



Research Office Guidance Regarding the use of GSA Lodging Rates

The Research Office follows [UD's travel policy](#) and the sponsoring agency's terms and agreements when reviewing travel and lodging on sponsored projects. UD's travel policy language (in IV.B.7.a, IV.B.7.c, and IV.B.7.d) allows for flexibility when it involves GSA rates and lodging.

Conference Lodging:

In IV.B.7.d, the policy states when traveling to a conference, it is appropriate to stay at the hotel hosting the conference, even if the rate exceeds GSA guidelines. The hotel room must be booked at the conference rate and travelers will not be reimbursed for "no show" charges.

Lodging that Exceeds GSA Rates:

The Research Office **allows** lodging charges that exceed the GSA rates when adequate backup (see below for examples of required documentation) is provided to prove lodging could not be secured at the GSA rate. The only exception would be cases where the sponsor and/or agreement limits lodging to GSA rates (see below).

In IV.B.7.c, the policy states that when availability does not allow lodging rates within GSA guidelines, documentation should be provided to support the cost. Travelers should document the "why" for lodging somewhere outside of the GSA guidelines. The documentation should justify the lodging costs and explain why the alternative arrangements were necessary. The documentation should allow anyone reviewing the expense/charge to reach the same conclusion as to why lodging outside of the GSA guidelines was deemed necessary.

Required Documentation:

Although the policy does not explicitly ask for documentation, this is necessary to establish that the hotel was indeed offered by the conference and that the rate was consistent with the conference rate.

- Justification documenting reasoning as a written explanation detailing why GSA rates could not be used. This may include (but is not limited to):
 - o Hotel receipts, website printouts showing the conference is being hosted at that location, and/or the conference agenda/itineraries.
 - o If travelers cannot book a room at the conference hotel, then proof such as an email or screen print confirming no rooms are available will be acceptable documentation.
 - o Hotel quotes, comparative pricing, alternative lodging rates, and/or market research.
 - o Print out of Expedia or hotel.com that show no hotels in that area meet the GSA rate.

Non-Sponsored Travel:

The post-award team does not review non-sponsored travel and the department should follow UD's travel policy and work directly with the Procurement Office.

Other Considerations:

In cases where the sponsor limits lodging to the GSA rates a Journal Voucher entry will be necessary to remove the amount that exceeds the GSA rates.