H3ABioNet Workshop Policy

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H3ABioNet Workshops Policy Scope

H3ABioNet will be hosting a series of workshops annually based on requirements of H3Africa projects and H3ABioNet personnel. The workshops are designed to establish and rapidly develop bioinformatics capacity that will equip workshop participants to undertake the significant informatics challenges they will face with H3ABioNet and H3Africa projects.

The scope of the H3ABioNet workshop policy is to define the guidelines to be adhered to when an H3ABioNet workshop is hosted, and provide information as to what can be and what should not be expected by workshop attendees and the workshop holders.

Application and Workshop Fee

Currently there are no application fees or workshop attendance fees to be paid when applying for or upon successful selection and attendance for an H3ABioNet workshop.

Application Procedure

A workshop application call will be placed on the general H3ABioNet consortium wide mailing list with links to online application forms placed on the H3ABioNet website. The duration for which a given H3ABioNet workshop will accept applications from the period of the initial workshop call should be at least 2 weeks.

Each application by a potential candidate must be accompanied by a motivational letter from the candidate's supervisor and a separate motivational letter by the applicant and additional information that is required by the application form.

All H3ABioNet workshop applications must be completed online and incomplete applications will be discarded. Hard copy couriered documents of workshop applications will not be accepted.

Workshop Selection Criteria

A selection committee comprising of members from the Management Committee (MC) and external experts, if deemed necessary, will be convened to examine completed workshop applications and decide upon the final selection of attendees for a workshop.

The selection of workshop participants will be based on possession of pre-requisite skills determined beforehand for the workshop and will be heavily weighted in favor of individuals whom provide a mentoring / teaching role within their Institution in order to propagate the knowledge gained from the H3ABioNet workshops within their Node.

H3ABioNet Workshop Policy

The order of precedence for selecting H3ABioNet workshop attendees will be:
1) H3Africa funded project members.
2) If possible due to spare capacity, non-H3Africa affiliated personnel.

If demand is too high for H3ABioNet workshops that cover material integral to H3ABioNet and H3Africa projects, only a single member from an H3ABioNet node will be selected to participate for a workshop ensuring even distribution of informatics skills throughout all H3ABioNet Nodes.

Successful Applications

Visas and Associated Costs

The onus of determining the required visa documentation, procedures, costs and requirements e.g vaccinations and actual visa application is on the successfully accepted workshop applicant. Accepted workshop applicants should liaise with the relevant Embassy / Consulate of the country hosting the workshop located in the applicant's country of residence to obtain the relevant requirements and submit their visa application. Workshop Attendees and their relevant Institutions are responsible for covering the costs of visa applications, vaccinations and any other relevant requirements for the issuance of a visa.

The Node hosting the H3ABioNet workshop will undertake to provide support letters of invitation to the successful applicants to be used to support their visa applications.
At this point, no airline ticket bookings will be made until one is in possession of a valid visa although, if required for the successful application of a visa, travel itineraries can be arranged upon completion and return of the H3ABioNet Air ticket booking form.

Please note that acceptance to an H3ABioNet workshop is non – transferable between members within an Institute or a project. Do not apply for an H3ABioNet workshop if you will not be able to attend it.

Air Travel

H3ABioNet will provide a valid, non-refundable economy class return ticket for successful applicants to attend the workshop upon being furnished with an individual passport information page and an itinerary as completed on the H3ABioNet Air ticket booking form. Please note, airline tickets reservations will not be made without a completed H3ABioNet Air ticket booking form.

Air ticket arrival dates will be booked for an individual to arrive within 24 hours before the workshop is due to start and departure dates booked for the day after the workshop ends.

Different departure dates and arrival dates can be booked upon request and a motivation provided in the H3ABioNet Air ticket booking form if provided well in advance. The accommodation and catering costs of the extra dates, transfers and stop overs during transit and any other incidentals will be borne by the applicant or the applicant's home Institutional policies and not by H3ABioNet.

In cases whereby one wishes to make an amendment to the original ticket dates as provided on the H3ABioNet Air ticket booking form, the cost of the amendment will be borne by the workshop applicant or the workshop applicant's Institution and facilitated by the travel agent used by the applicant's home Institution or in the private capacity of the applicant and not by H3ABioNet.

If there might be any issues that would hamper an individual's ability to participate or attend a workshop, the onus is on that individual to rapidly inform the H3ABioNet workshop organizers and Head of their Institution so that remedial measures may be taken, such as delaying of flight bookings or changing of flight dates due to unavoidable circumstances.

