

# Laboratory for Information and Decision Systems

## TRAVEL INTRODUCTION FOR STUDENTS AND POSTDOCS

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### Administrative Assistant for Travel Information and Reimbursement

<i>Admin Name</i>	<i>Room</i>	<i>Phone</i>	<i>Email</i>	<i>Faculty Supported</i>
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### 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.
- AFTER reading this overview, contact Rachel with any questions (especially about international trip for airfare rules and keeping proper records so reimbursement goes smoothly).

### 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 R. Cohen'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!).
- In most cases, MIT and LIDS will accommodate variations in itineraries or other necessary irregularities in travel plans. It is important to check with R. Cohen 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. [PLEASE, check ahead with Rachel to make sure you are purchasing correctly.]
  - 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.)
  - 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 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 -- as if you were flying from BOS<->DESTINATION on the day before, and returning the day after. It is best if estimate is created 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, the estimate is STILL required. In this case, you would make an estimate for each conference round-trip. There is some exception to this, especially if the conferences are close together in dates, but the estimates are still needed.*
- LIDS Rules and Regs
  - E-ticket/itinerary/receipt must be provided for reimbursement. [This MUST have flight departure AND arrival times, flight number and class of travel, price with details of taxes and other fees.]
  - MIT will NOT reimburse you for any trip insurance/flight cancellation INSURANCE. Watch out for Expedia especially, as they sometimes add it on without prior approval.
  - It is a 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 R. Cohen)
    - E-ticket/itinerary/receipt is still required for reimbursement!
  - “Do-it-Yourself”
    - Use R. Cohen’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.
  - Pay out of pocket: keep track of date, to/from, amount; provide receipt for individual use over \$75.

## Hotel/Lodging Expenses, Payment Options and Receipts

- Hotel/Lodging
  - “Do-it-Yourself”
    - Use R. Cohen’s MIT Travel Credit Card – no out of pocket expense
      - *Paid* hotel bill/receipt is still required for reimbursement!
    - Pay out of pocket: submit *paid* hotel bill/receipt for reimbursement
    - Other hotel expenses like internet, parking, meals are okay to be paid on one bill.
    - If you share a room with another student (MIT or otherwise), it is important to let the R. Cohen know how costs were split, or other arrangements that affect reimbursement.

## Meals and Receipts

- In-transit meals
  - To be reimbursed for meals/food expenses DURING travel (i.e. in the airport, on the plane), you MUST keep receipts.
- Daily Meals at Destination
  - Check with your Research Supervisor – some will expect you to keep receipts.
  - For LIDS in general, keep track of amounts spent on meals/food. Reimbursement will be based on a per meal/per day average. Maximum allowed based on US Gov’t meals rate by location. No receipts required unless individual meal is more than \$75.

## 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 R. Cohen’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>)
  
- **Car Rental** (continued) –
  - 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**

There is an online google form that must be filled out for reimbursement. The link is available on R. Cohen’s staff website via the LIDS homepage, under the Admin Staff Directory. <https://lids.mit.edu/people/administrative-staff/rachel-cohen>