

AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY: DEPARTMENT FOR BUSINESS AFFAIRS
RESPONSIBLE CONTACT: VICE PRESIDENT FOR BUSINESS AFFAIRS
POLICY IDENTIFICATION: TRAVEL POLICY
Effective Date: 02/06/09
LAST REVISED: 05/2022

It is the policy of the University to comply with the standards of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and of federal, state, and non-governmental sponsors regarding travel. All faculty, staff, students, and other visitors who travel for University business holds a position of trust and responsibility. They represent the University to the outside community, and are authorized to spend University funds for travel. The University reserves the right to restrict, deny, postpone, or recall any travel for University business for any reason, including but not limited to, travel bans, concerns about the safety of the destination, or limited funds.

Procedures

The Travel Authority Request form must be completed by the requester, signed by the Department Head, and turned in the Office for Business Affairs at least 10 working days in advance of the trip. If travel advance funds are paid to the requester prior to the trip, the advance must be accounted for at the end of the trip on the Travel Expense Voucher. All travel must be authorized prior to the trip and any travel advance funds issued for such travel must be accounted for within three (3) working days of the return to the campus. All expenses will be scrutinized and possibly disallowed if unreasonable or unallowable.

By signing the Travel Authority request form, the recipient of advance travel funds agrees to have his/ her wages garnished for the advance until the Travel Expense Voucher is submitted to the Office for Business Affairs.

Non-employees

Non-employees, such as consultants, visiting lecturers and other individuals providing services to VUU are treated as independent contractors. As such, their travel expenses are included in the fees she/he charges to the University, unless otherwise specified in their contract. Expense reimbursement for travel for will be paid to independent contractors directly or should be included as per their contract stipulation. Documentation for payment must accompany a fully executed professional service agreement or an invoice submitted by the independent contractor. The independent contractor should retain all original receipts. All appropriate payments will be included, and reported to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as compensation on the Form 1099 Miscellaneous.

Airline Travel including International Flights

All airline tickets

- a. should **ONLY** be purchased after the trip has been approved, and through Purchasing Department which then alerts the requester via email of the completed purchase.
- b. employee purchase of airline ticket for an authorized and properly approved travel using her/his personal credit/ debit card, should rarely happen unless unusual circumstances arise while she/he is already out on an authorized travel trip. If this occurs, she/he must report the expense on the “*Travel Expense Voucher Form*” after returning from the trip.
- c. employee is required to attach original ticket stubs for each leg of the trip to the “*Travel expense Voucher Form*” when submitting travel expenses for reimbursement as stipulated within this policy.
- d. University employees are encouraged to use electronic tickets to minimize ticket delivery costs and as a means of expediting the refund process when necessary. When e-tickets are used, the boarding pass will be the accompanying document on the completed “*Travel Expense report*”.
- e. The University will cover fares as follows:
 - Coach class fares on domestic flights
 - Coach class fares on international flights up to **six (6)** hours (not including layovers)
 - Business class fares on international flights greater than **six (6)** hours (not including layovers)

Travelers may retain frequent flyer program benefits. However, participation in these programs must not influence flight selection which will result in incremental cost to the University beyond the most economical airfare, as defined in this Policy. The University will not reimburse Travelers for tickets purchased with frequent flyer miles.

Ancillary fees (e.g., convenient or early boarding, extended legroom, seat location, baggage, in-flight meals, wi-fi service, etc.) should be incurred responsibly and should not be excessive. Recommended baggage tip is \$1.00 per bag.

In order to obtain the lowest possible airfare, airline travel should be booked as far in advance as possible, *preferably* a minimum of 21 days. For most travel, the preferred method of transportation will be commercial air.

Reimbursement for checked baggage will be limited to one piece of luggage if traveling four days or less, and a maximum reimbursement of two pieces of checked baggage for travel over four days.

Lodging

Lodging costs are reimbursed **only** if traveler is required to be away from her/his residence or duty post substantially longer than a business work day, and would not be able to return to their home or duty post by 7:00 p.m.

Lodging – The daily rate (including associated taxes and fees) may be between ninety-five (\$95.00) and should not exceed one hundred thirty (\$130.00).

NOTE: The University will **not** provide travel advances or reimbursements for spouses or others who accompany faculty or staff on University business.

In view of the fact that hotel reservations are guaranteed to assure lodging for late arrivals, travelers are required to cancel reservations in a timely manner to prevent “no show” charges, except under extenuating circumstances. (NO SHOW charges are not routinely reimbursed.) Travelers who travel overnight on University business are required to use the standard hotel rates.

