



# Western Michigan University

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## Travel Policy and Procedures & Expense Reimbursements

University Travel Site <http://wmich.edu/travel/>

Travel forms and check lists <http://wmich.edu/travel/forms.html>

Frequently asked questions <http://wmich.edu/travel/>

Payroll and Disbursements

(269)387-2154

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## OVERVIEW

### **Purpose and Scope**

The objective of these guidelines is to provide Western Michigan University travelers with the policies and procedures for receiving authorization to travel, reporting expenses, and obtaining reimbursement when traveling on University business. This policy shall apply to all officially approved travelers (employees, students or external parties traveling on University business) of Western Michigan University.

### **Policy**

University travelers are required to obtain prior approval whether the travel is reimbursed or not. Approval should be obtained by the employee supervisor at a minimum and should also comply with any other authorization procedures required by their departments or Grants and Contracts. Travel authorization forms are available at [Travel Authorization System](#). University travelers should submit a travel expense voucher with original receipts for reimbursement within 30 days of return trip. The University will reimburse approved travel expenses. The extent of reimbursement will depend on budgetary procedures as determined by each department and compliance with these guidelines. Any reimbursement will be based on travel by the usual, direct route. If travelers plan to use a less direct route, or a more expensive mode of travel than may be authorized as reimbursable, the travelers must bear the extra costs. Local travel is normally not reimbursable.

All University air/rail travel will be directly billed to the department's fund and cost center. Any misrepresentation or falsification of any expenses or supporting documents, such as receipts or bills, will be pursued in compliance with the appropriate Rules of Conduct as contained in the Human Resources Policies/Procedures Manual, or the bargaining unit contract when appropriate. All employee travel reimbursements are processed electronically via direct deposit through accounts payable. Non-employee reimbursements are also processed through accounts payable.

### **All University travelers are responsible**

- to exercise good judgment and discretion in spending University funds,
- to complete expense reports properly and within 30 days of travel return.
- Book flight through AAA.

### **All department heads and vice presidents are responsible**

- to see that the travelers under their jurisdiction are fully aware of the University travel policy and reimbursement procedures,
- to approve only reasonable, proper, and necessary expenses.

### **AAA is responsible**

- to book requested reservations in a prompt and accurate manner,
- to advise University travelers
- support University policy

## TRAVEL PROCEDURES

### **Before Departure**

University travelers are required as far in advance as possible:

- all purchases of tickets for air transportation must be procured through AAA. However, consistent with the philosophy of attempting to procure travel at the lowest cost, if you find a lower price from an outside source, contact AAA at (800) 854-5044 to see if they can match the price. If they are unable to match the price a waiver can be obtained by providing documentation to AAA of the lower fare as long as it is done before the tickets are purchased. ***Purchases of airline tickets from another source without a waiver will not be reimbursed.***
- complete a Travel Authorization request form. Forms must be completed online using the University Travel Authorization Online System [Travel Authorization System](https://enterprise.nuttravel.com/Login.aspx?WM=RESXPROD4/). This should be done before booking a flight on AAA's reservation system. <https://enterprise.nuttravel.com/Login.aspx?WM=RESXPROD4/>. AAA will hold your reservation for 24 hours. However, if a price change occurs before the authorization is received; the new flight price will be charged.
- verify that the Travel Authorization has been approved and submitted to AAA. AAA will not book ticket requests until the completed form has been submitted.

### **During the Trip**

University travelers should:

- charge all business related expenses to their personal credit card.
- save all receipts for reimbursement with the exception of per diem meals.

### **Upon Return**

University travelers should:

- Fill out a Travel Expense Voucher, obtain the proper signatures, and submit the completed Travel Expense Voucher with original receipts to Accounts Payable within 30 days of trip return.
- Pay off personal credit card with the reimbursement for their Travel Expense Voucher.

## AIR TRAVEL

### **Airline Contracts**

From time to time, the University may enter into contracts with air carriers. Purchasing will provide information regarding these contracts. Employees are expected to use these carriers whenever possible. If other carriers offer a better fair or more convenient itinerary, University travelers have the option to use them, as long as reservations are made through AAA.

