

Laboratory for Information and Decision Systems

TRAVEL INTRODUCTION FOR STUDENTS AND POSTDOCS

September 2023

Planning Your Trip:

- Contact your research supervisor for PRIOR approval of travel and support.
- Plan as far ahead as possible to take advantage of early registration fees, better airfare prices, etc.

General Comments

- It is possible to pay for large ticket items without using your own funds. Please take advantage of either our MIT preferred Travel Agents, or using your Admin's MIT Travel Credit Card so you are not out-of-pocket for your own monies for several months.
- The US Carrier rule (explained below) is very important to remember. Your research supervisor will end up having to use non-research funds for your airfare reimbursement if you forget (and in some cases, your research supervisor does NOT have non-research funds, or will not be willing to use those funds and you will be stuck paying yourself!).
- In most cases, MIT and LIDS will accommodate variations in itineraries or other necessary irregularities in travel plans. ALWAYS take a screen shot of estimated DIRECT ECONOMY flights (Expedia works well with full flight information). if you are not following that itinerary. It is also important to check with your Admin Asst. for required paperwork to cover such cases BEFORE purchasing any tickets, to insure you can get your expenses reimbursed in a clear and timely fashion soon after your trip.

Airfare Rules and Regulations

- US Government Rules and Regs
 - 95% of your travel funds come from US Gov't Agencies. All domestic travel and any possible international travel MUST be on US Carriers.
 - You can use US/Foreign partnership flights, but e-ticket/receipt MUST show the *US Carrier flight numbers* and information. All travel must be Economy/Coach fare.)
 - There is now some flexibility to use Euro-zone Air Carriers, but THERE ARE MAJOR LIMITATIONS in terms of reimbursement. ALWAYS CHECK BEFORE!
 - Research funds will cover costs for one day before and one day after a conference only. Plan accordingly.

- MIT Rules and Regs
 - *No reimbursements are made until after your trip is over – no exceptions (i.e. if you pay “out-of-pocket,” you may not see your funds for many months).*
 - Itineraries other than roundtrip from BOS to DESTINATION are allowed but, for reimbursement, a roundtrip airfare estimate MUST be provided. It is best to create the estimate at the same time as booking the actual tickets!
 - EXAMPLES:
 - (1) where the trip is a mixture of MIT and personal travel – i.e. you are traveling to Singapore, but then want to travel home to China before returning to Boston;
 - (2) you are traveling to California for a conference, but then will be coming back via Texas where you have an interview scheduled, etc.;
 - (3) you are traveling to Norway for a conference, but want to add a few personal days at the end and your return flight is from a different city;
- If the multi-stop trip is all for MIT business – e.g. for two conferences, or for a conference and a research meeting, then the estimate is not required.*
- LIDS Rules and Regs
 - E-ticket with COMPLETE itinerary and PAID receipt must be provided for reimbursement
 - Good idea to keep boarding passes

Train Rules and Regulations

- Rail travel may be used when it is convenient. Rail travel is reimbursable as long as the total cost of the trip is comparable to, or less expensive than, the lowest available coach airfare. It is best to get a roundtrip airfare estimate at same time as booking train, which can be passed in along with other receipts when requesting reimbursement.

Large Transportation Expenses, Payment Options and Receipts

- Airfare or Train
 - Travel Collaborative – no out of pocket expense (get contact info from admin)
 - E-ticket/itinerary/receipt is still required for reimbursement!
 - “Do-it-Yourself”
 - Use Admin’s MIT Travel Credit Card – no out of pocket expense
 - E-ticket/itinerary/receipt is still required for reimbursement!
 - Pay out of pocket: submit e-ticket/receipt for reimbursement

Small Transportation Expenses and Receipts

- Taxis, Shuttles, Ferries, Trams, MBTA, etc.
 - ***Your Research Supervisor may have rules for what they will and won’t pay for.***
 - ***Your Research Supervisor may require you to provide receipts for ALL taxis, etc. Check with your LIDS Admin prior to travel.***
 - Pay out of pocket: keep track of date, to/from, amount; you must provide receipts for individual use over \$75.

Hotel/Lodging Expenses, Payment Options and Receipts

- Hotel/Lodging
 - “Do-it-Yourself”
 - For Hotel stays via a travel internet site (i.e. paid-in-advance, NOT a reservation), you may use Admin’s MIT Travel Credit Card with no out of pocket expense. However:
 - *An **Itemized** and **Paid** hotel bill/receipt is still required for reimbursement!*
 - Pay out of pocket: submit a ***Itemized** and **Paid** hotel bill/receipt for reimbursement*
 - Other hotel expenses like internet, parking, meals are okay on the same bill.
 - If you share a room with another student (MIT or otherwise), it is important to let the admin know how costs were split, or other arrangements that affect reimbursement.

Meals and Receipts

- In-transit meals
 - Meals/food expenses DURING travel (i.e. in the airport, on the plane), can only be reimbursed based on saved receipts.
- Daily Meals at Destination
 - ***Your Research Supervisor may have rules for what they will and won’t pay for.***
 - ***Your Research Supervisor may require you to provide receipts for ALL meals. Check with your LIDS Admin prior to travel.***
 - Also, most professors will NOT reimburse students/researchers for alcoholic beverages.
 - For those Research Supervisors who do not expect you to keep meal receipts – you can simply suggest a daily amount for meals (limited by US Gov’t Meal rates]. [Exception: any single meal over \$75 must have a receipt.]

Other Expenses, Payment Options and Receipts

(i.e. Conference Registration Fees, Car Rental or Personal Vehicle Mileage, Parking, Gas, Tolls, Poster, Baggage, Telephone/Internet, Visa/Passport/Consulate Fees & Postage, Required Vaccinations, Finance Charges on Foreign Transactions, ...)

- **Conference Registration Fee** – there is often a discount for Early Registration. Please try to take advantage of this by planning your trip as soon as possible.
 - “Do-it-Yourself”
 - Use Admin’s MIT Travel Credit Card – no out of pocket expense
 - Receipt is still required for reimbursement!
 - Pay out of pocket: submit receipt for reimbursement
- **Car Rental** – MIT has an arrangement for better rates with Budget and Avis which provide volume-based discounts and insurance on vehicles for MIT Travelers. The use of these agencies will serve to mitigate MIT’s financial risk associated with automobile accidents and losses, including the theft of the vehicle. ***When traveling in the US, under no circumstance should you purchase insurance offered by any car rental agencies when booking a rental car***

(One exception: MIT Travelers should purchase rental car insurance when renting in Alaska). When traveling internationally, including Canada, Mexico, Bermuda, Puerto Rico and the Caribbean islands, Travelers should purchase insurance under all circumstances.

- For Avis, use this link
(<https://www.avis.com/car-rental/profile/go.ac?A491400>)
 - For Budget, use this link
(<http://www.budgetcarrental.com/budget/fastbreak/index.html?T240202>)
 - Pay out of pocket: submit receipt for reimbursement. This MUST be a receipt, the “estimated costs” is not acceptable for reimbursement.
 - Keep track of any additional costs: gas, parking, tolls; these are handled separately from the car rental itself.
- **Other Incidentals:**
(i.e. Posters, Airline Baggage Fees, Visa Fees, Postage, ...)
 - Pay out of pocket: submit receipt for reimbursement

HOW TO REQUEST REIMBURSEMENT FOR YOUR TRIP

Check with your PI’s admin for their preferred mode of filing for reimbursement. Most LIDS’s admins have google forms with links attached to our LIDS admin websites (found under the Admin page on the LIDS website).