TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT POLICY

Effective April 1, 2013

GENERAL POLICY STATEMENT

Travel in support of a TEES mission is essential and therefore it is the responsibility of the TEES Fiscal Office to provide flexible and expeditious reimbursements to the traveler while maintaining strict adherence to any applicable state, system, federal or sponsor requirements. At TEES, travel payments will be based on the travel policy associated with the project/account it will be charged against. On most local funds and the majority of Office of Sponsored Research Services (OSRS) sponsored projects, this policy will apply. However, when specific travel guidelines are included in the terms of a contract or grant, the provisions of that contract or grant will govern the reimbursement (referred to as Special Sponsor Guidelines). On State dollars (321xx accounts and any sponsor that require State guidelines to be followed) reimbursements are subject to the State of Texas Travel Management Program and TexTravel. Special Sponsor and State policies can differ greatly from this one.

Each traveler traveling on accounts that follow TEES Travel Reimbursement Policy should be familiar with this policy prior to travel to ensure that costs will be reimbursable. Lack of proper documentation may result in non-reimbursable expenses to the traveler and a delay in processing the travel voucher. It is the traveler's responsibility to report his/her actual travel expenses in accordance with System ethics regulation and in accordance with the regulations set forth in this policy. Because of the significant amount of federal funding administered by TEES and OSRS, portions of this policy and guidelines parallel those of the Federal Government.

The reimbursement policy is based on documentation of reasonable and actual expenses. Some expenses must be supported by original receipts (monthly credit card statements or credit card receipts alone are not acceptable as backup documentation). Others must be documented by the traveler and submitted as a claim for reimbursement. A cost is reasonable in its nature or amount, if it does not exceed that which would be incurred by a prudent person under the circumstances prevailing at the time the decision was made to incur the costs. In determining the reasonableness of a given cost, consideration shall be given to:

- Whether the cost is of a type generally recognized as ordinary and necessary for the operation of the organization or the performance of the award.

- The restraints or requirements imposed by such factors as generally accepted sound business practices, arms length bargaining, Federal, System and State laws and regulations, and terms and conditions of the award.

- Whether the individuals concerned acted with prudence in the circumstances, considering their responsibilities to the organization, its members, employees, and clients, the public at large, and the Federal Government.
• Significant deviations from the established practices of the organization which may
  unjustifiably increase the award costs.

Travel reimbursements must be vouchered in Epik. A certification by the traveler is required. The preferred method to accomplish this task is to have the traveler sign the travel voucher report certification. An electronic signature in lieu of the original signature on the travel voucher is acceptable as long as the email correspondence attached to the voucher includes the full certification statement from the traveler himself (e.g., I certify that the travel expenses are business related, true, correct and unpaid) and makes reference to the travel dates, destination and the total dollar amount of the voucher. Vouchers on State accounts must have the Epik voucher report signed; the email certification will not suffice. Each travel voucher needs to claim expenses for only one State employee; see TFO memo 2010-03 for more details about the Alternate Payee functionality in Epik.

The intent of this policy is to ensure that reimbursements comply with IRS accountable plan rules. Following an accountable plan eliminates the need for travelers to report reimbursements as income on their personal tax returns. The IRS outlines accountable plan rules as follows:

1. Your expenses must have a business connection – that is, you must have paid or incurred deductible expenses while performing services as an employee of your employer.
2. You must adequately account to your employer for these expenses within a reasonable period of time.
3. You must return any excess reimbursement or allowance within a reasonable period of time.

Reasonable period of time as defined by IRS is as follows:

- You receive an advance within 30 days of the time you have an expense
- You adequately account for your expenses within 60 days after they were paid or incurred.
- You return any excess reimbursement within 120 days after the expense was paid or incurred.

TEES has elected to limit to 30 days, not 120 days, for advance repayments.

APPROVALS

Prior to travel, a travel requisition (TR) should be submitted through Epik to gain division approval and, when applicable, OSRS approval. A travel voucher cannot be submitted until a TR has completed routing.

If there is any doubt as to the allowability of the trip on sponsored funds or of the need for prior approval, the OSRS Project Administrator should be contacted. Unallowable costs may result in personal expense to the traveler and/or the Principal Investigator.

