

TRAVEL, CONFERENCE, & BUSINESS REIMBURSEMENT POLICY

Purpose

The University is committed to the professional growth and development of faculty and staff. This may sometimes involve travel to conferences or workshops. University employees also travel on official University business. The intent of this policy is to ensure that reimbursement for travel expenses is fair and equitable to both the traveler and the University and is consistent with federal and other regulations. *Individuals traveling on University business are expected to exercise the same care in incurring expenses as they would in personal travel.*

The University of Mary's Travel, Conference & Business Reimbursement Policy satisfies the Internal Revenues Service's definition of an "accountable plan". These policies are necessary to comply with federal/state tax laws and third-party sponsoring agency regulations. It is intended to ensure consistent and fair treatment between departments throughout the University and the uniform reporting of financial results.

Statement of Policy

In general, the cost of travel, accommodations, entertainment, and other business expenses should be governed by what is reasonable and appropriate to the purpose involved. The University respects the personal integrity and discretion of each member of its faculty and staff and conducts expense account affairs accordingly. The following information outlines the responsibilities of various parties to the process:

Traveler/Employee:

The individual submitting an [Institutional Travel Form](#) bears the responsibility to:

- Verify that all expenses being paid or reimbursed by the University are valid and conform to this policy document and understand that requests lacking required documentation and/or explicit business purpose will be questioned and perhaps not be reimbursed through these policies.
- Attest that expenses submitted for reimbursement have not been previously paid through a prior submitted expense report, cash advance, or by an outside agency or other third party.
- Personally submit the expense report and all relevant forms related to his/her travel to an appropriate University approver within 60 days of completion of travel or payment of the business expense.
- Retain accountability for ensuring all expenses are in accordance with this policy document and sponsoring agency, if applicable, even though the employee may delegate responsibility for the [Institutional Travel Form](#) preparation to an assistant.

Authorizer/Approver:

Individuals authorized to approve business expenditures of others will administer these policies and are responsible to:

- Attest that the purpose of the expense is valid and directly related to University business.

- Request further documentation or explanation for expenses that appear to be excessive or unusual in relation to the nature of the business travel. Explanation of such expenditures must be included on the [Institutional Travel Form](#).
- Submit [Institutional Travel Form](#) to Accounts Payable on a timely basis (via my.umary.edu).
- Understand that while Accounts Payable may review the [Institutional Travel Form](#), the primary responsibility for the appropriateness of expenditures rests with the traveler/employee and the individual responsible for departmental approval.

Accounts Payable:

The Accounts Payable department within the Office of Financial Affairs is generally responsible for reviewing the [Institutional Travel Form](#) prior to processing a reimbursement to verify that expenses are reasonable and meet the following criteria:

- Information on the [Institutional Travel Form](#) is supported by accompanying support documentation, including full description of business purpose, which is both complete and in accordance with this policy document.
- Expenses conform to requirements imposed by the Internal Revenue Service or, as applicable, sponsoring agencies.
- Expenses have been reviewed/approved by the appropriate approver.
- Expenses have been reviewed for compliance with University Policies.

Procedure

Reimbursements:

All reimbursement requests, aside from student/agency accounts (processed using paper approvals), are submitted via [Requisitioning & Purchasing](#) (located on my.umary.edu). Original documents are not required as copies are scanned and attached to the request. An [Institutional Travel Form](#) is included as necessary documentation for all travel reimbursements. Receipts are required for all transactions unless the *per diem* meal rate was chosen for reimbursement.

All business and travel expenses must have a business purpose which should, clearly and without need for interpretation, explain how the business expense is connected to the University and supports its mission. The business purpose explanation should be included with all reimbursements.

If an employee does not substantiate expenses and/or clear advances within 60 days, these amounts will be treated as compensation, subject to required payroll tax withholding, and reported on the employee's form W-2.

No employee should approve his/her own reimbursement.

Travel reimbursements will be disbursed on a separate check in accordance with the payroll schedule. Reimbursements must be submitted by the end of pay day (Tuesday at 4:30 PM) in order to receive payment on the following pay date.

Air Travel:

It is considered best practice and thus highly recommended for faculty and staff traveling on business to book airline travel arrangements through Cheryl Fenster at Northland Travel (cherylfenster@northlandtv.com, tel. 701-222-8656). A purchase order should be obtained prior to or directly after contacting Northland Travel. This is accomplished via [Requisitioning &](#)

Purchasing. An alternate booking method may be used but prior Director/Dean approval, in consultation with the Business Office, must be obtained.

A traveler who chooses to book flights outside of Northland Travel, should use a University credit card and provide a receipt that includes an itinerary reflecting airline, flight numbers, departure/arrival dates and times, total flight costs, payment method, and evidence of full payment. If for some reason a University credit card was unavailable and the traveler booked flights on his/her own, reimbursement will only occur **after** the business trip is completed (see “Reimbursements” section above).

For air travel on Delta or United, whether booked through Northland Travel or on one’s own, the University’s corporate mileage accounts should be supplied for all business travel when making the reservation. For travel on Delta, use the University’s *Skybonus* corporate account “US0011277”. For United, use the University’s *PerksPlus* corporate account “S0863.” For American, use “B8XB598.” This allows the University to accrue corporate points which are leveraged during extraordinary situations (often in the case of emergencies) to book select fares at a reduced rate for travelers.

