

Arkansas State University
Sponsored Programs Accounting
Travel Costs

Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to define travel for Sponsored Programs.

Travel on Sponsored Projects

A-State faculty, staff and students routinely travel in support of sponsored activities. The University reimburses travelers for necessary and reasonable business expenses incurred while traveling. Reimbursable expenses must conform to university policy, federal and state law, if applicable, and the restrictions placed upon each sponsored award.

Domestic and foreign travel charged to sponsored projects should follow the guidelines set forth in this document, unless federal regulations or the funding agency imposes greater restrictions. The terms of a particular grant or contract should be referred to for specific guidance on allowable expenditures.

General Guidelines

Travel is allowable as a direct cost when such travel will provide direct benefit to the award. If federally funded, sponsored awards are subject to certain federal laws and the guidelines set forth in Uniform Guidance (2 CFR Part 200). All awards are subject to specific agency restrictions and A-State Travel Policy. The terms and conditions of the individual agreement should be reviewed prior to incurring and/or submitting any travel cost for reimbursement. When there is a conflict between University policy and award requirements the more restrictive policy applies.

The following list highlights some common sponsored travel restrictions. Some awards **may**:

- Prohibit foreign travel
- Require pre-authorization by Sponsor for each trip
- Restrict the number of trips that can be taken
- Restrict the number of travelers on an authorized trip
- Set a maximum dollar value per trip
- Allow attendance to a conference to present research, but not for the purpose of “staying current in the field”
- Limit travel to a specific destination or purpose
- Specify maximum meal, mileage or other cost rates

Sponsored travel must be justified, well documented, in compliance with the sponsor requirements, and incurred within the period of the award. Sponsored project travel has a high audit profile and is routinely examined by internal, external and sponsor auditors. Therefore, each transaction must be adequately documented. Sufficient documentation provides clarity so that anyone reviewing the transaction can verify that it is allowable, allocable and reasonable.

If costs are not allowable, allocable, reasonable, consistently treated and sufficiently documented they cannot be charged to a sponsored research project.

Travel Charged to Two or More Projects

Auditors carefully review travel charges that are split between two or more projects so as to be sure that charges are properly allocated. When preparing your travel report it is important to be clear about how the trip specifically benefited each project respectively.

Charges split between more than one project must be split on the basis of proportional benefit or other reasonable method. The division of the expenditure cannot be based on available funding or any other type of synonymous methodology. An expenditure that benefited two or more projects cannot be charged solely to one project because the other project is almost out of funding.

Foreign Travel

The definition of foreign travel may differ from sponsor to sponsor and, therefore, each award must be reviewed for this definition. For example, many agencies do not consider travel to Mexico and Canada to be foreign travel. The award must also be examined for any applicable prior approval requirements.

Under the Fly America Act travelers are required to use United States (US) air carrier service for all travel funded by Federal agencies. Some exceptions may be available, please contact your Sponsored Programs Accountant.

Approval in TEM

In the comments section, the traveler must indicate how the travel is necessary to the performance of the award. It remains the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to ensure that the expenses follow applicable policies for allowable costs and that the proper authorizations have been made