



OBJECTIVE

To ensure efficiency and fiscal accountability for university business travel.

POLICY

Applies to: Individuals who travel on behalf of the university
 Issued: 06/1987
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II. General Overview

- A. The Ohio State University will pay for reasonable and necessary expenses incurred by faculty, staff, students and eligible guests in connection with authorized business travel on behalf of The Ohio State University.
- B. An individual is considered in travel status when traveling on official university business whether or not expenses are to be paid by the university. An approved Application for Leave form or similar document must be on file.
- C. University travelers should incur the lowest reasonable travel expenses and exercise care to avoid impropriety and/or the appearance of impropriety.



- D. If a circumstance arises that is not specifically covered in the travel policy, the most conservative course of action should be taken.
- E. Some business travel expenses are eligible for prepayment and others must be reimbursed after the fact. Requirements and process details are covered in the procedures section of this policy.
- F. Prepayment or reimbursement of travel expenses are allowed only when payment for the expenses has not been and will not be received from a third party.
- G. Prepayment is the recommended method to pay travel expenses whenever possible.
- H. First class tickets will not be prepaid or reimbursed by the university.
- I. Upon completion of the trip, and within 90 days, the traveler must submit a Travel Reimbursement Form and supporting documentation to obtain reimbursement of expenses. The traveler's signature is required.
- J. The university reserves the right to deny payment or reimbursement of travel related expenses for failure to comply with university policies and procedures.
- K. Cash advances or a group/extended travel card may be issued to a traveler when specific circumstances would cause undue financial hardship.
 - 1. Traveler must provide receipts and reconciliation of expenditures associated with the cash advance.
 - 2. The traveler must repay the department or the Office of Sponsored Programs for any advance in excess of the approved reimbursable expenses.
 - 3. The group/extended travel card cannot be used on sponsored projects.
- L. Sponsored project agreements contain specific guidelines pertaining to the allowability of travel expenditures. The Office of Sponsored Programs Travel Office and the sponsored program officer are available for consultation as needed.
- M. Federally funded sponsored project travel requires the use of U.S. Flag Air Carriers for international travel, if service provided by such carrier is available. To learn more visit <http://busops.osu.edu/travel.php>.

III. Accountability

- A. Business travel policies are aligned with the university's accountable plan as required by the Internal Revenue Service.
- B. All business related travel paid with university funds must comply with university's Expenditures, Purchasing Card, Travel and Group/Extended Travel Card and Human Resource policies.
- C. Additional sponsor requirements and/or federal regulations may apply to expenditures charged to sponsored projects.

IV. Authorization

- A. Travel for university faculty, staff, students and guests must be approved.
 - 1. An individual may not approve his/her own travel.
 - 2. Individuals who are authorized to approve travel are designated by each college and vice presidential area and detailed in the unit's Delegation of Signature Authority document. Throughout this policy this approval is referenced as "designated approval authority."
 - 3. Persons with designated approval authority are required to review expenditures and withhold payment if there is reason to believe that the expenditure is inappropriate or extravagant.

V. Use of Personal Funds

- A. University employees are strongly discouraged from using personal funds to pay any travel expenses on behalf of faculty, staff, students, guests or colleagues.
- B. Travelers should verify that planned travel is eligible for payment or reimbursement prior to making travel arrangements.
- C. Travelers who choose to use personal funds to facilitate travel arrangements will not be reimbursed until after the trip occurs and the Travel Reimbursement Form has been completed and approved by the designated approval authority.

VI. Travel Incentives

- A. University travelers may accrue frequent flyer miles from university related travel with the following restrictions:



1. In accordance with the State of Ohio Ethics Commission rulings, these accrued miles can only be redeemed and used for university related business travel.
 2. If a traveler chooses to use frequent flyer miles in connection with university business travel, it is his/her responsibility to track the accrual/usage for auditing purposes.
 3. Frequent flyer miles cannot be used to upgrade tickets.
- B. Accrual of hotel points, rental car company enticements and other inducements in connection with university related travel are prohibited.

VII. Vacation in Conjunction with Business Travel

- A. Travel will only be paid when expenses are incurred at locations specific to the business purpose. Travel expenses to and from alternate vacation destinations while on business travel are not eligible for payment.
- B. In cases where vacation time is added to a business trip, any cost variance in expenses such as airfare, car rental and/or lodging must be clearly identified and documented.
- C. Personal expenses will not be prepaid with the intention of being "repaid" at a later time, nor will any personal expenses be reimbursed.

