

Policy Title: General Travel

Policy Type: Finance/Administration

New/revised: Revised

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Approval level: ☒ Board of Trustees
☐ President
☐ Vice President
☐ Other (specify here)

Purpose: The following policy applies to the travel of all employees of the university in the performance of their official duties. Provisions of this policy also may apply to individuals other than employees who are authorized to travel at university expense. Departments may adopt more restrictive policies than those included in this document. Authorization for travel will not be granted and expenses will not be reimbursed unless the travel is made and reimbursement claimed in accordance with this policy and any approved exceptions hereto.

Procurement cards may be used for the payment of registration fees and required advance payments for airline. Procurement cards may not be used for expenses incurred during actual travel time except in instances of team/group travel.

This policy and specific reimbursement rates for travel expenses allowed under this policy shall be consistent with those of the Comprehensive Travel Regulations of the State of Tennessee. Current reimbursement rates can be found in the Travel Rate Schedule.

All travel must be consistent with the educational, research, and professional needs of the University. Employees must conduct all travel with integrity, in compliance with applicable laws, policies, and procedures, and in a manner that excludes considerations of personal advantage. Employees must exercise good judgment and conduct all aspects of travel in a cost-efficient manner.

Policy:

I. General Provisions

- A. No authorization for travel by an employee shall be granted, and no reimbursement for travel expenses shall be made, except in accordance with the provisions of these policies and procedures. Reimbursement for travel expenses shall be limited to expenses incurred upon travel authorized in advance by the appropriate approving authorities.
- B. Travel which may be authorized, and pursuant to which expenses may be reimbursed, shall be limited to the following:
- C. Travel which is necessary for the proper execution of official University business, or in justifiable pursuit of the University's educational and research objectives; or
- D. Travel to meetings and conferences of a professional nature which will increase the attending employee's usefulness to the University.

- E. Travel shall not include, and no reimbursement for expenses shall be made for, transportation in connection with an employee's official station of employment. The employee's "official station" is his or her regular area of employment activity, e.g., campus, or designated location of an employee established in the field.
 - 1. The official station of an employee shall be designated by the appointing authority.
 - 2. It is normally expected that the official station is that location at which the employee spends greater than 50% of his or her working time.
 - 3. For an employee required to be on call (as determined by his or her job description), either overnight or on weekends, the official station of the employee while on call becomes his or her residence, or the location at which the employee receives the call.
 - 4. Reimbursable mileage begins at the location at which the employee receives the call.
- F. The employee is considered to be on official travel status, and as such, eligible for reimbursement of travel expenses, at the time of departure from the employee's official station or residence, whichever is applicable, for the purpose of traveling on University business.
 - 1. Expenses for meals and lodging will be allowed when overnight travel or occasional excessive hours of work are required outside the county of the employee's official station of residence.
 - 2. En route lodging will be allowed for only one day each way on trips of long duration.
 - 3. Expenses for lodging will only be allowed in cases where the approved and most direct or expeditious mode of travel will require more than ten (10) hours of continuous travel for trips of long duration.
 - 4. The lodging expense will not be considered en route lodging if it does not add an additional day of lodging expense.
 - 5. For example: An employee has a 9:00 a.m. meeting in Atlanta. Assume the employee needs to work a full day prior to the trip. It would be less expensive and more convenient to drive rather than fly. The employee leaves the night before and drives to within two hours of Atlanta. Then the employee spends the night, continues the drive the next morning and arrives for the 9:00 a.m. meeting. This will be reimbursed but is not considered en route lodging as it did not add an additional day of lodging expense to the normal travel expenses.
- G. The limitations on travel expenses contained herein are maximum amounts above which reimbursement will not be made. Employees are expected to be as conservative as possible in incurring travel expenses.
- H. Reimbursement for travel expenses shall only be allowed for actual expenses incurred, subject to the maximum limitations cited in the [Travel Rate Schedule](#).
 - 1. Receipts must accompany claims for reimbursement for all expenses exceeding the amount cited on [Travel Rate Schedule](#).
 - 2. Receipts are not required for meals, taxi fares, tolls, and ferry fees.
 - 3. Lodging receipts are required and must itemize room charges and taxes. No expenses shall be reimbursed until after travel has been completed.
- I. Internet travel sites such as Expedia, Travelocity or Kayak can be utilized to purchase single travel services such as an airline ticket. Internet travel sites cannot be used to

purchase a package or one or more travel services. Purchases of travel packages that combine services such as lodging, airline, or vehicle rentals are not allowed. These package deals do not usually provide sufficient itemized pricing for each service purchased and therefore do not allow for proper comparison to CONUS or conference rates as required by policy.