Ancillary fees (including in-flight Wi-Fi, checked/carry-on baggage, etc.) are reimbursable; however, such fees must be reasonable and prudent (see “Reimbursements” section above). The University does not pay for travel insurance.

Lodging:

It is best practice to coordinate the booking of lodging with the University’s Purchasing Clerk. This will assist the traveler in obtaining direct billing, where applicable, or the use of a University credit card. Travelers should choose convenient, safe, and reasonably priced accommodations whenever practicable: however, when attending a conference, travelers may stay at the conference hotel.

If the traveler chooses to book the lodging on his/her own, the University will pay actual room costs, as substantiated by the detailed hotel bill, for each day the lodging away from home is required for business purpose (see “Reimbursements” section above).

Expenses for rentals of non-conventional lodging (e.g. Airbnb), while not encouraged, are reimbursable if properly documented (see “Reimbursements” section above).

Car Rental:

It is best practice to coordinate car rentals through the University’s Purchasing Clerk. Vehicle rental agencies require a gas tank to be fully filled upon return. For an added fee, rental agencies will offer to fill the gas tank upon return of the vehicle. Travelers ought to decline this option and fill the gas tank personally at a nearby station before returning the vehicle to the agency to avoid any unnecessary additional fees. The University will reimburse for fuel, tolls and parking costs via Requisitioning & Purchasing, as long as receipts are scanned in for documentation (see “Reimbursements” section above).

If the traveler chooses to book his/her own car rental, receipts from the rental agency are required to be submitted as documentation. Car rental insurance should be declined and, if elected, is **not** reimbursable.

The cost of taxis, shared transportation services (e.g. Uber, Lyft, etc.), or other ground transportation is reimbursable. Please provide copies of receipts when submitting via

[Requisitioning & Purchasing](#), whenever possible. Please include description if actual receipt is missing (e.g. "Paid cash for taxi").

Follow all safety rules as outlined on the University's Safe Driver Policy.

Personal Automobile:

Use of a traveler's personal automobile will be reimbursed either at the mileage rate effective at the time of travel **or** using actual fuel receipts. Please include documentation on an [Institutional Travel Form](#) (see "Reimbursements" section above).

Follow all safety rules as outlined on the University's Safe Driver Policy.

Meal and Entertainment

The University will reimburse for reasonable, non-excessive meal expenses incurred while traveling away from home or entertaining on University business (see "Reimbursements" section above and the University's [Alcohol Reimbursement Policy](#)). Travelers will be reimbursed for meals in one of two ways:

- Actual and reasonable costs properly documented by detailed receipts

Or

- On a *per diem* basis for breakfast, lunch, dinner and incidentals (75% of total for first and last day of travel \$44.25)*
 - Breakfast \$13
 - Lunch \$15
 - Dinner \$26
 - Incidentals \$5

If using actual receipts, the University will reimburse for tips associated with meal costs up to 20% (please ensure the tip is not included on receipt by vendor, when calculating tip).

Travelers are **not** allowed to blend actual and *per diem* reimbursements. They should pick one methodology per reimbursement and use throughout documentation on the [Institutional Travel Form](#).

*Based on budgetary needs, departments are permitted to pay **lower** *per diem* rates than the rates noted above.

Conferences:

Travel and Lodging for conferences should follow University policy (see "Air Travel", "Car Rental", "Personal Automobile", and "Lodging" sections above).

If meals are included in the conference fee but the traveler chooses to eat elsewhere, such expenses are **not** reimbursable. Meals not included in the conference fee are reimbursable on the actual costs or *per diem* basis, although travelers should exclude any conference-provided meals from the reimbursement request, based on rates previously outlined (see "Meal and Entertainment" section above).

Conference fees should be paid directly by the University (submitted via [Requisitioning & Purchasing](#)) or using a University credit card. If the traveler chooses to pay the conference fees

directly, these can be submitted for reimbursement and must include documentation (see the “Reimbursements” section above).

Travel Advances:

Travel advances can be requested when deemed appropriate. The request should be initiated via [Requisitioning & Purchasing](#). Upon return and no later than 60 days after return from travel, excess cash, signatures from cash recipients and actual receipts, as applicable, should be submitted to Accounts Payable, or acctspayable@umary.edu, as appropriate.

Supplies and Miscellaneous Business Expenses:

Employee reimbursements are primarily for travel and entertainment purposes. The employee reimbursement method should only be used for emergency purchases of goods or services. An employee reimbursement should not be used as a means to circumvent strategic vendor relationships or approved buying methods.

Non-Reimbursable Expenses:

There will be no reimbursement for personal expenses such as:

- Accident or Travel Insurance premiums
- Costs resulting from failure to cancel transportation or hotel reservations that come about from personal rather than University choice
- Penalties or fees for cancellation or change of discounted tickets when the cancellation or change came about due to personal rather than University choice
- Traffic and parking violations received while driving rental or personal vehicles
- Annual fees or interest/late charges on personal credit cards
- Alcohol (see [Alcohol Reimbursement Policy](#))
- Entertainment functions (unless prior approval from VP received)
- Valet parking (unless the hotel only offers valet parking)
- In-room movie rentals
- Spouse/significant other travel (unless VP approval and for business purposes)
- Frequent Flyer Miles redeemed
- Personal gift cards used to pay for University travel expenses
- Gratuity in excess of 20%

Approved

7 June 2023 by the President of the University