ADVANCES

TEES issues advances to employees in support of official business for a very limited number of business activities. Because employees are eligible for agency issued credit cards, travel advances are restricted and only issued for one or more of the following reasons:
- Employee is not eligible for agency issued card
- Employee will be paying for all or some business related expenses for a group of non-employees consisting of two or more individuals (e.g. hotel expense)
- Destination is such that service providers (food, lodging, auto rental, etc) do not honor the agency issued cards

Travelers may request funds for the reasonably estimated, ordinary and necessary business costs that will be incurred. Below is the process for obtaining a travel advance:

1. Complete and sign the TEES Travel and Advance Request form and route through Epik for signatures. It must be received by TEES Fiscal Office at least 5 working days prior to date of departure. (Remember, electronic routing includes several offices with Fiscal being the final destination for a travel advance so allow adequate time for the other offices to review and approve.)
2. If advance is approved by the Fiscal Office, the check will be either mailed or the funds direct deposited into the employee’s bank account (if they are set up for direct deposit with Accounts Payable). Travel advance payments other than for airfare or a hotel deposit will be campus mailed or direct deposited three working days before the scheduled departure. Pre-paid airfare or hotel deposit travel advance payments will be campus mailed or direct deposited once they have been processed and approved.
3. Travel occurs.
4. Travel voucher must be prepared and submitted via Epik within 30 days of return from travel or cancellation of travel.
   a. If travel advance exceeds expenses incurred, the difference must be submitted to Fiscal Cash Office following proper cash handling procedures.
   b. If expenses incurred exceed the travel advance, the difference will be paid to the traveler.
   c. If travel advance is equal to expenses incurred, a travel voucher must still be completed and submitted in order to clear the advance.
5. TEES will be enforcing the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) guidelines which require the treatment of past due travel advances as additional compensation once they are 120 days past due (based on return of trip or cancellation of trip). This action will likely result in additional payroll taxes and benefits being charged to both the traveler and the department. Again, advances should be cleared up by a travel voucher being submitted within 30 days following the end of the trip. If a travel voucher is not issued within the 30 day period, then an email notification will be sent to the following: the traveler and the Academic Business Administrator/departmental accountant. If after 60 days the advance is still outstanding, then a letter will be send to the above plus the department head. At 90 days, a second letter is sent to the above and the TEES Controller. At 120 days, the employee will be taxed on the funds, and collection efforts will continue in earnest. If a travel advance exceeds 120 days, no further travel advances will be available to the employee in the future.
6. Unless consecutive trips (trips within one week of each other) are scheduled, only ONE outstanding advance per employee is allowed. If the trip is cancelled, the advance must be returned immediately to Fiscal Cash Office following proper cash handling procedures.
7. If the request routes to Fiscal after the employee is already in travel status, then the requested advance will not be approved.
REIMBURSEMENT OF TRAVEL EXPENSES

When combining personal travel with business travel, payment will be based on the least expensive and reasonable means of transportation to the business location. Meals and lodging are limited to the business portion of the trip. Generally, the dates of the conference or meeting and one travel day before and after are allowable for reimbursement. Any additional days must be documented with a business purpose. Reimbursement of meal and lodging expenses for one or more additional days is allowable when the purpose of the additional days is to reduce overall travel costs and quotes are provided that prove the cost savings.

A cancellation or change fee is reimbursable only if the charge is incurred for a business related reason, natural disaster, or a sick leave eligible personal emergency/illness. If your division chooses to pay or reimburse for a change fee/cancellation that is not documented to comply with one of the above three choices, the expense will only be allowed on certain accounts, see the TEES Expenditure Guidelines Grid.

DOMESTIC TRAVEL

TRANSPORTATION

If a rental vehicle or private automobile is used for out-of-state business travel for purposes other than transporting equipment, materials or conserving costs, an amount not to exceed the cumulative economy airfare will be allowable only for the owner of the automobile. Attach advance quote for economy airfare to the business destination if reason is lower total cost. Lodging, meals and parking are allowed based on what the traveler would normally incur with air travel. Remember, TEES must minimize the amount of travel expenses reimbursed by ensuring that each travel arrangement is the most cost-effective considering all relevant circumstances.

