

**SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITIES RESEARCH ASSOCIATION
CRESST II TRAVEL GUIDELINES**

Effective: January 1, 2023

Traveler: For purposes of this Agreement, a *Traveler* is defined as an individual authorized by SURA to travel, including but not limited to non-U.S. Government employees, researchers, consultants, exchange visitors, students, and invited guests.

Foreign Travel: Foreign travel is any travel outside of the United States, the Commonwealths of Puerto Rico, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the territories and possessions of the United States (excluding the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands).

U.S. Flag Air Carrier: All domestic and international air travel reservations shall be made at the lowest available coach class fare on U.S. flag air carriers, which are any air carrier holding a certificate issued by the United States under 49 U.S.C. 40102. The United States means the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the territories and possessions of the United States.

Travel Agreement: *Travel Agreements* will be generated and sent to *Travelers* AFTER the official Visitor Management System (VMS) online request has been received by the CRESST II Central Office. VMS requests should be submitted at least five business days prior to departure. A *Travel Agreement* must be completed and submitted to Katie McKee (katherine.s.mckee@nasa.gov) at least three business days prior to the *Traveler's* departure. SURA reserves the right to reject any travel agreement received less than three days prior to departure and will not guarantee processing and reimbursement.

Travel Voucher: A *Travel Voucher* shall be completed, approved, and submitted to Carolyn Wilson (cwilson@sura.org) with required receipts within 14 days after the trip is complete, unless expenses are ongoing. Ongoing expenses shall be expensed every two weeks when the length of visit is greater than thirty days. Travel expenses shall be kept to the minimum level needed to accomplish stated objectives.

- When personal travel is taken in conjunction with CRESST II travel, all expenses relating to the personal portion of the trip shall be paid by the traveler.
- *Travel Vouchers* must be signed by the *Traveler* who incurred the expense and submitted to Carolyn Wilson (cwilson@sura.org). All *Travel Vouchers* must be reviewed by SURA for authorization of payment.

Expense Reimbursement: Reimbursement of actual expenses will be limited to the amount approved on the *Travel Agreement*. An amended *Travel Agreement* is required, and must be submitted prior to the date of departure, if:

- The duration of the trip increased from that approved on the *Travel Agreement*.
- Travel includes one or more destinations not approved on the *Travel Agreement*.
- Travel includes expenses for paid airfare, train, rental car, lodging and/or per diem, when one or more of these expenses were not approved on the original *Travel Agreement*. Cost departures of more than 25% of the base fare will also require sponsor approval.

Air Travel: Actual *Traveler* expenses by public carrier are reimbursable for coach class airfare via a scheduled U.S. flag air carrier airline for the most direct practical route between points of business (original receipt and itinerary is required for reimbursement).

Local Transportation: Local transportation expenses are limited to the amount approved on the *Travel Agreement*. Original receipts are required for any local transportation expense that exceeds \$25.00.

- Taxi or airport shuttle fees to/from common carrier terminal and local transportation at the *Traveler's* destination (taxi, train, bus, subway) will be reimbursed at actual cost.
- Tolls and parking will be reimbursed at actual costs.
- If traveling overnight, short-term airport parking shall not be utilized.

Rail or Ocean Travel: Rail is reimbursable when used to replace airfare, and reimbursement shall not exceed the coach-class rate listed on the *Travel Agreement*. Acela class train fare is acceptable when traveling to/from the Washington, DC metropolitan area. Ocean travel is reimbursable only when approved in advance on the *Travel Agreement*, and reimbursement shall not exceed the lowest applicable coach class airfare.

Rental Car: The standard class for rental car reservation shall be what is commonly termed mid-size. *Travelers* may request other classes of vehicles for special purposes with appropriate justification. Optional equipment and upgrades will be the financial

responsibility of the renter. Individuals traveling together shall share rental cars whenever possible. The *Traveler* whose name appears on the receipt shall include the expense on his or her *Travel Voucher*. Rental of larger commercially-rented vehicles is authorized when more than two authorized individuals are traveling together and the single vehicle rental results in cost savings compared to the cost of renting more than one vehicle at the rate for a mid-size automobile.

Rental Car Insurance: *Travelers* shall not purchase the extra collision or liability insurance coverage offered by U.S. rental car agencies for a rental car used for domestic travel. SURA provides collision and liability insurance for all *Travelers*. However, if a portion of the rental car is used for personal business, the *Traveler* may elect to purchase the additional coverage at his/her own expense. Rental of a Global Positioning System (GPS) is authorized when on official travel.