University travelers using grant or contract funds must comply with all University policies and procedures regarding travel. There may be additional restrictions on travel when using grant or contract funds, such as Fly America Act, foreign travel and per diem restrictions. The travel should be included in the approved budget for the grant or contract. For more information contact the Grants and Contracts department at (269) 387-4707.

### **Change of Plans**

Changes made in travel plans after the reservations have been booked or during the trip itself should be coordinated through AAA.

### **Class of Service**

When traveling on either domestic or international routes, University travelers should request the lowest available fare in coach class.

### **Fares**

Travelers should notify AAA of their travel plans as far in advance as possible in order to take advantage of any special rates offered by the airlines.

### **Flight Information**

After AAA receives a copy of the Travel Authorization/Reservation Request form the ticket will be booked.

### **Frequent Flier Mileage**

University travelers are allowed to keep their own frequent flier miles. However, travelers should keep in mind the importance of obtaining the lowest available fares.

### **Payment**

Air travel will be directly billed to your department's fund and cost center and does not get included on the Travel Expense Voucher.

## **OTHER MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION**

### **Air Charter Travel**

All requests for charter planes must be requested through the WMU Purchasing Department.

### **Car Rental**

Western Michigan University has a negotiated contract with Hertz Rent-A-Car. Use of rental cars at travel destinations is limited to circumstances where other transportation is either more expensive or impractical.

### **Personal Car**

Reimbursement for travel by private car will generally be authorized under only one of the following circumstances:

- when common carrier service is not available without undue loss of time,
- when two or more staff members are eligible for similar travel authorization and their driving together would mean an overall savings to the University (the department head is responsible for making such a determination before approving the travel request),
- when use of an automobile will permit the traveler to make stops en route and perform duties more effectively,
- when it will cost the University no more than by other means,
- when the use of an automobile will not require the traveler to be away from duties for a substantially longer period than travel by common carrier. Private car mileage, when

authorized, will be reimbursed for either in-state or out-of-state trips at the amount specified in Internal Revenue Service regulations. If circumstances require additional driving within the vicinity, the traveler should show this mileage separately. Bridge and turnpike tolls will be reimbursed. Receipts should be obtained if possible. All mileage must be shown from point to point.

### **Rail and Bus**

Trains and buses are acceptable optional means of transportation. In cases of long distances, time considerations are often restrictive. Travelers should use coach class unless pre-approved by the appropriate vice president. Bus reservations must be made by traveler. Reservations for rail may be made using AAA.

### **Taxi/Bus/Shuttle**

Shuttle service should be given preference whenever available and economical. Taxi trips are acceptable when necessary to and from airports. Travelers must obtain receipts for reimbursement.

### **Hertz Rent-A-Car (Car Rental)**

Information concerning Hertz Car Rental can be obtained by accessing the University Travel Website <http://www.wmich.edu/travel/>

## **LIABILITY AND PROPERTY DAMAGE INSURANCE**

### **For Personal Cars Used on University Business**

Liability coverage provided for the use of personal cars is excess coverage; that is, the coverage carried by the owner would apply first, in the event of an accident, with costs above those limits being covered by WMU's policy. Physical damage insurance for personal cars being used on University business is not provided.

### **For Rental Cars Used on University Business**

Rental cars are covered under the University's coverage for both liability and physical damage. There is a \$5,000 deductible for physical damage which would be the responsibility of the department. The coverage is secondary to any additional coverage either purchased or provided through a separate arrangement. Liability and damage Insurance is included with WMU rentals from Hertz Rent-A-Car. Since the \$5,000 deductible for physical damage would be the responsibility of the department they may want to consider purchasing the physical damage coverage when renting from an agency other than Hertz. This cost and exposure should be taken into consideration when opting not to go with the University's contract with Hertz.

## **Student Travel on Field Trips and Other Outings**

Student field trips, which are part of organized course instruction, may be taken to vital places of interest. Student participation in field trips is on a voluntary basis and students must cover their own costs. Students age 20 and older may drive Hertz rental vehicles on field trips. Students' ages 18-19 may drive selected Hertz rental vehicles for a fee. No insurance is provided by the University on any student-owned vehicle.

