Travel Procedures

This Policy Statement provides guidelines for reimbursement of travel, subsistence, and related expenses incurred while on official business. It incorporates travel policies as approved by the Board of Governor’s of the State System of Higher Education, and implements streamlined University forms and procedures for processing travel expenses.

1. **SCOPE.** This policy applies to all non-coalition bargaining unit (APSCUF and SCUPA) employees, management employees, students, trustees, and volunteers authorized to travel at University expense. Coalition bargaining unit employees (those in the AFSCME, Nurses, Physicians and Police units) are reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with the Commonwealth’s Travel Regulations, the procedures and forms outlined below are applicable to them. This policy applies to all travel and related expenses, regardless of the source of funds from which expenses are paid.

2. **OBJECTIVE** To provide employees with reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses incurred in the performance of their duties within prescribed maximum allowances.

3. **POLICY** This policy is consistent with the State System of Higher Education’s Travel Expense Regulations. In those cases where the provisions of a collective bargaining agreement are inconsistent with this policy, the provisions of such agreement shall take precedence insofar as they apply to the employees encompassed by such agreements.

4. **RESPONSIBILITIES.**
   a. Employees are responsible for ensuring that expenses claimed on travel expense vouchers are proper and accurate. As directed by SSHE policy, careless, fraudulent, or negligent preparation of a travel voucher will require financial restitution and may result in disciplinary action. Also, a traveler who knowingly presents a false, fraudulent, or fictitious claim may be subject to penalties under criminal statutes.
   b. Department heads and/or Responsible Persons are responsible for reviewing and approving travel requests and travel expense vouchers to ensure the propriety and correctness of expenses incurred.
   c. The Purchasing Office is responsible for pre-auditing travel requests and vouchers to ensure compliance with University policy.

5. **GENERAL PROVISIONS**
   a. All persons who travel at University expense are expected to exercise prudence and economy.
   b. All travel shall be by the most direct and expeditious route. When an employee travels directly from home to a travel site, the distance from home or the University, whichever is shortest, will be used to compute mileage.
   c. When traveling with other employees, travelers should obtain separate receipts and submit only their own expenses on Travel Expense Vouchers. This is necessary in order to avoid duplicate payments.
   d. All modes of transportation are authorized consistent with and appropriate to the requirements of an assignment and the efficient and economic conduct of official business.
6. PROCEDURES

a. **Travel Request.** All individuals who anticipate traveling on official business shall submit a Travel Request form in advance. This form will be utilized to obtain necessary supervisory approval, to encumber funds, and to ensure Workers’ Compensation coverage in the event of accident. An approved Travel Request must also be on file in the Purchasing Office prior to prepayment of registration fees, transportation, etc. Employees should describe the purpose of the travel and estimate total costs. Any limitation on reimbursement from departmental funds should be noted. Any approved amount on the Travel Request will be encumbered against the budget account indicated. If expenses are to be paid from more than one account, Responsible Persons from both accounts should sign the request and the breakdown should be included on the Travel Request so that funds can be properly encumbered. Completion of Out-Service Training forms is no longer required except for credit-bearing courses.

   (1) Registration fees may be paid by employees and reimbursed via Travel Voucher. Alternatively, employees may request that registration fees be paid in advance directly to sponsoring organizations by submitting completed registration materials and indicating Prepay Registration on the Travel Request form to the Purchasing Office at least two weeks prior to the registration deadline. The Purchasing Office should subsequently be notified of any cancellations in order to seek refunds.

   (2) In the interest of convenience and cost efficiency, the University has arranged with certain travel agencies (see attached) to provide airline tickets and certain other forms of public transportation at the best fare available given scheduling and other constraints. Under this plan, arrangements may be made by contacting these travel agents and expenses may be charged to the University credit card by giving your Travel Request number and your Cost Center or WBS number (provide these to the agent), in which case the Purchasing Office will be billed directly by the Credit Card company. Alternatively, employees may use these or other travel agencies and pay transportation expenses themselves, in which case they are eligible to be reimbursed prior to the date of the trip by submitting receipts, ticket/itinerary copies, and checking the Prepay Registration block on the Travel Request form and submitting it to the Purchasing Office.

   (3) If a Travel Request is encumbered and the trip is cancelled, the Purchasing Office should be notified so that funds can be disencumbered and made available for other use.

   (4) After signature by the Department Head/Responsible Person and the appropriate Vice President or Dean, the Travel Request form should be submitted to Purchasing.

b. **Travel Expense Voucher.** Reimbursement for travel, subsistence, and related expenses will be made on the basis of approved and audited Travel Expense Vouchers. Vouchers may be prepared for each trip, for a group of trips, or on a monthly basis, but in any case a voucher should be submitted in a timely fashion. Corresponding Travel Request numbers should be referenced on the Voucher, a description of the purpose for travel should be included, and any necessary receipts should be attached. The traveler and Department Head/Responsible Person must sign the voucher. The Department Head/Responsible Person should indicate any limitation on reimbursement from departmental funds, verify the accuracy of the account to be charged, and forward the voucher to the
Purchasing Office. If expenses are to be paid from more than one account, the breakdown should be indicated. Travel expenses are charged to the fiscal year in which the travel occurred.

