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PROCEDURES: Travel and Business Expenditures

AUTHORITY: University Administration

RESPONSIBILITY: Vice President (Finance and Administration)

EFFECTIVE DATE: November 1, 2013

Purpose

To implement the Travel, Hospitality and Business Expenditures Policy as concerns Travel and Business Expenditures, the following specific actions will be taken to conform to the policy. These procedures set forth the documentation and approval processes for travel expenditures for both external and employee events.

Responsibility

The Vice President, Finance and Administration, on behalf of The Administration of the University, is responsible for the development, administration and review of these procedures.

Authorization

Faculty and staff travel and expense claims must be authorized by an appropriate authority in compliance with the ‘one-over-one approval’ principle. Travel and expense claims for the President are reviewed and approved by the Chair of The Board of Regents.

Travel must be authorized in advance. An Application for Faculty/Employee Travel Form should be used, a copy of which should be attached to the University Travel Expense Claim Form, when submitted.

Travel must be related to University business and in support of the University’s mission. When authorizing travel requests, consideration should be given to other ways of

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achieving the same goal (e.g., in-house training programs, group rates, Cisco teleconferencing, etc.) while minimizing the cost and environmental impact.

Use of the University's preferred travel agent Out'N About Travel Inc. is mandatory for all University travel paid out of the operating budget, and recommended for travel paid from research, TPDA and other restricted accounts. Approval of the Associate Vice-President (Finance and Operations) is required for travel paid from the operating fund to be booked without the assistance of Out N' About Travel.

Travel Advances

The University may provide a maximum of one (1) travel advance per trip up to 75% of the total cost of the trip, but of no less than \$500 and no more than \$2,000 in the following circumstances:

1. When required for one or more of the following reasons:
 - The travel will be to a remote location where credit cards have limited application;
 - Due to the nature of the expenditures listed, they are unlikely to be chargeable to a credit card;
 - The lengthy duration of the trip precludes being reimbursed for the requested portion of the advance before credit card charges can be paid
 - A student or staff member lacks credit card eligibility or the required cash resources.

2. When airfare (if any) has been booked through the University's travel agent.
 - Approval of the Associate Vice-President (Finance and Operations) is required for advances in excess of the limit or in other circumstances.
 - Advances will not be provided to pay for airfare as it is paid directly by the University.

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- Advances for future trips will not generally be provided until documentation is received for previously received advances.

All travel advances require an explanation and subsequent submission of the receipts with the travel claim. Failure to provide the appropriate documentation will result in rejection of future advance requests and may result in rejection of future travel claims or other action as deemed necessary in the circumstances.

Corporate credit card

Regular and continuing faculty and administrative staff may apply for a corporate RBC Visa credit card through the Accounts Payable Department. They are encouraged to use this card for travel expenditures whenever possible. There are several advantages to using the RBC Visa credit card, including:

- Most University travel and other expenses can be charged to the credit card including airfare, hotel, car rental, meals, etc.,
- Limits the need to use personal funds or personal credit cards on University business;
- Reduced security risk since carrying large sums of money is unnecessary;
- Easier to reconcile University expenses at the end of each month;
- Emergency Purchases Insurance
- Auto rental Collision/Loss Damage Insurance
- Travel and Insurance Assistance Service
- Hotel/Motel Burglary Insurance
- Excellent identification for corporate discount benefits;
- Assured reservations at participating hotels.

Employees are not permitted to use the corporate credit cards for any personal items. In the rare event that the employee uses the corporate credit card for personal items in error, a cheque to reimburse the funds must be submitted along with the monthly report and receipts. Repeated use of the corporate credit card for personal expenses will result in the cancellation of the credit card.

The corporate credit card is no longer valid once you leave the employment of the University. The card must be returned to the Director of Purchasing.

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Use of Personal credit card

Any agency administrative fees or other incidental costs incurred as a result of using a non-corporate credit card will NOT be reimbursed by the University, with the exception of travel expenses being paid from a faculty member's Travel & Professional Development Allowance (TPDA)

Interest for late or less than full payment of personal credit cards is not a reimbursable expense.

Air Transportation

Travel by air shall be done in the most economical way considering the total cost of the trip including paid employee time, overtime, airfare, baggage handling, hotel and other travel expenses.

