



Applications are invited for grants to support travel to academic conferences. Evaluation of the applications will be based on all of the following criteria:

- a. Proof that the paper has been accepted for presentation at an academic conference;
- b. The paper being presented draws on the student's MA or PhD research;
- c. The student is in good standing in their program. That is, the student earned at least A- or 80% GPA in their last term of study; and, in the case of doctoral candidates, all relevant milestones have been successfully completed in a timely manner (e.g. courses, comprehensive exams, dissertation proposal);
- d. The student has completed all relevant university protocols for research (e.g. Office of Research Ethics) and travel (e.g. UW International or Laurier International);
- e. The completion of an itemized financial budget and a carbon budget (see instructions below).

Eligible expenses include registration, travel, accommodations and per diems for meals.

All requests for travel support funding must be received and approved in advance of the travel. The BSIA will not reimburse travel retroactively.

Students may ask for up to \$1,500 in support. Normally, students may make one request for funds per fiscal year. Subject to the availability of funds, there may be an opportunity for students to make a second request for funds in a fiscal year; however, priority will be given to students who have not yet received conference travel support. Students may seek additional funding at any time for participation in remote/virtual conferences.

Travel expenses will be reimbursed after the conference. Expense claims must be submitted to Joanne Weston within 30 days after returning from the conference. Funds must be spent in the fiscal year in which they are allocated (May 1 to April 30). If you have any questions about eligible expenses, please reach out to Joanne Weston before you travel.

Carbon Budgeting

The Balsillie School's Net Zero Plan (<https://www.balsillieschool.ca/the-bsia-releases-its-net-zero-greenhouse-gas-emissions-plan-and-joins-the-race-to-zero/>) commits the School to requiring that applicants for travel funding use a School-approved framework to generate a 'carbon budget' of emissions associated with the proposal, and that they explain why these emissions are necessary in order to achieve the objectives of the

application/project. Just as the School has a limited amount of money available to fund research and events, so the world has a limited 'carbon budget' of possible emissions before hitting 1.5 or 2 degrees Celsius of warming beyond pre-industrial levels and, according to the scientific consensus, facing catastrophic consequences. This form thus asks you to justify using some of that carbon budget for your project.

Please do the following to create your carbon budget:

1. List all planned travel for which you are requesting funding. For each distinct trip (by person/mode), please provide the traveler's name (or a description of their role in the project), the mode of transportation, and the start and end points of the trip with any anticipated layovers.
2. Using the Balsillie School's framework for estimating greenhouse gas emissions (developed in conjunction with Sustainable Waterloo Region), estimate the GHG emissions associated with each trip.

Please use the following link when calculating emissions:

<https://www.carbonfootprint.com/calculator.aspx>

In filling out the information for points 1 and 2, please use the following table (examples provided for your reference):

Person's Name	Mode of Transportation	One-way or Return?	Start Point	End Point	Anticipated Layovers	Estimated Emissions
[participant A]	Taxi	Return	Waterloo, ON (home)	Pearson Airport	n/a	0.02 tCO ₂ e
[participant A]	Air (economy)	Return	Toronto YYZ	San Francisco SFO	Chicago ORD	1.02 tCO ₂ e
Project Research Assistant	Train (Via Rail)	Return	Kitchener, ON	Ottawa, ON	Toronto (change trains)	0.01 tCO ₂ e

3. Explain the benefits that you anticipate will result from your attendance at the conference, and the reasons that they justify the emissions. In doing so, please consider possible alternative, less carbon-intensive ways of achieving the project's goals (meeting online, traveling by train rather than plane to Montreal or Ottawa, etc.) and explain why you have chosen them. If the conference is offering remote participation, explain why it is necessary for you to attend the event in person.

This process is not meant to discourage you from applying for BSIA funding for travel to attend academic conferences. As the Net Zero Plan says, the BSIA, to meet its core goals, “will for the moment need to continue funding some quite carbon-intensive activities (such as flying, where appropriate).” Rather, the process seeks both to make you aware of the GHG emissions associated with your project and to ask you to justify them. In awarding funding, the School will look more favourably on proposals that contribute to graduate student career development, and/or that could not obviously achieve their goals in significantly less carbon-intensive ways.