Rental Vehicle

Rental vehicles should be used to obtain economical or practical transportation, i.e., when it would cost more to travel by privately owned vehicle, taxi, bus, etc. It is recommended to use rental vehicles due to the personal liability issues. The receipt must separately itemize all charges, including the starting and ending dates of the rental, the name of the renter and any other charges. Proof of payment is required.

In order to minimize costs, travelers are encouraged to choose standard class cars or lower whenever possible, as well as, to use the state contracted vendors. When state contracted rates are not used, the Fiscal Office or OSRS may request additional justification. For current list of state contracted vendors see http://www.window.state.tx.us/procurement/prog/stmp/stmp-rental-car-contract/

If class used is above full size, the traveler must provide a justification for use of class.

An additional driver fee is reimbursable only if the second person is traveling on TEES business.

If the car is retained for personal leave days, the rental fee must be reimbursed proportionately to the business days. Make sure the rental car gas is also prorated.

The cost of collision damage waiver (CDW) or loss-damage waiver (LDW) coverage obtained through
the rental car company is reimbursable and included on most state contract rentals. However, the cost of personal liability, personal effects insurance, or other liability insurance supplements are NOT allowable. The vehicle should be rented in the traveler's name and therefore, personal automobile insurance policy(s) should be reviewed for adequate coverage as determined by the traveler.

**Privately Owned Vehicles**

Travel using privately owned vehicles may be necessary to save time, transport equipment, or reduce cost when a number of persons are traveling together. Miles will be reimbursed at the rate set by the Internal Revenue Service for business travel. Current rates can be found at [http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/100715](http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/100715). This rate covers all fuel, maintenance, insurance, transportation, and operating costs. Damage to a privately owned vehicle used for TEES business is covered by the individual’s private insurance, costs for which are included in the mileage reimbursement. TEES does not assume responsibility for deductibles or other uninsured loss to the vehicle.

The number of miles traveled by an employee for state business may be determined by either:

a. Actual odometer readings with specific point to point itemization, or
b. Print out from Google Maps showing mileage between the starting location and ending location.

Mileage for traveling between the place of lodging and the place of entertainment, visiting friends/family, sightseeing, or shopping is not reimbursable.

On a scheduled work day, mileage will be calculated to and from the traveler’s headquarters to the business destination. On a scheduled day off, mileage will be calculated to and from the traveler’s residence or actual location, whichever is less.

Toll, bridge, ferry, and tunnel fees are also reimbursable. The supporting documentation for the reimbursement of an expense must list each day the expense was incurred and the amount of the expense incurred each day. Based on IRS guidelines, receipts are required if over $75.

**Motorcycles**

The use of privately owned motorcycles is reimbursable at the IRS approved rate. See [http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/100715](http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/100715) for current rates.

**Air Transportation**

**Commercial**

Economy/coach or other special discount fares are to be used when available. Federal regulations prohibit reimbursement of business or first class airfare unless it is required to accommodate a disability or special need. To accommodate a disability, the disability must be substantiated in writing by a competent medical authority. The medical authorization will be retained in a secure file and will not be attached to the expense report. Please work with Human Resources on these matters.
Business or first class airfare is not allowed on most TEES accounts. In order to be paid from specific TEES funds, a business reason must be acknowledged and approved by the Division Head. Please refer to the Expenditure Guidelines Grid for the specific accounts and requirements. OSRS written approval is required on accounts they manage. Make sure the Division Head or OSRS approval is attached to the Epik voucher.

A paid airline ticket receipt should be attached to the travel voucher. An itinerary alone is unacceptable. A receipt that has been altered by any person other than the airline is unacceptable. A receipt to which additional information has been added is considered unaltered if the additional information does not conflict with or obscure the original information on the receipt. If the ticket is in the form of an Electronic “Ticketless” Ticket, the passenger itinerary or receipt must be attached to the voucher. The name of the employee and airline, the ticket number, the class of transportation, the travel dates, the amount of the airfare, the origin and destination of each flight, and proof of payment must be included on the receipt.

