

Travel Authorization

Summary/Purpose: When a travel authorization is required.

1. In-state and out-of-state travel to a convention, association, or meeting. Section 25-1-83 of the Mississippi Code requires written approval from the department head for employee attendance at any convention, association, or meeting in order for expenses to be reimbursed. A convention, association, or meeting is any program which is sponsored by a local, regional, or national organization to conduct an annual meeting, share information, present research papers, augment professional development, etc. Participation involves payment of a fee (registration, conference, tuition, etc.) to the sponsoring program.

The traveler's department head should approve the completed authorization form. Travel authorization forms for department heads/chairs must be signed/approved by their dean/administrative head. Travel authorization forms for senior management (i.e., vice chancellors) and department heads with a direct reporting line to the Chancellor, must be signed/approved by the Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance, or his designee. Travel authorization forms for the Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance must be signed/approved by the Chancellor, or his designee. The signatory officer for the account that will fund the travel must also sign the travel authorization form.

2. International Travel has been defined by the State of Mississippi as travel outside of the continental United States. Canada, Hawaii, Puerto Rico and Mexico are considered International Travel. Travel to Alaska is considered within the continental limits of the United States and meals would be reimbursed at the maximum state reimbursement rate allowed.

The employee's Vice Chancellor or the Provost, the Chancellor and the Office of Procurement Services must sign the travel authorization form prior to any trip involving International Travel. First, the traveler must complete a request for approval of international travel form and include a written statement that fully explains the specific benefits to the University from this travel and how this travel supports University goals and mission. This form must be signed by the traveler and his/her supervisor. This completed request form must be attached to the associated travel authorization form **prior** to obtaining Provost/Vice Chancellor and Chancellor signatures. Once the travel authorization has been approved by the Chancellor, both the original request for approval of international travel form and the original travel authorization form should be submitted to Procurement Services for processing.

Funding for International Travel must come from self generated funds. No business area "10" accounts can be used for International Travel reimbursement.

Before making a trip where authorization is required, the employee should have an authorization number verifying approval. Failure to obtain authorization when required will cause inability to reimburse expenditures.

Travel Reimbursement

Summary/Purpose: Section 25-3-41, Mississippi Code of 1972, establishes guidelines for travel reimbursement of employees of the State of Mississippi, including the University of Mississippi. It also provides that the Fiscal Management Board shall publish rules and regulations that accomplish savings for all expenses authorized under the section.

Penalty for Fraudulent Claim

In accordance with the Mississippi Code of 1972, Section 25-3-45, anyone who knowingly and willfully violates any provisions of the law, is guilty of a misdemeanor. The penalty for conviction is loss of job or position held, a fine of not more than \$250.00, and civil liability for the full amount of the expenses illegally received, allowed, or approved. The person receiving the reimbursement is also liable whether the violation was willful or not.

A university employee should not claim expenses for another university employee.

Approvals

The traveler's department head should approve the completed reimbursement form. Travel reimbursement forms for department heads/chairs must be signed/approved by their dean/administrative head. Travel reimbursement forms for senior management (i.e., vice chancellors) and department heads with a direct reporting line to the Chancellor, must be signed/approved by the Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance, or his designee. Travel reimbursement forms for the Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance must be signed/approved by the Chancellor, or his designee. The signatory officer for the account that will fund the travel must also sign the travel reimbursement form.

Personal Expenses

The University will not pay expenses resulting from unofficial stopovers, side trips, personal telephone charges, or any other items of a personal nature.

General

A [Travel Reimbursement Voucher](#) must be completed, approved by the traveler's department head, and sent to the Office of Procurement Services with the following items attached, if applicable:

- Required receipts
- A program brochure from the sponsor of a conference, seminar, or meeting when special lodging or airline rates are provided.
- International Travel receipts must be converted to US dollars on the Travel Reimbursement Voucher and be accompanied by the conversion rate used.
- Expense claims must be itemized under Section A, B, C, D, E, F and G of the Travel Reimbursement Voucher.

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- Travel Reimbursement Vouchers must be signed by the employee and cannot be completed or signed in pencil.
- If the information on the Travel Reimbursement Voucher does not correspond to the approved Travel Authorization (if required), the travel clerk will return the Travel Reimbursement Voucher for clarification.
- If the Travel Reimbursement Voucher is not completed correctly, it will be returned requesting the needed information.

Expenses That Require Receipts

Major expenses incurred while on official travel for the University must be documented with original itemized receipts.

