

GSA Conference Travel Grant Reimbursement Guide

GSA is happy to be able to support graduate students as they travel all over the world acting as representatives for UCR. This guide is designed to allow graduate students to maximize their reimbursement by following the GSA guidelines as closely as possible.

Section 1: Organizing Your Receipts

- [Expense Request Form](#) and receipts are due to the GSA Office **7 business days after the last day of the conference** unless an extension was requested and approved by the Conference Travel Grant Coordinator prior to travel.
- Gather all of the receipts that you wish to submit to GSA for reimbursement. If a receipt is smaller than half of an 8 ½ by 11 sheet of paper, it must be taped to a larger piece of paper. Applicants avoid taping over printed information on a receipt, as the adhesive will disintegrate the ink, making it illegible and potentially unable to be reimbursed.
- **It is imperative that all documents show the amount and method of payment as well as the vendor name and date of purchase on the receipt.**
- **Any ambiguous or un-itemized receipts will not be reimbursed by GSA.**
 - A receipt is considered itemized when it shows all of the items that were charged and the cost of each item including tax and other fees or service charges.

GSA will provide a grant to reimburse the following types of expenses:

Travel

GSA covers costs such as airfare, ground travel, fees for checked baggage, shuttles, taxis, parking, etc., as long as the expenses were necessary and are directly related to attending the conference.

Whether or not the applicant travels by air or by ground, he/she must submit to GSA the time and date of departure and arrival to/from his/her destination.

- If traveling by air, the applicant must submit boarding passes and an itinerary from all flight(s). If no itinerary exists (for instance, if driving a personal vehicle), the applicant should inform GSA of his/her approximate time of departure.
- If planning to travel by means of your own vehicle, you must submit a completed, signed and approved [Personal Vehicle Use Form](#), prior to your

travel. Traveler will be reimbursed by the mileage of the total trip at the rate of \$0.575 per mile (rate changes dependent upon economic changes; contact your department travel coordinator for the latest information on mileage reimbursement rates). Traveler must submit printed directions and mileage calculation from your starting point to your destination using a service such as Google Maps (<http://maps.google.com>) or Yahoo Maps (<http://maps.yahoo.com>). Because you will be reimbursed based on mileage, GSA will not reimburse gasoline receipts for personal vehicle use. If sharing a ride with fellow travelers, only the person who is providing the vehicle can be reimbursed for mileage.

If traveling by means of a rented vehicle, you must submit a copy of your rental agreement. When renting a vehicle, you will be reimbursed for the rental fees but **not** for fees that are optional (such as insurance, GPS and upgrades). When renting a vehicle you may submit gasoline receipts for reimbursement. Only the person who is named on the rental agreement and requesting reimbursement for the rental vehicle can be reimbursed for the gas receipts. Please see UC Vehicle Rental Agreements on the UCR Travel website @ <http://travel.ucr.edu>

GSA does not cover expenses that are not directly related to the conference travel.

- If a conference coincides with a vacation, personal business or other departmental travel, the applicant should research the cost of travel from his/her starting location **directly** to and from the conference location and print the most cost effective comparison. For instance, if attending a four-day conference abroad and then staying an additional week for leisure, the applicant should use an airline booking service (i.e. Expedia, Travelocity, UCR Connexus etc.) and calculate at the same time of booking the costs as to what the flight would have been if only going to and from the conference without the additional travel destinations. The applicant should then print out a copy of the direct flight and submit this information when submitting their receipts for travel reimbursement to GSA upon his/her return.
- Traveler must submit to the GSA Conference Travel Grant Coordinator in writing prior to travel the reason for not returning directly as well as getting the approval from the GSA CTG Coordinator with your new deadline for receipt submission.

If you are not planning to return directly after the conference, DO NOT mail the expense form and receipts GSA.

- Instead, inform GSA **in advance and get approval as previously mentioned and submit your expense form and original receipts on the approved submission date when you return.**

Accommodation - Lodging

GSA will reimburse lodging expenses for the duration of the conference plus **one additional day before and after the conference**. GSA does NOT reimburse for additional optional hotel costs such as internet use, phone calls, or secured storage fees. You must submit an **itemized receipt** showing all hotel expenses and method of payment.

*If sharing a room amongst other travelers, each applicant must show proof of his/her own payment. For a guide to this see Section 3: Splitting Costs with Other Travelers.

Conference Registration

GSA will reimburse for costs of registering for the conference. You must submit a receipt showing that your payment was made for attending the conference and not for other related conference expenses.

- GSA does NOT reimburse for the costs of membership to any organization, abstract or tuition fees for courses or extracurricular events offered at the Conference.

Registration/Accommodation Combination

Some conferences include lodging in the cost of registration. These do not need to be listed separately on the Expense Request Form, but the receipt for such combinations should be itemized.

Expenses (Not covered by GSA)

All expenses not covered by GSA are as follows: Meals, Presentation Materials (poster fees, abstract fees, test tubes etc.) travel insurance, ticket changes due to travelers request, phone calls, internet fees, and any other incidental fees or receipts that will be reimbursed or paid ahead of time by the applicant's PI, Department or Other Sources of funding.

- GSA will forward expense forms and receipts to applicant's department for processing if they are being funded by the Department or Advisor/Chair/PI.
- Funding by Conference Organizers or Other outside sources, traveler must indicated the amount on the expense report form.

Section 2: Proof of Participation

Along with your receipts, you must submit proof of your participation in the conference. These are items that can only be procured by physically attending the event. Submit one of the following to GSA:

Conference Badge: In most cases, the conference will provide you with a badge for identification while attending. It is not necessary to submit the plastic casing or the neck strap, but only the badge with your name and conference on it. Tape the conference badge to an 8 ½ x 11 paper.

Conference Program: Front page of the program and, if possible, the page on which your name appears in the program.

Letter from Conference Organizer: This must be signed and accompanied by an explanation of the letter writer's association with the event.

Section 3: Splitting Costs with Other Travelers

Many travelers split costs of large expenses (i.e. airfare, registration and lodging.) between two or more travelers. Splitting costs is not accepted unless you request a meeting with the Conference Travel Grant Coordinator and it is approved prior to your purchase.

- **To avoid complications and possible receipt reimbursement disapproval, make your appointment with the CTG Coordinator at least 2 weeks prior to your shared receipt purchase.**
- **Vehicle Rentals, Mileage Reimbursements are not approved for shared expenses.**
 - **Each person requesting reimbursement must submit proof of his/her payment for each shared expense.**

GSA CTG will only allow an actual bank transfer of funds between the travelers sharing expenses. No checks or cash transactions will be allowed as proof of payment so everyone requesting reimbursements for their shared payment expense will have to have a copy of the original receipt along with a copy of their bank transfer transaction to the person who purchased the original receipt. **No longer will we accept processed checks as proof of payment.**

GSA will only reimburse the person who purchased the receipt up to maximum cap if these procedures are not followed.

Section 4: GSA Caps for Reimbursement

The amount of money that GSA will reimburse for a Conference Travel Grant is dependent upon two factors:

- (1) Whether or not the applicant is presenting or attending only, and
- (2) The geographic location of the conference.
- (3) Completion of expense request forms and receipts.

These amounts are subject to change based on budget changes and other financial adjustments.

Maximum reimbursement amounts and other information about reimbursement can be found on the GSA website under Conference Travel.

*****GOOD LUCK AND THANK YOU FOR REPRESENTING UCR!*****