

# GEAR NETWORK AWARD FAQs for the University of Illinois Hub

**My GEAR Network award letter says I'm being funded by the University of Illinois hub. What do I do now?**

Below are common questions regarding reimbursement for travel funded by the GEAR Network from the University of Illinois hub.

## General Information

**Q:** How do I submit a reimbursement request?

**A:** Reimbursement forms are found at [GEAR Reimbursement Form University of Illinois Hub](#). You may mail your reimbursement form and supporting documentation to

GEAR Network  
250 Altgeld Hall  
1409 W. Green St.  
Urbana, IL 61801

or email at [gear@math.illinois.edu](mailto:gear@math.illinois.edu). Email is preferred.

**Q:** How long do I have to submit the reimbursement request?

**A:** Please submit the request within 10 business days from the last day of your travel to ensure timely processing.

**Q:** What expenses can I claim for reimbursement?

**A:** The award is intended for travel, lodging and local expenses related to the trip you indicated in your GEAR Network application.

**Q:** What won't my GEAR award cover?

- A:**
- 1) Expenses not related to GEAR including airfare to other destinations on the same itinerary
  - 2) Expenses for an additional traveler
  - 3) Hotel amenities such as room service, safe rental, etc.
  - 4) Business class or first class airfare
  - 5) Airfare amenities such as additional legroom (unless required by a physician)
  - 6) Travel insurance

**Q:** What kinds of receipts are acceptable?

**A:** All receipts must include proof of payment. For airfare include a receipt showing the 1) itinerary and 2) the airline, 3) the cost of the airfare and 4) proof of payment (i.e. "charged to MasterCard/Visa XXXXXX1234"). For hotels, submit an itemized receipt showing check in/check out dates, daily rate, and a "0" balance and proof of payment.

**Q:** What if I don't have receipts?

**A:** The University of Illinois will reimburse expenses up to \$10 without a receipt. Any amount above \$10 cannot be reimbursed.

**Q:** What if my airfare or lodging receipt doesn't show proof of payment?

**A:** You must include a credit card statement (with non-relevant information blacked out) showing that you made the purchase.

**Q:** I shared travel expenses with another person(s). Can you split the reimbursement?

**A:** No. The person whose name is on the receipt is the only person who can be reimbursed.

**Q:** Can my reimbursement be deposited into my bank account instead of mailing a check?

**A:** If you reside outside of the US, have a foreign bank account AND there is a high probability of your mail being lost, you may complete a wire transfer request form at <https://illinois.edu/fb/sec/9761472>.

**Q:** I am no longer at my check mailing address. What do I do?

**A:** Contact the GEAR Network Administrator immediately at [gear@math.uiuc.edu](mailto:gear@math.uiuc.edu) to arrange for your check to be sent to another address.

**Q:** How long will it take for me to receive my reimbursement check?

**A:** It can take up to 12 weeks to receive your reimbursement check as the request has to go through several layers of review including a final review by the University Grants and Contracts Office. However, most reimbursements are dispersed within 8-10 weeks.

**Q:** How do I check on the status of my reimbursement?

**A:** You may contact the GEAR Network Administrator at [gear@math.uiuc.edu](mailto:gear@math.uiuc.edu) to check on the status of your reimbursement request.

### **Visa Documentation**

**Q:** Will my visa status prevent me from being reimbursed by GEAR?

**A:** Please see the University of Illinois Payment Eligibility list of visa statuses at the end of this document to determine if you are eligible for reimbursement.

**Q:** What kind of visa documentation do I need to submit with my reimbursement request?

**A:** The reimbursement form lists all of the required visa documentation.

**Q:** I am traveling on an ESTA waiver. Will I still need to provide my visa and passport information?

**A:** Yes. The University of Illinois requires copies of your passport, visa (if you have one), all US entry stamps as well in addition to a copy of your ESTA.

## Travel/Lodging

Your airfare must fall within the following NSF guidelines:

- ✓ The airline must be a US carrier, US partner carrier (i.e. KLM is partnered with Delta) or a carrier operating under the Open Skies agreement. (Most European airlines are part of the Open Skies agreement, but not all.)

### The flight

- ✓ should be from the participant's home institution directly to the NSF funded destination and directly back to the home institution.
- ✓ should be a roundtrip ticket and not two or more one way tickets.
- ✓ should not include any additional non-GEAR related destinations in the same itinerary.
- ✓ should depart from the home institution no earlier than two days before an international event, no later than one day for domestic events and return to the home institution no later than one day after the event.

If flight itinerary does not fall within these guidelines, you **must** go to an online travel agency such as a Travelocity or Expedia and print an itinerary showing the price of a direct flight from your home institution to the GEAR sponsored destination and back to your home institution *on the same day you purchase your ticket*. The itinerary must also show the cost of the flight. This itinerary is called a fare comparison. ***If your flight itinerary differs from NSF standards and you do not present a fare comparison when you request reimbursement, you cannot be reimbursed for your airfare.*** Please see the sample fare comparison at the end of this document.

**Q:** Can GEAR pay for my airfare?

**A:** Yes. You may contact the GEAR Network Administrator at [gear@math.uiuc.edu](mailto:gear@math.uiuc.edu) to request your airfare be paid directly instead of reimbursed. Please be advised when using this option the airfare has to be NSF compliant.

**Q:** Can GEAR pay for my lodging in advance?

**A:** Yes and No. Per NSF policy GEAR can only pay for lodging at the end of the stay, not before. This is most easily arranged by contacting the GEAR Network Administrator at [gear@math.uiuc.edu](mailto:gear@math.uiuc.edu). Please note most lodging companies other than a hotel (i.e. airbnb) require payment upfront in which case you will need to pay for the rental and request reimbursement at the end of your visit.

## Other

**Q:** What is per diem and how do I get it?

**A:** Per diem is Latin for per day and is a daily meal allowance. When you request per diem in your application it is then included in your award. Students receive \$20 per diem regardless of where the student travels. Postdocs and faculty members receive \$28 per diem for travel to Illinois and \$32 for domestic US travel outside of Illinois. Further, postdocs and faculty members receive \$40 per diem when traveling to a country outside of the US.

**Q:** How do I get reimbursed for mileage?

**A:** Mileage is reimbursed for driving a personal car. You do not have to submit the actual mileage; just the trip origin and destination. Please retain all of your travel receipts if you are using forms of transportation other than your personal car.

**Q:** Can I rent a car from any rental car company?

**A:** National Car Rental and Enterprise are the University's preferred rental providers. However, if you are unable to use either company, you may rent a car from another rental provider.

If you have any questions, please contact the GEAR Network Administrator at [gear@math.uiuc.edu](mailto:gear@math.uiuc.edu).  
Thank you for being an active GEAR Network participant!