



UNIVERSITY TRAVEL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Policy Title: University Travel Policies and Procedures

Policy Type: Administrative

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Responsible Office: Office of the Controller/Financial Services

Responsible Executive: Vice President Finance and Administration

Applies to: All University employees and, as appropriate, non-state employees affiliated with the University.

POLICY STATEMENT

All travel related purchase orders through Colleague along with all supporting documents, **must be completed and approved prior to travel.**

Norfolk State University will reimburse individuals traveling on official University business for reasonable and necessary expenses incurred. Travel expense accounts are open to the public and must be able to sustain the test of public review. When planning and paying for travel, economy, prudence and necessity are of primary concern. The use of State funds to accommodate personal comfort, convenience, and taste is not permitted. Travelers and travel planners must seek ways to reduce the cost of essential travel.

All university travel must comply with the most current Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Accounts (DOA), State Travel Regulations which includes per diem rates for meals and incidental expenses (M&IE) and lodging for in-state and out-of-state travel destinations. Certain foreign travel destinations may justify higher amounts. DOA will monitor agency travel expenditures to ensure that exceptions appear reasonable.

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DEFINITIONS

Agency: Any commission, department, division, institution, board, council or other organization Of the Commonwealth of Virginia operating from State funds.

Agency Head or Designee: An Agency Head is an officially appointed, elected or designated individual who directs, and is ultimately responsible for, the overall operations of an agency or institution.

A designee is any other person appropriately designated to act on behalf of the Agency Head. Such designation must be approved by the President in writing and retained on file within the agency. These listings should adhere to the record retention policy in order to provide adequate evidentiary support of appropriate approvals for audit/review purposes. Copies of written designee listings must be provided to the Department of Accounts and appropriate auditors upon request.

Base Point: The primary place, office, or building where the traveler performs his/her duties on a routine basis. Multiple base points are not allowed.

Commuting Mileage: Round trip mileage traveled routinely by the employee between his residence and base point. Mileage and other commuting cost incurred during commuting status are considered a personal expense and are not reimbursable.

International Travel: All travel to areas outside of the **48 contiguous** United States.

Non-State Employee: Any individual who is not employed by the State, but who is conducting State business. This included members of the boards, authorities, or commissions.

Official Station: The area within a **25** mile radius of an employees designated base point.

Sponsored Programs: Programs funded by revenue derived from grants and contracts.

State Employee: Any elected, appointed, classified, or non-classified employee of the Commonwealth.

Travel Expense Reimbursement Voucher (TERV): Original authorized documentation for requesting reimbursement of expenses incurred by an individual while traveling on official State business. This documentation, including itemized, original hotel bills and receipts as required, provide support for reimbursement of travel expenses.

Travel Status: Travel outside of an employee's official station.

Trip: Any period of continuous travel between when the traveler leaves his residence or base point and returns to his/her residence or base point.

CONTACT(S)

The Office of the Controller/Financial Services officially interprets this policy. The Vice President for Finance and Administration is responsible for obtaining approval for any revisions as required by BOV Policy # 01 (2014) *Creating and Maintaining Policies* <https://www.nsu.edu/policy/bov-01.aspx> through the appropriate governance structures. Questions regarding this policy should be directed to the Office of the Controller/Financial Services.

STAKEHOLDER(S)

All University employees and, as appropriate, non-state employees affiliated with the University.

UNIVERSITY TRAVEL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES: POLICY CONTENTS

This statement sets forth University policy and procedures for all business related travel by University employees and, as appropriate, non-state employees affiliated with the University.

Procedures

I. Transportation

Arrangements for airline, bus or railway tickets for official University travel must be made via purchase order (PO) number through the travel agency currently under contract with the University using the following procedures:

1. Airline/rail or individual bus transportation

- i. Call the travel agency to obtain economy or coach class price quote for airline/rail/bus fares.

Note: The travel agency will not finalize the booking until they have received a PO number. The ticket price is not guaranteed and could increase prior to receipt of a PO so it is imperative to complete the PO process within Colleague as quickly as possible.

- ii. Enter a requisition into Colleague for the travel request. Purchase requisitions requesting airline tickets must include the name of the person(s) traveling, purpose of trip, departure and arrival dates and times, flight numbers (air travel), and destination of traveler(s).
- iii. *Within 24 hours (same day if possible)* obtain the required approvals from supervisor and/or Agency Head/Designee to avoid a price increase on the quoted fare.

