



Section: Business and Finance

Section Number: 310

Subject: Travel Procedures

Date: August 2006

INTRODUCTION

This section is designed to provide guidance to faculty and staff on University travel policies, regulations and procedures. These guidelines are in general terms and are not expected to cover every situation. For questions regarding policies, procedures or travel arrangements, call Purchasing Services at 616-331-2280. For questions regarding travel and expense reimbursement, call the Accounting Office at 616-331-2203.

AUTHORIZATION

It is the responsibility of each prospective traveler to secure the appropriate approval for University travel from his/her supervisor, department head, dean, director or executive officer. Additional regulations may apply for travel associated with grant funding, especially for international travel. The following individuals would be eligible for reimbursement of reasonable expenses while traveling for University-related purposes:

- University Board of Trustees, faculty and staff employees
- Non-employee guests invited to the University for lectures, consulting, interviews, recruiting, and other special occasions, or those requested to travel for the University as specified in a contractual arrangement

ARRANGEMENTS

Employees: Each traveler is responsible for arranging his/her own travel schedule, booking reservations, and payment of expenses. [Carlson Wagonlit \(CWT\)](#) is the University's authorized travel agency. The agency provides a variety of travel related services protected by their quality and assurance policy. Call 616-493-9220 for assistance with your travel requirements and questions.

University Guests/Groups: The host department is responsible for coordinating travel arrangements for University guests and non-employee groups. Contact the University's travel agency for assistance in booking air and/or ground transportation, hotel accommodations, car/van rentals or bus charters. The travel agency can also assist with other arrangements such as scheduling meeting rooms, catering service, restaurant reservations, etc. at off-campus locations if required. Transportation tickets, hotel and/or car rental confirmations will be delivered to the host department.

To request charges direct billed to the University, the following information must be given to the travel agency: guest name, dates of travel, hotel reservation, car rental, University host/arranger's name, department name, account number, and phone number. Upon receipt of invoices from the travel/hotel/car rental agency, the Accounting Office will send a copy to the department for verification of the direct-billed charges and authorized signature for payment approval. The approved invoice copy must be returned to Accounting promptly.

CORPORATE CHARGE CARD

University faculty and staff have an opportunity to charge all business travel and entertainment expenses to one of two credit cards: American Express or Mastercard.

1. American Express Corporate Charge Card: There is a \$55.00 non-reimbursable annual membership fee to participate in this program. Call the Business and Finance Office at 616-331-2257 for an application.
2. Fifth Third Mastercard: There is no annual fee to participate in this program. Call the Human Resources office at 616-331-2215 for an application.

It is important to note that individual cardholders are personally liable for all charges on their American Express or Mastercard charge card. A monthly statement of charges will be sent to the cardholder, who is solely responsible for full and timely payment of all charges. Please note that charges to the American Express card can not be deferred. Requests for eligible travel reimbursement should be made soon after completion of the trip and need not wait for receipt of the credit card statement. Refer to the Expense Reimbursements section for reimbursement of airline tickets purchased far in advance of trip.

EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENTS

The following individuals are eligible for reimbursement of reasonable expenses while traveling for University-related purposes:

- University Board of Trustees, faculty and staff employees.
- Non-employee guests invited to the University for lectures, consulting, interviews, recruiting, and other special occasions, or those requested to travel for the University as specified in a contractual arrangement or approved by the appropriate executive officer.

Refer to the [Travel & Expense Guidelines](#) for the current reimbursement schedule.

Transportation:

A. Commercial Airlines

1. Airfare must be booked at lowest economy or coach class unless the traveler certifies on the Travel and Expense Form that such classes were not available. The passenger's ticket coupon/receipt or e-ticket itinerary must be submitted when reconciling expenses. If a credit card statement for airfare is due before the trip has been completed, the University will reimburse that expense to the traveler when requested on the Travel and Expense Form.

