

# Executive Summary for Travel Advances & Travel Expenses

Effective 07/01/2016

The following is intended to outline the major requirements and highlight changes and clarifications from the previous policy. The new policy has been designed to include best practices and consistency with peer Universities. Generally speaking, there are no restrictive spending limits. The traveler should use prudent judgment in selecting moderate lodging & reasonably priced meals based upon their destination. More restrictive policies may be set at the department or school level. However, it is the responsibility of the department or school to document, communicate, and enforce any restrictions they impose. More details and instructions can be found at [aishelp.wustl.edu](http://aishelp.wustl.edu), *Accounts Payable*.

When utilizing sponsored funds to pay for travel, there are many issues to consider in addition to the Washington University Travel Policy. Sponsored Projects Accounting (SPA) reviews travel submitted via travel reports, travel advances, and ProCard documents for compliance with the Washington University Travel policy as well as the applicable agency and federal guidelines. Guidance specific to travel on Sponsored Projects can be found on the SPA website under Policies and Guidelines.

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- Formal approval of travel before the trip is not required.
- Travel can be paid for using the following methods:
  - Personal Credit Card
  - Travel Advance
  - Corporate Travel and Entertainment Card
  - Procurement Card
- There is not a specific deadline when one can obtain a travel advance in order to cover costs paid up front (e.g. purchasing an airline ticket months in advance of the trip to secure lowest airfare). Travel advances for expenses that will be incurred during the trip will not be approved prior to 30 days before the trip.
- Employees may use the procurement card to pay for airfare, registration, hotel, car, meals, social expense, and catered events. Employees cannot use the procurement card to pay for meals when using the meal and incidental expense per diem method.
- All travel expenses paid by the procurement card must be entered on a travel expense statement. As a best practice, the supplemental procurement card expenses form should be used to detail procurement card activity. The original procurement card receipts should be kept in the department or school procurement card files.
- If a trip is paid for entirely by procurement card, a travel expense statement must be completed and approved. It is not necessary to enter this travel report in AIS; however, the statement and documentation must be retained in the department.
- Reimbursement on a per diem basis is allowed to cover meal and incidental expenses each day in lieu of actual costs. Travelers may not request reimbursements based on actual expenses for one portion of the trip and per diem for the remainder. With per diem, the traveler is not required to provide receipts for meals and incidentals.
- In order for the traveler to avoid possible taxable income, per diem rates cannot exceed the federal rates (see the Travel Policy for the websites to use).
- No per diem may be claimed for one-day travel (when there is no overnight travel).
- Per diem rates must be adjusted under the following circumstances:
  - For day of departure and return, rate is reduced to 75%.
  - Per diem is reduced for meals provided by a conference or by others (15% breakfast, 25% lunch, 60% dinner).

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- If traveler selects the per diem method but hosts a business meal with others (non Washington University employees), the university will reimburse this particular meal based on a receipt. The traveler must reduce the total daily per diem for the meal. (15% breakfast, 25% lunch, 60% dinner)
- Supporting documentation should provide evidence of origination from the vendor that contains purchasing details including dates, price and proof of payment. An electronic or legible picture of the original receipt which is printed is acceptable supporting documentation.
- Travel related expenses must be submitted on the travel expense statement with receipts attached (other than procurement card and when using the meal and incidental expense per diem method). Supporting documentation is encouraged for all actual reimbursable expenses, regardless of amount; however, it is only required for individual expenses of \$50 or more. Any individual transaction of \$50 or more without a receipt requires exception approval. Special Rule for Sponsored Projects: Some sponsors require actual receipts for all transactions to be submitted with a request for reimbursement to the University. In these cases, it is necessary to obtain and attach all receipts regardless of dollar amount to the travel report.
- Exception approval will be required if missing receipts are \$75 or greater per day.
- After the traveler signs the travel expense statement, the travel expense statement must be signed by someone who is at least one level higher than the traveler or by a designee coordinated with the Accounts Payable Manager and approved by the Controller's Office. Principal Investigators (PI's) can sign for travel paid on their research grants. PI's cannot approve their own travel expense statements.
- Signature stamps are not acceptable but approved electronic signatures are allowed. Those interested in electronic signature capabilities please contact WashU IT at [CIO@wustl.edu](mailto:CIO@wustl.edu) or visit <http://resourcemanagement.wustl.edu/purchasing-services/procedures/procurement-of-computers-software-and-services/>. The Audit Log page(s) should be printed and included with the electronically signed travel report. Accounts Payable (AP) and Sponsored Projects Accounting (SPA) will not approve an electronically signed travel report without this documentation.
- When an exception to the policy is necessary, a brief explanation of the exception must be noted on the travel expense statement and exception approval must be obtained from the Dean or Vice Chancellor who has responsibility over the employee's department. If responsibility is delegated to someone other than the Dean or Vice Chancellor, it cannot be delegated to the person who approves the Travel Report and the designee must be coordinated with the Accounts Payable Manager and approved by the Controller's Office. Exceptions for Deans, Executive Vice Chancellors, and other Senior Management reporting to the Chancellor, will be approved by the CFO or Controller in the CFO's absence.