- iv. Print the PO after final approval.
- v. Contact the travel agency and give them the PO number to confirm/purchase the ticket. If there has been a price increase, ensure that there are additional funds added to the purchase order to cover the extra expense.

Note: The purchase requisition number will not be accepted to confirm tickets.

2. Group bus transportation

Prior to chartering bus transportation for a group, travelers must check the availability of a state bus through the University's Motor Pool and obtain written approval from the Physical Plant Business Manager.

Once written approval has been received from the Physical Plant Business Manager, call the travel agency to obtain the most economical and cost-beneficial quote for charter bus.

Note: The travel agency will not finalize the booking until they have received a PO number. The ticket price is not guaranteed and could increase prior to receipt of a PO so it is imperative to complete the PO process within Colleague as quickly as possible.

- i. Enter a requisition into Colleague for the charter bus request.
- ii. Within 24 hours, obtain the required approvals from supervisor and/or President/Designee to avoid a potential price increase on the quoted charter.
- iii. Print the PO after final approval.
- iv. Contact the travel agency and give them the PO number to confirm/purchase the charter.

Note: The purchase requisition number will not be accepted to confirm charters.

3. Automobile transportation

Employees traveling on behalf of the University are required to use the services of Enterprise Rental, the State-Contracted vendor for lease/ rental vehicles. Employees are permitted to use their personally owned automobile (POV), when the use of a personally owned vehicle is cost-beneficial to the agency. Employees should use the Office of Fleet Management Services trip calculator to determine if using a personal vehicle is cost-beneficial to the University. The trip calculator can

be found on the Accounts Payable page on MY NSU under Faculty/Staff Resources. Employees electing to use their personal vehicle *as a matter of convenience* will be reimbursed for mileage at a lower rate. All POV travel must be approved in advance by the Agency Head/Designee.

- i. Enter a requisition into Colleague for the travel request.
- ii. Obtain the required approvals from supervisor and the President/Designee.
- iii. Print the PO after final approval.
- iv. During travel, use the trip calculator (see Link under Related Documents). Accounts Payable will verify all mileage amounts requested for reimbursement to ensure that mileage is computed correctly.

4. Internet Purchases

Reimbursement for airline, bus or train tickets purchased via the internet, will only be made after the trip is completed. In addition to your ticket receipt, attach a hardcopy of the internet confirmation which shows total cost and confirmed services and your airline confirmation (ticket stub) to your travel voucher for reimbursement purposes.

II. Meals and Incidental Expenses (M&IE)

A. Overnight Travel Meals

The Commonwealth uses a per diem system to reimburse for the cost of meals and incidental expenses such as personal phone calls, laundry, tips to baggage handlers, etc. Per-diem is reduced by meals (if any) included in the conference fee and provided by the conference. Per-diem rates for U.S. cities and overseas locations are available from the General Services Administration (GSA) (see links in Related Documents). List each day's per diem separately on travel voucher. For departure and return days, **75%** of the appropriate per diem will be reimbursed. The M&IE per diem shall be paid directly to the traveler, even where it can be shown that one traveler incurred the expenses on behalf of another.

Note: Reimbursements in excess of the applicable M&IE per diem for meals taken during overnight travel are not permitted. Tips are included in the M&IE rate and will not be reimbursed separately. Meals are not reimbursed unless an overnight trip is taken.

B. Overtime Meals

Reimbursements in excess of the maximum amount authorized under the overtime work meal reimbursement policy are not permitted.

C. Official Business Meals

Business meals must be approved in Colleague Financials in advance by the President/Designee. These meals must involve substantive and bona fide business discussions and include the original, itemized receipt. A Business Meals Certification form, signed by the President/Designee prior to the event must accompany the request for reimbursement. . * Business meals can only be reimbursed for actual expenses up to the amount shown for the applicable meal in the M&IE rate table, excluding the incidental allowance without prior approval of the /Designee. However, the President/Designee *may* authorize business meal reimbursements up to 50% over the applicable per-diem guidelines with sufficient justification. Business meal reimbursements above 50% over the applicable per-diem guideline *are not permitted*. More detailed information is contained in the Official Business Meals Policy.