VIII. Group Travel

- A. Group travel purchased from the university's designated travel agencies is exempt from bidding requirements.
- B. If the designated agencies are not used, competitive bids must be solicited when the total cost of the trip is expected to exceed the following thresholds.
 1. University funds -- \$50,000
 2. Federally sponsored contracts -- \$10,000
 3. Federally sponsored grants -- \$25,000



IX. Travel Expenses that will not be Prepaid or Reimbursed:

- Airline club memberships
- Airline upgrades
- Business class for flights less than 5 consecutive hours
- Child-care, babysitting, house-sitting, pet-sitting/kennel charges
- Commuting between home and primary work site
- Costs incurred by failure to cancel travel or hotel reservations in a timely fashion
- Evening or formal wear expenses
- First class tickets
- Haircuts and personal grooming
- Laundry and dry cleaning
- Vaccinations, and visas when not required as a specific and necessary condition of the travel assignment
- Personal entertainment expenses including in-flight movies, headsets, health club facilities, hotel pay-per-view movies, in-theatre movies, social activities and related incidental costs
- Private car and hired driver (taxi not included)
- Personal travel accident insurance premiums and/or personal travel insurance
- Other expenses deemed not directly related to the business travel

X. Exceptions

Occasional and non-recurring exceptions to the Travel Policy must be documented in the travel system and approved by the dean, vice president or their designated approval authority. The Office of Sponsored Programs Travel Office approves exceptions for sponsored projects.

PROCEDURE

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I. Definitions

Blanket Travel Request - a travel request with multiple reimbursements to track and reimburse in-state transportation expenses.

Cash Advance - advance payment available to travelers when specific circumstances would cause undue financial hardship.



Cash Advance Form - an electronic form generated in the travel system used to request an advance for travel expenses. The form must be completed and signed by the traveler before the advance is approved.

Group/Extended Travel (GET) Card - a bank issued credit card that can be used for business travel related expenses for 2 or more travelers or for an individual's travel that spans 7 or more consecutive days. It cannot be used on sponsored projects.

Per Diem - daily reimbursable allowance for meals and incidental expenses established by the General Services Administration (GSA).

Prepayment - advance payment via the travel system for transportation expenses, conference registration and cash advances associated with business travel.

Reimbursement - payment to the traveler based on documented, reasonable and actual business travel expenses supported by original, itemized receipts where required.

"T" number - a unique number assigned by the travel system for each travel request/reimbursement. The "T" number is used as an auditing record and must be shown on all receipts regardless of the payment method.

Travel Request – entry in the travel system to document estimates and approve travel.

Travel Reimbursement Form - an electronic form generated in the travel system used to request reimbursement of travel expenses. The form must be completed and signed by the traveler within (90) days of the return date of the trip.

University Purchasing Card - a bank issued credit card that can be utilized to pay conference registration fees, lodging, airfare, and rental car services. The card is intended for internal department use and may accompany a traveler. It cannot be used on sponsored projects.

University Travel Card - a bank credit card issued to frequent travelers to pay for lodging, airfare and rental car services while on travel status. It cannot be used on sponsored projects.

II. Travel Expenses for Guests of the University

- A. Travel expenses for spouses, companions, dependents or other family members of university faculty and staff are not eligible to be prepaid or reimbursed unless the individual has a bona fide university purpose for engaging in the travel or attending the event. Documentation of business purpose is required. Such travel is generally limited to deans, vice presidents and other senior officers, and should occur infrequently.

- B. University Travel and Expenditures Policy apply to individuals who are not university faculty, staff or students, but whose approved travel expenses are eligible to be paid or reimbursed by the university. Examples include lecturers, consultants, prospective faculty, staff, and students.
- C. Prepayment of airfare expenses for guests can only be made through the university's travel system. A travel request must be processed prior to the trip.
- D. Guest travel expenses must not be charged to a university PCard.
- E. A "T" number is not required prior to the trip if travel expenses are to be reimbursed after the trip is completed. Also, reimbursement is at risk as expenses will not be approved if in conflict with university policy.