A traveler can be reimbursed for the checked baggage fee for one piece of luggage. A second bag fee will only be reimbursed if a specific business reason is stated on the voucher. Overweight and oversize baggage fees will also require a business reason to be reimbursable. Receipts are required if the expense exceeds $75.

If changes to airfare result in non-refundable expenses, a statement as to what steps were taken to obtain a refund or to minimize the costs should be included. These reasons should be related to business or for other reasons beyond the traveler’s control.

**Personally Owned or Rented Aircraft**

Prior notification and approval is required before a traveler uses a private aircraft. The traveler should provide the Fiscal Office with the following information:

- Destination and purpose of trip
- Dates of travel
- Number/names of passengers
- Type of airplane
- Insurance certificate for the airplane
- Explanation why the personal plane is more economical to use rather than a commercial carrier
- Project and Account to which the expense will be charged

If the traveler plans to use the aircraft for more than one trip, all dates and destinations should be included. If this is on an OSRS administered project, the Project Administrator will review the sponsor guidelines and/or contact the Grant/Contracting Officer to determine allowability. If allowable, the traveler will be reimbursed using the highway mileage between the designated headquarters and point of destination. The rate of reimbursement will be based on the State of Texas Travel Allowance Guide. The rates are available at [https://fmx.cpa.state.tx.us/fm/travel/travelrates.php](https://fmx.cpa.state.tx.us/fm/travel/travelrates.php)
**Taxicab, Shuttle Services, Limousine, Bus, Subways**

Taxi, shuttle services, limousine, bus fares, and subways must include the point to point description, date, and dollar amount. Reimbursable tips are limited to 20% of the fare. Based on IRS guidelines, receipts are required for any single fare or expense over $75. Limousine service from city to city, such as from College Station to Houston, will be used only when other practical means (i.e., rental vehicle, personal vehicle, bus) are not available, or the limousine service is more economical. An explanation of why limousine service was used must be submitted with the voucher.

**Train**

Travelers must use coach/economy class accommodations for all train travel. Refer to business or first class airfare for guidance on authorizations and accounts to pay for fares above coach. For each expense, include the point to point description, date, and dollar amount. Itemized receipts must be submitted when over $75.

**Parking**

In most instances, parking expenses incurred while traveling in a state-owned or leased motor vehicle, a personally owned or leased motor vehicle, or a rented motor vehicle is reimbursable.

A parking expense incurred by an individual while dropping off or picking up a traveler at the airport is reimbursable.

The supporting documentation for the reimbursement of a parking expense must list each day the expense was incurred and the amount of the expense incurred each day, as well as the locations where the expense was incurred. Based on IRS guidelines, receipts are required if over $75.

**LODGING AND MEALS**

The traveler may use one of two methods for lodging and meal expenses incurred in connection with official travel of more than one day. The method selected must be used for the entire trip.

In both methods outlined below, itemized receipts for lodging are required. The receipt needs to include name and address of the commercial lodging establishment, name of the traveler, single room rate, daily itemization of charges, and proof of payment.

Remember, as employees of the State of Texas, travelers are exempt from Texas state hotel occupancy taxes. In order to take advantage of this, the traveler must present an exemption certificate to the hotel desk clerk at the time of check-in. Many hotels will not honor the exemption if it is presented at check-out. The Texas Hotel Occupancy Tax Exemption Certificate can be found on the Epik Fiscal portal. Reimbursements for Texas hotel occupancy tax charged on lodging will be made only in those instances where the traveler attempted to claim exemption but was denied by the lodging establishment. In this case, we must report the hotel to the State Comptroller’s Office.
Travel meal reimbursements are for the traveler’s meals only. Reimbursement includes the actual cost of reasonable and necessary food, non-alcoholic beverages, gratuities, taxes, and other incidental expenses. Alcoholic beverages are unallowable and must be deducted before submitting a claim. An employee may not be reimbursed for meals when traveling on official business that does not require an overnight stay unless the meal is considered a business meal and is substantiated as such. Business meals are reimbursed through a purchase voucher using the TEES Business Meal/Food form to document the IRS required five W’s: who, what, where, when, and why.