## **LODGING**

### **Change of Plans**

If travel plans must be changed, it is the traveler's responsibility to contact the hotel, in accordance to the hotel's cancellation policy, to cancel the reservation. Please obtain and keep the cancellation number to assure that a "no-show" charge will be avoided.

### **Conferences**

If traveling to a conference that has prearranged hotel space, the traveler makes their own reservations. Reservations for non-prearranged hotel space can be made using AAA. All authorized hotel expenses will be reimbursed directly to the traveler.

### **Payment**

University travelers need to provide AAA with a personal credit card to guarantee hotel reservations for late arrival. Upon departure, travelers should obtain a detailed receipt. A statement may not be used in the place of receipts.

### **Reservations and Reimbursement**

Hotel reservations can be made using Nutravel (formerly Rex-X) or AAA. The University will reimburse authorized lodging expenses at the single occupancy business rate. Original hotel bills are required for reimbursement. The exception is tipping, which will be reimbursed if reasonable and customary.

### **Shared Accommodations**

When an authorized traveler shares a hotel room with non-University individuals, such as family members or colleagues from other institutions, reimbursement will be as follows:

- if shared with non-University individuals, and there is no increase in cost, the University traveler will be fully reimbursed for the single occupancy rate.
- if shared with non-University individuals and there is an increase in cost, the University traveler will be reimbursed the single occupancy rate. If the cost is shared between the occupants, the traveler will be reimbursed the proportionate amount of the room cost. The receipt must show the total amount paid for multiple occupancy and that the University traveler was accompanied by one or more persons. If this information is not on the hotel invoice, a list of people who shared the room should be added.



## MEALS

**Meals for one day trips WILL NOT be reimbursed as the Treasury Department regulations classify meal reimbursements during day trips as taxable income.** *An exception of that rule applies for hosting meals that includes non-university personnel (see Hosting Meals).*

### **Conference Meals**

University Travelers cannot use the full day GSA per diem or the full standard daily per diem rate for meal expenses on those days that the conference/seminar is providing any meal services. Only those meals that are not being provided for by the conference/seminar presenter are reimbursable to the traveler. In this case only the portion of the full day GSA per diem or standard daily per diem rate for the uncovered meal can be used on the Travel Expense Voucher.

When attending a conference or seminar that does not require overnight travel, any costs associated with meals, not included in the conference/seminar fees, will not be reimbursed by the University. This includes both in- and out-of-town conferences and seminars.

### **Hosting Meals**

The University welcomes visitors, guests and employment applicants and recognizes that University staff members may be required to act as host. The University recognizes hosting as an appropriate expense of University funds if hosting activities contribute to, or result from, legitimate University-related business. Each department is expected to use prudence in determining the appropriateness of the hosting function. Grant and Contract funding normally do not allow for hosting meals and any exceptions need Grants and Contracts preapproval.

Local business meals and expenses incurred by employees while hosting University guests will be reimbursed at actual cost within the constraints of good taste and reasonableness. The names and business affiliations of the guests for whom the meals were purchased and the date, location and business purpose of the meal expense must be documented on the voucher. In addition, meal receipts must be submitted with the Travel Expense Voucher. Acceptable meal receipts include charge card receipts, cash register receipts and hotel receipts with meal costs itemized. Order stubs with handwritten totals are not acceptable. Reimbursement will not be made for alcoholic beverages using fund 11 accounts or Grant funds 25-30. Reimbursement for alcohol out of other funds may be made providing there are proper VP approvals and business reasons.

When it is in best interest of the University, business meals may be purchased for customers, vendors and others with whom the University has business dealings. Examples of such situations include, but are not limited to, retreats, workshops, potential donor meals and committee meetings. All business meals are to be documented with individuals' present, business affiliation(s), the purpose of the meeting and the date and place of the meeting.