Rental Car Insurance on Foreign Travel: *Travelers* who rent a car in connection with foreign travel are advised that upon pick-up to confirm that full insurance coverage has been added. If coverage has not been included, be sure to purchase ALL insurance. Insurance procedures, terminology, and minimum insurance limits vary somewhat from country to country, so if it is unclear which insurance option provides damage coverage, accept all of them.

Use of Personal Vehicle: *Travelers* may request authorization to drive their personal vehicle under certain circumstances. For example: when public transportation is unavailable or impractical, travel by personal vehicle allows the *Traveler* to make the best use of work time, combining personal travel with a business trip, or the cost of driving is less than the cost of the lowest available airfare.

- A cost comparison, attached to the travel authorization, is required when travel is outside a 300-mile radius of the *Traveler's* primary duty station.
- When a *Traveler* is authorized to drive his/her personal vehicle for the convenience of SURA, the *Traveler* may be reimbursed for mileage at the current full published IRS POV rate plus parking fees, tolls, lodging (original receipt required), and M&IE expenses *en route*. The maximum allowances for lodging and M&IE cannot exceed that of the business location.
- When a *Traveler* is authorized to drive his/her personal vehicle for his/her convenience, then the *Traveler* may be reimbursed at the current reduced published IRS POV rate plus parking fees and tolls *en route* to the *Traveler's* destination when the cost is deemed to be no higher than other preferred modes of transportation. Lodging and per diem costs associated with added travel time are not reimbursable.
- Travel using a personal vehicle outside a 50-mile radius of the *Traveler's* primary duty station may be reimbursed from home or work to the travel destination, whichever is less, at the current IRS published POV rate plus any tolls and parking fees.
- M&IE expenses are not allowed for travel within a 50-mile radius of the *Traveler's* primary duty station unless overnight lodging is required.
- For insurance purposes, *Travelers* shall not utilize private aircraft or motorcycles while on sponsored travel.

Traffic Accidents: A *Traveler* who is in an accident involving a personal or rental vehicle while on business travel shall report it as soon as possible to the police department that has jurisdiction (state, county or local), the *Traveler's* personal car insurance agent or rental car agency, and Ms. Lynette Queen. Policy limits should not be disclosed, nor should any admissions be made concerning liability for the accident. Expenses incurred due to traffic or parking violations, forfeiture of his/her driver's license, and any related costs are the responsibility of the *Traveler*.

Lodging Per Diem: For overnight stays required to accomplish the business purpose, *Travelers* may be reimbursed for actual lodging expenses not to exceed the maximum allowable rate for the business location.

- If lodging is not available at the business location, reimbursement will be made for the closest location where lodging is available.
- Lodging will be reimbursed at the single room rate unless more than one authorized *Traveler* shares a room with another authorized *Traveler*.
- *Travelers* who expect to remain in the same location for more than 2 weeks should request lodging at weekly or monthly rates.
- Total reimbursement for each day, excluding tax on lodging, may not exceed the maximum allowable GSA (for CONUS), DOD (for OCONUS), or DOS (for foreign) lodging per diem rate for that location.
- If the *Traveler's* destination is not listed in the GSA lodging per diem rate table, the maximum reimbursement for lodging per diem allowed will be the standard GSA per diem rate as stated in the GSA per diem rate table.
- *Travelers* may be eligible to receive government rates at participating hotels. The discounted Federal rate should be requested when making reservations. If the hotel requires proof of eligibility, the *Traveler* should present his/her GSFC ID badge.

Lodging Per Diem Exceptions: When the applicable maximum lodging per diem rate is inadequate due to special and/or unusual circumstances or the hotel will not offer the Federal rate, the *Traveler* may request reimbursement for actual expenses not to exceed 150% of the applicable maximum daily rate for lodging per diem. These costs must be justified and approved by the CRESST II Central Office in advance of travel and the *Traveler* must itemize their actual expenses on the *Travel Voucher* when requesting reimbursement.

M&IE Per Diem: The per diem rate covers all meals, fees, and tips associated with lodging and meals, laundry and dry cleaning, personal baggage handling, and other incidental expenses and require no receipts.

- No per diem shall be allowed for travel within a 50-mile radius of the *Traveler's* primary duty station, unless overnight lodging is required.
- The per diem rate paid shall be based on the *Traveler's* business location at the end of the day (12 midnight). On the day of return, the per diem rate applicable to the preceding business location shall be applied.
- When a meal is provided by the Government, a meeting sponsor, or as part of a registration fee, the M&IE rate for that meal must be deducted from the meals per diem.
- *Travelers* will be reimbursed at 75% of the applicable daily per diem rate on their day of departure and day of return to the point of origin.
- For meals provided on the day of departure and the last day of travel, *Travelers* must deduct the entire allocated meal cost from the decreased M&IE rate.