7. **RATES OF REIMBURSEMENT**

   a. **Personal automobile.** When travel is by personal automobile, reimbursement will be made at the mileage rate established by the General Services Administration for Federal Government employees. Employees and supervisors are responsible for the accuracy of mileage claimed. The mileage chart of the “Office Transportation Map” published by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation or other references such as MapQuest may be used as a guide to determine the reasonableness of mileage claimed. Include justification on the Travel Voucher for any mileage in excess of normal guidelines. When employees travel together in a personal automobile, only one is entitled to mileage reimbursement. Employees are encouraged to utilize the “mileage calculator” on the Enterprise (see Section C) Rentals web site. If the cost for the planned trip will be less using a rental, the employee should arrange to use an appropriate rental.

   b. **Commercial transportation.** The most economical means of transportation available should be utilized, including car rental. Rental car selection is limited to compact or intermediate unless a larger car/van can be justified. Collision Damage Waiver insurance should be taken. Liability insurance supplemental, personal accident insurance, safe trip insurance, and personal effect coverage are not reimbursable. Charges for first class air or rail accommodations will not be reimbursed. Transportation should be arranged through the University’s travel agents in order to obtain the lowest fares (see Section 6a. (2) For procedures). Cancellation fees resulting from a decision to cancel a trip will be paid by the University if the supervisor approves.

   c. **Rental Cars – Enterprise:** An agreement with Enterprise Auto Rentals has been reached for the procurement of vehicles for university business. Faculty, staff and student employees may operate Enterprise rental vehicles at the MU rate while in pursuit of University business. An employee is only authorized to drive a rental car for university business if (1) he/she is operating the vehicle pursuant to his/her employment responsibilities, (2) is 21 or older (25 for 15 passenger vans), and (3) possess a valid state driver’s license.

   The Purchasing Department will be responsible to gather the information required to charge the departmental travel budget for the vehicle use from a copy of the reservation form emailed to Enterprise and/or the signed travel request form submitted.

   d. **Car Rentals**

   Use of rental cars or other special conveyance will be allowed only when a university owned vehicle, or public means of transportation is not available. The use of a rental car during a conference should be a justified need to have the car to travel from a hotel to the meeting site, etc. If the use of a rental car during a conference is for convenience, or it is used for personal sightseeing, it should not be submitted for reimbursement. All such expenditures must be justified. Itemized receipts are required for rental cars, for gas and/or for emergency repairs.

   1. Rental cars selection is limited to compact or intermediate unless a larger car can be justified.
2. Collision Damage Waiver insurance will be reimbursed. Liability insurance supplemental, personal accident insurance, safe trip insurance, and personal effects coverage are not reimbursable.

3. The reimbursement of the utilization of a van or limo service will not exceed the reasonable cost of mileage and parking.

e. **Miscellaneous expenses.** Employees may be reimbursed for business expenses incurred for such items as telephone, telegraph, registered or certified mail, taxi, local transportation and other miscellaneous expenditures. Personal phone calls are not reimbursable. Charges for laundry, dry cleaning, or other personal services are not reimbursable unless the employee is in continuous travel status for more than five days. Receipts should be obtained where available and are required for all transportation expenses, taxi cabs, local transportation, etc.

Employees may be reimbursed for parking, tolls, and similar expenses, regardless of the type of vehicle used (i.e., personal, State System, or rented), when receipts are provided. Employees may be reimbursed the actual cost of fuel for rented or State System vehicles, but not personal vehicles.

Reimbursement for alcoholic beverages is strictly prohibited.

**Parking fines or moving vehicle violations fines are not reimbursable.**

f. **Overnight lodging.** Reimbursement for lodging is authorized at sites not within a reasonable commuting distance of the University or employee’s residence. Generally, 50 miles is considered reasonable commuting, subject to itinerary, weather, and time considerations. Employees should attempt to obtain State Government rates when seeking price quotations for lodging and should carry some form of official identification such as a University I.D. Lodging costs are limited by SSHE policy, but since lodging costs typically exceed these SSHE limits, costs in excess of the maximum are authorized:

   (1) when lodging cannot be located with a reasonable effort within maximum allowances,

   (2) when employees must stay in a specific hotel or motel where their presence is required by the nature of the official business,

   (3) or when lodging and meal expenses are contracted for at the minimum rate under the American Plan at a host establishment while attending a conference,

Itemized receipts for lodging are required, and an explanation of lodging costs in excess of the maximums must be included on the Travel Expense Voucher.

g. **Subsistence.** Subsistence will be paid on a per diem basis and receipts are not required.

   (1) **Overnight travel status**

      (a) While in overnight travel status, maximum per diem reimbursement for meals and other subsistence expenses will be at the established rates by the General Services Administration for Federal Government employees, which include tips and sales tax, for each 24-hour period spent in a continuous overnight travel status. The 24-hour period begins at
any time of day or night that the employee leaves headquarters or residence to embark upon overnight travel on official business. This allowance covers all meals and subsistence expenses not specifically provided for elsewhere. Job applicants and guests are reimbursed for two travel days and number of days on campus, with the exception of meals provided by faculty or staff.