- J. Procurement cards may be used for travel expenses for team/group travel as approved by the procurement card administrator.

II. **Authorization of Travel**

- A. **Approving Authorities** - The President or President's designees shall have authority to approve travel by employees of the University. Authorization for travel by a student, regardless of the destination, shall be approved by the President or their designee.
- B. **In-State Travel** - All employees must obtain prior authorization for instate travel by the employee's appropriate approving authority. Written authorization may not be necessary for instate travel where the expected expenses will not be substantial, or when there is no advance notice of the circumstances necessitating the travel, and such travel is approved orally by the appropriate approving authority. Employees whose employment requires frequent instate travel may obtain blanket authorization in writing for such travel.
- C. **Out-of-State Travel** - All employees must obtain prior written authorization for out-of-state travel, which must be approved by the employee's appropriate approving authority. The authorization must show the name of the person traveling, purpose of the trip, destinations, date of departure and return, mode of transportation, estimated expenses, and availability of funds. If, in the normal course of official business, the employee must routinely travel into another state and back in the same day, such travel will be considered in-state travel and shall be subject to the in-state travel provisions. This exception applies for trips which do not exceed 50 miles into another state. Employees whose employment requires frequent out-of-state travel may obtain blanket authorization in writing for such travel.
- D. **Canada Travel** - Authorization for travel by an employee to Canada shall be approved by the President for employees of institutions.
- E. **Alaska, Hawaii and Out-of-Country/International Travel** - Authorization for travel by an employee to Alaska, Hawaii, and all out-of-country/international travel shall be subject to approval by the President. Authorization for travel to Alaska, Hawaii, and all out-of-country/international travel by the President shall be subject to approval by the Chair of the Board of Trustees. Requests for authorizations should reach the President's Office fourteen (14) days before the date approval is needed.

III. **Transportation**

- A. **General** - All travel must be by the most direct or expeditious route possible and any employee who travels by indirect route must bear any extra expense occasioned thereby. When work is performed by an employee en route to or from the official station, reimbursable mileage is computed by deducting the employee's normal commuting mileage from the actual mileage driven in performing the work in route to or from the official station. For example, if an employee normally commutes 10 miles (20 miles round trip), and performs work on the way home from the official station which results in 12 miles driven, the mileage reimbursement will be for 2 miles only, as that is the amount of mileage in excess of the employee's normal commute. In no instance shall mileage claimed for reimbursement exceed actual miles traveled.

- B. **Mode of Transportation** - Transportation for employees traveling singly should be by common carrier (air, train, or bus) whenever practical. The use of air travel is recommended when time is an important factor or when the trip is so long that other methods of travel would increase the subsistence expense. Automobile transportation may be used to save time when common carrier transportation cannot be satisfactorily scheduled or to reduce expenses when two or more employees are making the trip. Employees who have approval to drive rather than fly on long trips will be reimbursed for two day's meals and one day's lodging in route to the destination and similarly on return to campus. Reimbursement for personal vehicle use may be claimed at the lesser of the standard mileage rate or comparable cost of commercial transportation including taxi fares and/or limousine charges.
- C. **Common Carrier Travel** - When travel is by common carrier, the fare must not exceed the standard coach fare charged the general public, and advantage must be taken of round trip rates when available. The employee's copy of the ticket, or an acceptable itemized receipt, must be submitted for reimbursement of common carrier expenses. Baggage Fees will be allowed when necessary. A receipt is required for reimbursement. Charges for trip insurance are not reimbursable. The State of Tennessee is self-insured and does not purchase separate insurance, and therefore will not reimburse for insurance purchases made for trips.
- D. **Chartered Aircraft** - Generally, faculty and staff (including group travel and athletics) whose duties require travel will use commercial ground and air carriers or a university vehicle. However, a chartered aircraft may be used if time and/or distance preclude ground travel or if a commercial air service is either unavailable or does not meet the needs of the traveler(s). The following guidelines apply:
 - 1. Chief Financial Officer will be responsible for:
 - i. reviewing and approving requests for charter air services,
 - ii. scheduling charter flights, and
 - iii. informing those who request charter flights of the charter company's policy on canceling scheduled flights.
 - 2. Charter services will be obtained only when it can be shown that the charter does not exceed the sum of all traveling costs by commercial carrier (e.g. transportation, meals, and lodging) or that circumstances necessitate travel when no other means is available.
 - 3. The charter company must provide the institution with an original, itemized invoice showing the beginning and ending dates of the charter, the origin and destination of each flight, and the names of passengers on each flight.