- **Lodging** Express Check-out receipts that do not provide a daily itemized hotel bill are not acceptable documentation for reimbursement.
- **Airplane, train and bus tickets** - Itemized receipt must include departure and destination cities with dates. Proof of payment must be on document.
- **Baggage charges** – Actual cost – original receipt required over \$10.00 per claim
- **Registration fees**
- **Car rental**
- **Taxi or limousine service**, if amount claimed exceeds \$10.00
- **Parking or toll charges**, if amount claimed exceeds \$10.00
- **Gasoline charges**
- **Banquet meals** that cause the total daily meal reimbursement to exceed the maximum daily meal allowance.

Expenses That Do Not Require Receipts

- Meal and meal tips
- Personal vehicle mileage
- Baggage handling – **\$10.00 or less per occurrence**
- Telephone calls - itemized calls on hotel bills must be identified as business calls. Circle the call and write business next to it. Personal calls cannot be claimed on the Travel Voucher.

Other Required Documentation

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A [Waiver Request Form](#) must be submitted to the Office of Procurement Services and approved to request a waiver from any standard travel procedures. The following is a list of possible reasons a Waiver Request Form may be needed:

- Requesting authority to pay an amount greater than the state contract.
- Requesting authority to rent a vehicle with a cost greater than the intermediate size on state contract.
- Requesting authority to purchase vehicle rental insurance.
- Requesting authority to rent a vehicle not on state contract.
- Requesting authority to pay a hotel other than the conference hotel.
- Requesting authority to pay greater than the least expensive cost comparison for airline tickets.
- Requesting authority to purchase business or first class airfare.

Please refer to the [Waiver Request Policy](#) for additional information.

Airline Travel

Summary/Purpose: Regulations pertaining to airline travel when on official University business.

General Information: House Bill 1488, effective July 1, 2002, allows University of Mississippi employees to utilize the State of Mississippi Travel Agency Services contract administered by the Office of Purchasing and Travel. This bill allows university employees to make reservations for all travel arrangements, using a state contract travel agency or booking flights over the Internet. A receipt (passenger receipt) and itinerary shall accompany the request for reimbursement.

Business/First Class: Preferred seating, business, or first class service may be authorized if at least one of the flight segments exceeds 6 hours. A flight segment is defined as time in the air between stopovers, changing aircraft, or change of airline. Business or first-class travel is not reimbursable unless approved in advance. A [Waiver Request](#) signed by the department head must be submitted and approved by Procurement Services **prior** to the trip.

Booking Flights Online: For all flights that are not booked through one of the [contract travel agencies](#), the University must maintain in its files a cost comparison showing a minimum of two (2) fares. If you purchase from an online source, such as Orbitz, Delta.com, or Travelocity, the 2nd comparable quote must come **from a different online source** and be submitted with your airfare receipt attached to your travel reimbursement. This cost comparison must show the fare and any issuance cost and must show a savings, and shall be submitted along with the employees' Travel Reimbursement Voucher.

If the employee must book a flight at a price in excess of the lowest rate on the cost comparison, the traveler must, prior to booking the flight, submit a [Waiver Request](#) to Procurement Services and include the amount of cost and the justification of using that fare on the waiver.

The least expensive routing shall be used. In calculating the difference between airfare and travel by personal vehicle, factor in additional lodging and meal expenses, taxi fares, parking, and other airport related expenses. Delays en route that will not delay the traveler's arrival at the destination by more than 3 hours actual travel time within the same day travel was begun and result in a substantial cost benefit to the state will be used.

Airline Penalty Fares

Airline penalty fares shall be used whenever possible. The University will pay the penalty or administration fee if schedules have to be changed or canceled due to business related circumstances. Some canceled nonrefundable tickets require that the ticket be held and used within the next twelve months, with a payment of an administrative fee. The ticket is in the employee's name and cannot be changed for another person to use. The ticket **must** be used for university business.

Airline Reservation Changes

When an **involuntary airline reservation change** results in additional reimbursable cost (delayed flight requiring overnight hotel and meals), you should attach a note of explanation to the Travel Reimbursement Voucher. If you must make **voluntary changes to your travel arrangements** while en route, make the necessary change and attach a note of explanation to the Travel Reimbursement Voucher when you file for reimbursement. The University will not reimburse the fees resulting from the change if the change is for personal reasons.

Flight Insurance: Some of the state [contract travel agencies](#) also provide free insurance with tickets. No other flight insurance will be reimbursed.

Frequent Flyer Points

Any bonus or promotional gratuity received as a result of official University travel shall be used to offset or reduce the cost of subsequent official University travel. Under no circumstances can the traveler keep a bonus or other promotional gratuity so earned for their own personal use **nor** shall bonuses or gratuities be used to upgrade a ticket. As sufficient mileage, earned as a result of state-paid travel, is accumulated, free ticket coupons will be applied for. The procedures required by the airlines for redemption of mileage credits should be followed.