(b) Per diem subsistence allowances in locations identified as high cost areas will be determined by the Chancellor. Fractional day allowances (FDA) for high cost areas will be calculated pursuant to the Commonwealth’s regulations as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Interval</th>
<th>Allowance</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 2 hours</td>
<td>No reimbursement</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 hours to less than 6 hours</td>
<td>25% of per diem</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 hours to less than 15 hours</td>
<td>62.5% of per diem</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 hours to less than 24 hours</td>
<td>Full per diem</td>
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</tbody>
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(2) **Non-overnight travel status**

An employee who works more than two hours before the normal start of the workday or more than two hours past the scheduled quitting time in non-overnight travel status will be reimbursed for the cost of a meal up to a maximum of $8.00 only if the travel assignment takes the employee 50 miles or more (one way) from both residence and headquarters. Reimbursement for noonday meals is not permissible for employees not engaged in overnight travel except as specifically provided for in this policy or in labor agreements.

(3) **Meals associated with official meetings.**

(a) Employees on official business attending breakfast, luncheon or dinner meetings may be reimbursed for actual costs incurred. Receipts should be obtained. Such meetings must meet the following criteria:

- The meeting must be planned in advance and approved by the supervisor.
- The meal must be an integral part of the meeting.
- The purpose of the meeting must be to discuss business and the nature of the business must be stated on the Travel Expense Voucher.
- The event must include employees from more than one State System entity or participants who are not State System employees.

(b) Employees in overnight travel status while attending breakfast, luncheon or dinner meetings and seminars or conventions, at which meals are provided and included in the registration fee, shall have their total per diem claims reduced by the amounts for meals provided in the Meals & Incidental Expenses (M&IE) breakdown at such meetings.
h. Special Provisions
Within the limitations of available funds, members of the Board of Governors, university councils of trustees, the chancellor, vice chancellors, university presidents, university vice presidents and, when designated by the chancellor or a president, official volunteers in service to the State System are not subject to the maximum rates herein prescribed and shall be eligible for reimbursement for actual expenses associated with official travel. In accordance with Board of Governors Policy 1991-04 Section B-4 volunteers are not permitted to operate University vehicles, and in accordance with Section B-5 damage to vehicles is not covered. Receipts shall be attached to the travel voucher when actual expenses are claimed in excess of the maximum rates.

i. Reimbursement of Travel Expenses Incurred by Applicants (Policy Statement 340.03) (Please see Applicant Travel Procedures for more details on this subject). Applicants for employment may be reimbursed for the cost of reasonable travel expenses in connection with the interview process. Hotel or Transportation Orders may be utilized, but no cash advance may be granted. The number of applicants authorized to travel at State System expense shall be held to the minimum required, in the opinion of the chancellor or the president.

j. Reimbursement of Expenses Incurred on Behalf of Others.
Vice presidents and other employees designated by the president are eligible to be reimbursed for actual meal expenses incurred by themselves and on behalf of others in the conduct of official business. Such reimbursement may be made for incurred meal expenses only when the meal is an integral part of the business meeting and includes either persons who are not employed by the university or employees of other Commonwealth agencies whose attendance is relative to the official business being conducted.

Complete justification for incurring expenses must be included on Travel Expense Vouchers. Justification should include but not be limited to:

1. Every item of expense $10.00 or more except for subsistence and personal automobile mileage
2. Every expenditure in this policy which specifically requires a receipt
3. No item of expense will be approved if a required receipt is missing, unless it was impossible to secure such a receipt and the reason is fully explained. Mere inconvenience is not a satisfactory explanation.

k. SUBMISSION AND AUDIT OF TRAVEL EXPENSE VOUCHERS
All travel and subsistence expenses are subject to audit by the Purchasing Office. The audit will include a review of the propriety of the expenses incurred. As part of normal audit procedures, the Purchasing Office is authorized to request additional information for any expenses claimed. If there is a pattern of unusual claims, the Purchasing Office may require an employee to provide itemized receipts for any such future claims.

m. SHORT-TERM LODGING
Employees who are required to work at a temporary worksite, away from the University or their residence for an extended period of time of 60 days or more, may be if approved in advance, enter into a short-term lodging agreement. All requests for such short-term lodging agreements must be submitted to the
Purchasing Office for review and approval. Failure to obtain Purchasing Office approval prior to entering into a short-term lodging agreement (contract or lease) will result in the employee or individual giving authority to enter into such an agreement being liable for any resulting costs.

Detailed justification showing a cost comparison of both the regular travel expenses reimbursement and the alternative short-term lodging costs must be provided. Reimbursement under a short-term lodging agreement is limited to lodging, necessary utilities (extra costs for telephone and cable television are excluded). Subsistence expenses will not be allowed under a short-term lodging agreement which includes kitchen facilities. No mileage will be allowed between the short-term lodging and the temporary worksite.

n. Any exceptions to this policy must be approved by the University President.