



Title: Travel Policy and Guidelines
Prepared by: Controller's Office
Administrator: University Controller
Created: July 1, 2012
Revised: April 7, 2014

Policy Statement

The basic principle governing travel expenses is that authorized travel occurs to support the mission of the University (education and research). This policy applies to all travel expenses funded by restricted gifts and grants as well as general operating, overhead return, professional development and faculty start-up funds. More restrictive policies and procedures mandated by federal and state regulations, donors, or departments take precedence over University policy.

The purpose of the travel policy is to provide greater accountability and financial management for University business travel. The policy provides a uniform approach for the approval and control of business travel costs and it is essential that all University faculty and staff conduct themselves as careful stewards of University funds while on travel. This document adheres to the University's policies and procedures on business expenses. The purpose of which is to provide guidelines for reasonable business expenses that will enable the University to monitor and control costs effectively, while complying with federal and state regulations.

This policy does not apply to non-University personnel. Please refer to the University's [Business Expense policy](#).

Definitions of Terms Used

Financial manager – The faculty or staff member with budgetary responsibility over funding sources. For federally sponsored projects, this would be the Principal Investigator.

Personal expense - Expenses that provide a personal benefit to one individual and do not support the University's mission. These expenses are not reimbursed by the University.

Substantiation – Evidence that an expense occurred and the business purpose of the expense. Invoices and receipts are to include appropriate detail to determine what was purchased and why. If the receipts are travel-related, the documentation is to include who attended and why. Only original invoices and receipts will be accepted for payment. If originals are not provided, a written explanation is needed to explain why. For reimbursement of expenses paid by faculty or staff, substantiation would include the method of payment. No receipts are required for reimbursement for travel-related expenses \$75 and under (i.e. meals, conference fees, tolls, bus fare, etc.). This threshold also applies to purchases using PCards.

Travel expense - The ordinary and necessary expenses of carrying on the University's mission while away from campus. Examples include travel for student recruitment, donor and alumni events, education and research, meetings, conferences and training. Expenses generally include meals, lodging, and transportation expenses.

Unallowable expense – In accordance with OMB Circular A-21 Cost Principles for Educational Institutions, unallowable expenses are direct or indirect costs that cannot be charged to federal grants and contracts. Unallowable expenses meeting the definition of a business expense may be reimbursed by the University but cannot be paid with federal funds or included in the University's indirect cost rate (Facilities & Administrative cost rate) charged to federal grants and contracts.

Responsibilities

The intent of the travel policy is that reimbursement will be fair and equitable to both faculty and staff and the University. Faculty and staff traveling on University business should neither gain nor lose personal funds as a result of an assignment requiring travel. The University will reimburse travelers for modestly priced, comfortable and safe accommodations for lodging, meals and transportation. Travelers are expected to exercise prudent and judicious care when incurring travel expenses and are expected to use the most economical mode of lodging and transportation.

University faculty and staff are responsible for ensuring that any travel expenses to be submitted for payment by the University are in accordance with the travel policy, are valid business expenses properly substantiated and have been preauthorized by their supervisor. Prior approval by the Dean or Vice President/Provost is required for all overnight travel and must include an estimate of the complete cost of the trip and the business purpose.

All travel expenses submitted for payment must be approved by the Financial Manager of the funds being charged. All travel expense reimbursements paid directly to a faculty or staff member also need to be approved by the subordinate's supervisor (i.e., an expense report). In the event that the Financial Manager and the subordinate's supervisor are not the same, two approvals are required for reimbursement. Department Head expenses are to be approved by the Provost's Office. The Financial Manager or supervisor approving the expense is responsible for reviewing the reasonableness and business propriety of the expense; proper substantiation of the expense; budget availability and compliance with University policy. The University reserves the right to deny reimbursement of expenses that are considered extravagant or are not supported by documentation. Expenses for unauthorized trips will not be reimbursed.

The Controller's Office is responsible for enforcing the University travel policy and reviews requested payments accordingly.

How to Process Payments

The University's preferred method of payment is direct payment by check or Pcard to vendors providing travel services and accommodations. For payment by check, please refer to the University's [Business Expense policy](#). For payment by Pcard, please refer to the University's [Pcard policy](#).

The [Expense Report](#) is completed to request reimbursement of travel expenses paid by faculty and staff. The University maintains an "accountable plan" and reimbursement are to be submitted within 60 days

of returning from travel. No receipts are required for travel expenses and business meals less than \$75. Please refer to the University's [Business Expense policy](#) for additional guidelines for an accountable plan.

Costs required to be paid in advance (i.e. airfare, certain lodging, conference fees, etc.) are to be paid by Pcard (held by employee or department admin). Should personal funds be used, reimbursement by [Expense Report](#) will occur after travel has been completed.

