

How is my Travel Funded When I am a McNair Scholar?

- Please refer to the Student Request for Travel Reimbursement (Appendix A5).
- **Graduate school visits and conferences:** Scholars are encouraged to visit graduate schools and to attend professional conferences in their field of study. Some funding for travel may be available, but scholars should be aware of the following funding guidelines:
 - ❖ it may be available for one discipline-specific conference;
 - ❖ is limited and all expenses may not be covered;
 - ❖ incidental expenses (i.e., personal expenses) are not covered. You will incur some personal expenses;
 - ❖ try to attend conferences at possible graduate schools you are interested in attending to combine the conference with a graduate school visit;
 - ❖ individual and group trips are coordinated through the McNair program office; and
 - ❖ you may be asked to secure additional funding from the Grants Office or other sources.
- **Research-related travel:** Some funds are available for expenses incurred by traveling to or conducting your research off campus. Please bring this up to the McNair Director as soon as possible so you can submit an application for funding **in advance** of the travel date.

Additional Request for Reimbursement Travel/Research Funds forms can be obtained from the McNair office.

What are the Travel Guidelines?

- **Transportation:** For travel within the state, using fleet vehicles is expected despite their limited availability. Depending on available funds, you may be reimbursed for using a private vehicle (i.e., gas expenditures). For trips beyond the state where other forms of travel are used, receipts must be provided. **You must check with the McNair Director before you finalize any travel plans in which you are requesting funds from the McNair Program.** All reservations are made by the McNair Administrative Assistant.
- **Accommodations:** With travel approved by the McNair office, you will be reimbursed for the cost of the room charge (single rate) plus tax. You must submit an itemized hotel bill. You may be housed in dormitories at the discretion of the McNair Director to save money.
- **Meals:** You will be reimbursed for **reasonable cost** of your meals (**no alcohol**). You must present itemized receipts for all meals for reimbursement. Tips may be included. **If meals are included in the registration fees at a conference, you will not be reimbursed for any meals you choose to have on your own.** In-State: Breakfast \$8.00; Lunch \$10.00; Dinner \$20.00. Out-of-State: Breakfast \$10.00; Lunch \$15.00; Dinner \$25.00.

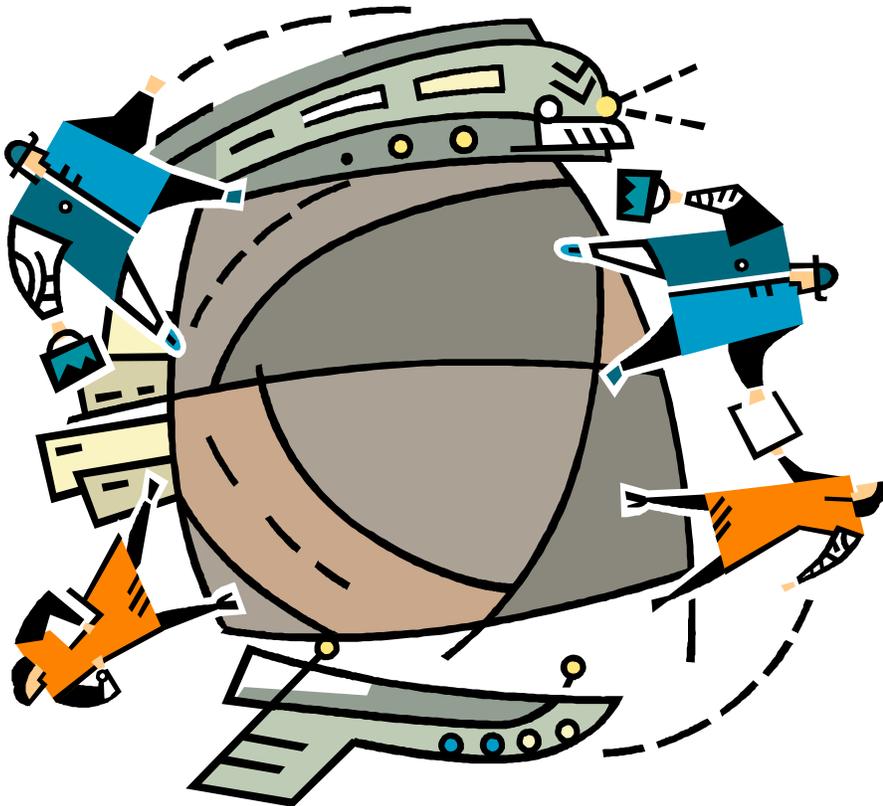
ALWAYS GET A RECEIPT ~ NO RECEIPT = NO REIMBURSEMENT!

What Travel Expenses are Not Allowable?