III. Travel Request and Advance Payments

- A. Travel must be approved by a designated approval authority and a "T" number must be processed prior to the trip for authorized business travel unless the only miscellaneous expenses to be reimbursed are parking, mileage, ferry and/or bus passes.
- B. A blanket travel request can be issued to track and reimburse miscellaneous in-state expenses (parking, mileage, ferry, and/or bus passes).
- C. Mileage only reimbursements for more than one trip should be accompanied by a mileage log (date, business purpose and destination should be included).
- D. A cash advance or a group/extended travel card may be issued to a traveler when specific circumstances would cause undue financial hardship.
 - 1. Cash advances are processed through the travel system and are limited to:
 - a. OSU students traveling on behalf of the university – 100% of the total estimated cost can be advanced.
 - b. OSU faculty or staff leading a group of students – 100% of the total estimated cost can be advanced.
 - c. OSU faculty and staff traveling internationally – 80% of the total estimated cost can be advanced.
 - 2. Requests for cash advances are processed and approved on the Cash Advance Form. This form and all supporting documentation must be retained in the department or college/vice presidential area.



3. Faculty and staff may also request the group/extended travel card to obtain an advanced payment for business travel expenses for two or more travelers or for an individual's travel that spans 7 or more consecutive days.
4. Expenses associated with a cash advance or a group/extended travel card must be documented by original, itemized receipts (or equivalent documentation) and must be reconciled and substantiated within one month of the return date. Any cash in excess of the approved reimbursable expenses must be returned to the appropriate departmental account or sponsored project.

IV. Travel Reimbursements

- A. Reimbursement of documented travel expenses is based on reasonable and actual expenses supported by original, itemized receipts where required.
- B. Travel expenses that have been or will be reimbursed by a third party must be documented on the Travel Reimbursement Form and will not be paid by the university.
- C. Requests for reimbursements are processed and approved on the Travel Reimbursement Form. This form and all supporting documentation must be retained in the department or college/vice presidential area.
- D. Reimbursements that exceed the travel request estimate by 20% or more must follow the exception approval process.
- E. If travel is paid on a sponsored project, original supporting documentation must be sent to the Office of Sponsored Programs Travel Office.



V. Travel Expenses/Methods of Payment and Required Documentation

Airfare

University’s designated travel agencies are the preferred Supplier.

Coach class or economy ticket must be purchased for domestic or international flights with flight times totaling less than 5 consecutive hours—excluding layovers. A higher priced coach ticket cannot be purchased for an upgrade in seating.

A less than first class ticket (i.e. business class) may be purchased at the department’s discretion for domestic or international flights with flight times exceeding 5 consecutive hours—excluding layovers.

Payment Options	Documentation Required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel System (prepayment) • University Purchasing Card • University Travel Card • Group/Extended Travel Card • Purchase Order <p>Reimbursement Airfare may be reimbursed after the trip is completed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An original, itemized receipt, eTicket, Internet receipt/statement or equivalent documentation is required unless the airfare purchase is pre-paid through the travel system. • Receipt must show the method of payment and indicate that payment was made. • “T” number must be indicated on receipts and on the financial system reallocation pages.

Rail

The university will prepay or reimburse rail transportation providing the cost does not exceed the cost of the least expensive airfare.

Payment Options	Documentation Required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as airfare. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as airfare.



Rental Car Services

Use of an automobile as a primary mode of transportation is authorized only if driving is more economical than any other type of transportation or if the destination is not otherwise accessible. Documentation (e.g. airfare quote) is required to demonstrate cost comparison when considering driving over flying.

Vehicle rental at a destination city is reimbursable.

Rental is limited to the least expensive vehicle that meets business needs (explanation documentation required when renting higher end or larger vehicle).

Rental agreement must clearly show the date, points of departure/arrival time and total cost.

Collision Damage Waiver (CDW) / Loss Damage Waiver (LDW) and Liability insurance coverage are required. The university will not reimburse any other type of supplemental insurance.

Priority order established by the university for securing rental cars: Transportation & Parking Services (first choice supplier), contracted agencies (secondary supplier) or other car rental companies if usage of Transportation & Parking Services or contracted agencies is not feasible.