Travel Expense Matrix

This is a list of common travel expenses submitted for direct payment or reimbursement. The list is not intended to be all inclusive and additional items may be listed on the [Business Expense Policy](#) matrix. For items not specifically listed, please consult directly with the appropriate Dean or Vice President/Provost and contact the Controller's Office for any questions.

Type of Expense	Travel Expense	Account Number	Additional Information
Air travel	Yes	7311 Domestic 7312 Foreign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Airfare is to generally be paid by Pcard (employee or department admin). ▪ When the most efficient means of transportation is air travel, reimbursement will be limited to coach fare except for the instances noted below if <i>prior approval</i> of the Dean or Vice President/Provost is received. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Requires travel during unreasonable hours 2. Excessively prolongs the duration of the trip 3. Results in additional costs that would offset the transportation savings; or 4. Offer accommodations which are not reasonably adequate for the medical needs of the traveler. ▪ When traveling on federal funds, air travel must be with a U.S. flag carrier or a carrier that has an Open Skies agreement. Contact Sponsored Research Accounting (ext.5422) with any questions: http://www.marad.dot.gov/documents/MAR730.US.Flag.Carriers.pdf ▪ An employee may upgrade their travel class at any time by paying the incremental cost from personal funds (documentation required). First class air or charter accommodations require <i>the prior approval</i> of the Board of Trustees under limited exceptions. ▪ Whenever a fee is imposed by the airline to change a ticket due to business reasons, the University will pay for the expense. ▪ Airline ticket insurance will be reimbursed. ▪ If the traveler takes an indirect route or interrupts a direct route for other than University business, reimbursement for air fare will be at either the actual charge or the charge that would have been

			<p>incurred by traveling the direct route by the most economical means, whichever is less (documentation required).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The University does not reimburse travelers for tickets purchased with frequent flier miles. ▪ The University will not pay dues for membership in airline clubs. ▪ Airline stopover charges (additional airfare, lodging, etc.) when made for personal convenience will not be reimbursed. ▪ Costs of lost luggage, including attaché case or similar article will not be reimbursed. Claim for damage to personal property must be filed with the transportation carrier.
Alcohol	Yes	7319 Unallowable 7111 Supplies (for research)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Limited to certain events and purchases exceeding \$250 must be approved by the Dean or Vice President/Provost. ▪ Unallowable expense unless used in formal research.
Automobile rental	Yes	7311 Domestic 7312 Foreign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Limited to situations where other means of transportation are not practical, economical, or unavailable, and to emergency situations. ▪ The most economical car should be used. ▪ Car rental charge over mid-size rate will not be reimbursed unless dictated by business need and preapproved by the Dean or Vice President/Provost. ▪ Always try to rent any vehicle using your Pcard. The Visa Business Auto Rental Collision Damage Waiver benefit provides primary collision coverage worldwide up to the actual cash value of most rental cars. ▪ If an employee is renting a vehicle on WPI business and he/she does not have a WPI issued Corporate Visa Procurement Card (Pcard), the employee should rent the vehicle with their own credit card. Please check with your credit card company prior to renting the vehicle to verify coverage before declining the physical damage coverage. Note, your personal automobile policy will be primary when renting a vehicle and WPI's automobile insurance will be excess. ▪ Fines for automobile violations or personal misconduct will not be reimbursed.
Automobile travel	Yes	7311 Domestic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When using personal vehicle to travel on University business. ▪ Reimbursement limited to the prevailing IRS mileage reimbursement rates. ▪ When traveling directly from home, subtract your normal commute from the total miles associated with the trip. MapQuest directions required for reimbursement. ▪ Gas, oil, insurance premiums, repairs or other costs presumed included in the mileage rate will not be reimbursed. ▪ Fines for automobile violations or personal misconduct will not be reimbursed. ▪ Costs to commute to/from work daily are not valid travel expenses. ▪ Driver's license issuance or renewal fees will not be reimbursed
Business meals	Yes	7325	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Must provide detailed description of the business purpose, the

