Traveling on behalf of the University

Before you travel:

- If you plan on traveling on behalf of OSU, please give plenty of notice. At least 2 weeks is recommended to receive all approvals. **Travel must be approved in Workday via a spend authorization (SA) before the trip takes place or any purchases are made for the trip, otherwise this will be a policy exception.**

- All travelers (faculty, staff, students, and guests) must incur the lowest reasonable expenses that meet the business needs of the traveler.

- Reimbursement of documented travel expenses is based on reasonable and actual expenses supported by **original, itemized receipts** or equivalent documentation.

- Travelers incurring additional costs by taking vacation/personal time in conjunction with business travel must pay for the costs of personal travel themselves. The only expense OSU **may** cover is airfare if the cost of personal time + business travel is less expensive than business travel alone.
  - A cost comparison form must be completed and attached to the SA to show and explain the personal time costs in comparison to the business time costs.
  - Please notate in the business purpose of the travel request if personal time will be taken and attach a **round-trip** cost comparison for the **business dates** that are pulled at the same time the actual flight is booked. CTP can assist with pulling the comparison or this can be pulled in CTP yourself.
  - Cost comparisons should be pulled from CTP 24 hours before the airfare purchase.

- International travel currently requires an **“International Acknowledgment of Understanding Form”**. This form should be available in Workday when the SA is completed. If not available, please use the link above for the docusign form.

- Lodging must not exceed either the conference rate at the conference/convention site or twice the federal lodging rate for the business travel location. If the lodging expense falls within the range of 1.5 to 2 times the federal lodging rate and is not a conference rate, then additional justification is required.

- Activities such as golf outings, sightseeing tours, spa activities, and other entertainment costs will **not** be paid by the university.

- If attending a conference or meeting with an agenda, a **PDF of the conference agenda must be saved and attached to the spend authorization**. A link will not work, as there is not guarantee those will stay active in perpetuity. **If there is no agenda, include this in your business purpose.**

- When traveling domestic, a traveler has 1 day before and 1 day after of additional travel time that can count towards the business trip. When traveling international, a traveler has 2 days before and 2 days after of additional travel time that can count towards the business trip.
Flying:

- **Airfare must be purchased through the University’s travel agency, CTP. If airfare is not purchased through CTP reimbursement is at risk.**

- Regular economy class tickets are the recommended choice. You can book basic economy tickets, but these are not recommended due to their non-refundable nature and other restrictions. If you choose to book basic economy, you must agree that you understand these restrictions.

- The university will not prepay or reimburse first class tickets.

- Business class is only permissible with international flight times in excess of five consecutive flight hours, excluding layovers.

- If you decide to bump up your ticket at the gate (i.e., priority seating), that charge will come out of your pocket. OSU will not reimburse for these costs.

Driving:

- **Rental cars must be booked through the OSU contract. Failure to do so, can result in loss of reimbursement**
  - Enterprise, National, and Hertz are the University’s contracted rental car agencies.
  - The contract information along with the discounted rates can be found on the [Travel Office website](#).

- Typically, mileage is reimbursed at .67 cents per mile as of January 1, 2024
  - The mileage reimbursement rate includes all vehicle-related expenses (i.e., gasoline, wear and tear, and personal auto insurance). If being reimbursed mileage you do not need to save gasoline receipts, as the rate covers this expense.
  - A mileage map will need to be attached to your SA and reimbursement, showing the starting and ending addresses. A printout of Google maps is acceptable.

- If you are traveling on grant funding, make sure to check if the mileage rate is different.

- If you are choosing to drive instead of fly for a trip that is or exceeds 5 hours, a cost comparison form will be needed. If airfare is the less expensive option that is the amount that is reimbursable.

Food Costs:

- Business related banquets or meals that are considered part of the conference can be paid with the registration fee or reimbursed as appropriate. **These meals must be deducted from the traveler’s per diem allowance.**

- Meal allowance is authorized for in-state (with overnight) or out-of-state (45 miles or more from the traveler’s residence or headquarters) travel.

- **Full meal allowances while on travel status will not be paid if a meal is served on the plane, included in a conference registration fee, built into the hotel room rate, or replaced by a legitimate business meal.**

- Receipts, attendees and a business purpose are required for business meals. No receipts are required if meal expenses are being covered by per diem.
When You Return:

- Travel documentation for reimbursable expenses, prepaid expenses and p-card expenses related to the travel must be submitted via Expense Report (ER) within 60 days of the travelers return date. Documentation submitted after 60 days is an exception to policy and may be considered taxable income by the IRS.

- Hard copy receipts are no longer needed. Digital receipts are necessary as documentation and will be kept on file at the BOC.

- As the traveler, your responsibility is to keep all itemized receipts and submit to your fiscal associate or unit administrator promptly upon your return. Your area fiscal contact or unit administrator will organize and submit the travel documentation to the BOC via email to eng-boctravel@osu.edu

- The BOC will then submit the expense report which will be approved by the cost center manager, other relevant areas and **lastly the traveler has to approve**. The reimbursement will then be deposited to the traveler.

Resources:

- University Travel Website
  - Plan Business Travel
  - Contact a CTP travel agent
  - Concur
  - Rental Car Discounts
  - Federal Per Diem Rates

- Video - Travel Policy and Changes with Workday
- Video - Travel Process with Workday
- Business Operations Center (BOC)

- Travel Policy