

GSO Grants and Awards Tips for the Reimbursement Process

GSO grants are actually *reimbursements*; awardees are reimbursed for the actual amount they spent on travel or research materials after the travel or research occurs. If the actual amount you spent is less than the awarded amount, you will receive the actual amount only.

GSO grants reimbursements can take up to 12 weeks – if everything is submitted at once and there are no complicating factors. The following tips are intended to help facilitate the reimbursement process for you. After 12 weeks if you still have not received your check you may contact the GSO office at (808) 956-8776 or at gsogrant@hawaii.edu.

GENERAL

You need to include receipts for all funded purchases, boarding passes, hotel folios (a document with the hotel letterhead with detailed breakdown for room rate, tax, and other charges), and portions of the conference booklet or materials.

If you haven't traveled yet...

- Please keep all relevant documents, such as boarding passes, receipts, and registration forms, etc.
- Failure to retain these items will lead to delays in processing your reimbursement and, in some cases, may lead to the forfeiture of that portion of your award.

If you have already traveled...

- If you have lost boarding passes or the hotel folio, please submit a letter stating that the document has been lost and you have not/do not intend to submit them elsewhere for reimbursement.

1. Copies of your conference brochure and registration are required as proof of project completion, even if you are not requesting funding for conference fees. Research projects require a paragraph detailing research logistics as proof of completion.

If you have already completed travel and do not have a copy of your conference registration, go online and print out:

1. The main conference webpage that includes the name of the conference, dates, and location;
2. The page listing your presentation or poster session.

2. Foreign receipts and bank statements

When submitting receipts from international travel or credit card statements from foreign banks, please provide a translation of all materials. If you are unable to translate them, please find someone to translate for you. Include conversion to USD amounts if they do not already appear on these documents. Conversion tools can be found at <http://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/>.

3. Credit cards

Do not cancel or throw away any credit cards you used or credit card statements showing purchases for which you have been awarded funding until after your reimbursement has been fully processed.

4. Booking online – package deals

In order to save money, many students choose to book package deals that include both hotel and airfare. This complicates your reimbursement because there is no breakdown for airfare and hotel charges. Since travel grants award specific amounts for specific items, we need to know how much is spent on each item.

If you wish to book or have booked packages, we will request that you submit web printouts of:

1. A sample flight itinerary with prices for the same dates.
2. Sample room rates from the hotel for the same dates.

5. Payment – repaying other people

If someone else paid for any portion of the travel, accommodations, or other fees for which you are requesting reimbursement, you will need: (Sections 3, 4, and 5 are not required if the other person is a spouse of the student)

1. All original receipts
2. Proof of payment by the person who originally paid. This includes a credit card statement and copies of his/her credit card with the name of the person and the last 4 digits of the credit card number clearly visible.
3. A signed letter from the person who paid. This letter should outline the charges, how much your portion was, and whether or not you have repaid them already. If you have already paid them back, the letter should indicate the method of payment (check, cash, etc.)
4. If you have not yet reimbursed them, you should submit a signed letter indicating that you intend to do so.
5. If you have already repaid the person, you will need to submit proof of payment (i.e. front and back of your check).

6. Travel organized by someone else

Students may participate in research trips organized by their advisors or another third party. Occasionally, the trip organizer pays for everyone's travel and lodging fees and allows the student to reimburse him/her. Please be aware that you will still be responsible for submitting all required receipts and proof of payment.

If you have not traveled yet...

- Collect all original receipts and boarding passes; ask for them if they are not provided to you.
- Where possible, pay for your own expenses.
- Repay only the person who initially paid for your expenses. Do not repay a third party on behalf of your advisor/trip organizer.
- Repay via a traceable method such as a check. Use the memo line to indicate what is being repaid.

- Do not let your advisor/trip organizer create a ‘package deal’ based on estimated costs or costs averaged over the group. All reimbursements are based on your actual expenses.

If you have already traveled...

- Collect as many original receipts as possible.
- Have the trip organizer write a letter that outlines what they paid for. Submit this letter with your reimbursement documents (see 5 above on repaying other people).

AIRFARE

1. Changes to your itinerary

If any of your flights were canceled or changed from your original itinerary, you will need to submit a letter outlining what changes occurred and why.

2. Online check-in

Please understand that boarding passes printed from your home computer are generally not preferred for reimbursement. If you print boarding passes from home, print two copies, one to be submitted with your reimbursement documents.

3. Frequent flyer miles

Flights booked with frequent flyer miles cannot be reimbursed, as miles have no actual value. You cannot use GSO funds to pay someone else to book a ticket for you with their miles.

4. Service credit

If your airfare was paid for with a service credit (credit from a previously canceled flight), we will need:

1. Proof of purchase of the original flight (receipt and proof of payment);
2. Itinerary for the canceled flight;
3. A letter from the airline indicating that the payment for the previous flight is being credited to the current flight;
4. Proof of payment for any remaining balance on the current flight.

ACCOMMODATIONS

1. Booking online

When you book a hotel online, especially with sites like Orbitz, Travelocity, or Priceline, you may not receive a hotel folio.

If you haven't traveled yet...

- Print out and keep a sample of room rates from the hotel with the same dates.
- When you check out, ask for a folio.

If you have already traveled...

- Submit web printout or quotes of sample room rates for the same number of days and range of days.

2. Shared accommodations

If you share a room with someone, we assume that each person in the room is paying equal

portions of the room rate. For reimbursement, you will need to submit the original hotel folio and proof of payment for the room, even if you did not pay for the hotel directly. If you are not the person who paid for the room, see “General” section (item 5) above on repaying other people.

3. Handwritten receipts

Printed receipts are preferred over handwritten receipts, although they can be accepted. When submitting handwritten hotel receipts, they should ideally be stamped with the hotel contact information. If there is no identifying information about the hotel on the receipt (e.g. address, phone/fax number, e-mail address), please collect this information to submit with your reimbursement materials. If possible, include a hotel brochure or business card.

4. International accommodations without folios, receipts

If your hotel does not provide hotel folios:

If you haven't traveled yet...

- Ask if they can make you one
- Print any price quotes you can find on the hotel website
- Ask for a hotel brochure or business card to submit with your reimbursement materials
- If traveling to remote areas, bring your own receipt book and ask people to make receipts. Collect addresses and contact information if possible.

If you have already traveled...

- Without any kind of receipts, it will not be possible to reimburse you for lodging. Consider applying for other items.