**Method #1: Actual Expenses**

With lodging and meal receipts, travelers may be reimbursed for the actual costs of reasonable and necessary lodging, meals and gratuities. Tips for meals must not exceed 20% of the cost of meals. Any tip charges in excess of that amount will not be paid.

Meal receipts must be attached to the voucher. Tips will be included in the meals and lodging object code, not coded as incidentals.

The maximum amount that may be reimbursed under actual lodging and meal expenses with receipts is limited to 150% of the applicable Federal domestic maximum GSA rate for the location. Please note that the first and last day of travel in the contiguous United States have a lower applicable rate. See domestic rates at [http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21287](http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21287). Attach the appropriate GSA rate page to the voucher.

If the city is not specifically listed on the GSA site, then use the rate listed for the county in which the city is located. If neither is listed, use the “Standard Rate” for that state. Use the GSA lodging location if lodging is not at the duty point.

Requests to exceed 150% of the maximum lodging rates listed must be supported by a written statement explaining the circumstances that caused the existing rate to be inadequate and will be subject to Fiscal Office or OSRS approval. Based on Federal Travel Regulations, requests for hotel reimbursements of more than 150% and up to 300% over the standard allowable rate are unallowable except for the following:

- Lodging is at a prearranged place such as a hotel where a meeting, conference or training session is held or;
- Costs have escalated because of special events; lodging within prescribed allowances cannot be obtained nearby; cost to commute to/from the nearby location exceed the cost savings from occupying less expensive lodging.

**Method #2: Actual Lodging Expense and Actual Meals, Up to the Applicable GSA Rates**

The traveler may be reimbursed for the actual lodging cost and the actual cost of meals up to the applicable GSA rates. Meal reimbursement includes the actual cost of food, non-alcoholic beverages, gratuities, taxes, and other incidental expenses. Receipts are required to claim actual lodging expenses, but do not have to be submitted for the meals.

Reimbursements will be based on the applicable Federal domestic maximum GSA rate for the location. Please note that the first and last day of travel in the contiguous United States have a lower applicable

If the city is not specifically listed on the GSA site, then use the rate listed for the county in which the city is located. If neither is listed, use the “Standard Rate” for that state. Use the GSA lodging location if lodging is not at the duty point.

Requests to exceed 150% of the maximum lodging rates listed must be supported by a written statement explaining the circumstances that caused the existing rate to be inadequate and will be subject to Fiscal Office or OSRS approval. Based on Federal Travel Regulations, requests for hotel reimbursements of more than 150% and up to 300% over the standard allowable rate are unallowable except for the following:

- Lodging is at a prearranged place such as a hotel where a meeting, conference or training session is held or;
- Costs have escalated because of special events; lodging within prescribed allowances cannot be obtained nearby; cost to commute to/from the nearby location exceed the cost savings from occupying less expensive lodging.

Travelers using this method should not seek separate reimbursement for incidental expenses. Incidental expenses are covered as part of the meal reimbursement. The Federal Travel Regulations describes incidental expenses as:

- Fees and tips given to porters, baggage carriers, bellhops, hotel maids, other hotel workers, stewards or stewardesses and others on ships.

Meals furnished in registration fees must be adjusted by deducting the appropriate amount shown in the chart below for contiguous United States travel.

The current breakdown for each IRS category is a follows and is subject to change:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>M&amp;IE Total</th>
<th>$46</th>
<th>$51</th>
<th>$56</th>
<th>$61</th>
<th>$66</th>
<th>$71</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Continental Breakfast/ Breakfast</strong></td>
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<td>$8</td>
<td>$9</td>
<td>$10</td>
<td>$11</td>
<td>$12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lunch</strong></td>
<td>$11</td>
<td>$12</td>
<td>$13</td>
<td>$15</td>
<td>$16</td>
<td>$18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>$26</td>
<td>$29</td>
<td>$31</td>
<td>$34</td>
<td>$36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Incidentals</strong></td>
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<td>$5</td>
<td>$5</td>
<td>$5</td>
<td>$5</td>
<td>$5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>First &amp; Last Day of Travel</strong></td>
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<td>$38.25</td>
<td>$42</td>
<td>$45.75</td>
<td>$49.50</td>
<td>$53.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Telephone Calls**

Travelers are expected to use the most economical means of making phone calls while traveling on business. If the traveler receives a cell phone allowance, they are expected to use the cell phone. Travelers will be reimbursed for phone calls that are reasonable and necessary for conducting business.

