



National Evolutionary Synthesis Center

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NESCent Travel Guidelines

The following information is an overview of your travel plans for your trip to NESCent. Please also see our NSF/NESCent Travel Policies section.

1. Federal Employees

Please contact Danielle Wilson (Danielle@nescent.org) immediately if you are a Federal employee.

2. Travel Arrangements

Your airfare will be billed directly to NESCent. As a condition of your invitation to participate in any NESCent event, we ask that your travel plans be ticketed at least 21 days in advance of your arrival date. In some circumstances, particularly for international travel, we may request that you extend your stay to include a Saturday night. In addition, our travel agent has been instructed to search for lower-cost airfares for all attendees.

NESCent cannot guarantee the reimbursement of any travel arrangements made through a non-NESCent travel agent. Attendees wishing to make their own travel plans should seek approval prior to making any financial commitments.

In addition, the National Science Foundation requires that we use U.S. air carriers and coach class.

3. Hotel Information

NESCent will pay for your room. You will be responsible for all other incidental room charges, including phone calls and meals charged to your room.

- a. NESCent will assist in selecting the hotel and will coordinate all reservations for the attendees.
- b. NESCent is limited by the U.S. Government's rates in the lodging fees that it can pay.
- c. NESCent will pay for attendees' lodging for the dates of the meeting, usually including arrival one day prior to the meeting and departure the afternoon or evening of the last meeting day. Return flights to some locations may require departure the day following the meeting's adjournment. Meeting coordinators can request an arrival or departure beyond this framework for themselves.

If your travel plans change and you are not able to attend the meeting, please assist NESCent in avoiding any hotel penalties by contacting Danielle Wilson via email at Danielle@nescent.org, or phone at 919-668-4545. She can assist you in making any changes or canceling your room reservations.

4. Special Note to International Visitors to the United States

Beginning January 12, 2009, all VWP (Visa Waiver Program) nationals and citizens will be required to obtain a travel authorization prior to initiating travel to the United States under the Visa Waiver Program. This authorization may be obtained on-line through a free Internet application administered by the Department of Homeland Security through a U.S. government web site. There is no fee for completion of an ESTA application.

For complete information, please go to: http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/id_visa/esta/

4.1 Other Important Information for Non-U.S. Citizens

We would appreciate you letting us know if you are not a U.S. citizen. If you will be arriving from outside the United States, we will provide you with a formal letter of invitation from NESCent briefly outlining the purpose of your visit. This letter may be required during your travel to the U.S., and we encourage you to keep a copy with you. Please send via email your office mailing address so that we can send the formal letter of invitation.

For all non-US citizens we will need to make a copy of your passport, I-94, visa waiver, and/or permanent resident card during your visit. You must meet with a NESCent staff member for photo-copying and completion of Duke University and NESCent International Guest forms. This includes citizens of other countries already in the US. We cannot process your expense reimbursements without this documentation.

5. Meal Arrangements

NSF prohibits the reimbursement for any alcohol. Please note that we cannot reimburse you for your meal if alcoholic beverages appear on your receipt Please consult with your restaurant server to insure that alcoholic beverages do not appear on your receipt for NESCent.

Non-Duke University Employees – Per Diem:

- a. NESCent is limited by the US Government's meal per diem rates. NESCent may modify these rates.
- b. Due to Duke University policies, it is not possible to offer attendees a meal program of NESCent-paid meals and partial per diems. We have found it more efficient to provide attendees with a post-meeting reimbursement for a pre-established GSA-related per diem rate. Attendees (non-Duke attendees) are not required to provide NESCent with any meal receipts as part of this program.
- c. NESCent will communicate to your attendees the reimbursement rates for the meeting.
- d. NESCent may modify the reimbursement rates for meetings.

Non-US Citizens – Original Receipts:

- a. Because per diem reimbursements for foreign nationals can be taxed at 36%, it is recommended that NESCent reimbursement be based on original meal receipts.
- b. Amounts for meals are based upon the US Government's per diem rates. These pre-established and meeting-specific rates will be communicated to participants prior to the meeting and will outline additional details and the process for reimbursing their expenses.