IV. **Travel by Automobile**

- A. **Automobile Travel** - When travel by personal vehicle is appropriate, employees may use state-owned vehicles whenever available and feasible. However, state-owned vehicles should be used only on official business.
 - 1. **National/Enterprise Rental Cars** – The University operates under a state contract for the use of National/Enterprise which is to be used for most travel. Employees must be registered as an Emerald Club member in order to rent a vehicle. Approved individuals may also have approval to have the rental car direct billed to the University. Cars may be rented using the State of Tennessee specialized website at www.enterprisecarshare.com/tennessee. The contract with National/Enterprise provides all required insurance

coverage so all insurance should be declined when renting a vehicle as it will not be reimbursed.

2. State-Owned Automobiles - When transportation is by a state-owned vehicle, all necessary repair bills, tolls, parking, gasoline and storage expenses are allowable. When using motor pool vehicles, employees will be furnished with courtesy cards for purchase of gasoline, oil, and other vehicle services, and such expenses should not be claimed by employees as travel expenses. Emergency out-of-pocket expenses, such as towing or emergency repairs, will be reimbursed but must be accompanied by proper receipt identifying the vehicle and itemizing the services. Such expenditures must be of an emergency nature where immediate service is required and access to a state facility is not possible. Major repairs should be approved by campus officials prior to work being performed. Such expenditures are allowed but should be filed or reimbursement separately.
3. Personally-Owned Automobiles - Use of a personally-owned vehicle must be authorized. The trip optimizer function of the National/Enterprise website should be used to determine if the use of a personal vehicle is cheaper than the anticipated cost of a rental car. When using a personal vehicle when the trip optimizer indicates the use of a rental vehicle will be at less cost, reimbursement for the personal vehicle will be limited to the amount shown by the trip optimizer. A copy of the trip optimizer calculations must be included with all travel claims where personal mileage is being claimed. When travel by personal vehicle is shown to be less mileage reimbursement rates are provided on Travel Rate Schedule. The authorized mileage allowance includes all operating expenses such as gas, oil, and repairs precluding any separate claim for such items. Employees may use reputable websites to determine point-to-point and/or vicinity mileage. Commuter Mileage procedures for calculating mileage are based on the fact that the State is prohibited from reimbursing employees for normal commuting mileage. If an employee begins or ends a trip at his/her official station, reimbursable mileage will be the mileage from the official station to the destination. If work is performed by an employee in route to or from his/her official station, reimbursable mileage is computed by deducting the employee's normal commuting mileage from the actual mileage driven. If an employee begins or ends his/her trip at his/her residence without stopping at his/her official station, reimbursable mileage will be the lesser of the mileage from the employee's residence to his/her destination or his/her official station to the destination. On weekends and holidays, the employee may typically be reimbursed for actual mileage from his/her residence to the destination. If an employee travels between destinations without returning to his/her official station or his/her residence, reimbursable mileage is the actual mileage between those destinations.
4. The travel claim must indicate the employee's itinerary and must show the official business mileage. Business mileage as indicated in the Rand-McNally or reputable websites for out-of-state routes will be as official. Vicinity mileage must be reported on a separate line and not included with point-to-point mileage. Only mileage while on official business may be claimed.