If an individual is unable to make the H3ABioNet workshop due to conflicting engagements and has not provided sufficient notice for remedial action to be undertaken, then the cost of any subsequent amendments to the original Air Ticket dates booked shall be borne by the applicant or the applicant's home Institution barring any exceptional circumstances such as a medical emergency. In cases whereby the participant has not provided sufficient notice for remedial action to be taken and the Airline Ticket is not honored, that individual will be barred from future H3ABioNet workshops

Airport Transfers
Transfers to and from the airport within the applicants' country of residence as well as in the country where the workshop is taking place shall be borne by the workshop attendee in line with their home Institutional policies and will not be covered by H3ABioNet unless stated in the letter of acceptance to attend the workshop.

Any costs for additional transfers, taxis etc not related to or provided by the workshop organizers will be borne by the workshop attendee and not by H3ABioNet.

Accommodation
Accommodation at a venue will be provided for workshop attendees starting the day / night before the workshop begins and will terminate the day after the workshop ends.

Costs for any additional nights for which accommodation will be required shall be borne / governed by the attendants' home Institutional policies as these extra periods

are not deemed to be workshop related. No cash stipends shall be provided to workshop attendees for accommodation or meals by H3ABioNet.

In situations whereby shared room bookings are made due to logistical reasons, the attendants are welcome to pay the difference to obtain single, non-sharing accommodation.

Catering
Workshop participants will be accommodated in venues that provide breakfast. Other meals will not be covered by H3ABioNet and workshop attendees are advised to make suitable arrangements with their home Institution to cover the costs of these meals and ideally arrive in the country hosting the workshop with some local currency to cover these expenses according to their home Institutional policies. H3ABioNet will not entertain any receipts / claims for re-imbursement of such costs.

H3ABioNet will not cover the costs of meals in cases where one is travelling straight after the workshop and not attending dinner or will travel during the evening the day after the workshop ends. In such instances the costs of those meals shall be borne by the workshop attendee according to their home Institutional policies.

Per Diems / Stipends
H3ABioNet will **NOT** provide cash stipends or Per diems to any workshop attendee. If deemed necessary, workshop attendees must arrive with their own pre-determined budget and financing from either their home Institution according to their Institutional policies or from their personnel monies.

H3ABioNet workshops are being hosted and financed by H3ABioNet and not by the NIH. Hence, the NIH Per diems calculation is null and void for H3ABioNet workshops. Additionally, Per diems provided by the NIH are used to cover local transfers, accommodation and catering, all of which is provided for by H3ABioNet.

Workshop Attendance
All accepted workshop participants are expected to attend all the workshop days, actively participate in and complete the pre-scribed readings and exercises set by the workshop lecturers and complete the end of course evaluation form.

Failure to do so will result in the non-granting of Certificates of Participation and in serious cases, the demand for costs incurred for the non-participation of an individual from that individual's home Institution as that workshop place could have been given to more deserving participants.

If there might be any issues that would hamper an individual's ability to participate in or attend a workshop, the onus is on that individual to rapidly inform the H3ABioNet

workshop organizers and Head of their Institution so that remedial measures may be taken such as delaying of flight bookings or changing of flight dates due to unavoidable circumstances.

Workshop Evaluation Surveys

After each H3ABioNet workshop, a link to an online questionnaire will be sent to workshop participants to complete. Workshop attendees will have a period of 1 week to fill in the online survey. Completion of the online survey is compulsory in order to obtain a workshop certificate of participation and failure to do so may result in disbarment from further H3ABioNet workshops.

All survey responses are treated as confidential and will be de-linked from the names section so that respondents remain anonymous as we need honest feedback to improve subsequent H3ABioNet workshops. The personal details' field is enabled to determine who has completed the evaluation form and send certificates of participation to.

Other / Medical Requirements

The H3ABioNet online workshop application form does provide a section for applicants to alert the workshop organizers about any particular requirements that should be taken into account. If a workshop attendee is aware that they require medication for a particular instance, the responsibility to have an adequate supply of medication and prescriptions for the duration of the workshop rests solely with the workshop attendee and costs of procuring those medicines locally will be borne by the workshop attendee.

In some instances medical insurance / cover and certain vaccinations are required by certain countries as a criteria for obtaining a visa, these costs shall be borne by the workshop attendee according to their Institutional travel policies.