State Travel Agencies

Summary/Purpose: Travel agencies contracted by the State for employee business travel.

The Office of Procurement Services has identified the approved list of [Travel Agencies](#) to provide travel services to university employees.

Employees may have travel arrangements handled by one of the contracted agencies whenever traveling on official University business by airline or other common carrier or may make arrangements through methods of their own choice. A fee is charged when utilizing the services provided by the state travel agencies. The traveler will receive a confirmation of travel accommodations arranged by the state travel agency. A copy of the confirmation must be attached to the Travel Reimbursement Voucher when it is filed.

You must identify yourself as a University of Mississippi employee. The traveler is responsible for ensuring that the travel agency provides you with the state contract rate.

Private Vehicle - Travel

Summary/Purpose: Reimbursements for use of a private vehicle while in travel status.

Employees shall receive the legal rate established by the State of Mississippi for each mile actually and necessarily traveled in a privately owned vehicle while in official travel status. This rate will be the same rate that federal employees are reimbursed for using private vehicles for official federal business. **Please check the [travel website](#) for the mileage rate.**

The travel clerk will use the latest edition of the Rand McNally Highway Mileage Guide to compute mileage between points. Rand McNally now has a Windows software product, "Delorme Street Atlas USA 2015" that is inexpensive and would be helpful for those who travel often.

In-town mileage should be shown as a separate entry under mileage on the Travel Reimbursement Voucher.

The University will not reimburse travel within the boundaries of the Oxford Campus.

When travel is by private vehicle, the total travel expenses reimbursed, including meals and lodging, shall not exceed the cost of the lowest unrestricted air fare unless a complete written justification signed by the employee's department head (**see statement below**) determines that it is in the best interest of the University that the employee drive, or that, on comparison of "total driving" and "total flying" expenses, it is less expensive to drive than to fly.

Statement and Justification required

"In my opinion, it is in the best interest of the University that (employee name) use his/her private vehicle for travel from (origin) to (destination) from (date) to (date)." This statement will require complete justification by the department head.

When two or more employees travel in one private vehicle, only one travel expense at the authorized reimbursement rate per mile shall be allowed. The person claiming reimbursement shall report the names of other university employee passengers. If a cost comparison must be made between driving vs. flying cost, the cost of flying should be multiplied by the number of passengers and compared to the cost of driving.

Rental Car

Summary/Purpose: Justification and use of rental cars while in travel status

The University will allow use of rental cars when there is a demonstrated cost saving over other modes of transportation and use of the rental car is not strictly for the traveler's convenience. If an employee uses a rental car instead of a private vehicle for travel to their destination, state guidelines require documentation of the total rental expense compared to the total mileage expense from using a private vehicle. Reimbursement of the lesser expense shall be claimed on the Travel Reimbursement Voucher.

Please remember that an **intermediate** size vehicle is normally the largest rental that will be reimbursed. Naturally, there will be occasions for which a larger vehicle will be required. A waiver request form should be submitted for approval to the Office of Procurement Services prior to making any reservations.

If a state travel agency is used to make rental car reservations with the rental agency, the state travel agency will send the traveler a confirmation of the reservation and the rate. Upon arriving at the destination if a more economical rate is found with another agency, that agency may be used without approval from the state travel agent. Make sure all charges that will be assessed by the other rental agency are known in order to determine which rate is actually the lowest. To document the lower rate when filing for reimbursement, attach the original confirmation from the state travel agent and the receipt for the actual car rental to the Travel Reimbursement Voucher.

In State and Out of State Rental Car Contracts

For current In-State and Out-Of-State contracts please visit the [Travel website](#). The Corporate ID's are listed on the contracts for each vendor and need to be used in order to obtain our contracted rate, unlimited mileage, and free Collision Damage Waiver/Loss Damage Waiver insurance coverage.

Rental Car Contract Insurance

The current vehicle rental contracts **include** unlimited mileage and free CDW/LDW insurance. **The option to purchase insurance should always be declined when a vehicle is rented utilizing the state contract.** Insurance purchases will not be reimbursed as per the above information.

The following conditions justify use of rental cars:

- When the traveler reaches the destination by commercial carrier and **several places** within the area must be visited.
- When transportation between commercial carrier terminal and the hotel or meeting place is needed and a taxi or a limousine is **not available**.
- When a commercial carrier **cannot** meet the traveler's schedule.

The following usage of a rental car will not be reimbursed:

- Rental of a vehicle for personal use, such as sightseeing.
- Optional travel to and from restaurants while on official state business.

Lodging - Travel

Summary/Purpose: Handling of lodging expenses when in travel status.