The following items are **NOT** approved for reimbursement; this may be a partial list.

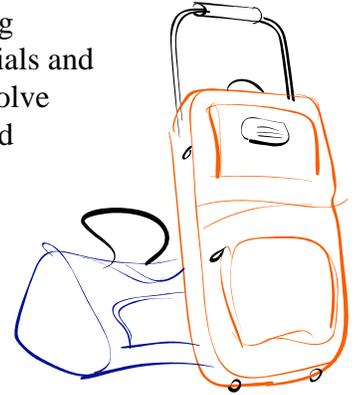
- ◆ long distance phone charges (use a phone card or a cell phone)
- ◆ room service charges
- ◆ baby or pet sitting costs
- ◆ souvenirs
- ◆ meals included in the registration fee at a conference
- ◆ alcohol
- ◆ medication
- ◆ personal items
- ◆ movie/DVD/TV charges
- ◆ books, magazines, newspapers
- ◆ extremely expensive meals (review the menu and select an average-priced item)

NOTE: You may be traveling to a city with expensive food costs, but be reasonable with the cost of your meal choice. Many fine restaurants have each item priced separately with larger portions. Tipping is nice but if you cannot afford it do not leave a tip. Drink water, choose a large salad or entrée and forego dessert. Be a good steward of the resources provided to you.



Help! Is There a Guide for Attending Conferences?

A high point of preparing for graduate school is attending a conference. Meeting professionals from other programs, hearing expert speakers, viewing new materials and traveling to new locations often makes lasting impressions. Such occasions involve considerable planning of activities, costly transportation, complex schedules, and sometimes, metropolitan challenges.



1. Prior to Attending:

- contact graduate school representatives and discuss their programs; arrange to meet them at the conference (if possible)
- review the conference agenda; in advance, choose the sessions you will attend
- Verify your travel arrangements: flight status (arrival/departure), transportation from airport to hotel/conference site, and conference registration confirmation. Save all your confirmation numbers for these reservations and **carry them in your carry-on luggage.**

2. Preparation for the Conference: The conference information brochure usually indicates that a complete registration packet can be requested or found on-line.

The material sent prior to the conference usually includes a **detailed program schedule**. **Take advantage of early travel and registration discounts**, especially for student registration, groups attending from the same institution, early registration, and staying at specific hotels.

Stay at the hotel where the conference is being hosted or at nearby hotels. Question whether hotel discount rates are available for attendees when you call for reservations. In larger cities, inexpensive motels could be sought out. It is cheaper to share a room with one or more people. Some conferences held at college sites will match roommates if desired and if you do not have a preferred roommate. **In a number of large cities we have also found reasonably-priced, safe accommodations at dormitories and retreat centers.** You will need to guarantee your room with a credit card.

Major cities host many cultural events and scenic tours; you may want to obtain information on those activities. Often, such information will accompany the conference registration packet.

If **air travel** is recommended, early travel plans can be requested from travel agents. Be sure to check on multiple air connections and travel from the airport to the hotel/conference site. Many hotels have **shuttle service** for guests at free/discount rates, while taxis or buses are more expensive. You should take a carry-on bag of essential possessions in case your other baggage is lost, damaged, or stolen. Delayed baggage is usually brought to your hotel by the airline, but you should confirm this process.

3. Finances:

- **Keep a record of all expenses and receipts. Make a note on the back of receipts if they are not labeled. Keep a list of expenditures if you can not get a receipt (e.g., bus, taxi).**
- Obtain student membership in the organization holding the conference or use the student discount rate for registration to reduce fees. Sometimes special concessions are made for “hardship” situations when you are seriously strapped for money, but they must be specially requested **before** the conference.

- Sometimes fees will be reduced by offering to work at the conference (*i.e.*, help with the registration table, equipment supply, copy service, clean up).
- Tipping is expected by taxi drivers and some hotel staff. If you let bellhops carry your bags, expect to pay about \$1 per bag. The taxi tip may be 15% or \$1 per bag. The hotel concierge/doorman is at the hotel entrance to provide directions and provide other courtesies (for a tip).
- Besides a luncheon/banquet, most meals are not provided by the conference. Meals are generally much more expensive at hotels, ranging from continental breakfasts (\$12); light lunch (\$10-15); and dinner (\$15-30). Check menus before sitting down to order. Also ask at the hotel about nearby inexpensive restaurants. Tipping is 15-20% of the bill, but if you cannot afford it, it is not required to leave a tip.
- If you have a car, parking will typically cost between \$8-25 per day at the hotel, and you may have to pay more for entering and leaving. Parking at city lots may cost \$3-5 per hour.
- You may bill hotel restaurant meals to your hotel room and pay at one time by credit card. Track your credit expenses so you do not exceed your maximum credit allowance. You must have an itemized receipt for reimbursement.
- If you charge the bill on a major credit card, upon checkout ask whether any “automatic holds” of a dollar amount above the charges due have been placed on your account.
- When you receive your bill at checkout, make sure room and taxes are properly charged.
- If you have an AAA card or military ID, some hotels, restaurants, car rentals, and tourist attractions offer discounts, but you have to ask.