### **Meals - University Employees/Faculty**

Meal expenditures in connection with meetings of University personnel are generally not reimbursable. However, circumstances may arise that may warrant the use of University funds for meals attended exclusively by University personnel. This is appropriate only under certain circumstances whereby the business meal is considered necessary in order to conduct University business and such business purpose is clearly stated on the voucher. Reasonable judgment, applying a conservative perspective, must be exercised when determining the appropriateness of such meals. Grant and Contract funding normally do not allow for hosting meals and any exceptions need Grants and Contracts preapproval.

When conducting employee workshops or committee and faculty/staff meetings, campus facilities should be used whenever possible. Reimbursement shall generally be limited to rolls or other low cost food and beverages.

The University may sponsor social events where only University personnel are present for staff appreciation/recognition. Since the University is a public institution, it is the fiduciary responsibility of those at the University to authorize such activities in an appropriate manner. Such activities are to be non-routine in nature and campus facilities should be used whenever possible. These events are to be authorized by the vice president in the area.

All such meals referred to above are to include on the voucher the individuals present, business affiliation(s), the business purpose, the date and place of the meeting.

### **Per Diems**

Per Diem meals apply to individual University travelers and does not apply to hosting meals.

### **Continental United States**

The University will reimburse overnight travelers for meals consumed during business related travel on a per diem basis. Per Diem meal allowance will be used for all days of travel. Actual receipts will not be used. Per Diem meals will be reimbursed according to the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA Per Diem) schedule of per diem rates as found at <http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem> . This web site lists the per diem rates by primary destination. If a city or county is not specifically listed, the Daily Standard Per Diem rate per day will be used.

The current Daily Standard per Diem rate is \$51.00 per day. WMU Travelers should be aware that the per diem rates include an amount for the tip and incidentals. The first and last calendar day of travel is calculated at 75 percent which is \$38.25 per GSA rate. The daily standard per diem rate will be allocated for breakfast, lunch and dinner as follows and not to exceed \$46.00 per day: Breakfast \$12.00; Lunch \$11.00; Dinner \$23.00; Incidentals \$5.00. The individual meal rate for breakfast, lunch and dinner does include meal taxes and tip. The incidental rate is for expenses related to snacks, fees and other tips. When meals are provided or included in conference registration fees, the daily rate must be reduced by the applicable meal rate.

### **Foreign Rates in U.S. Dollars**

The University will also reimburse international travel based on the U.S. Department of State Foreign Per Diem rates found at [http://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per\\_diem.asp](http://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per_diem.asp) in effect for the days of travel. Receipts for meals and incidentals are not required when the per diem is used.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### **Gift, Contract or Grant Funds**

University travelers using gift, contract or grant funds should follow the regular University travel policy unless there are specific restrictions provided by the contract, gift or grant.

### **Non-reimbursable Expenses**

Any expense that is not directly related to the business purpose of the trip is non-reimbursable. Examples include such items as movie rentals, personal telephone calls, laundry service, athletic facilities fees, etc.

### **Passport and Visa Information**

Obtaining a passport and/or visa may be necessary when traveling outside the United States. Reimbursement will be made only when passport or visa is a job requirement. As the requirements and processing time can vary, it is important that University travelers submit the application well in advance of travel. AAA can provide current information about obtaining a passport, visa or required photographs. WMU's travel site also has additional information at the following link:  
<http://www.wmich.edu/travel/abroad/documentation.html>

### **Tax-Exempt Status**

University travelers on authorized, University business are exempt from some state sales taxes. Travelers should seek to maximize this benefit to the University by showing the tax-exempting document. A copy of this form is available at:  
[http://www.wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u332/2015/tax-exempt-cert\\_0.pdf](http://www.wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u332/2015/tax-exempt-cert_0.pdf)

### **Telephone Expenses**

All business-related calls are reimbursable.

### **Travel Reimbursement During Hiring Process**

Reimbursement or direct payment of candidate travel expenses will be made only when it becomes necessary in employment negotiations to attract highly qualified candidates. Only new hires at the senior administrative level and tenure track faculty are normally eligible. The Provost's office offers additional guidelines for academic hiring.