Rental Source	Payment Options	Documentation Required	Considerations
Transportation & Parking Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100W • Travel System (prepayment) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer copy of 100W • OSU rental agreement signed by traveler. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First choice supplier • CDW/ LDW and Liability insurance included at no additional cost.
Contracted rental car agencies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enterprise Rent-a-Car • National Car Rental 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University Purchasing Card • University Travel Card • Group/Extended Travel Card <p>Reimbursement Vehicle rental and gasoline purchases for rented vehicles may be reimbursed after the trip is completed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Original, itemized receipts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiated discounted pricing. • CDW/ LDW and Liability insurance included at no additional cost (traveler should verify that CDW/LDW and Liability insurance has not been charged to the invoice. If so, recovery of funds is required) • Corporate discount numbers must be provided when the reservation is made to access discount/insurance package.
Rental car agencies not under contract	<p>Reimbursement Only Vehicle rental and gasoline purchases for rented vehicles may be reimbursed after the trip is completed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Original, itemized receipts. • Fully executed rental agreement signed by traveler indicating CDW/ LDW and Liability insurance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CDW/ LDW and Liability insurance must be purchased and will be reimbursed by the university.



Personal Vehicles

Mileage will be reimbursed in the travel system for personal vehicles as a primary mode of transportation if the cost does not exceed the least expensive airfare or rental car rate or if the destination is not otherwise accessible. Mileage should be calculated by deducting any normal work-day commute from overall total.

Additional expenses, including but not limited to hotel expenses and Per Diem, should be considered when comparing the cost of a trip by auto to airfare.

Reimbursement for usage of a personal automobile is based on the IRS mileage rate or the actual cost of gasoline. IRS mileage rate includes all vehicle related expenses (i.e. gasoline, wear and tear and personal auto insurance).

Mileage rates are determined at the local level for gift-in-kind vehicles assigned to university employees.

Payment Options	Documentation Required
<p>Reimbursement Only Mileage or actual cost of gasoline may be reimbursed in the travel system after the trip is completed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mileage log (including date, business purpose, odometer readings and destination) or other supporting documentation to document mileage distance of trip (e.g. MapQuest). • Original, itemized receipts are required for reimbursement of gasoline.

Charter Bus/Motor Coach Rental Services

Priority order established by the university for securing charter bus/motor coach services: Transportation & Parking Services (first choice supplier), contracted agencies (secondary supplier) or other charter bus/motor coach rental companies if it is not feasible to use Transportation & Parking Services or the companies under contract listed below.

Rental Source	Payment Options	Documentation Required	Considerations
Transportation & Parking Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100W 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer copy of 100W (unless covered by a service agreement) • Charter Confirmation Form from T&P 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First choice supplier
<p>Contracted charter bus/motor coach companies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crosswell Bus Lines • Great Day Tours • Lakefront Lines • Motor Coaches & Cardinal Transportation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase Order 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Original, itemized receipts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiated discounted pricing.
Charter bus/motor coach companies not under contract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase Order 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Original, itemized receipts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully executed rental agreement signed by Purchasing is required for each trip.



Conference Registration Fees

Business related banquets or meals that are considered part of the conference can be paid with the registration fee or reimbursed as appropriate. These meals must be deducted from the traveler's Per Diem allowance.

Activities such as golf outings, sightseeing tours and other entertainment costs will not be paid by the university.

Payment Options	Documentation Required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel System (prepayment) • University Purchasing Card • Purchase Order • University Convenience Order <p>Reimbursement Conference registration fees may be reimbursed after the trip is completed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the conference registration was not prepaid through the travel system, the conference registration form and the original, itemized receipts are required. If the conference does not provide a receipt, documentation showing that the amount was paid is required for reimbursement (e.g. cancelled check, credit card statement).

Lodging

The university will reimburse lodging expenses at reasonable, single occupancy or standard business room rates.

The cost of overnight lodging (room rate and tax only) will be reimbursed if the authorized travel is 45 miles or more from the traveler's home or primary work site.

Reimbursement will be limited to the conference rate when the hotel/motel is the conference/convention site.

Only single room rates are authorized for payment or reimbursement unless the second party is representing the university in an authorized capacity. Reimbursement for a second person requires supporting documentation that includes the second person's name and "T" number.

Lodging Type	Payment Options	Documentation Required	Considerations
<p>Commercial Lodging</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University Purchasing Card • University Travel Card • Group/Extended Travel Card • Purchase Order <p>Reimbursement Lodging may be reimbursed after the trip is completed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Original, itemized receipts. 	
<p>Non-Commercial Lodging (host village, colleague, etc.)</p>	<p>Reimbursement Only Non-commercial lodging may be reimbursed after the trip is completed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written documentation that includes the length of stay, associated fees, (in U.S. dollars) and signatures of both the traveler and payee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be pre-arranged and authorized by the department prior to departure. • Alternate payments (i.e. gifts and meals, to compensate the traveler's family or friends for lodging and/or expenses) are not reimbursable.