Meals

Traveler(s) will be reimbursed for personal meal expenses while on business travel at the University established daily *Per Diem* rate of fifty (\$50.00) .The per diem is to cover three (3) meals per day (breakfast, lunch, and dinner), or any combination of the three. Meal cost above the per diem amount will be considered a personal expense not reimbursable by the University.

NOTE: The University’s Per diem rate is based on approximately one-third (1/3) of the GSA guidelines for calendar year 2022, and can be found at <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>.

The prerequisite for the per diem rate is as follows:

1. Breakfast \$10.00 – A traveler leaves or returns to the University before 9:00 a.m.
2. Lunch \$15.00 – A traveler leaves or returns to the University after 11:30 a.m.
3. Dinner \$25.00 – A traveler leaves or returns to the University after 4:00 p.m.

Gratuity recommended is 15% for meals keeping in mind the University’s daily per diem limit.

Proof of travel is required (e.g., boarding pass, conference registration tag, etc.).

Ground Transportation

The most economical mode of transportation, such as shuttle services, public transportation, taxi, Uber or Lyft should be used to and from air, rail or bus terminals, whenever possible.

Rental Cars: Depending on the traveling party size (in number of persons), the University requires purchasing to reserve rentals of a compact or standard size car when:

- a) other forms of transportation are not available;
- b) distance from place of origination to destination is at least twenty-five or more miles; and
- c) the overall cost of renting a car (including the cost of parking at destination) results in cost savings compared to other forms of transportation.

When renting a car, Purchasing will decline the Collision Damage Waiver (CDW) and the Liability Damage Waiver (LDW) option or other insurance options because such coverage is provided under the University’s insurance policies.

i. Private Vehicles -

Use of a private automobile is discouraged, except for special travel within the state. Personal vehicle travel shall be reimbursed at the current mileage rate established by the University, including parking and toll fees. If two or more persons are traveling together in the same vehicle, only one person will be reimbursed for mileage.

A traveler choosing to use her/his personal automobile for out of state travel as opposed to air transportation or rental car use, must evaluate the costs and benefits of doing so, as

her/his reimbursement will be based on the lesser cost of the two methods of transportation.

Employees are not covered under the University's automobile insurance policy when driving their own vehicle for university business purposes. It is the personal responsibility of the owner of a vehicle being used for university business to carry adequate insurance coverage for their protection and for the protection of any passengers. An employee driving her/his own vehicle, will be reimbursed a mileage rate of **\$.41** calculated on a per mile basis for the actual miles traveled (not more than ten (10) miles over the round-trip mileage listed on Google/MapQuest Maps). The mileage rate covers all transportation and operating costs of the vehicle, including gasoline, and is 70% of the stated IRS rate in effect at the time of travel. Current IRS rates are available at the following link: <https://www.irs.gov/tax-professionals/standard-mileage-rates>.

ii.No Mileage -

No mileage will be allowed for travel between an employee's home and his official workstation. Employees traveling directly from home to a required business destination, including their nonhome base, shall deduct the normal travel mileage between their home and regular office location, using the University's standard reimbursable rate. Documentation should be submitted with reimbursement request (i.e., MapQuest printout). (Rate can be confirmed by Purchasing Department.)

iii.Rental Cars

For rental cars, or approved limousine service, and private vehicles, the University will also cover tolls, ferries and parking. The University will not reimburse employees for parking tickets, fines for moving violations or vehicle towing charges.

Note: The use of rental cars should be limited to instances in which other means of transportation are not economical or practical. In the effort to control costs to the University, be fiscally responsible with grants and contracts and private funds, Purchasing will be instrumental in this determination during travel events.

The incremental cost of vehicle upgrades is to be considered a personal expense.

(The loss damage coverage (LDW) and / or personal accident insurance (PAI) or additional liability insurance should be declined.)

The University maintains comprehensive collision and liability insurance on all vehicles rented or leased in the University's name, therefore the traveler must be on the University's vehicle insurance in order to rent a vehicle in the University's name. If possible, a University issued credit card should be used for the transaction. Add the University's name to the signature block, in addition to the renter's name and title. If the vehicle is in an accident, the employee must notify the Division of Business Affairs within 24 hours, in addition to notifying the car rental agency.

To secure reimbursement following completion of travel, the receipted rental car bill must accompany a properly completed Travel Expense Form.

The traveler should refill their gas tanks before returning the vehicle, (rental companies levy a charge for refueling, far more than the price of gas.)

If an employee reserves a vehicle on their own, the University may not reimburse the employee for car rental

Note: Traffic Violations – Traffic and parking violations received while driving rental, personal or college owned vehicles are not reimbursed. Reimbursement for gasoline, oil changes, towing, repairs and other similar expenditures are not allowed. The University does not reimburse for rental cars used for local travel

Rail and other forms of transportation:

The University will pay the cost of the lowest class available for the trip for rail transportation or other form of transportation.