As points of reference: the average person in Bangladesh emits 0.47 tCO₂e per year, the global average is 4.79 tCO₂e, and the Canadian average is 18.58 tCO₂e.

Travel Expense Policy

May 1, 2025

The Balsillie School of International Affairs (BSIA) provides reimbursement for preapproved expenses incurred by its community members while travelling on official BSIA business, to conferences, or for fieldwork. This policy is in alignment with the travel policies of the two universities.

When considering requests for travel support to conferences or for fieldwork, approvers will consider whether the request is:

- In-line with research and/or study goals
- Able to stand up to scrutiny by the auditors and members of the public
- Properly explained and documented
- Fair and equitable (i.e. funds equally available to students across programs)
- Reasonable

Some general points to note:

1. Reimbursement claims that fail to adhere to the guidelines contained in this policy will be declined.
2. Student requests for conference funding will be considered based on return travel from the Waterloo region to the conference venue. Requests for travel funding received from students who, at the time of the conference, and due to official academic business (e.g. fellowships, internships, university exchange programs) are based outside of the Waterloo region, will also be considered.
3. Students must be in good standing in their program to qualify for funding.
4. Staff can assist with BSIA guest travel bookings, but BSIA community members should book their own travel.
5. Travel advances are not permitted. If prepaying travel expenses would present a financial hardship, please speak with your program director.
6. Travel expenses paid with a gift card, loyalty points, digital/cryptocurrency, or vouchers are not eligible for reimbursement.
7. All expenses (except for meals) must be supported with a detailed receipt and be listed on the expense claim form (e.g. check-in and check-out dates for accommodation, and starting and ending locations for flights, taxis, rail, etc.)
8. Conference travel claims must include a copy of the full agenda, showing the date and title of the claimant's presentation.
9. Students are required to disclose funding received from other sources.
10. BSIA community members are encouraged to use the most carbon-friendly mode of transit. Students must complete a carbon budget in their application for funding.
11. All travel must comply with university travel safety requirements, including registering the trip with the university.
12. All requests for travel support funding must be received and approved in advance of the travel. BSIA will not reimburse travel retroactively.

Flights

The maximum level of reimbursement should not exceed the equivalent of economy airfare for the most direct route. Airport taxes should be included as part of the cost of the airfare. Standard seat selection fees and WIFI onboard fees are also eligible for reimbursement. The purchase of flight cancellation insurance is encouraged to avoid loss of funds should the trip need to be cancelled. For long haul flights (international flights of six hours +), Premium Economy booking may be considered with preapproval but note that the total maximum allowable reimbursement does not change. Additional airfare for stopovers, and other costs not related to BSIA business, are considered to be personal expenses of the claimant and will not be reimbursed.

Lost or Excess Baggage

The ultimate responsibility for retrieving and compensating lost baggage lies with the airlines. BSIA will not reimburse travelers for personal items lost while traveling on business.

Claimants will be reimbursed for excess baggage charges only in the following circumstances:

- When traveling with heavy or bulky materials or equipment necessary for business, or
- The excess baggage consists of BSIA property.

Ground transportation

Ground travel can include personal vehicles, rental vehicles, rail, taxi, car service, busses and other ride-hailing services.

It is acceptable to use personal automobiles for round trips of less than 500km while on BSIA business. Claimants are reimbursed based on the current rate of \$0.60 per kilometer. If traveling with multiple passengers, only one person can claim the reimbursement. No reimbursement can be made for travel between a claimant's residence and the BSIA.

The BSIA insurance policy does not provide coverage for the use of personal vehicles. The compensation provided to the claimant for the use of personal vehicles for BSIA business, is intended to cover all costs, including personal insurance. In advance of travel, car owners are strongly advised to check with their insurance agents to secure appropriate endorsements to personal policies.

If renting a vehicle, the rental duration should align with the business or research purpose. Vehicle rentals during non-working or non-travel days will be considered personal use and not eligible for reimbursement. Gas expenses are eligible for reimbursement only when a rental vehicle is used.

Faculty and staff members may book an upgraded train fare class, provided the total cost is less than the cost of flying to the same destination.

Parking

Expenses for hotel parking, airport parking, and public parking are allowable, with original receipts. Where both self-parking and valet parking are available, only the rate for self-parking is eligible.