Meals

Meal allowance incurred while on travel status will not be reimbursed if the meal is served on the plane, included in a conference registration fee, built into the standard, single hotel room rate, or replaced by a legitimate business meal. The allowance for these meals is based on the percentage of Per Diem (25% - breakfast; 25% - lunch; 50% dinner) for the applicable city location.

Meal allowances are reimbursed after the trip is completed:

Per Diem Allowances – Reimbursement Only—Receipts Not Required

- Reimbursement is authorized for in-state, overnight travel or out-of-state travel that is 45 miles or more from the traveler's home or primary work site.
- In-state travel that does not include an overnight stay may be reimbursed through the payroll system (taxable income) with dean, vice president or designee approval.
- Rates are based on the "federal meal and incidental per diem rates" that vary by city location. These rates include incidental expenses such as service tips (housekeeping, baggage carriers, porters, etc.).
- Per Diem reimbursements are based on departure and return times over the entire 24-hour day and prorated accordingly.

The Per Diem allowance based on departure and arrival time from and to the traveler's home or primary work site follows:

Departure Day	Return Day
12:00 am – 7:59 am = 100%	12:00 am – 7:59 am = 0%
8:00 am – 11:59 am = 75%	8:00 am – 11:59 am = 25%
12:00 pm – 5:59 pm = 50%	12:00 pm – 5:59 pm = 50%
6:00 pm – 11:59 pm = 0%	6:00 pm – 11:59 pm = 100%

Meals in Lieu of Per Diem—Reimbursement Only—Original, Itemized Receipts Required

- If a Per Diem allowance is not paid, meals purchased while on travel status may be reimbursed. The maximum allowable reimbursement is: 25% of the applicable Per Diem for breakfast; 25% for lunch; and 50% for dinner.

Business Meals—Reimbursement Only—Original, Itemized Receipts Required

- The university will reimburse expenses for properly documented business meals.
- Business meals must be documented on the Travel Reimbursement Form.
- See the university's Expenditures Policy for detailed information and/or restrictions.
- Federally funded sponsored projects contain specific guidelines and/or restrictions. Sponsored program offices should always be consulted in advance.

Miscellaneous Expenses

Business Expenses

- Faxes, photocopies, Internet charges and data ports included.
- Original, itemized receipts or equivalent documentation including business purpose are required.
- Lodging bill may be used as a receipt when charges are included as part of an overnight stay.

Parking

- Original, itemized receipts or equivalent documentation are required for parking totaling \$25 or more.
- Lodging bill may be used as a receipt when charges are included as part of an overnight stay.

Business Telephone Calls

- Business telephone calls placed while on travel status may be reimbursed.
- Two personal telephone calls may be reimbursed if the traveler is on authorized travel status for more than one week (7 calendar days).
- Original, itemized receipts or equivalent documentation including business purpose are required.

Tolls

- Original, itemized receipts or equivalent documentation are required for tolls totaling \$25 or more.

Other Transportation

- Includes: taxi, bus, subway, metro and ferry.
- Original, itemized receipts or equivalent documentation are required for expenses that total \$25 or more for each occurrence.

Visas and Immunizations

- May be reimbursed when required as a necessary condition for the international travel assignment.
- Reimbursement is left to the discretion of the designated approval authority.
- Original, itemized receipts or equivalent documentation are required.



RESOURCES

For Consultation

Ohio State, Travel Office, <http://busops.osu.edu/travel.php> , 614-292-9290

Ohio State University Office of Sponsored Programs, Travel Office, <http://rf.osu.edu/travel>,
614-292-2126

Ohio State, Transportation & Parking Services, <http://www.tp.osu.edu>,
614-292-9341

Additional Information

Designated Travel Agencies, http://busops.osu.edu/travel_agencies.php

Per Diem and Mileage Reimbursements, http://busops.osu.edu/travel_perdiem.php

Rental Car and Hotel Discount Information, http://busops.osu.edu/travel_autohotel.php

U.S. Flag Air Carriers, <http://busops.osu.edu/travel.php>.

University Travel Forms (Worksheets and Mileage Log)

<http://busops.osu.edu/travelforms.php>

Office of Sponsored Programs Travel Guidelines

<http://rf.osu.edu/forms>