

TRAVEL PROCEDURES

GENERAL TRAVEL PROCEDURES

1. The Northeastern State University Travel Procedures has been developed in accordance with Oklahoma Statutes. The procedures covers state officials and employees who are performing a substantial and necessary service for the State of Oklahoma.

Non-employee travel is covered under the procedures if the travel expenses were:

- a. Incurred by a student traveling at the university's request.
- b. Incurred at the university's request by an individual in the course of seeking employment with the university.
- c. Provided for in a grant or contract for a conference participant when no other honorarium or contract will be made for the individual's service or participation.
- d. Incurred by an individual who has volunteered their services and payment for the individual's services will not be made.

Travel expenses incurred by a vendor or consultant must be included in the total amount of the contract award.

2. **Justification for Travel**

Travel must be necessary for the proper execution of official university business or in justifiable pursuit of the university's educational objectives. Meetings and conferences attended must be of a professional nature that will increase the attending individual's usefulness to the university.

3. **Limits of Expenses**

- a. Reimbursement for university travel is based on actual expenses incurred, subject to the limitations established by the University's Travel Policies.
- b. If travel expenditures are to be paid from a grant or contract account, travel polices of the grant or contract may specify reimbursement of expenses at a rate different than the amount allowed by the University's Travel Policies. Documentation from the specific grant or contract must be attached to the Travel Reimbursement Summary Form.

- c. An expense which is at the official duty station of an employee will not be reimbursed. The “**official station**” is defined as the office headquarters or the designated location of employees established in the field.
- d. The limits on travel expense reimbursement specified in this policy are not to be construed as an indication of the amounts that should be spent. **These are maximum amounts above which reimbursement cannot be made.**
- e. Specific policies which apply to various types of travel expenses are listed on the next several pages. If you have any questions about reimbursement of expenses, call the Travel Clerk in the Office of Business Affairs (ext. 2803).

TRANSPORTATION EXPENSES

- 1. Transportation for persons traveling singly should be by common carrier (air, train, bus) wherever practical. Advantage must be taken of round trip rates when available. Travel must be by the most direct route possible, any individual traveling by an indirect route must bear the extra expense.
- 2. Regardless of the mode of transportation (including privately owned vehicles), reimbursement for out-of-state transportation shall not exceed that of coach airplane fare.
- 3. **Air Travel**

The use of airplane travel is recommended when the cost of the employee's time is an important factor and when the trip is so long that other methods of travel would increase the lodging and meals expense. Accommodations should be limited to coach class.

All airline tickets must be purchased from a travel agency designated by the Central Purchasing Division in accordance with the Oklahoma Statutes. This can be done by using the University Purchasing System, the University Procurement Card or by requesting reimbursement on the State of Oklahoma Travel Voucher after the trip's completion.

Current Travel Agents:

- **Tahlequah/Muskogee Duty Station.** Use Jimmy Houston Travel (918) 457-5113 Toll Free (800) 775-7721.
- **Broken Arrow Duty Station.** Use Journey House (918) 524-5249. Toll Free (800) 251-6559. OR Nammer Travel Telephone (918) 492-6800 Toll Free (800) 421-6635.

Exceptions to the designated travel agency rule are as follows:

- a. When the travel was initiated on an emergency basis, such as changing itinerary and route or emergency travel after hours.
- b. If air travel is originated from a location outside the state, making it impractical to arrange for air travel through appropriate channels.
- c. When air travel is part of a package arranged by an organization scheduling a meeting or conference.

If a ticket is purchased elsewhere a written quote from the State Approved Travel Agent must be included with the travel claim. This quote must be obtained before the ticket is purchased and if at all possible it should be 21 days before the date of travel. We cannot pay more than the quoted amount from the state approved travel agent. A copy of the airline itinerary must be included with the travel claim. The claimant's identification number should be written on the airline itinerary.

4. Flying vs. Driving Cost Comparison

1. A cost comparison must be done if the claimant drives a private vehicle outside the state to a conference. The flying comparison can only include three items:
 - a. Written quote for the cost of airfare from a state approved travel agent. It must be obtained before travel and it is recommended that if at all possible it be 21 days before the date of travel.
 - b. The cost of the mileage to and from the airport. (Ex. Tahlequah-Tulsa-Tahlequah (69x2=138 miles x 0.50 = \$69.00).
 - c. The cost of the mileage from the airport to the conference/hotel at the destination. The mileage can be obtained from the internet, mapquest.com is recommended. A copy of the map showing the mileage should be printed and included with the travel claim.

The total of the above three items will equal the total "cost to fly". All three items can be totaled on the airfare quote with the words "cost to fly" noted.

2. The driving comparison must be documented with a copy of a map showing the miles from the point of entry of travel and the destination. The total number of miles driven times the mileage rate will equal the "cost to drive." Mapquest.com is recommended, the map must be included with the travel claim.

The lesser of the “**cost to fly**” or the “**cost to drive**” will be paid. The amount which is being paid is listed under mileage, with a note of explanation attached.