			<p>type of meal (breakfast, lunch, dinner), and who attended.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The University does not reimburse on a per diem basis. Reasonable expenses incurred will be reimbursed. General guideline is that the meal should not exceed \$10 for breakfast, \$20 for lunch, and \$30 for dinner.
Entertainment	Yes	7322	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Official University events only. ▪ Business entertainment essential to the transactions of University business will be reimbursed and must contain the following documentation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Date and place of the event 2. Specific purpose for the event 3. Names and titles of people in attendance and their relationship to the University. ▪ For large parties or receptions, prior approval by the Dean or Vice President/Provost is required and must be documented. ▪ Personal entertainment expenses when traveling on University business will not be reimbursed (i.e. in-room movie rentals, theater, sporting events, or optional conference related “side” trips to local attractions).
Foreign travel	Yes	7312	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Preapproval required by the Dean or Vice President/Provost. ▪ Translate the expense on each receipt from the foreign currency to US Dollars (USD) using the rate on the day the expense was paid by the traveler. The following website can be referenced: http://www.oanda.com/convert/cheatsheet
Laundry	Yes	7311 Domestic 7312 Foreign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reasonable charges for laundry and dry cleaning services will be reimbursed for extended business trips of five or more days. Receipts and/or supporting documentation are required for reimbursement.
Lodging	Yes	7316	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When overnight stay is required. ▪ Must be preapproved by the Dean or Vice President/Provost. ▪ Generally, trips of less than 50 miles one way do not qualify for reimbursement for an overnight stay. ▪ Travelers are entitled to accommodations that are safe, well located and meet reasonable standards of cleanliness and comfort. Travelers are expected to use modestly priced lodging that meets the above criteria. Examples of acceptable hotels are Hampton Inn, Courtyard Marriott and Holiday Inn Express. The traveler is encouraged to stay at the hotel where a professional meeting, convention, or conference is being held, or at a nearby moderately priced hotel. The actual itemized hotel bill is required for reimbursement. A credit card statement is not sufficient documentation. ▪ Hotels normally hold a room without prior financial commitment until approximately 6:00 p.m. on the check-in date (local destination time). In order to hold a confirmed reservation beyond that hour, the hotel will generally require an advance deposit (normally prepayment for one night) or a guarantee by the traveler's credit card. After a deposit is submitted or a

			<p>guarantee is made, the traveler is responsible for notifying the hotel of cancellation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The traveler will not be reimbursed for the deposit or guarantee penalty if he/she fails to make a cancellation notification unless there are extreme extenuating circumstances beyond the control of the traveler (for example, a canceled flight, medical emergency). Such circumstances must be documented on the expense report. ▪ Mini bar services will not be reimbursed ▪ No show charges will not be reimbursed
Meetings and conferences	Yes	7321 Faculty and staff 73210 Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conference registration fees; rental of meeting sites ▪ Sometimes the organizers of conferences, conventions, and seminars will announce discounted fares for transportation and lodging that may be obtained by arranging travel through their organizations. Travelers are encouraged to take advantage of these discounts.
Parking, taxi fare and tolls	Yes	7311 Domestic 7312 Foreign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transport to and from hotels and terminals ▪ Includes gratuities. ▪ Traffic fines, parking violations and court costs will not be reimbursed.
Passport, passport photo and visa fees	Yes	7311 Domestic 7312 Foreign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When needed for international travel.
Personal expenses	No		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Personal credit card membership dues, fees or charges including liability insurance for lost card or use by third parties. ▪ Personal expenses (i.e. toiletries, barber/hairdresser, city tours, personal entertainment, etc.). ▪ Loss or theft of cash or personal items.
Personal travel combined with business travel	No		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The University will reimburse only the business portion of the trip. The traveler must provide evidence to support the business portion of the trip and the allocation between the business and personal expenses. It is required to obtain a quote at the time of airline ticketing to document the incremental cost that will be incurred and treated as personal expenses. This should be included with the expense report.
Pet care or kennel costs	No		
Spousal travel	No		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The University will not reimburse personal, spouse or companion travel related expenses. The employee is responsible for allocating only his/her portion of expenses on the Expense Report and for identifying them on the hotel, restaurant, transportation and other receipts. The University will pay only the single rate at hotels. When travel

			arrangements such as a family plan result in more economical airfare, the University will pay only for the business traveler's share of the cost. The amount paid will not exceed the charge that would have been incurred if travelling alone by the most economical means (documentation required).
Telephone calls	Yes	7311 Domestic 7312 Foreign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Costs for telephone calls, faxes, internet connections or use of hotel's business center related to University business will be reimbursed. ▪ Telephone charges from airplane phones will not be reimbursed
Tips and gratuities	Yes		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The reasonable costs of gratuities to taxi cabs, airport limousines, porters, bellhops, and other service personnel will be reimbursed. Gratuities for business meals are recommended between 15% to 20% (maximum) of the total bill. Gratuities should be shown on the credit card receipt or the restaurant receipt.
Travel insurance	No		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The University provides life insurance for employees traveling on University business. Please consult Human Resources for questions on the extent of coverage. Coverage begins upon departure from the place of business or residence and continues on a full 24 hour basis until return to the place of business or residence, whichever occurs first. Commuting to and from work is excluded. Coverage is further subject to the terms and conditions of the WPI insurance contract. ▪ Insurance costs such as additional flight insurance, personal automobile and baggage will not be reimbursed. Airline ticket insurance will be reimbursed.
Travelers check fees	No		

Questions

Questions regarding this policy and/or the procedures contained in it should be addressed to the Controller's Office or to the Office of Sponsored Programs for transactions under federal grants, contracts, or other externally funded agreements.

- Charlene Bellows, Controller, ext. 5577 or cbellows@wpi.edu
- Heather Bilotta, Mgr., Sponsored Research Accounting, ext. 5422 or hbilotta@wpi.edu