- B. **Airport and Hotel Parking** – Necessary charges for hotel and airport parking will be allowed. A receipt is required if the fee exceeds the maximum indicated in the [Travel Rate Schedule](#).
- C. **Limousine and Taxi Services** - When travel is by common carrier, reasonable limousine and taxi fares will be allowed for necessary transportation. Bus or limousine service to and from airports will be used when available and practical. After arrival at destination, necessary taxi fares for traveling between hotel or lodging and meeting or conference will be allowed. No receipt is required for reimbursement of reasonable taxi fares.
- D. **Car Rentals at Destination** - Charges for vehicle rental shall be allowed whenever it is more economical than alternative methods of transportation or it is the only practical means of transportation. When renting a vehicle at the destination, the National/Enterprise contract must be used using the State of Tennessee specialized website at www.enterprise-carshare.com/tennessee. This contract includes all necessary insurance coverage's so all insurance should be declined when making the reservation. If not direct billed to the University, an itemized receipt must be submitted for reimbursement. Whenever possible, employees should refuel before returning vehicles to the rental agency. If an agency other than National/Enterprise is used, evidence must be provided that the cost was less or reimbursement will be limited to amounts per the National/Enterprise contract.
- E. **Tolls and Ferry Fees** - Reasonable tolls and ferry fees will be allowed when necessary. No receipt is required for reimbursement of tolls and ferry fees.
- F. **Daily Parking Fees** - Daily parking fees for those employees working in downtown offices will not be allowed. However, if an employee is required to leave his or her office on state business and later returns, the actual additional charge required to park will be reimbursed up to the maximum indicated on the [Travel Rate Schedule](#). Also, those employees required to utilize commercial parking facilities in the daily performance of duties, or while on travel status will be allowed reimbursement for actual costs up to the maximum indicated per day. A receipt is required if the fee exceeds the maximum indicated in the [Travel Rate Schedule](#).
- G. Unnecessary meals and lodging expenses which are occasioned by the use of an automobile for reasons of the employee's personal convenience, or which are due to travel by an indirect route, will not be allowed.
- H. If travel is by common carrier, the employee will be reimbursed for expenses in traveling to and from the common carrier including related parking expenses.

V. **Lodging**

- A. **In-State Lodging** - Lodging expenses incurred within the state while on authorized travel will be reimbursable to the maximum stated in [Travel Rate Schedule](#).
- B. **Out-of-State Lodging** - Lodging expenses incurred out of the state while on authorized travel will be reimbursable to a maximum stated in [Travel Rate Schedule](#). The maximum reimbursement rates for out-of-state travel are the same as those maintained by the U. S. General Services Administration for federal employees within the continental United States (CONUS). The CONUS list, available on the General Services Administration web site, contains a standard reimbursement rate for lodging and meals and incidentals, and several pages of exceptions. Most destinations for out-of-state travel fall within the list of exceptions. En route lodging will be allowed for only one day each way on trips of long duration. En route lodging will only be allowed in cases where the approved and most direct or expeditious mode of travel will require more than ten (10) hours of continuous travel.

- C. **Lodging-Related Taxes** – Sales taxes on lodging costs will be reimbursable.
- D. **Additional Lodging Expenses** –
 - 1. Convention or Conference Lodging - Higher rates for lodging at the location of a convention or conference will be allowed, without special approval, up to the amount indicated in the convention or conference brochure or conference website. A printed copy of the online information is to be submitted with the claim for reimbursement.
 - 2. President Lodging - Additional lodging for the President will be approved on the same basis as approval is granted for other employees. Any exceptions must be approved by the Chair of the Board of Trustees.
- E. The convention or conference brochure which indicates the lodging rates must be included with the travel claim. Otherwise, reimbursement will be limited to the applicable lodging rate as provided in these regulations.
- F. **Shared Lodging** - In the event of double occupancy for university employees on official travel, both employees should attach an explanation to his or her travel claim detailing dates and other employees with whom the room was shared. The lodging cost may be claimed by the employee who incurred the cost, or one half the double occupancy charges may be allowable for each employee. If a room is shared with other than a university employee, actual cost subject to the maximum in [Travel Rate Schedule](#) will be allowed. The receipt for the entire amount should be submitted with each travel expense claim.