Duke University Employees:

- a. Duke University faculty and staff must furnish original receipts for meals and, if possible, use a Duke Procurement Card to purchase meals.
- b. Amounts for meals are based upon the US Government's per diem rates. These pre-established and meeting-specific rates will be communicated to Duke employee participants prior to the meeting. Additional details and the process for reimbursing their expenses will be outlined at that time.

6. Flight Arrangements:

- a. We are required by NSF to use U.S.-based air-carriers and require coach-class tickets. Occasionally, there are situations where US carriers are not available. We address these on a case-by-case basis.
- b. There are rare occasions where an attendee may request an exemption to coach-class travel for medical reasons. These are addressed on a case-by-case basis and may require a written statement from the attendee's physician for full consideration. This is a NSF policy.
- c. NESCent expects all participants to select lower cost, 21-day advance purchase tickets through NESCent's selected travel agent. In some circumstances, particularly for international travel, we may

request that you extend your stay to include a Saturday night. We will provide all attendees our travel agent's name, email address, toll-free telephone number and related contact information, and ask them to contact our agent.

- d. All flight arrangements should be made through a NESCent travel agent. Once attendees have made their travel plans and their tickets have been purchased, it will be the responsibility of the attendee to pay for any non-emergency ticket changes. Emergency ticket changes (such as family, or medical issues, etc.) are addressed on a case-by-case basis and may not be approved or paid for by NESCent.
- e. Although cancelled tickets are usually in the name of the attendee, NESCent hopes that the attendee will be able to use the canceled ticket for a future NESCent activity.

Luggage:

NESCent encourages all participants to avoid checked luggage fees with carry-on luggage for trips lasting fewer than 4 days. For longer trips, or where necessary, NESCent will reimburse participants for checked baggage. As with other reimbursements, all receipts must be submitted.

Ground transportation:

- a. Attendees may choose to drive to their meeting at NESCent. In these cases and at NESCent's discretion, NESCent may choose to offer the attendee reimbursement equal to the GSA mileage rate for the round-trip drive or a 21-day advance purchase air fare, whichever is lower. Long distance driving reimbursements will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
- b. NESCent will reimburse attendees for routine airport parking and related hometown ground-travel expenses with original receipts.
- c. Attendees should take a taxi to the hotel. Taxis may be found outside the Baggage Claim areas at the RDU Airport.
- d. NESCent cannot pay for limousines or car rentals.

Getting to NESCent:

NESCent will coordinate daily shuttle service between the hotel and the NESCent office for your visit. We will also pre-schedule your out-bound airport shuttles (if applicable). A schedule will be distributed upon your arrival at NESCent.

7. Other Reimbursements

- a. Duke University requires original receipts for reimbursements.
- b. Duke University requires that all reimbursements be mailed to the attendee's home address. Attendees will be requested to provide their home address in the NESCent Administrative Database prior to the meeting.
- c. Attendees will be given a form outlining the reimbursement process, and a pre-addressed envelope for sending their original receipts to NESCent. If applicable, attendees will be asked to provide their social security number on the form.
- d. Processing reimbursements will take approximately 45 days, assuming attendees immediately provide their original receipts and home address. Individual situations may take longer.
- e. NESCent provides reimbursement in US dollars. Attendees wishing to receive reimbursement in alternative currencies or wire transfers will be responsible for the payment (or deduction from reimbursement amounts) of all currency change fees. Historically these fees have been \$20 for alternative currencies and \$45 for wire transfers.

- f. We recommend that foreign nationals submit original receipts for reimbursement of all expenses. Without a social security number and an international tax treaty agreement with the United States of America, taxes may be withheld at 36% from all reimbursements submitted.

8. Web Sites With Federal and NSF Travel Policies:

- a. Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Circular A-21, #53 Travel Costs - http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/a021/a21_2004.html
- b. NSF Grant Policy Manual, #05-131, #614 Travel Costs - http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/manuals/gpm05_131/gpm6.jsp#614
- c. U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) Per Diem Rates - <http://www.state.gov/m/a/als/>