

ECE Graduate Assistant Travel Primer

There are 3 basic steps:

ECE Travel Group – travel@ece.msstate.edu

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| I. Get Approval to Travel | I. Jeannette Booth |
| II. Make Travel Arrangements | II. Ellen Harpole |
| III. Turn in Receipts for Reimbursement | III. Teresa Stewart |

- I. Approval to Travel - Before you make any arrangements for travel, you **MUST** have an approved Travel Authorization Form (MSU Form A-03) completed and signed through section C.
 1. Your professor who is funding the trip needs to email ECE-travel@lists.msstate.edu with the following information:
 1. WHEN - Dates of travel
 2. WHY - Reason for travel – Explanation of why your are traveling for MSU such as presenting a paper, attending a conference or meeting, etc.
 - i. Conference name if applicable and conference link
 - ii. Dates of conference
 3. WHERE – name of city you are traveling to
 4. HOW
 - i. Fund name/number that the travel is being funded from
 - ii. Mode of transportation
 2. *If you have funding from BCOE or the Graduate Office, forward the award email to the ECE Travel group*
 3. The travel group at ECE will fill out the A-03 form and contact you to come sign it. You can now make your travel arrangements.

- II. How to make travel arrangements using the MSU authorized travel agency Travel Leaders:
 1. Contact Travel Leaders (662-324-5007) or email one of their Travel Consultants:
Terry Dickinson - tdickinson@travellers.com
Kerry Long - klong@travellers.com
Dominique Yeomans – dyeomans@travellers.com
 2. Tell them where you are going, when you want to leave and return, if you will need a hotel, and if you will need a rental car. They will send you options to choose from. Once you let them know what options you want they will book it for you and send you the E-ticket along with the hotel and rental car confirmations. Be sure to tell them to copy the ECE Travel group.
 3. You can pay for the flight with either your personal credit card or by EBTA. (The EBTA is “ghost” account and the charges go directly to the university and not to your personal credit card.) If you want to use the EBTA be sure to tell the travel consultant and ask them to email the ECE Travel group (ECE-travel@lists.msstate.edu) with your selected flight. We will take care of the EBTA and the e-ticket will be sent to you by email.
 4. Hotel reservations at the conference hotel for the published conference rate can be made by yourself using your personal credit card. If not staying at the conference hotel and Travel Leaders booked your flight then they **MUST** book your hotel also.
 5. If you wish to get a travel advance let the ECE Travel Group know. We will initiate the form for you. The money will be deposited into your checking account by direct deposit.

How to make travel arrangements NOT using the authorized travel agency Travel Leaders:

1. You must be able to show that the price from the online agency is cheaper so you MUST have a quote from Travel Leaders. This documentation *MUST be turned in or you will not get reimbursed.*
 - a. PRE-DATED quote from Travel Leaders prior to the purchase date/time of the online flight reservation MUST be included and the base cost must be at least \$75 cheaper not including the Travel Leaders booking fee.
 - b. The quote from Travel Leaders should match the online flight purchase as to where and when you are departing and returning.
 - c. Verification of single room rate for lodging must be obtained for online lodging purchased *or you will not be reimbursed.*
 - d. All vehicle rentals MUST be made with the state contracted rental car agencies. Check the MSU Travel website(<http://www.travel.msstate.edu>) for the current list.
 - i. Intermediate size vehicle – *you will not be reimbursed for larger vehicles unless you can justify the usage*
 - ii. Do not get the prepaid Gas Option – *you will not be reimbursed*
 - iii. Only purchase CDW insurance – *additional insurance will not be reimbursed*
2. You must pay with your personal credit card. EBTA or procard can not be used.
3. Travel advance for cost of airline tickets not purchased through Travel Leaders is NOT available.
4. Make sure that the receipt you get from the online reservation company is itemized and shows payment by you so that you will be reimbursed.

III. Turn in Receipts for Reimbursement as soon as possible once you return

1. Turn in your itemized receipts to Jeannette:
 - a. Air Fare – IF NOT booked through Travel Leaders
 - b. Hotel
 - c. Rental car including gas receipts for rental car
 - d. Taxis, metro, trains
 - e. Meal Receipts – you do not have to have a receipt but you must tell us how much you spent per meal each day
 - i. Meals included in a conference registration can not be claimed
 - ii. A continental breakfast as part of a conference is considered a meal.
 - iii. A reception as part of a conference is not considered a meal.
2. The ECE Travel Group will work up your travel, complete the form, and notify you when it is ready for you to sign. Once it is signed it will be sent to MSU Travel and you will be reimbursed through direct deposit.

Some things to note:

1. The Mississippi Department of Finance and Administration requires all state employees to use one of the state contracted travel agencies. MSU was allowed an exception to negotiate its own contract with Travel Leaders enabling us to save over the state contract reservation fees.
2. MSU travelers should use the most economic means of travel available which means you can use online travel sites such as Travelocity, Priceline, etc. *IF you can show that it is the most economic means of travel. SO you MUST have quotes from Travel Leaders for documentation to prove this.*
3. The EASIEST way is to go through Travel Leaders and let them do all of the booking. They know the rules!

Updated September 2015