For telephone call expenses over $75, reimbursement requests must be accompanied by a hotel bill showing itemized call information or by an original, itemized phone bill.

**Internet Connections**

Travelers will be reimbursed internet connection charges that are reasonable and necessary for conducting business. A receipt is required when expense exceeds $75.

**Laundry**

Expenses incurred for laundry, cleaning and pressing of clothing are reimbursable within the United States (including Alaska, Hawaii, U.S. Territories, and Possessions). However, the employee must incur a minimum of four (4) consecutive nights at the place of lodging (on business travel) to qualify. A receipt is required when the expense exceeds $75.

**Conference Registration**

Supporting documentation for registration fees for conferences, meetings, etc. should include a receipt from the conference sponsor with the full name of the conference, dates of the conference and name of attendee, along with proof of payment. If optional meals are purchased please be aware that they are part of the meal expense for that day.

**Miscellaneous Expenses**

Based on IRS guidelines any other single expense over $75 for any allowable miscellaneous expense must have a receipt in order to be reimbursed. However, itemization needs to be provided for each.

**Reimbursable**

Examples of allowable miscellaneous expenses incurred while in travel status include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Miscellaneous supplies (not office supplies)
- Fees for traveler's checks/currency exchange. When a loss is incurred in currency exchange, the loss may be claimed.
- Porterage fees, special transportation, and tips for handling business equipment and materials
- Postage for official mail
- Gasoline for rental cars
Fees for money orders and/or certified checks

Transaction fees for use of automated teller machines (ATMs) – amount of the ATM withdrawals may not exceed the amount of funds approved for authorized travel

Passport and/or visa fees

Costs of photographs for passports and visa

Foreign country exit fees

**Not Reimbursable**

Examples of expenses that will **NOT** be reimbursed include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Entertainment expenses and related social activities such as tours and dances
- Frequent flyer mileage fees
- Costs incurred by unreasonable failure to cancel transportation or hotel reservations
- Fines for automobile violations including parking tickets
- Gasoline purchases for personal vehicles when claiming mileage or gasoline for rental cars on personal days.
- Personal items purchased due to lost/delayed baggage
- Lost or stolen tickets, cash, or property
- Hotel movie rentals and airline headsets
- Health club fees
- Magazine, newspapers, and books unrelated to business
- Personal credit card delinquency fees or finance charges
- Office Supplies not related to the travel purpose of the trip

Memberships - According to Federal guidelines memberships are not allowable unless their applicability to the special circumstances or purpose of the project is clearly established in the scope of work. See TEES Expenditure Guidelines Grid for allowable accounts.
FOREIGN TRAVEL

Foreign travel by any state employee on state business must be for the benefit of the State of Texas and any personal benefit thereby accrued must be solely incidental to the official purpose of the travel. It is the obligation of both the individual employee who is traveling and his or her supervisor to ensure that all foreign travel conforms to this mandate.

Receipts submitted in a foreign currency are to be converted to the U.S. dollar equivalency of the date expenses were incurred, use historical rates during the duration of travel, or submit a credit card statement showing the U.S. dollar amount.

DEFINITION

In general, foreign travel is defined as travel outside the United States, U.S. territories and possessions, Canada and Mexico.

Sponsors differ in defining the term “foreign” so when traveling on OSRS managed accounts, travelers should contact the OSRS Project Administrator to be sure the contemplated travel is correctly classified.

APPROVAL

It is required that all foreign travel by state employees on state business must be approved in advance; submit the travel requisition at least 14 working days prior to departure. This includes travel at no charge to TEES. State funds cannot be used to reimburse foreign travel expenses.