VI. **Meals and Incidental Expenses**

- A. **In-State and Out-of-State Meals** - While on authorized travel, actual expenses not to exceed maximum stated in the [Travel Rate Schedule](#) per day will be allowed for meals. The maximum per diem rates include a fixed allowance for meals and for incidental expenses (M&I). The M&I rate, or fraction thereof, is payable to the traveler without itemization of expenses or receipts. Incidentals are intended to include miscellaneous costs associated with travel such as tips for baggage handling, phone calls home, etc.
- B. The M&I rates for out-of-state travel are available on the [CONUS](#) web site. As with lodging, there is a standard rate for the continental United States, and a list of exceptions. Reimbursement for meals and incidentals for the day of departure shall be three-fourths of the appropriate M&I rate prescribed for the lodging location. Reimbursement for M&I for the day of return shall be three-fourths of the M&I rate applicable to the preceding calendar day.
- C. The breakdown of meal (breakfast, lunch and dinner) and incidental expenses is available on the [CONUS](#) web site.
- D. **Reimbursement for meals will not be permitted when overnight travel is not involved.**
- E. **Out-of Country/International Meals** - Out of Country/International meals are reimbursed at actual expense with itemized receipts. If no receipts are provided, the maximum rate will be the maximum [CONUS](#) rate for Out-of-State travel. The [CONUS](#) rates currently range from \$51 to \$74 so the out-of-country/international rate is \$74.
- F. **Official Banquets** - When the expenses for an official banquet of a meeting or conference are in excess of the above limits, the excess will be allowed provided a receipt or other documentation of the charge is submitted.
- G. **Business Meals** - See ETSU Policy on Business Meals for criteria on reimbursing business meals.

VII. **Miscellaneous Expenses**

- A. **Personal Expenses** - Expenses for entertainment (employees or others), laundry, tips, and gratuities, etc., are personal expenses and will not be reimbursed in excess of the incidental portion of the M&I rate.
- B. **Telephone, Internet and Fax Expenses** - Charges for long distance telephone calls, Internet and/or fax on official business will be allowed provided a statement is furnished showing the date, the name and location called, and the nature of the business. Charges for necessary local calls on official business will be allowed.
- C. **Registration Fees** - Registration fees for approved conferences, conventions, seminars, meetings, etc., will be allowed including cost of official banquets and/or luncheons if authorized in advance by the appropriate approving authority and provided receipts are submitted with the travel claim.
- D. The Procard may be used for payment of conference registrations, workshop registrations and booth/exhibitor fees. The Procard may not be used for CME credits, entertainment, tours, charges for spouse or other family members, banquets and luncheons.
- E. If Procards are not accepted as a form of payment, the registration can be paid by check by completing the [Registration Fee Prepayment Request Form](#) and forwarding this on to the Travel Office.

VIII. **Claims**

- A. **Claim Form** – The [Travel Claim Form](#) shall be used for reimbursement of expenses. The form must show movement and detail of expenses on a daily basis and be signed by the employee and be approved by the appropriate approving authority prior to reimbursement. All signatures on travel claims must be original or electronic in accordance with TBR policy. Where adequate controls have been implemented to minimize risks associated with travel claim (such as the risk that duplicate claims will be submitted or alterations made to the original claim subsequent to approval by approving authority), travel claims may be submitted for payment electronically via email. Receipts for appropriate expenses must be submitted with the claim for reimbursement. Expenses for books, supplies, postage, and other items that do not constitute actual traveling expenses should not be included in the claim form. Claims for reimbursement for travel expenses should be submitted no later than (30) days after completion of the travel. Any expenses charged to the Procard must be subtracted from the total amount of the claim.
- B. **Mileage Only** – Claims for reimbursement (mileage only) of multiple local trips may be claimed on the [Travel Claim Mileage Only](#) form. This form must list each trip separately.
- C. **eBucs Claim Submission** – Once the [Travel Claim Form](#) or [Travel Claim Mileage Only](#) has been completed, the employee can request reimbursement through [eBucs](#). The [Travel Claim Form](#) or the [Travel Claim Mileage Only](#) form and all the required receipts will be required as an attachment in [eBucs](#). The only signature required on the [Travel Claim Form](#) or on the [Travel Claim Mileage Only](#) is the traveler's signature. All other appropriate approvals will be received electronically through [eBucs](#).

