</b></p>	<p>At these events you’ll connect with knowledgeable speakers and session leaders as well as experience exceptional peer-to-peer networking opportunities where you will learn from others and grow your network.</p>
<p>✓ Keep your students <b>engaged and excited</b> about learning</p>	<p>Experts in mathematics education, who are breaking new ground and witnessing real success in schools across the country, present workshops and sessions to share their insights and strategies.</p>
<p>✓ Gain <b>fresh ideas</b> and get inspired</p>	<p>Get inspired by keynote speakers and leaders in mathematics education who will stimulate your passion for teaching mathematics.</p>
<p>✓ Learn about <b>new advances and technologies</b> for the classroom</p>	<p>Talking with vendors can be a great way to access expert knowledge and learn about new products and educational resources. Tour a lively exhibit hall, test the latest educational resources, and collect free activities and lesson plans to bring back to the classroom.</p>
<p>✓ <b>Bring information back</b> to your school or district</p>	<p>Session handouts are posted and available on the NCTM website after the event. You’ll be able to support the investment of time and budget dollars by setting up training sessions or sending out information on your return.</p>



## Conference Strands

All sessions, workshops, and bursts are submitted to unique topic strands developed by the Program Committee. See below for strand titles and descriptions:

### Designing Learning Experiences

The Designing Learning Experiences strand offers opportunities to inform effective teaching practice. This strand focuses on the intersection among worthwhile tasks, purposeful questioning, and supporting productive struggle with a focus on mathematical processes and practices. Sessions in this strand will explore how effective teaching can move students toward deeper understanding of important mathematical ideas.

### Dismantling Barriers: Promoting Equity and Access

Sessions in this strand will focus on dismantling barriers that have kept students from using mathematics to improve their own lives and the lives of their communities. Participants will examine structural barriers (e.g., racism, sexism, language barriers, lack of accommodations, and others) that disproportionately impact students' and their communities' experience of learning mathematics, on a personal, classroom, school, district, state, or national level. Sessions may focus on engaging in the cultures, communities, and families of our students to improve classroom outcomes as well as on examining instructional practice and programs that are effective for all students, and in particular students who may have been denied access to educational opportunities in any way for any reason, which has limited their mathematics learning.

### A Student's Journey in Mathematics

A sound mathematics curriculum develops coherently throughout a students' school journey. A robust curriculum also encompasses solid mathematical practices while connecting and engaging students with mathematics in the real world, empowering students and improving their lives by building their critical reasoning skills. Sessions in this strand will address these components of a mathematics curriculum as well as address the question "How can teachers be supported in keeping their students' journey coherent within curriculum restraints?"

### Intentional, Effective Use of Tools and Technology

Technology and tools are powerful resources in the math classroom when they are used purposefully to promote sense making, reasoning, and communication among students. The sessions in this strand will explore the use of tools and technology to give students access to meaningful problems, promote student discourse, encourage mathematical curiosity and inquiry, and visualize and understand mathematical ideas.



## Assessment

Assessments should drive everything that happens in classrooms, including the choices teachers make about instruction and tasks. Teachers, teacher leaders, math specialists/coaches, researchers, and administrators all have roles to play in designing, supporting, and making use of effective and efficient assessment practices. Assessment includes testing but is much more than that. Sessions in this strand will address questions such as: What supports do teachers need in order to use student thinking in their planning and instruction? How can we get better at assessing things like students' dispositions, thinking, and reasoning skills (mathematical practices)? How can we get better at assessing the extent to which our tasks meet our goals, engage our students in thinking deeply, and so on? How can we get better at using assessments to inform students about their learning?

## Professionalism: Building Capacity, Collaboration, and Leadership

This strand is for all math educators—teachers, principals, coaches, specialists, researchers, and professors. What practices, structures, and supports empower teachers to develop their craft? Sessions in this strand will explore topics such as growing leaders within schools, districts, and regions; establishing and supporting professional learning communities; leveraging our positions to advocate for all our students; and developing mathematical and pedagogical knowledge for all teachers.

## STEM: Where's the M?

In this strand, mathematics is not subordinate. Minimally, high-quality STEM instruction requires deep content and pedagogical-content knowledge in mathematics, as well as the ability to integrate and make connections among the sciences while incorporating technology and the processes of engineering in rich, real-world contexts and applications. In essence, STEM teaching is quality teaching and learning where students are engaged in significant real-world explorations, problem solving, and mathematical modeling. The focus of this strand will involve non-trivial mathematics integrated with Science, Technology, Engineering, and perhaps other disciplines.



## Expenses Estimate

Conference expenses are affected by a number of factors. Use the following worksheet to help you develop a cost estimate for attending your selected conference. Be prepared to compare the expenses against your benefits worksheet in order make the case for attendance.