2. The University will permit the benefits of airline frequent flyer programs derived from travel paid for by the University to accrue to the traveler. However, travelers are encouraged to apply these benefits toward future University travel.
- B. Charter Air Service – Charter air service may be authorized when it is to the advantage of the University measured by comparative travel costs and the time constraints of the travelers.
- C. Personal Aircraft – Air travel for University business on an aircraft owned/leased by employees is prohibited. All University air travel must be booked on regularly scheduled commercial airlines or a University chartered aircraft.
- D. Public Transportation – Taxis, buses, subways, limousines, etc. are reimbursable at full fare for University business.
- E. Rental Vehicles – The use of rental vehicles is limited to situations where commercial transportation is either not available or is impractical. Renting vehicles for use at out-of-state destinations is permitted if necessary to the purpose of the trip. The University will reimburse expenses for economy or midsize vehicles. Contact either the Facilities Services Office or the University’s travel agency for assistance with rental vehicles.
1. A major credit card is required as security at time the vehicle is picked up. The rental agreement form and receipt must accompany the Travel and Expense Form for reimbursement.
 2. The University has discount agreements with several major rental agencies. Discount cards are available from the travel agency or the Purchasing Office. Request the applicable discounted rate when reserving a vehicle. Some promotional specials may be more economical than the discounted rate; request the best rate available.
 3. Refer to the Insurance section regarding appropriate coverage.
- F. Personal Vehicles
1. If an employee works primarily on campus and has a GVSU principal office assigned or principal place of business, the mileage reimbursement allowed will be calculated from their principal GVSU office or place of business. Employees involved in work or temporary assignments off campus (i.e. field supervision, teaching, TV broadcasting, etc.) will be allowed mileage reimbursement based on their distance from their GVSU campus principal office/place of business or from their home to the place of the work or temporary assignment, whichever is less. Mileage for travel between home and campus is personal commuting and is not reimbursable.
 2. If an employee works primarily in the field off-campus, the mileage reimbursement allowed will be from either their home or an alternative location that is approved by the appointing officer. This approved location will be considered the point that mileage reimbursement will be calculated from.
 3. Mileage within a campus location (Pew or Allendale, for example) is generally not reimbursable unless the employee is required to transport special equipment or tools to perform their duties and /or receives appointing officer approval.
 4. Mileage between all campuses is permissible for reimbursement. Employees are encouraged to utilize the bus service between the Grand Rapid and Allendale campuses whenever possible rather than to request reimbursement.

5. Personal vehicles may be used in lieu of commercial airline travel. Mileage will be reimbursed at the established current rate but should cost the University no more than the commercial coach/economy airline fare. Similarly, transportation by bus, train, or other means will be reimbursed for actual cost but no more than the commercial coach/economy airline fare.
6. Expenses for gasoline, repairs, towing, etc. are included in mileage allowance. Expenses for parking, storage, tolls and ferries are reimbursable and limited to the actual amount paid. Parking fines and fees at University facilities are not reimbursable expenses. Any fine or charge for a violation of public policy (such as a speeding ticket, etc.), is not a reimbursable expense.
7. Refer to the [Table of Standard Mileage](#) for the current schedule and eligible reimbursements.
8. Any exception to the policies in [F. Personal Vehicles](#) requires approval by the Vice-President of the respective Division.

Meals:

- A. Reimbursement for individual meals will not exceed the maximum per diem allowance. Reimbursement for meals included in a conference or meeting fee is not allowed. Meals for employees involved in assignments off campus are allowable when deemed appropriate by their supervisor.
- B. Meals including University guests are allowable at the actual cost not to exceed the maximum per diem allowance. Reimbursement requests must include a receipt with the guest's name, company name, and business purpose of the meeting.
- C. Meals for University employee groups are reimbursable only with appropriate executive officer approval and documentation.

Lodging: Actual lodging expenses, as evidenced by an original receipt, are reimbursable. The maximum single room rate will be reimbursed when a university traveler shares lodging with a non-university person. Room service expenses are reimbursable in accordance with the per diem allowance. Reasonable expenses incurred for tips are reimbursable without receipt.

The University's travel agency has discount agreements with several properties. Contact the travel agency for assistance with lodging accommodations.

Conference Fees: Actual registration fees for conferences, seminars, etc. will be reimbursed as evidenced by a registration confirmation or paid receipt. Fees for non-business and/or spousal activities associated with the conference, such as golf or tour events, are not reimbursable. It is preferred that the conference registration be paid with the University's purchasing card. Conference registrations may also be processed for payment by submitting an online purchasing requisition through Banner. A copy of the completed registration form (with the requisition number written on it) can then be sent to the Purchasing office in 201 LMH.

Miscellaneous Expenses:

- A. Telephone calls and telegrams made for business purposes are allowable and must be listed separately on the Travel and Expense Form. Dates, company names and names of persons called must be identified.

- B. Reasonable expenses incurred for handling, storage and checking of baggage are allowed.
- C. Personal expenses incurred for valet service, entertainment, personal phone calls, etc. will not be reimbursed.
- D. Parking fees at University facilities are not reimbursable expenses.

