

Policy On Personal Travel While Traveling On CIRES Business

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CIRES employees on official travel sometimes combine a modest level of personal travel with their official travel. While this is an acceptable practice in certain circumstances, it is important that we avoid even the appearance of inappropriately using business travel to subsidize personal trips, and it is essential that the dominant purpose of the trip is for business interest, not personal. The most effective way of protecting ourselves from the appearance of impropriety is enforcing a strict policy that only allows travel to and from the business destination with no opportunity for personal leave. However, including a modest level of personal travel to nearby locations while on a legitimate official business trip is reasonable, as long as it can be clearly demonstrated that there are no added costs for the university. Using the policies applied to federal employees as a guide, the following is the CIRES policy for personal travel conducted in conjunction with business travel.

Combining personal travel with business travel is only permitted if any one of the following three scenarios applies:

- 1. The personal travel does not change the destination or return locations of the trip and does not increase the cost of the trip.**

In this scenario, the traveler must travel to the location of the business that is the basis of the trip and must return home from that same location. The traveler is free to conduct personal travel to some other destination within the trip, but CIRES will only cover itineraries to and from the business-related destination. In cases in which personal travel adds additional days to the trip, the traveler is expected to take leave on those added days and pay for additional lodging, meals, and incidental expenses. Adding personal travel and time to a business trip will *not* be permitted if the airfare for the alternate dates is higher than that for the dates associated with the business being conducted, unless—as articulated in scenario 3 below—the traveler pays the full cost of the airfare up front and claims reimbursement for the work portion after the trip. For the airfare on a trip that includes personal travel to be paid in advance with a CIRES speedtype, the total travel must result in airfare that is either the same cost as would be incurred without the personal travel or demonstrably cheaper.

- 2. Traveling to or returning from a destination other than the temporary duty site results in airfare that is demonstrably cheaper than or equivalent in cost to airfare to and from the location at which the business is being conducted.**

The cost comparison between flights must consider the cheapest itineraries that would reasonably be considered for the business travel (i.e., the traveler should not compare a flight to or from the personal destination to a more expensive flight to or from the business destination than would be necessary for the business trip). In cases in which personal travel adds additional days to the trip, the traveler is expected to take leave on those added days and pay for additional lodging, meals, and incidental expenses.

3. The traveler pays the full cost of a trip, including transportation and seeks reimbursement for the official travel expenses after the completion of the trip.

In these cases the traveler can take personal travel that increases the cost of the trip, but will receive no support for any portion of the trip until travel is completed and an expense report is filed. Also in such cases, the traveler must provide a cost estimate from Christopherson Business Travel for the lowest-cost itinerary associated with the official business. This estimate is to be provided at the time the travel request is submitted and will be used as a basis for calculating the maximum reimbursement after the trip is completed. The traveler is responsible for covering all expenses for the trip as they are incurred, *including transportation costs*, and must file an expense report after the trip is completed. The traveler will then be reimbursed only for the amount that would have been incurred had the travel been conducted for official business only. *CIRES will not cover any expenses for such trips in advance or accept any after-the-fact payment of additional expenses incurred as a result of personal travel.* Advanced excess payment by CIRES and subsequent reimbursement by the traveler amounts to CIRES providing a loan to the traveler and creates additional work that involves at least two members of our finance office, the Sponsored Projects Accounting Office, and the Bursar's Office. For a nearly 800-person institution, the cumulative work becomes significant, and results in an increased cost to CIRES and the University.

Note that in scenario 3, if a business trip is cancelled due to circumstances beyond the traveler's control, the airline change fee will be reimbursed by CIRES. The traveler will have a credit with the airline that must be applied within one year of the purchase date. The credit can be used for personal or business travel. If the credit is used for business travel, a new travel request must be submitted. *If the credit is not applied within one year, the credit will be forfeited* and the traveler will not have the option of being reimbursed by CIRES for the cost of the airfare.