It is the responsibility of every employee to check their foreign destination (including Canada and Mexico) for any Travel Warnings/Alerts when requesting approval for foreign travel. Travel Warnings, as defined by the U.S. Department of State, are issued to describe long-term, protracted conditions that make a country dangerous or unstable. A Travel Warning is also issued when the U.S. Government’s ability to assist U.S. citizens is constrained due to the closure of an embassy or consulate or because of a drawdown of its staff. Please review the “TEES Signature and Attachment Guidance for Travel Requisitions” for more details on the requirements. This can be found on the TEES Fiscal portal.

Sponsoring agencies may also require prior approval. It is the responsibility of the traveler to contact their OSRS Project Administrator. The approval request should be submitted at least 45 days prior to the anticipated departure date.

TRANSPORTATION (Foreign)

For all transportation categories not specifically listed below, please refer to the domestic allowability and receipt requirements.

Rental Vehicles

Rental vehicles should be used to obtain economical or practical transportation (i.e., when it would cost more to travel by taxi, bus, subway, etc.). When leasing vehicles in foreign countries, it is advisable to purchase all available and reasonable levels of insurance including Personal Accident Liability.
Insurance (PAI). Itemized receipts are required. Please refer to Domestic Travel sections regarding other allowability and receipt requirements.

**Air Transportation**

Generally, if a traveler is traveling on funds provided by the federal government, he/she must use a U.S. flag carrier (an airline owned by an American company), regardless of cost or convenience.

If you are scheduling international travel that is federally funded (check with OSRS if you are not sure if your sponsor is Federal), you must ensure that all flights, where possible, are scheduled on U.S. flag carriers or on foreign air carriers that code share with a U.S. flag carrier. Code sharing occurs when two or more airlines “code” the same flight as if it was their own. In other words, a U.S. airline may sell a seat on the plane of a foreign air carrier; this seat is considered the same as one on a plane operated by a U.S. flag carrier. Compliance with the Fly America Act is satisfied when the U.S. flag air carrier’s designator code is present in the area next to the flight numbers on the airline ticket, boarding pass, or on the documentation for an electronic ticket (passenger receipt).

**Exceptions to the Fly America Act**

The biggest exception to the Fly America Act is the Open Skies Agreement [http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/103191](http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/103191). On October 6, 2010, the United States and European Union (EU) “Open Skies” Air Transport Agreement [http://www.gsa.gov/graphics/ogp/FTRBulletin11-02USEUOpenSkies.PDF](http://www.gsa.gov/graphics/ogp/FTRBulletin11-02USEUOpenSkies.PDF) was published by the U.S. General Services Administration providing full explanation of the multilateral agreement in place so that qualifying travelers, whose travel is supported by federal funds, may travel on European Union airlines as well as U.S. flag Air Carriers. A list of current member countries of the European Union is available at [http://europa.eu/about-eu/countries/index_en.htm](http://europa.eu/about-eu/countries/index_en.htm). There are also Open Skies agreement with Australia, Switzerland and Japan.

There are other exceptions to the Fly America Act which may be appropriate as well. A list of exception criteria may be found in the Federal Travel Regulation Guidelines [http://www.gsa.gov/portal/external/public/site/FTR/file/Chapter301p010.html/category/21868/#wp1088924](http://www.gsa.gov/portal/external/public/site/FTR/file/Chapter301p010.html/category/21868/#wp1088924) – FTR sections 301-10.135-138. Please note that lower cost and personal convenience are not acceptable criteria for justifying the non-availability of a U.S. flag air carrier.

To document the exceptions, you must complete and attach the [Foreign Flag Carrier Justification Form](http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/103191).

Please refer to the Domestic Travel sections of this document regarding other allowability and receipt requirements.

**Lodging and Meals**

Please refer to Domestic Travel sections of this document regarding allowability and receipt requirements. Either of the two methods for lodging and meal reimbursements can be used.

For foreign travel location applicable rates, please obtain current rates from the State Department at [http://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per_diem.asp](http://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per_diem.asp)

Laundry
As laundry/dry cleaning expenses are included in the incidental calculations (part of the meal maximum) outside the United States, separate claims for such expenses are not allowed.

All Other Expense Categories
Please refer to Domestic Travel sections of this document regarding allowability and receipt requirements for all other expense categories.