Out-of-Pocket Expenses: The Travel and Expense Form may also be used for reimbursement of non-travel related, out-of-pocket expenses up to \$100. The form must indicate a description of the items to be reimbursed, FOAP, appropriate signatures, and the original receipt(s) must be included. Copies of personal checks are not acceptable as documentation for reimbursement.

EXPENSE RECONCILIATION

Travel and Expense Form:

- A. All reimbursement requests for travel expenses must be submitted on a [Travel & Expense Form](#). The purpose and dates of the trip must be clearly stated. Submit the completed form and required receipts to the Accounting Office. Any unused Travel Advance funds must be returned with the completed Travel and Expense Form and required receipts to the Accounting Office or Cashier's Office. Do not send cash in the mail.
- B. University guests and other approved non-University employees should also use the Travel and Expense Form to request reimbursement of travel expenses. The completed form with G Number (or for non-GVSU employees the social security number) must be approved by appropriate executive officer or as specified in a contractual arrangement.

Settlement Date: The Travel and Expense Form should be submitted at the earliest practical date after return from the trip, but within thirty (30) calendar days (fifteen for travel advances).

Required Receipts: Only actual business expenses incurred, supported by the required original receipts must be submitted for reimbursement. Any extenuating circumstances resulting in altered travel plans or unusual expenses must be clearly explained on the Travel and Expense Form. Any questionable claims, non-compliant requests, or alterations of receipts may result in the form being returned to the traveler for explanation, deductions from the requested reimbursement amount, and/or approval by the appropriate executive officer.

Foreign Currency: Expenses must be expressed in U.S. dollars with the foreign exchange rates applied or currency difference identified where necessary. The Travel and Expense Form total must be stated in U.S. dollars. Refer to the [Universal Currency Converter](#) for assistance.

CANCELLED TRIP

- A. If an approved trip is cancelled and a Travel Advance was issued, the original check or a personal check must be returned promptly to the Accounting Office for deposit.
- B. Airline tickets already received are subject to airline/travel agency return regulations. When applicable, the credit will be issued to the party having made payment. Cancellation fees charged by the airline/travel agency are eligible for reimbursement. When reimbursement has already been received for the cancelled trip, the traveler must reconcile this credit promptly with the Accounting Office.

INSURANCE

UNIVERSITY VEHICLES: All university vehicles are insured for vehicle liability (including the statutory Michigan no fault coverage) while being driven anywhere in the U.S. or Canada. Coverage is extended to anyone driving these vehicles with university permission.

Personal Vehicles: Employee personal vehicles are insured for vehicle liability while being driven on University business. This coverage is secondary to employee's personal automobile insurance and is subject to specific deductibles.

Rental Vehicles: Rental vehicles are covered under the University's liability policy. All terms and conditions of the vehicle rental agreement should be read and followed, particularly concerning authorized drivers. Violations of the agreement or driving regulations may render the University responsible for any damages. Use the following guidelines for insurance coverage when renting vehicles. Questions concerning insurance coverage should be directed to Business Services at 616-331-2257.

- A. Decline the collision damage waiver insurance. The University provides coverage that eliminates liability for replacement at full retail value due to collision damage.
- B. Decline the personal accident insurance if rental was booked by the university's travel agency and/or paying with the American Express Corporate charge card or the Fifth Third Visa offered through GVSU. Travel agency and corporate charge card program contracts automatically provide accident/medical and death benefits under personal insurance coverage.
- C. Decline the personal effects insurance for university property. The university is insured for property in the vehicle. Personal property may be covered under your personal insurance; confirm with your insurance agent. Accepting the coverage for personal property is at your expense.
- D. When vehicles are rented for university business travel, all rental contracts should be issued in the university's name to avoid confusion concerning vehicle liability insurance.

ACCIDENTS AND EMERGENCIES

Accident Reports:

In addition to those actions normally required in the event of an accident, the driver of any vehicle on University business should:

- A. Report the accident to his/her supervisor. Accidents involving serious personal injury or vehicle damage should be reported to the Department of Public Safety.
- B. If driving a University vehicle, a M.U.S.I.C. Motor Vehicle Loss Report must be submitted. Call the Business Services Office at 616-331-2257 for assistance.
- C. When another vehicle is involved in the accident, obtain that driver's insurance company name and address. Also obtain the names, addresses and license plate numbers of potential witnesses.

Reporting Illness or Emergency:

- A. In cases of serious illness, accident or emergency that occur while traveling on University business, the traveler should notify his/her supervisor. If the supervisor cannot be reached, contact the University Human Resources Office.
- B. It is the responsibility of traveler to inform his/her supervisor of address and phone number while traveling on University business. This is important should it become necessary to contact traveler in the event of an emergency.