

Research and Sponsored Projects Manual (RSP)

RSP 504–01: Sponsored Projects Travel for ASU Employees

Effective: 6/1/1983

Revised: 11/1/2024

Purpose

To describe how foreign, domestic, and in-state travel costs incurred by ASU employees are authorized and reimbursed

Sources

Federal Travel Regulation, November 13, 1998 Edition of the *Federal Register* (Vol. 63, No. 219). The amendment relates to the use of U.S. flag carriers under the provision of 49 USC 40118, which is commonly referred to as the Fly America Act

Section 5 of the *International Air Transportation Fair Competitive Practices Act of 1974*, 49 USC §40118 as implemented in the United States Comptroller General's guidelines (*Comp. Gen. Decision B-138942*, dated June 17, 1975 as amended March 31, 1981)

74 FR 2396 *Federal Travel Regulation*, Fly America Act, US-EU Open Skies Agreement

Federal Travel Regulation, GSA Bulletin FTR 11-02 and FTR 12-04

Arizona Revised Statutes §§ 38–621 to –627

Comptroller General Decision B-240956 dated September 25, 1991

Arizona Board of Regents Policy Manual 3-603

Financial Services

Office for Research and Sponsored Projects Administration (ORSPA)

Policy

Authorization

Allowable and approved foreign, domestic, and in-state travel for work related to a [sponsored project](#) is governed by university travel regulations, unless the sponsor's regulations are more restrictive and cannot be waived, as is typically the case with federal contracts.

Some federal agencies require [principal investigator \(PI\)](#) to request written approval, prior to travel, for each foreign trip whether or not it was itemized in the proposal and included in the awarded budget for both grants and contracts. In this case, the foreign travel request must be countersigned by the appropriate grant and contract officer in the Office for Research and Sponsored Projects Administration (ORSPA). Please consult [RSP 507–01](#), "Sponsored Project Award Changes" for the necessary prior approvals.

Transportation expenses

Transportation expenses cannot exceed the cost of an economy roundtrip fare except when such accommodations would result in:

1. circuitous routing
2. travel during unreasonable hours
3. excessively prolonged travel
4. greatly increased flight time
5. additional costs that would offset benefits of the economy fare

or

6. inadequate accommodations for the traveler's medical needs.

Requests to incur airfare costs in excess of the economy fare must be justified on a case-by-case basis to the ASU Travel Office.

Use of U.S. Flag Air Carriers Required for Foreign Air Travel Charged to Federally-funded Sponsored Projects

Overview

The "Fly America Act" mandates the use of U.S. flag air carriers for international air travel funded by the federal government. This section outlines the requirements and exceptions for using U.S. and foreign air carriers under federally-funded sponsored projects. Even when a nonfederal account is being charged for official travel, the university prefers that a U.S. flag air carrier be used.

Definition

A "U.S. flag air carrier" is an airline certified under Section 401 of the Federal Aviation Act of 1958, 49 USC §41102.

Requirement

Travelers must use U.S. flag air carriers for federally-funded international travel when such service is available, even if:

1. A foreign air carrier offers a comparable or cheaper service.
2. A foreign air carrier is preferred by the traveler.
3. The fare can be paid with excess foreign currency.

Availability

Utilize the following rules to determine whether a U.S. flag air carrier is considered available unless applying these rules results in a foreign air carrier performing the first or last leg of travel from or to the U.S.

1. U.S. flag air carrier service at point of origin must be used to destination. Even in the absence of direct or through service. It must be used to the farthest interchange point on a usually traveled route.

Or

2. If a U.S. flag air carrier does not serve an origin or interchange point, a foreign air carrier shall be used only to the nearest interchange point on a usually traveled route to connect with a U.S. flag air carrier.

Permissible use of foreign air carriers

Foreign air carriers may be used under the following circumstances:

1. **"Open Skies" Agreements.** If travel is under an agreement meeting the Fly America Act requirements, such as the U.S.-EU "Open Skies" agreement.

The list of current agreements and related Federal Travel Regulation Bulletins can be found at <https://www.gsa.gov/policy-regulations/regulations/federal-travel-regulation/fttr-and-related-files>.

2. Involuntary Rerouting. If a traveler is rerouted by a U.S. carrier onto a foreign carrier.

Travel to/from the U.S.

If using a U.S. flag carrier would extend travel by 24 hours or more, or at an interchange point the use of a U.S. flag carrier would

1. increase the number of aircraft changes the traveler must make outside of the U.S. by two or more
2. require the traveler to wait four hours or more to make connections at that point or
3. extend the time in a travel status by at least six hours more than travel by a foreign air carrier

Travel between Points Outside the U.S. If using a foreign carrier avoids two or more aircraft changes, use of a U.S. flag air carrier would extend travel status time by at least six hours more, or use of a U.S. flag carrier would require a connecting time of four hours or more at an overseas interchange point.

Short Distance Travel: A foreign air carrier may be used if the total travel time is three hours or less and using a U.S. flag carrier would double the travel time.

Code Share Alliances: Under the Fly America Act, travel on a foreign air carrier under a code-share agreement with a U.S. flag carrier is allowed, provided the ticket is issued by a U.S. flag carrier. The ticket must identify the U.S. carrier's two-letter designator code and flight number.

The key to meeting the requirements is whether the ticket is purchased through the U.S. flag air carrier. If the ticket is issued through the U.S. flag air carrier, the expense will, in most cases, be eligible for reimbursement, provided the U. S. flag air carrier is identified on the ticket. If the ticket is issued by a foreign air carrier, even under a code-sharing arrangement, the ticket is not eligible for reimbursement on a federal award.

Note: You may contact ORSPA at sponsoredcompliance@asu.edu to determine an airline's flagship status.

For more information on air travel, or travel on other common carriers, see [FIN 501](#), "ASU Travel Policy." Use of the [Certification of Exception to Fly America Act](#) form can help identify legitimate exceptions for use of a foreign air carrier.

Reimbursement

When faced with conflicting federal, sponsor, and institution policies, the more restrictive policy is followed. To ensure consistent and equitable treatment of ASU students and employees, if the restriction results in a lesser reimbursement from a sponsored account, the university should cover the difference from a nonsponsored account.

Foreign travel is typically reimbursed according to the U.S. Department of State's published rates [published rates](#).

The traveler is responsible for obtaining proper passports or visas. Expenses for securing passports and visas are rarely allowable costs.

Procedure(s)

For additional foreign travel guidance, see [researchadmin.asu.edu > Foreign travel](https://researchadmin.asu.edu/Foreign-travel).

Additional Information

For guidance on applying the Fly America Act to specific cases, contact ORSPA's fiscal compliance team at sponsoredcompliance@asu.edu.

For definitions of underlined terms, see the [ORSPA Acronyms and glossary](#).

Cross-References

- [RSP 101](#), “General Research Policy.”
- [FIN 501](#), “ASU Travel Policy.”
- [RSP 507–01](#), “Sponsored Project Award Changes.”