3. A cost comparison is not required for use of government furnished vehicles.

Any questions concerning the purchase of air travel should be directed to the Travel Clerk.

5. **Train/Bus Travel**

A receipt or ticket stub for transportation fare must be submitted with the request for reimbursement.

6. **Automobile Travel**

- a. Mileage is reimbursed at 0.50 per mile. This usually changes around January 1, of each year. It was last revised on January 1, 2010.
- b. Automobile transportation may be used to save time when common carrier transportation cannot be satisfactorily schedule to cover a number of outlying places, or to reduce expenses when two (2) or more university employees are making the trip.
- c. Travel by a privately owned vehicle shall be reimbursed at the approved rate based on the distance on the latest State Highway Commission road map. Distance from Tahlequah to some commonly used destinations in Oklahoma are listed on the OKMapMile software. This program can be downloaded from www.okladot.state.ok.us/.
 - 1) All miles from one town to the other are listed under the “Map Column” on the voucher. All towns listed on the voucher must be listed on OKMapMile. If your town is not listed call the Travel Clerk.
 - 2) “**Vicinity travel**” refers to travel that is in excess of map mileage performed in a privately owned vehicle while conducting university business.
 - 3) The **shorter of the distances** from the employee’s residence (if leaving from home) or duty station to the destination point of travel will be considered for reimbursement of mileage.

7. **Public Transportation**

This refers to local transportation at the traveler’s destination and includes taxi, limousine, bus, subway, shuttles, etc. If reimbursement for local

transportation is being claimed within the State Of Oklahoma, a letter of justification, signed by an Account Sponsor, must accompany the request for reimbursement.

8. Reimbursement of Leased or Rented Automobiles

Reimbursement for automobiles leased or rented within the State of Oklahoma from car rental agencies or private parties, to be used in lieu of a privately owned vehicle on official business for the state, shall not exceed the rate provided for the use of privately owned automobile.

The actual cost of leasing or renting an automobile outside of the State of Oklahoma, to be used on official business for the state, shall be reimbursed subject to approval by the Account Sponsor. This will include the liability insurance policy offered by the rental company.

MISCELLANEOUS TRAVEL EXPENSES

1. All miscellaneous travel expenses must be itemized on the Travel Reimbursement Summary and receipts attached.
2. Reimbursement may be claimed for the following miscellaneous expenses:
 - a. Communications: Telephone and internet charges may be reimbursed when incurred while conducting University business; a memo of explanation must be attached.
 - b. Registration: Please include a copy of the registration. Be sure to include the payment information. If it was paid with a purchase order include the PO Number. If it was charged to the NSU procurement card please write NSU CC on the voucher. If the claimant paid for the registration please include a copy of the receipt showing a "0" balance or both sides of a canceled check or a copy of the credit card statement. If meals were included in the registration fee, the number of meals provided should be indicated on the form and one-fourth of one day's meals and incidental expense allowance should be deducted from the per diem for each meal provided. If a dinner/banquet ticket(s) is purchased along with the registration include the cost of the ticket in the cost of the registration and subtract the meal from the total per diem amount.

NOTE: "Continental Breakfasts" and refreshments, such as coffee, tea, soft drinks, etc., provided during meeting breaks are not considered meals.

- c. Parking fee charges. Attach receipts.
- d. Toll Road Fees. Attach receipts if over \$25.00 in total.

- e. Baggage Fees charged by airlines can be reimbursed under Miscellaneous Charge with receipts.
 - f. Optional business activities. Attach a paid receipt and itemize any optional business activities. These expenses should be “essential and necessary” activities that are related and connected with the general purposes of the conference, meeting, seminar, etc. A statement signed by the claimant attesting that these activities were essential and necessary expenses and a brief description of their importance must accompany the State of Oklahoma Travel Voucher Form. If the optional business activity included meals, it must be deducted from the per diem total as described with the registration fees.
3. Reimbursement may not be claimed for the following expenses:
- a. Personal services such as haircuts, shoe shines, etc.
 - b. Gas, oil and repairs to privately owned vehicles. These expenses are covered in the reimbursement rate allowed.

MEALS AND LODGING EXPENSE

1. Per Diem Rates

- a. Per Diem rates will vary depending on the location of travel as identified in the Government Services Administration’s (GSA) Continental United States (CONUS) rates for domestic locations. Special rates apply to out of the country trips. A complete listing of these rates can be obtained from the GSA per diem website www.gsa.gov. (On left side of page look for per diem and click on it.) The charts are listed as effective October 1. Since this is a federal website the rates will change on October 1. A copy of the **per diem page** for the location of travel **must be printed and included with the travel claim**.
- b. There are **three** per diem rates for travel within the State of Oklahoma. In Oklahoma City (all of Oklahoma County) the per diem rate is \$66.00 per day, Tulsa, Creek, Osage, & Rogers counties are \$61.00per day and in all other locations within Oklahoma the standard rate is \$46.00 per day.