III. Lodging

President/Designees are responsible for ensuring travelers understand their responsibility for making a good faith effort to secure lodging within the guidelines before requesting exceptions. Lodging rates for U.S. cities and overseas locations are governed by the General Services Administration (GSA). The appropriate rate is determined by the physical location (county or city) of the hotel and not the mailing address.

Each traveler is responsible for obtaining economy class and government rates for lodging. Department Heads, Directors, Deans and Vice Presidents should question before approving any rates that seem unreasonable.

For all official University travel, the President/Designee is authorized to approve reimbursement *in advance*, for lodging up to 50% over the guidelines when circumstances warrant. An explanation of the circumstances justifying the lodging exception must be attached to the voucher. As an example, this exception may be justified for conference hotels where it can be shown that the additional lodging cost will be offset by reduced local travel costs incurred for travel (e.g., taxi or rental car expense avoided) between a non-conference hotel and the conference location. This approval can be obtained by the designee approving the travel requisition in Colleague Financials System electronically. **No exceptions will be made if 150% lodging rate was not approved in advance and the traveler will be reimbursed at the standard lodging rate.**

Lodging rates higher than 150% of the standard rates require approval from the appropriate Designee, Accounts Payable office, and Manager of General Accounting at Department of Accounts (DOA) in Richmond, prior to travel. The traveler will need at least 45 days prior to travel to seek approval for lodging exceptions. **If a request for exception has not been approved prior to the travel, lodging reimbursement will be based on the aforementioned policy.** Exception requests must include sufficient documentation showing cost comparisons

that justify the excess for timely and proper consideration. Incomplete requests or requests with missing documentation will be denied and returned to the requesting traveler.

Department of Procurement Services must receive requests for orders to direct bill for overnight accommodations at least three weeks in advance of the scheduled travel dates.

IV. Registration Fees

To process payments with purchase orders, the office of Accounts Payable must receive request of payments for conference and registration fees at least four weeks in advance of the scheduled registration date. The original registration form referencing the purchase order (PO) number obtained through Colleague should be forwarded to Accounts Payable immediately.

V. Miscellaneous

A. Sponsored Programs

All monetary travel reimbursements for meals, lodging, airfare, etc. funded solely from sponsored program funds are governed by the terms and conditions of the University Travel Policies and Procedures.

B. Out-of-Country Travel

Requests for out-of-country travel must be approved on the “Request for Approval of Travel Outside the Boundaries of the United States and its Territories,” which can be obtained from the Office of the President, by the President or Executive Vice President, prior to submission of purchase requisitions through Colleague. After approval has been obtained, the form must be forwarded to the office of Accounts Payable for processing.

C. Multiple Travelers

Travel involving more than three employees to a single travel destination must be approved in advance by the President or designees. This includes travel of presenters as well as attendees. For international travel, such approval (for more than three employees) must be obtained from the responsible cabinet secretary. These provisions apply to daily as well as overnight travel. On-site training sessions should be investigated when training is essential for five or more staff members.

D. Travel Advances

Travel advances are only issued to athletic coaches for team travel or recruitment purposes. A faculty member accompanying students to conferences, field trips, or other such activities may also request travel advances. Travel advances supporting student-related travel activities are limited to a minimum request of \$100.00 and are subject to

the availability of University funds. University personnel eligible for a travel charge card through the Commonwealth's travel charge card program are not eligible for cash advances. No other exceptions will be made for Travel Advances.

All unspent travel advance funds must be returned to Accounts Payable within five working days after the traveler returns from the trip. Travel advances should be repaid, in full, within 30 days of receipt of the advance. If advances are not paid within the specified time, the amount of the advanced balance will be deducted from the employee's paycheck.

University employees, who travel overnight at least twice per year and make at least \$15,000, must apply for a travel charge card or pay for all travel expenses out of pocket and seek reimbursement.

VI. Travel Expense Reimbursement Voucher

Completed and fully signed travel expense reimbursement vouchers, with receipts, are due in Accounts Payable within five working days after returning from the trip. It is the responsibility of the approving official to ensure that all travel claim reimbursement requests are submitted in a timely manner. Failure to submit your travel claim reimbursement request within five working days could result in disapproval of your reimbursement request.

