

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

- The [Expense Request Form](#) and original 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. Please make sure that the receipts are grouped in similar categories (i.e. parking receipts, taxi receipts, meal receipts).
- **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/or 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. Travelers will be reimbursed by the mileage of the total trip at the rate of \$0.535 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. Mileage will be calculated based on the shortest route to/from your conference. If it takes 25 miles to drive to the conference from your home and 22 miles to drive to the conference from UCR, we will take the shorter distance of the two regardless of which destination you started from.

- 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.

Extensions

- If you foresee that you will not be able to turn in your documents within 7 business days after the conference end date, then you must make sure to submit a request for an extension to the Travel Grant Coordinator prior to your travel. This request must be made in writing, and it should include the reason for your prolonged travel. *You must receive the Travel Grant Coordinator's approval prior to your travel. The written request for an extension must be sent to gsagrants@gmail.com.*

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

- **Instead, inform GSA in advance and get approval as previously mentioned and submit your expense form and original receipts by the approved submission date when you return.**
- For any other extenuating circumstances, please inform GSA prior to your travel.

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. The receipt or folio must show a zero balance.

- Travelers are not allowed to share lodging expenses under one person's name unless each person is charged on the lodging folio. If each person is charged individually, their methods of payment and payment amounts must be present on the folio. Otherwise, travelers are not allowed to split costs between themselves. Please read Section 3: Splitting Costs with Other Travelers for more details.

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. **The receipt must be itemized.**

- 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 indicate 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:

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

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. This may be a photocopy if you wish to keep the badge.

Conference Program: Front page of the program and, if possible, the page on which your name appears in the program. These must be original documents.

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, and only the traveler who originally paid for the receipt will be reimbursed by GSA.**

Section 4: Valid Receipts and Proof of Payment

- A valid receipt must be a legible and original document. No photocopies or screenshots will be accepted. It must visibly contain the vendor's name, contact information, date of purchase, itemization, payment amount, and method of payment. For accommodations, receipts must be itemized showing room rate, applicable taxes and fees, and incidentals paid in full with a zero (0) balance.
- Proof of payment/method of payment must be present on the receipt in order for it to be reimbursed. This may come in the forms/terms of Cash, Check, Paypal, Visa, or Visa xxxx.
 - If proof of payment is not present on the receipt, you can also provide a bank statement to supplement the original receipt. Both documents must show matching payment amounts in addition to all the requirements of a valid receipt. For privacy purposes, please redact any sensitive information not associated with your reimbursement or conference. **DO NOT SUBMIT A PHOTOCOPY OF YOUR CREDIT CARD.**
 - GSA does not reimburse receipts that indicate 'pending' payments.

Section 5: GSA Caps for Reimbursement

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

- (1) Completion of the original Conference Travel Grant Application with all required supplementary documents
- (2) Completion of expense request forms and receipts within 7 business days after the conference end date (unless an extension was granted)
- (3) Whether or not the applicant is presenting or attending only.
- (4) The geographic location of the conference.

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!*****