



# Travel Claim Information

As of 18 May 2017

SCAR works to ensure that claimants provided with travel funds authorised either by the Secretariat or by Group leaders are fairly reimbursed for their expenses.

The SCAR Secretariat may book and pay for travel directly at the request of Group leaders, on behalf of nominated authorised recipients. It is the responsibility of the recipients of such direct bookings to inform the Secretariat of any changes to the planned travel as soon as possible, to ensure cancellations fees are kept to a minimum. Changes that increase the cost need to be authorized in advance by the Secretariat or relevant Group leader.

Group leaders may also nominate coordinators for meetings and workshops to distribute funds on their behalf. In this instance a single invoice may be sent to the Secretariat to request the funds, once authorised by the relevant Group leader.

The nominated coordinators should contact the Secretariat with any queries as to the requirements for the invoice. The minimum requirements would be the amount requested, SCAR Group providing the funds, details on what the funds will be used for, details of the meeting or workshop and payment details to transfer the funds.

SCAR reimburses travel claims for the Secretariat staff on the basis that they should not be at a financial disadvantage as a result of travel whilst undertaking their work for SCAR. Similarly, staff should not benefit financially as a result and all expenses need to be in line with the guidance provided by the UK Government.

Secretariat staff will have their claims checked and authorised by another member of Secretariat staff or a member of the Executive Committee.

Limits may be applied to claims as part of the authorisation process. Claimants must provide receipts to at least the value of the limit for reimbursement.

Reimbursement in advance of travel may be made where the expense has already been incurred, e.g. flights, accommodation or registrations paid for in advance and receipted.

Receipts need to be sent in electronic format (scans, images, e-tickets, email confirmation etc.) and included in a single file with the signed claim form.

The SCAR travel claim forms are available at:

<http://www.scar.org/finances/claims>

Claim forms must be completed correctly including being signed by the claimant. If forms are not completed correctly, this may cause unnecessary delays in reimbursement.

## **Allowable Expenses:**

In a standard travel claim, where there is no specified limitation on the nature of the expenses, the allowed expenses will include:

### **Transport expenses**

Claimants are required to use the most cost-effective form of transport. Modes of public transport should be booked in advance to minimise cost.

Specific guidance is provided in relation to:

#### *Air travel*

All air travel must be by economy class, unless expressly granted in advance as a result of extenuating circumstances such as medical conditions. Claimants wishing to pay for an upgrade must provide an economy fare quote for the same flight, made at the time of booking, and will be reimbursed only that amount of the economy ticket.

#### *Rail Travel*

All rail travel should be at the most economical rate, taking advantage of any relevant reductions.

#### *Buses/Taxi*

Public transport should be used wherever possible, although taxis may be used if public transport is not practical. Use of taxis after long-haul flights is permissible as long as the cost is reasonable (as a general guide less than \$50 USD).

#### *Driving*

Personal cars may only be used where public transport is unavailable or uneconomic. Mileage rates are allowed at the UK Government approved rate of £0.45 per mile and this may be used to convert to other currencies as necessary.

### **Overnight Accommodation**

Accommodation bookings should be based on the cheapest available room type and should be within the vicinity of the location being visited.

If cancellation or amendment is needed, this should be done as far in advance as possible to avoid charges.

A contribution to accommodation costs when staying with friends or family needs to be authorised in advance.

### **Per Diem subsistence allowance and breakdown**

SCAR has a standard per diem rate of \$90 USD and is meant for subsistence (food) only (not accommodation). Claims involving per diems should be checked to ensure this rate is not above the UK Government approved rate for the destination. If the UK government rate is lower, then the UK rate must be used as the basis of the per diem calculations, or actual subsistence costs should be used. The full list of rates is available at the link below:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/359797/2014\\_Worldwide\\_subsistence\\_rates.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/359797/2014_Worldwide_subsistence_rates.pdf)

Claims for subsistence can be made on a per diem basis, up to \$90 USD equivalent rate. The following division of cost is suggested;

- Breakfast - \$20 USD;
- Lunch - \$30 USD; and
- Dinner - \$40 USD.

Per diem rates are for 24 hours and are reduced if complimentary meals are provided including as part of the accommodation booking. Travel days qualify for half per diem allowance.

Group leaders authorizing per diems may alter the division of costs between the meal categories or allow for a small allowance for incidental costs, as long as the total rate does not exceed the \$90 USD total.

If the standard SCAR per diem is in excess of the UK government approved rate for a destination, claims should be made based on either the UK government rate or the actual subsistence costs, with receipts for all costs retained and included with the submitted claim form. This must be decided by the authorizer in advance.

## **Registration and unavoidable administration costs**

Where costs such as conference registration are incurred in order for the claimant to be able to attend the specified event, they are allowed as part of the travel claim. Expenses related to visa and entry/exit fees are also allowable where they are necessary for the claimant to undertake their travel.

## **Excluded Expenses:**

Examples of expense not allowed as part of a travel claim:

- Expenses not paid for directly by the claimant;
- Expenses incurred by a companion or partner travelling with the claimant; and
- Gifts and non-consumable goods retained by the claimant.

## **Changes to travel:**

In the case of cancellation of travel where SCAR has reimbursed the costs, SCAR should be refunded where possible. If a change needs to be made to an itinerary which increases the cost it needs to be approved in advance by the relevant Secretariat staff or Group Leader authorizing the claim.

In cases where a cash advance for per diem etc. has been made and travel cancelled, SCAR must be refunded the advanced funds.

## **Reimbursement process:**

Travel claims should be received within one month of the end of the event supported. Claims received should be acknowledged and if no authorization is in place, clarification should be sought immediately.

SCAR has accounts denominated in USD, EUR and GBP and the correct account should be specified when making payments to avoid unnecessary currency exchange costs. In general, the USD account will be used for all payments not denominated in GBP or EUR.

Currency conversions required to produce final figures in the payment currency should be calculated on the basis of the midrate on the day of purchase.

Reimbursements are made directly to the claimant into their bank accounts. If the claimant wishes the payment to be made to another account, then documentation must be provided by both the claimant and the other account holder.

Recipients should be informed once the reimbursement has been transacted so that any delay in receipt of the funds is noted.