IX. **Travel Advances**

- A. **Permanent Travel Advances** - When an employee has blanket travel authorization, and is expected to travel the major portion of each month, the employee may be placed upon permanent travel status. Upon determination of the employee's estimated monthly expenses, if such expenses exceed \$100, the employee may be provided with a single advance in an amount sufficient to cover such expenses for one month, provided such amount may not exceed the semi-monthly salary of the employee. Subsequent to

the initial advance, the employee shall submit appropriate claims and be reimbursed as heretofore provided, with any unused portion of the advance to be returned upon termination of the employee's permanent travel status.

- B. **Temporary Travel Advances** - When temporary travel is authorized for an employee the employee is expected to request reimbursement for their expenses after travel is completed. Travel advances are available only under extraordinary circumstances. The employee must justify the extraordinary circumstances that warrant an advance. As an exception to policy, the employee may receive an advance, provided a request for the advance is submitted to the appropriate approving authority with the Travel Authorization Request. The employee must prepare a [Request for Exception for Travel Advance](#). Exceptions may be granted by the Associate Vice President Administrative Services based upon written request for exception for an advance approved by the Dean or Director. An amount equal to 80% of the estimated expenditures, excluding airfare and registrations if purchased through the Procard or ETSU check, will be allowed as an advance. No advance less than \$100 will be made.
 - C. **Student Travel Advances** - Students traveling under individual authorizations or an employee traveling with a student or students who is responsible for disbursing all funds for the trip may be advanced 100% of the amount of the authorization, excluding airfare and registrations if purchased through the Procard or ETSU check.
 - D. **Payroll Deduction Authorization** - Each employee receiving a permanent or temporary travel advance must sign a payroll deduction authorization which will allow the University to recover the advance from any salary owed the employee in the event of termination of employment or failure to submit a travel claim. This deduction from payroll will be used as a last resort only in the event all other efforts to collect the advance have failed.
 - E. **Expense Claim** - Upon return, the employee should submit a [Travel Claim Form](#) or a [Travel Claim Mileage Only](#) detailing their actual expenditures within 30 days of the completion of travel. This claim should show the total expenses incurred. The advanced amount should be subtracted from this total. No advance should exceed actual expenses. If the travel advance should exceed actual expenses, the expense claim should be forwarded to the Travel Office showing that the difference has been repaid. Repayment of any or part of an advance must be made to a cashier at the Bursar's Office and the receipt provided to the Travel Office.
 - F. An employee is eligible for reimbursement of travel expenses if the trip was entirely business related. If the trip was primarily for business and, while at the business destination, the employee extends the stay, makes a personal side trip, or had other personal activities, the employee can obtain reimbursement for only the business related travel expenses. These expenses include the travel costs of getting to and from the business destination but do not include additional lodging, parking, and per diem for the days not required for the business travel. Additional days are not considered business related unless they are necessary to provide rest or sleep required for the employee to properly perform their duties.
- X. **Exceptions**
- A. **General** - The President shall have the authority to grant exceptions to any part or all of the provisions of this policy when deemed appropriate and necessary. Any exception directly affecting the President must be approved by the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

Related Forms

Travel Authorization Request

<http://www.etsu.edu/bf/fs/documents/travelauthorization.xlsx>

Claim for Travel Expenses

http://www.etsu.edu/bf/fs/documents/travel_claim_12-20-12.xlsx

Claim for Mileage Only Travel Expenses

http://www.etsu.edu/bf/fs/mileage_only_8-01-11.xls

Registration Fee Prepayment Request Form

http://www.etsu.edu/bf/fs/documents/registration_prepayment_9-12-08.xls

Request for Exception for Travel Advance

http://www.etsu.edu/bf/fs/documents/request_for_exception_for_travel_advance_9-12-08.xls

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Helpful Links and Websites

Travel Reimbursement Rates

<https://policies.tbr.edu/policies/general-travel#Addendum>

CONUS Rates

<http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21287>

Ebucs

<https://solutions.scquest.com/apps/Router/Login?>

3/24/2017 – approved by the Board of Trustees.