4. Attending Meetings: Conference schedules can seem overwhelming at first glance. Review the program and select the presentations that most interest you. Other suggestions include:

- Take a notepad and pen.
- Attend presentations and break-out sessions on those that relate to your research
- Attend presentations by noted speakers whose writings you have studied
- Meet students from other colleges/universities and compare experiences, skills, courses, and research ideas
- Tour major cultural sites, especially if it is part of your research
- Research the topics and background of presenters whom you are eager to meet. Plan your questions ahead of time. Most sessions have a question and answer period.
- After the presentation, pose your own questions. Introduce yourself and let the speaker know what you enjoyed about the presentation.

- Carry maps of the hotel/conference site and review them before the conference starts. Street maps are available at the hotel.
- Ask if copies of the paper, PowerPoint, or other materials are available. This provides a good opportunity to have later contact with the presenter.
- Drop by display booths to preview new publications, research materials or graduate programs.
- Never take pictures of anyone's research materials without his/her permission.

5. Socializing: Network with other professionals in the field. Introducing yourself to a stranger or expert can feel awkward, but is common and expected behavior at conferences. Some suggestions:

- Don't let titles, famous names, or positions intimidate you. Most presenters and experts are more than eager to talk about their ideas.
- **Hand out your business card.**
- Use the back of one's business card to jot down the main idea of their topic/subject field to remember later on.
- Use the session topic as an opportunity to discuss the ideas with people sitting next to you, or with others after the program.
- Schedule events and meeting times with friends on the message board (near registration area).
- Conduct informal career interviews with people in the field to assess their career goals; their likes and dislikes about the field; professional trends they notice; and advice for new entrants.

6. End of Conference:

- **Write a one-page summary on how the conference experience impacted you and give it to the McNair Director.**
- Check out of the hotel on time. Late checkouts may be penalized with an extra night's stay. Stow baggage in a storage room until you are ready to leave (behind front desk).
- Use the hotel **Business Center** to check on reservations, verify flight times/connections, and **print your boarding pass**. Check on computer use fees. Leave for the airport with enough time to allow for traffic, and arrive at the terminal two hours before departure.
- After the conference, send a courtesy note to any presenters with whom you became acquainted. Follow up with graduate schools. Keep in touch with new student contacts.
- Share your notes and handouts with others who did not attend the conference. Discuss with your mentor particular events that have clarified your career aspirations.

This information was adapted from an article by David X. Swenson, Ph.D., Professor of Management at The College of St. Scholastica, and a psychologist in private practice.

Should I Join Professional Organizations and Honor Societies While I am an Undergraduate Student?

Scholars are encouraged to join professional organizations in their field of interest. Ask your mentor which professional organization you should join before entering graduate school. Many organizations offer discounts for student members who enjoy the benefits of full membership.

The benefits of joining a professional organization as an undergraduate are many:

- (1) Membership fees are generally lower while you gain exposure to current issues and trends in your field;
- (2) Memberships may include a journal or magazine which highlights people, ideas and significant trends in your field;
- (3) You may also need to join a professional organization once in graduate school in order to qualify for insurance such as malpractice insurance for those in the counseling and psychology fields.

Professional organizations that McNair Scholars have joined in the past include:

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| ✓ American Anthropological Association | ✓ Association for Computing Machinery |
| ✓ American Association of University Women | ✓ College English Association |
| ✓ American Chemical Society | ✓ Mathematical Association of America |
| ✓ American Psychological Association | ✓ Sigma Xi |
| ✓ American Society of Exercise Physiology | ✓ Society of Toxicology |
| ✓ American Society of Microbiology | ✓ Gerontological Society of America |
| ✓ American Mathematical Society | ✓ American Institute of Physics |
| ✓ American Society for Cell Biology | ✓ American Antiquarian Society |
| ✓ American Academy of Arts & Sciences | ✓ American Studies Association |
| ✓ American Society of Plant Physiologists | ✓ American Society for Neurochemistry |
| ✓ American Historical Association | ✓ American Cultural Resources Association |
| ✓ American Society for Biochemistry &
Molecular Biology | ✓ American Creativity Association |
| ✓ American Health Information
Management Association | ✓ American Association for the History of
Medicine |
| ✓ The Association for Computers & the
Humanities | ✓ Federation of American societies for
Experimental Biology |