All expenses must be necessary and reasonable. Government rates must always be used if it is the lowest rate available. The rate must be confirmed at the time the reservations are made and again at check-in.

All hotel or motel expenses must be documented with a **paid itemized** original bill. An itemized paid receipt is required for lodging booked through the **Internet. Express Checkout receipts that do not provide an itemized hotel bill are not acceptable documentation for reimbursement.**

Staying with a relative or friend should be footnoted on the travel reimbursement voucher explaining the absence of a hotel/motel receipt.

Lodging at other than hotels or motels (apartments, dormitories, etc.) may be used when they result in a lower cost. Payment to an individual for staying in a private home is not allowed.

In State Lodging

The State Travel Office maintains an updated agreement with various Mississippi hotels for state employee rates for official business travel. The contract for [hotels/motels](#) is a convenience contract. Employees must always request the state contract rate, and this rate should be confirmed both at the time reservations are made and at check in.

Out-Of-State Lodging

Interstate discounted lodging is frequently available through government rate programs. Often times, major chains will honor these rates. When traveling out of state on official business always request the government rate. The employee's University I.D. card is verification of employment.

Lodging Shared With a Family Member

An employee in travel status, if accompanied by someone who is not an employee of the University on official business (spouse, children, etc.), is entitled to reimbursement at the single room rate. The desk clerk should write the single room rate on the paid bill and sign it; otherwise, the travel clerk will reimburse one-half of the cost of the room.

Lodging Shared With Another University Employee

If a university employee shares a room with another university employee, they should request from the hotel separate invoices at the time they register. If the hotel is not willing to accommodate with separate invoices, then each should pay their portion of the bill and claim only that amount on their reimbursement. Each employee should reference the other employee on their reimbursement and place a copy of the original invoice with the reimbursement voucher.

Meals - Travel

Summary/Purpose: Handling of meal expenses when in travel status.

General

The State Fiscal Management Board will periodically establish a maximum daily expenditure limit (see below) for meals in-state and out-of-state travel. A record should be kept of the cost of meals and this amount claimed on the Travel Reimbursement Voucher. If actual expenses exceed the maximum daily allowance, the travel clerk will make an adjustment when the voucher is processed. **Alcoholic beverages are not reimbursable.**

No reimbursement is authorized for meals when travel is confined to the vicinity of Oxford or the Oxford Campus.

Maximum Daily Meal Allowance

The current maximum daily allowances are as follows:

In-state except high cost	\$41.00
Out-of-state except high cost	\$41.00
High cost area (prescribed maximum daily rate of \$150 – 164 in the Federal Register)	\$46.00
High cost area (prescribed maximum daily rate of \$165 - 179 in the Federal Register)	\$51.00
High cost area (prescribed maximum daily rate of \$180 – up in the Federal Register)	\$56.00
International Travel	\$61.00

Meal Tips

Meal tips should be included as a part of the daily meal limitation. If the daily limitation is exceeded because of tips, it is allowable to record total meal tips for each day under "Other Expenses" on the Travel Reimbursement Voucher. **Total meal tips shall not exceed 20% of the maximum daily limitation.**

Registration or Banquet Meals

If conference registration fees include certain meals, do not claim the covered meals as a separate item of expense on the Travel Voucher. Any meals claimed that are covered by the conference registration fee must be justified.

Taxable Meals

Taxable meals are meal expenses that occur during official travel where overnight stay is not required. **Taxable meals will not be reimbursed.** If a traveler stays with a relative or friend, they should make a footnote on their Travel Reimbursement Voucher by explaining why there is no hotel/motel receipt.

Group Meal

University employees may be reimbursed for the cost of group meals while carrying out their employment duties. A group meal is defined as a meal for one or more University employees and one or more individuals that are not employees of the University. The request for reimbursement

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for group meals should be in the form of a Request for Payment submitted to Procurement Services with an itemized receipt for the cost of the meals attached. The memorandum should indicate the names of the persons in attendance and the nature of the meeting. If the average cost per person exceeds \$30.00, the reimbursement must be approved by the Provost or the appropriate Vice Chancellor. **The University will not reimburse any employee for the cost of alcoholic beverages consumed with the meal.**

This policy will cover group meals for persons in travel status as well as those meals of an official nature in Oxford.

The cost of group meals while in travel status should be excluded from the Travel Reimbursement Voucher and submitted on a Request for Payment with receipts attached to the Office of Procurement Services.

The definition of a group meal does require that the group include one or more individuals who are not employees of the University. In other words, if three individuals from the University have lunch together, each employee would be responsible for his or her own meal cost.

Approved group meals will not be treated as travel costs but will be accounted for as commodities (G/L code 56440, Food for Persons).