Local Travel: Barring exceptional business reasons, local travel does not qualify for an overnight stay or payment of personal meals. If a trip exceeds the local travel limit but the traveler chooses not to stay overnight, personal meals will be eligible for reimbursement at the established Per Diem Rate: \$ 50.00.

Registration Fees

University employees are frequently required to pre-register for conferences and workshops. To secure prepayment or reimbursement for registration fees, the employee must include the fee(s) on their “*Travel Request Form*”, and submit to the Accounts Payable Department **20** days prior to the event.

- **NOTE:** The University has a strict mandate that no alcohol may be charged as a business expense. Under NO circumstances should alcohol be charged on an employee’s “*Travel Expense Form*”.
- Mileage - All travel and mileage reimbursement forms can be retrieved from www.myvuu.edu under the Business Affairs tab.
- Parking - Reimbursement for parking (other than metered) and toll fees shall be by receipt only. Parking at the airport will be reimbursed, but travelers are urged to use the lower-cost parking lots, when available. Only economy lot rates will be reimbursable. If public transportation or taxi service to and from the airport is available at a lower cost, the traveler is encouraged to take advantage of these savings.
- Personal Vehicle - An employee claiming and receiving reimbursement for personal vehicle shall report the names of other Virginia University employees travelling with them to include their employee identification number.
 - Trips of more than **300** miles each way will be reimbursed at the lesser of the following amounts:
 - A. The cost of traveling by air (or other commercial carrier, if the destination is not serviced by any airlines), including the cost of discounted tourist or economy class airline ticket(s), ground transportation, mileage and airport parking if necessary, or

- B. Mileage at the current reimbursement rate – plus tolls and hotel parking if necessary. Cost comparisons are to be attached to the “*Travel Request Form*” by the traveler prior to approval and reimbursement will be limited to actual costs or the approved amount, whichever is less.
- Registration Fees
 - After the employee has returned from a conference or workshop the registration form and / or conference brochure and agenda must accompany a properly completed Travel Expense Form. The form must be submitted to the Accounts Payable Department for reimbursement within three (3) working days after the conference or workshop. If the requester is denied approval to attend a conference or workshop, it is the responsibility of the requester to cancel any conference / working registration before any fees are accrued.
- Upon return, the employee must complete the “Travel Expense Voucher”, to reconcile and record their actual travel expenditures, including any travel advance funds received. The employee should attach all receipts that correlate to their business trip. **This form should be completed within three (3) business days upon return from their trip, and submitted for review and approval by the appropriate signatories.**
- When actual amounts spent exceed a travel advance amount, per the “*Travel Request/Authority Form*” a new “*Requisition Form*” must be completed and submitted to create a new “*Purchase Order*” to reimburse the traveler for additional travel expenses. The University will issue a check to the traveler on the next check run after their “*Travel Expense Voucher*” has been submitted and approved.

If the actual amount spent is less than the amount advanced, per the “*Travel Request/Authority Form*” the traveler should remit the funds by cash, check or money order to the University’s cashier within 3 business days from the date trip ends and keep a copy of the receipt as proof of closing out the travel process. The traveler should make the check or money order payable to Virginia Union University and attach it to the completed “*Travel Expense Voucher*”. If the traveler’s check is returned by the bank, due to insufficient funds, the University will assess the traveler a fee of \$50 in addition to the amount to be refunded to the University.

SPECIAL NOTE: If the travel advance funds are not reconciled within the specified time (as noted above), the recipient of the advance travel funds agrees to have his/ her wages garnished for an amount equal to the total advanced, until the “*Travel Expense Voucher*” is completed and submitted for review and approval.

LIABILITY: Only employees who are authorized to travel on behalf of the University will be covered under our general liability insurance policy. Therefore, it is extremely important that all business travel be appropriately sanctioned before the employee leaves on the business trip.

NON-REIMBURSABLE EXPENSES

1. Amenities, such as movies, in-room bars
2. Magazines, books or other personal reading material
3. Outlays for personal recreation or entertainment, such as greens fees, sightseeing fares, theater tickets, lift tickets, etc.
4. Airline travel insurance costs
5. Incremental airline ticket costs to obtain frequent flyer benefits
6. Frequent flyer credits or tickets
7. Fines for automobile or parking violations
8. Cost differential on premium and luxury car rentals
9. Fees for personal credit card usage
10. Incremental cost for adjusting coach fare to first class, unless there is an emergency to return home and the President or Senior Vice President for Business Affairs approves the cost.