Although not all-inclusive, the following information is **required** for expense reimbursement and must be submitted with the Travel Expense Reimbursement Voucher.

- Employee Colleague Id Number (do not use SSN)
- Authorization approvals
- Exceptions approvals (which must be received in advance of travel)
- Reason for travel
- Hard-copy confirmations of expenses if online methods were used to procure services (i.e., airline tickets)
- Fully explained reason for business phone calls, internet service, or fax services
- Printouts of appropriate per diem rate table for international destinations
- Itemized receipt for lodging
- Receipt for each meal expenditure of \$75 or more
- Receipt for registration fees
- Reason for reserved "for hire transportation" (i.e. taxi, shuttle, metro). Receipts are required if claim is more than \$75 per instance
- Work hours and overtime hours for overtime meals
- Approval for use of private or chartered airlines or State-owned aircraft
- Copy of the conference itinerary with the activities you attended highlighted, if there are multiple activities during the same time period.

Travelers must keep receipts and accurate records of all expenses to ensure correct reporting and submission of travel reimbursements. Travel reimbursements will not be

made from travel charge card statements or tissue receipts. Each day's expenses must be shown separately on the voucher. A copy of a correctly filled out travel voucher is attached. Assistance in completing the travel voucher is available from Accounts Payable.

The Commonwealth of Virginia uses the GSA rates for Lodging and M&IE expenses, therefore, the correct rates must be researched and documented clearly on the TERV by the traveler. By signing the travel reimbursement request, the traveler is certifying the accuracy of all information and the legitimacy of the travel. The signature of the traveler's supervisor certifies that the supervisor agrees that the travel was necessary and the requested reimbursements are proper.

*Note: the GSA rates are generally published for the Federal fiscal year, which runs from October 1 – September 30 annually.

PUBLICATION

This policy will be widely published and distributed to the University community. To ensure timely publication and distribution thereof, the Responsible Office will make every effort to:

- Communicate the policy in writing, electronic or otherwise, to the University community within 14 days of approval;
- Submit the policy for inclusion in the online Policy Library within 14 days of approval;
- Post the policy on the appropriate SharePoint and/or Website; and
- Educate and train all stakeholders and appropriate audiences on the policy's content as necessary. Failure to meet the publication requirements does not invalidate this policy.

REVIEW SCHEDULE

- Next Scheduled Review: 04/06/2021
- Approval by, date: President, 09/24/2014
- Revision History: 03/30/2005; 08/21/2006; 09/24/2014; 06/01/2015; 07/07/2016, 08/01/2017; 04/06/2018
- Supersedes: University Travel Policies and Procedures 41.208

RELATED DOCUMENTS

1. Official Business (Non-Travel) Meals Policy
<https://www.nsu.edu/policy/admin-41-02.aspx>
2. Commonwealth Accounting Policy and Procedures (CAPP) Manual Section 20300:
http://www.doa.virginia.gov/reference/CAPP/CAPP_Topics_Cardinal/20335-2015-Dec.pdf
3. GSA.gov- Per diem Rates by State- CONUS- Continental United States
<https://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/101518>

GSA.gov- Alaska, Hawaii, US Territories, & Possessions- OCONUS- Outside Continental US
<http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/>

4. GSA.gov- Per diem Rates International Counties- OCONUS – Outside Continental US Per diem Breakdown of Meal and Incidentals for all OCONUS Rates <https://aoprals.state.gov>
5. Per diem Calculator- Continental United States Only- Lodging and Meals Calculation for Each Travel Day <http://perdiemcalc.net/ga-np>
6. Oanda.com – Converting Foreign Currency <https://www.oanda.com>
7. Trip Calculator – Cost Comparison between Enterprise and Mileage Reimbursement
<https://www.dgs.virginia.gov/fleet/travel-planning/trip-calculator/>

FORMS

1. Travel Expense Reimbursement Voucher
https://www.doa.virginia.gov/forms/travel_Forms/Travel_Reim_Form.pdf
2. Travel Advance Request on MyNSU Portal under Accounts Payable Office:
<https://my.nsu.edu/faculty/ap/default.aspx>
3. Business Meal Certification Form on MyNSU Portal under Accounts Payable Office:
<https://my.nsu.edu/faculty/ap/default.aspx>