Per diem will be figured by taking the rate of per diem listed on the Per Diem Chart and dividing it by four. For each meal that is provided subtract $\frac{1}{4}$ of the daily per diem rate from the total per diem amount. Since a per diem rate is used it is not necessary to save meal receipts.

- c. Reimbursement for meals and lodging shall not begin more than twenty-four (24) hours before or continue more than twenty-four (24) hours after the objective of the trip. Forty-Eight (48) hours applies to out of the country trips. A copy of the conference agenda must be included. The agenda must have the **beginning** and **ending dates** and **times** of the conference. The dates and times will be used to figure the amount of the per diem.
- d. If the agenda shows a meal was provided deduct it from the total per diem unless it was an extra cost and was not purchased. If a meal was available it must be deducted even if the claimant did not attend, unless he/she was in another meeting at that time, special dress was required, or there is a medical reason they could not participant. A statement signed by the claimant attesting to the circumstances of non-participation in the meal function must accompany the Travel Claim.
- e. If meals and lodging are furnished as a package plan, reimbursement may be based upon a combined receipt but at a daily rate not to exceed the rate that would have been allowed for separate meals and lodging (the receipt must reflect a breakdown between meals, lodging, registration, etc.)

2. Lodging

- a. There are currently three lodging rates for travel within the State of Oklahoma. In Oklahoma City (all of Oklahoma County see attachment) the maximum lodging rate is \$82.00 plus taxes per night, and in all other locations within Oklahoma the standard rate is \$77.00 plus taxes except for Tulsa, Osage, Rogers, and Creek, counties which have a standard rate of \$80.00 plus taxes Rates are changed October 1.
- b. If the daily room charge is more than the GSA Rate it can be paid if you include a copy of the designated hotel information which can be found in the conference literature. The **“designated hotel”** information is the special discount rate arranged by the conference sponsors with the hotel. The single room rate must be specified.
- c. If the conference is held in the hotel where the participant stayed the daily room charged can be paid by marking the receipt as **“Conference Hotel”** and furnishing the information showing that the conference was held at that hotel.
- d. Claimants who acquire less expensive lodging shall be reimbursed the actual lodging expense not to exceed the single room rate charged by the designated lodging place. The designated hotel information must be included with the travel claim. Travel between hotel and meeting room is

covered, but is limited to a dollar amount not to exceed the cost of staying at the designated lodging.

e. Please examine the hotel receipt:

It must have a -0- balance:

- If the receipt shows more than one person in the room we must have an explanation: Are Single and Double rate the same? Was the cost split? Did the claimant pay the total bill, and the other party will not be seeking reimbursement? Or did a family member attend?
- The only dollar amounts that can be reimbursed under lodging are the daily single room charges plus taxes.
- If parking is on the hotel receipt it must be reimbursed under the Misc. column.
- Business phone calls on the receipt must be reimbursed under the Misc. column.
- Any business internet charges on the receipt should be reimbursed under Misc. column.
- Personal phone calls, room service, etc. listed on the hotel receipt are not reimbursable.

3. There will be reimbursement for documented meal and incidental expenses **only in connection with overnight travel status**. Meal and incidental expense include the cumulative cost of a meal and other objects of purchase incidental to travel undertaken for business reasons. **“Incidental expenses”** refer to those purchases made by chance or without intention in the course of official travel. Examples of this type of expense include: laundry, cleaning and pressing of clothing, refreshments, such as beverages and snacks; and fees paid to doormen, baggage handlers, cab drivers and waiters/waitresses. Examples of expense which would not qualify include: entertainment or other purchases of a personal nature; prescription or over-the-counter medications; tobacco products; personal clothing; souvenirs; and other similar purchases.
4. Overnight travel must be a least **60 map miles one-way from claimant’s duty station** to qualify for reimbursement of lodging expenses.
5. If there are no lodging expenses claimed on the travel claim (as in when a claimant stays overnight with family or friends) in Lieu of Subsistence may be claimed. Please write on the travel claim that the claimant stayed with family or friends and increase the basic per diem by \$10.00 per day.

REIMBURSEMENT FOR TRAVEL EXPENSES

1. After traveling, the claimant should complete and sign a Travel Reimbursement Summary and State of Oklahoma Travel Voucher to obtain reimbursement for expenses.

2. The following items should be forwarded to the Business Office for auditing and processing:
 - a. The completed Travel Reimbursement Summary signed and dated by the Claimant and the Account Sponsor.
 - b. One completed original Travel Voucher. Signed and dated by Claimant and the Account Sponsor.
 - c. The original of all required receipts (lodging, transportation fees, rental vehicle charges, gas, oil, and repairs to a university vehicle). If the original receipts are not available, please so indicate with an explanation.
 - d. The original of any required letters of justification to explain unusual expenses of amounts claimed.
4. Reimbursement may be expected within approximately fourteen (14) days from the date the Business Office submits the claim to the Office of State Finance. **The travel reimbursement will be mailed to the home address on file.**
5. As of August 1, 2006 we must use the official State Nickname on the State Voucher instead of the Social Security Number. Continue to use the Claimant's Social Security Number on the Travel Summary.