Expense	Guideline	Cost
<b>Conference Registration</b>		\$
<b>Preconference Workshop Registration (if applicable)</b>	Optional fee, separate from conference registration.	\$
<b>Flight</b>	Estimate using a travel service	\$
<b>Lodging</b>	NCTM has negotiated discounted conference rates for hotel accommodations. Room rates for the Chicago conference start at \$245* per night. <i>*Tax not included.</i>	\$
<b>Transportation</b>	Estimate using a travel service. Be sure to include transportation to and from the airport to the hotel. If driving, remember to include estimated parking costs and mileage reimbursement.	\$
<b>Food Per Diem</b>		\$
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$</b>

## Opportunities to Save

There are a number of ways you can save on your conference attendance. Here are two options to explore:

- If you register by the early-bird registration date, you can **save up to \$80 per person!**
- NCTM offers a discounted rate for a group of five or more attendees from the same institution. Register a group to **save 15% on each registration.**



## Registration Rates

Registration Type	EARLY BIRD Registration Rates	REGULAR Registration Rates	ONSITE Registration Rates	Notes
<b>Discounted Member Registration Fees</b>				
Member Full Registration	\$270	\$310	\$350	Applies to full individual members, e-members, and e-member teachers from pre-K-8 schools. Membership must be verified with member number.
Member One-Day	\$211	\$251	\$291	
Emeritus & Life Members	\$185	\$225	\$265	
<b>Registration Fees for Nonmembers</b>				
Nonmember Full Registration	\$370	\$410	\$450	(Includes NCTM e-membership for one year)
Nonmember One-Day	\$185	\$225	\$265	Does not include NCTM membership.
Nonteaching Guest	\$195	\$235	\$275	Must accompany paying registrant.
<b>Student Registration Fees</b>				
Student Member	FREE	FREE	FREE	Membership must be verified with member number.
Student Member One-Day	FREE	FREE	FREE	
Note: Groups of five or more paying with a single payment receive a 15% discount on all registrations				

## Registration Deadlines

EARLY BIRD Registration Rate	REGULAR Registration Rate	ONSITE Registration Rate
By November 3	By November 28	Begins November 29



## Testimonials

**Hear what past attendees have said about NCTM in-person meetings, conferences, and events:**

“The energy, the high level of participation, the spirit, and getting together with so many people. It’s just wonderful.”

“When I read blogs or look at different schools throughout the country and then see that they are going to be here, to be able to meet those people and connect with them in person—that really is an exciting thing.”

“You’re exposed to so many different ideas from so many different places and things that I have never even considered. Especially when you look around and see people incorporating different things in their own individual ways it’s like, ‘Oh, I can use that too.’”

“If you’re a new teacher, I think coming to the NCTM Annual Meeting is a huge deal. Just to see what’s out there . . . see the different exhibits, hear different speakers—it gets you inspired.”

“It’s so awesome and great to be around so many like-minded people who want to do well for their students, and we’re all teaching the same content and we all have the same goals in mind.”

“Having the opportunity to take an idea and go back to my classroom on Monday and be able to use it, that’s been the most valuable thing for me.”

“If you’re thinking about going to the Annual Meeting next year, definitely go. You’ll be able to talk with your peers, people who have knowledge about mathematics, research, research knowledge, practitioner knowledge . . . You’ll be able to find what you’re looking for.”

“I will go to every workshop, every session I can starting at 7:00 a.m. in the morning!”



**Justification Letter**

*Dear Educator,*

*We have prepared the following letter to assist you in garnering support from your principal or district leader to attend an NCTM Conference. Feel free to customize the document to help “make the case” for your attendance.*

Dear <Colleague>,

At the NCTM 2017 Regional Conference & Exhibition in Chicago, educators at all levels will be brought together to enhance their professional skills, knowledge, and careers. I would like to attend this event, which is scheduled for November 29–December 1, 2017, to learn best practices central to implementing college- and career-ready standards, including the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics.

To meet my professional development goals, I am seeking approval for the registration fee, travel expenses to the conference, and minimal food expenses during the conference. The detailed cost breakdown is listed below. <Insert your expense estimate numbers here>

- Conference Registration \_\_\_\_\_
- Preconference Workshop registration (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_
- Flight \_\_\_\_\_
- Lodging \_\_\_\_\_
- Transportation \_\_\_\_\_
- Food per diem \_\_\_\_\_
- Total estimated conference cost of \_\_\_\_\_.

By attending this conference, I will be able to select presentations (sessions, bursts, and workshops) from the following topic strands that are specific to my grade level:

- Designing Learning Experiences
- Dismantling Barriers: Promoting Equity and Access
- A Student’s Journey in Mathematics
- Intentional, Effective Use of Tools and Technology
- Assessment
- Professionalism: Building Capacity, Collaboration, and Leadership
- STEM: Where’s the M?

My participation in this program will complement our school’s objectives, and I plan to return with resources to share what I’ve learned with my peers, and to give our students the tools they need to succeed.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

<Your Full Name>