### **Reimbursement or Payment of Moving Expenses**

Reimbursement or direct payment of employee moving expenses will be made only when it becomes necessary in employment negotiations to attract highly qualified candidates to regular, full-time academic and administrative positions at Western Michigan University. The Accounts Payable Procedures and Moving Expense Policy manual links are provided for the current regulations and rates.

[http://www.wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u332/2015/moving\\_expense\\_form\\_0.pdf](http://www.wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u332/2015/moving_expense_form_0.pdf)

[http://www.wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u332/2015/moving\\_expense\\_policy\\_1.pdf](http://www.wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u332/2015/moving_expense_policy_1.pdf)

## **Export Control Laws**

Travel to most countries usually does not constitute an export control problem. However, there are potential situations that may trigger the need for a license to travel to certain countries or to take items with you (or ship) to a particular country. When leaving the United States, it is important to note that taking certain items (laptop computers, encryption software, wireless network hardware/software, some GPS systems, data/technology, blueprints, schematics, and research related materials) may require a license or license exception/exemption depending on the foreign destination.

Other potential export control issues may arise from the following:

- Presentation of “controlled” technologies or data at “closed” conferences (those not open to all qualified public and note taking is not permitted).
- Money transactions and the exchange of goods and services in certain countries.
- Travel to sanctioned/embargoed countries.
- Conducting business with certain people or entities.

The Department of State, Department of Commerce, and the Office of Foreign Asset Control, have lists of individuals and entities that we are prohibited from doing business with here in the U.S. and overseas as well. In general, problematic destinations are those countries currently under U.S. embargo, sanction, or other trade restriction. A list of these embargoed countries can be found at [http://www.pmddtc.state.gov/embargoed\\_countries/index.html](http://www.pmddtc.state.gov/embargoed_countries/index.html) . This list changes periodically and should be checked prior to travel.

If you have any questions or concerns that your travel may be in violation of export control laws you may call the Research Compliance Coordinator at (269) 387-8293.

Additionally, the U.S. State Department website for international travel also includes a list of tips for international travelers. These can be found at [http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/tips\\_1232.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/tips_1232.html) .

A Safety and Security brochure for Business Travelers Traveling Abroad can be found at: <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/investigate/counterintelligence/business-travel-brochure> .

## **Transportation of Hazardous Materials**

When traveling on University business and/or using University funds or resources, all members of the University community (including faculty, staff, and students) must comply with applicable federal, state, and University requirements, including this policy, relative to the transportation, shipment, and handling of hazardous materials.

Shipment and transportation of hazardous materials are regulated by the Department of Transportation and its branch, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). “Hazardous materials” are defined by federal and state regulations, and are incorporated by reference in this policy, as updated by the Federal or State Government.

Special training is required for any individual engaging in any aspect of hazardous materials transportation or use, including but not limited to, preparing packages for shipment, loading or unloading vehicles, and operating a vehicle used to transport hazardous materials.

If you do not have the proper training, proper packaging and labeling, and the proper containers and manifests, you shall not transport or prepare for transport hazardous materials.

WMU's Department of Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) provides guidance on this area of regulatory compliance and some training services. Please see the EHS website at <http://www.esem.wmich.edu/training.htm> or contact the Director of EHS at 387-5588.

Additionally, personally transporting hazardous materials via air travel is strictly prohibited. If you need to ship or transport a hazardous material please contact Logistical Services and EHS.

Specific ground transportation of specific hazard classifications with specific quantities of material may be allowed under certain circumstances.

Violations place the University and potentially others at significant risk, including unsafe conditions, fines, penalties, and liabilities. Employees, contractors, or students may be held personally and financially responsible and subject to consequences for violations of law, applicable regulations, or University requirements, which may include but are not limited to any fines or costs that may be incurred, obtaining their own legal representation for any possible civil and/or criminal proceedings, and the consequences a court or agency imposes upon them, such as imprisonment.

Any questions or interpretations regarding transportation of and traveling with hazardous materials are to be directed to WMU's Department of Environmental Health and Safety.