Per diem – Meals and incidental expenses

To align with our three partners, the BSIA has moved to a per diem policy for its community members while travelling on official BSIA business, to conferences, or for fieldwork. Claimants are entitled to a daily per diem allowance to cover the cost of meals, snacks and beverages while traveling. This allowance is determined based on the destination, duration of the trip, and eligibility of the meal.

Per diems are beneficial for both the claimants and the administrative team, **as receipts are not required to be submitted or retained** for per diem meal claims. The per diem rates will be reimbursed regardless of the actual meal costs.

It is recognized that meal costs vary depending on the geographic area and as such, the per diem rate chart below reflects rates for both meals within Canada and outside of Canada.

Canadian dollar amount for permitted per diems

Meal	Within Canada	Outside Canada
Breakfast	\$20.00	\$25.00
Lunch	\$25.00	\$30.00
Dinner	\$45.00	\$55.00
Maximum daily rate	\$90.00	\$110.00

The maximum daily rate includes all snacks, beverages, taxes and gratuities.

Ineligible meals include:

- Meals consumed outside of travel departure/arrival times from the airport or train station.
- Meals not consumed by the claimant.
- Meals not paid for by the claimant (e.g. included in conference registration, included in accommodation fees, included on the flight/train, or paid by another source).

For multi-day travel, reimbursement should be limited to the maximum daily rate multiplied by the number of days of travel, less all ineligible meals. Proof of departure and arrival time is required to determine if partial day allowances are submitted.

Business Meals (hosting guests on behalf of the BSIA)

Business meals with internal and/or external individuals paid for by the claimant must have prior approval from the Director. Claims for business meals must be supported by itemized meal receipts and a list of attendees with their affiliation. Alcohol is not a permitted expense for internal BSIA community members (i.e. UW or Laurier staff, faculty, students). A per diem cannot be claimed for this type of meal.

Accommodation

Accommodation for one night before and one night after an event is acceptable if the start and end times or distance merit such travel planning and are reasonable and appropriate for the type of activity.

Reimbursement for hotels and motels will be limited to single occupancy, standard room accommodation. Other lodgings (i.e. AirBnB) may be reimbursed at the lesser rate of the cost of single occupancy, standard room accommodation in hotels in the vicinity of the lodging or the cost of the lodging.

Conference Registration Fees

Conference registration fees are eligible expenses. The registration form and conference agenda are to be submitted along with the original receipts.

Membership fees for conference organizations will only be reimbursed if the combined membership fee and conference fee is less than a non-member conference fee.

Currency exchange

When submitting expenses for reimbursement that were paid in another currency, please use OANDA (<http://www.oanda.com>) to convert to the Canadian amount. **Use the date the bill was paid in OANDA when converting.**

Alternatively, a copy of your credit card statement may be submitted in lieu of using OANDA. The last four digits of your credit card, your name, and the expense lines must be visible on the copy. All other information may be redacted.

Illness and cancellations

As a general rule, we encourage purchasing flexible fares, so that a credit or a refund can be obtained in the event that a trip cannot be taken. When a non-refundable flight/hotel is booked, it may still be reimbursable, but supporting documentation regarding the non-refundability of the expense, alongside an indication there was an attempt to receive a credit or refund should be included. A request for reimbursement may be submitted to the BSIA Administrative Office.

Non-allowable Expenses

The following expenses are not permitted for reimbursement:

- Passport expenses
- Interest charges on outstanding credit card balances
- Traffic and parking fines or tickets
- Expenses for failing to cancel transportation or hotel reservations, unless cancellation was due to work requirements and occurred after the cancellation deadline
- Excess personal baggage or loss or damage to personal possessions of the traveler

- Laundry expenses, and health and beauty products
- Equivalent dollar reimbursement for non-out-of-pocket costs such as use of airline reward point or other rewards programs
- Hotel pay movies
- Expenses for attendants, family or partners unless medically required. Preapproval is required.
- Conference activities that are considered optional, e.g., golf tournaments
- Entertainment expenses (such as airline headsets, movies and sporting events)
- Political event tickets or attendance at a political fundraising dinner
- Medical insurance
- Financial penalties related to flight changes are only reimbursable if the change is made for School business reasons, not personal reasons
- Any other personal or excessive amounts