Personal Expenses Incurred While Traveling: Personal expenses incurred will not be reimbursed when personal leave is combined with business leave. Personal travel date and times must be discussed beforehand with the CRESST II Central Office.

- An added airfare cost for extending the duration of a business trip may result in a higher airfare. To substantiate allowable from unallowable airfare costs, an airline cost comparison, not including the personal days of travel, must be provided with the *Travel Voucher*. The comparison should be dated the same day as the actual airline ticket purchased.
- Rental car charges will be pro-rated for the days of personal usage (e.g., total rental days = 7, cost = \$560.00. Two of those days are personal; therefore, the reimbursement reduction for personal travel would be \$160.00).

Communication Expenses: Business-related telephone, Fax, and Internet access fees, and copy and postage costs shall be reimbursed. Communications charges other than telephone charges shall be itemized as miscellaneous expenses. Personal telephone calls while on travel will be reimbursed as follows:

- Domestic: \$4.00 per day or \$12.00 per week (7 days)
- Outside the United States: \$10.00 per day

The reimbursable amounts noted above may be used to purchase low-cost prepaid calling cards. Emergency personal calls made due to urgent or emergency situations may be reimbursed provided an explanation is given on your travel expense report. Personal cell phone costs are not reimbursable.

Internet Expenses: Wi-Fi service provider charges will be paid when flights are two or more hours in duration or when lodging property does not include Wi-Fi in the room rate.

Currency Exchange Fees: *Travelers* shall submit foreign currency exchange receipts and indicate the exchange rate used on the *Travel Voucher*. When no exchange rate is indicated on the *Travel Voucher*, currency conversion to U.S. dollars will be obtained from the OANDA.com website based on the published foreign exchange rate on the date of expense.

Other Allowable Expenses: Other reimbursable expenses include:

- Business related expenses incurred on intervening Saturdays, Sundays, holidays, and standby days.
- Registration and banquet fees paid by the *Traveler* or fares for travel by rail or ocean vessel in lieu of airfare (not to exceed the lowest applicable coach class airfare) are reimbursable only when specified on the *Travel Authorization*
- Visa photographs, visa fees, inoculation charges, work permit fees
- Travelers check fees
- Laundry and valet service, when travel exceeds 4 business days
- Baggage handling, storage, transfer, and checking fees
- Reasonable costs of professional, business-related reference materials
- Reasonable costs of incidental materials required to conduct the business for which the *Traveler* was sent, e.g., film to photograph fabrication processes, etc.

Unallowable Expenses: Unallowable expenses include, but are not limited to:

- Alcohol
- Entertainment
- Rental Car Insurance – U.S. Travel Only
- Expenses related to personal days, i.e., rental car, gas, hotel, meals
- Additional airfare costs for personal reasons

- Transportation expense tips in excess of 20%
- Additional lodging to accommodate spouse and/or dependents
- Fees associated with rental car upgrades
- Late fees, finance charges, or returned check charges assessed by the bank
- Memberships in organizations
- More than one reasonable phone call home per day
- Additional driver charges for non-authorized *Travelers*

Receipts: *Travelers* will be reimbursed for expenses with original receipts for the most direct practical route from the point-of-origin or primary duty station to the final destination. Original receipts shall be attached to the completed *Travel Voucher* and submitted for processing. Original receipts are required to obtain reimbursement for the following expenses:

- Airfare: e-receipt with full itinerary reflecting method and amount of payment
- Car rental: itemized bill from rental agency (customer copy of rental agreement) reflecting method of payment
- Lodging: itemized bill (presented at check-out) reflecting method of payment
- Other expense items exceeding \$25.00 each reflecting method of payment

Lost or Missing Receipts: In the event that an original receipt is lost or was not received, the *Traveler* shall be responsible for providing acceptable verification of the amount to be reimbursed. This should include written confirmation of the travel expense from the travel agency, airline, car rental agency, hotel, or other vendor or itemized written verification of charges that make up the amount being claimed accompanied by cancelled check, credit card charge receipt, or credit card statement. In the absence of acceptable verification as listed above, the *Traveler* shall be personally liable for the costs incurred.

Lost or Stolen Tickets: Lost or stolen transportation tickets shall be reported immediately to the issuing carrier (usually airline) and to the CRESST II Central Office. *Travelers* are liable for the cost of lost or stolen tickets that are not reported.

Contact Information:

CRESST II Central Office
NASA Goddard Space Flight Center
Katie McKee
Email: katherine.s.mckee