## **Reimbursable and Non-Reimbursable Expenses List**

### **Reimbursable Business Travel Expenses**

- Lowest available commercial coach / economy airfare available that meets the business purpose of the trip. Guidance specific to Sponsored Projects travel can be found on the SPA website under Policies and Guidelines.
- Business/Business Select Class will not be reimbursed without exception approval except for individual flight segments of 5 or more hours or when there is a medical need of an employee. Written documentation, no older than 12 months, from a doctor must be submitted with the travel expense statement. For flight segments greater than 5 hours a one class upgrade from coach / economy flight class will be reimbursed.
- First class airfare is only permitted with written approval from the Chancellor or with exception

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approval by the CFO or Controller when it is not a one class upgrade.

- Moderately priced lodging
- Travel meals
- Automobile rental
- Gas for rental car
- When renting/leasing vehicles outside the United States, Canada, and U.S. territories, travelers must elect to purchase the minimum liability and physical damage insurance coverages offered by the rental agency.
- When a personal automobile is used by the employee for convenience on a work related trip, a more comprehensive review of all costs of flying versus driving should be considered.
- Registration fees
- Ground transportation
- Laundry and valet services which can not be deferred until completion of the trip (for trips less than five days, these services are not normally reimbursed). The meal and incidental per diem rate for foreign travel also includes laundry and dry cleaning therefore it cannot be claimed as a separate expense.
- Telephone/Internet expense when used for business purposes
- Personal phone calls, within reason, are reimbursable but may not be charged to a sponsored fund
- Tips (except when the per diem method for meals and incidentals is used).
- Foreign currency transaction fees such as ATM charges or currency conversion charges

## **Non-Reimbursable Travel Expenses**

- Personal entertainment expenses including in-flight movies, headsets, books, magazines, newspapers, health club fees, hotel pay-per-view movies, in-theater movies, greens fees, ski passes, social activities, honor bar charges, etc.
- Babysitting, house-sitting, pet-sitting and kennel fees
- Personal grooming including haircuts and shoeshine services
- Incremental travel costs including airfare, lodging and meals for spouses or other persons accompanying an employee (in limited, approved situations, spousal travel may be reimbursed)
- Hotel, meals and other costs associated with going to a conference or on business travel early or staying late for non-business related reasons
- Late fees related to personal liability cards
- Traffic fines, court costs, parking violations, and auto repairs
- Over the counter medicine or prescription medicines
- Airline club fees
- Rental car extra charges such as child safety seats, GPS devices for domestic travel, satellite radio.

## **Other**

- The University has a travel accident policy that provides accident insurance to employees traveling on University business (there are a few exceptions). Questions regarding insurance coverage should be directed to the Insurance Department or visit the Insurance and Risk Management website for additional information.
- Visit the Global Engagement website (under Policies & Resources) for information regarding the International SOS Emergency Travel Assistance Service plan, International Travel Registry and the International Travel Policy to ensure consistent set of travel standards.

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## Corporate Travel & Entertainment Card

Washington University has partnered with JPMorgan Chase to offer a personal liability Travel and Entertainment (T&E) card for the University. Employees who are expected to travel or incur entertainment expense on behalf of the University may apply for this T&E Card. The department head or business manager must approve all T&E Card requests. The card will allow employees to pay for business related travel and entertainment expenses without tying up personal credit cards. This is a personal liability card and the cardholder is responsible for issuing payment to JPMorgan Chase by the stated due date.

### **Benefits**

- Card can be used for all business related travel and entertainment expenses including airfare, hotel, transportation, and meals
- Allows traveler to keep business expenses separate from personal expenses
- Will not impact personal credit history unless cardholder becomes 120 days delinquent
- Ability to receive and pay credit card statement on-line
- Payment due date 25 days after billing date
- VISA family of benefits including lost luggage insurance, travel insurance, and auto rental damage waivers