Travel arrangements should, whenever possible, be made sufficiently in advance to take advantage of discount fares.

Travel should be via the most direct route, but indirect routing can be approved if the cost (including employee time and overtime) does not exceed that for the direct route. The employees requesting indirect routing must be able to provide evidence of the variable cost, if requested, prior to confirming travel arrangements. Whenever possible, employees are asked to combine trips and reduce connections to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

If a traveler wishes to secure a lower airfare by booking an itinerary that includes an overnight stay, the University will reimburse the related additional expenses hotel and per diems costs, provided that the total of such expenses does not exceed the savings attained on airfare. This cost must not generate additional employee costs (i.e. overtime)

Travel by air at a class higher than economy requires approval by the President, a Vice President, Associate Vice President, Dean or Executive Director.

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Instances of approval for Business Class, first class or preferred seating travel will be rare and only in such circumstances as being explicitly permitted under the grant or contract funding the trip:

- Where it will enable the University traveler to accompany a sponsor, donor or similar senior official on the trip
- Where a flight is over six hours in length
- The agenda is so compressed it requires the traveler to lecture or attend meetings within a few hours of arrival on the Business Class leg of the trip.
- Exceptions may be granted for flights within Canada and the continental USA when warranted by special circumstances (e.g. medical certificate)

Upgrades to business, first class or preferred seating may be done at the expense of the traveler. Evidence of price differential paid by the employee must be provided with the completed University Travel Expense Claim Form.

The University will not reimburse airfare costs for tickets that are not used. It will reimburse flight change costs incurred due to University related causes.

Flight cancellation insurance is an allowable expense for reimbursement by the University, but may not be for a specific grant. We recommend travelers check the eligibility of flight cancellation insurance for their grant prior to booking their travel. This insurance is recommended for tickets over \$400 which are non-refundable and being purchased well in advance of departure.

Some airline tickets available through consolidators/wholesalers indicate a fare higher than the net cost to the traveler. The University will only reimburse the traveler for the net cost of the fare.

A traveler may enroll in a frequent flyer program at their cost. Travelers may not alter travel arrangements to accommodate frequent flyer programs. The choice of carrier must always be based on the most economical fare. When frequent flyer points have been used to book University travel, the traveler will NOT be reimbursed by the University for the equivalent cost of the airline ticket. The University will reimburse the cost of taxes and surcharges actually paid by the traveler.

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Each faculty/administrative department should limit the number of individuals on the same flight to minimize its exposure to a catastrophic loss.

Car Rentals

Car rentals should be used only when necessary, and when their use is economical and practical. Canadian Universities have negotiated preferential rates for Canada and the US with various rental agencies. Travelers should contact Purchasing services or the University's authorized Travel Agent to obtain the current discount identification number.

All car rentals are to be booked in advance at the lowest available rate. Whenever practical, employees with the same travel plans should share a vehicle.

The size of the rental car must be the most economical and practical required for the business task and the number of occupants. Luxury and sports car rentals are prohibited.

If it is likely that there may be more than one driver of the rental vehicle, the name of each potential driver should be listed on the rental contract in addition to the name of the employee responsible for the vehicle rental.

The condition of the rental car is to be examined, and damaged areas reported to the rental agency and documented prior to driving it from the rental lot.

The University has worldwide (with the exception of Puerto Rico) non-owned auto liability insurance coverage (collision, theft, fire, vandalism, and tire/glass damage up to the vehicle's full value) therefore employees should decline additional such coverage at the time of signing a contract for a rental vehicle. Liability coverage for bodily injury or property damage caused to others while using a rental car are generally provided through the car rental agency at no additional charge. For further information regarding insurance coverage and claims, contact the Manager of Insurance and Capital Accounting – Financial Services.

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In addition, use of the corporate RBC credit card automatically provides collision damage insurance. The University will not normally reimburse the cost of other collision damage insurance.

Parking or traffic violations incurred by the employee while using a rental car will not be reimbursed.

Employees are required to refill the gas on all rental vehicles prior to their return to minimize costs assessed rental agencies. So long as it is used for University business, fuel for rental cars is a reimbursable expense, or may be paid with a University corporate RBC credit card.

In the event of an accident the employee must notify local law enforcement, the car rental company, and the Office of the Vice-President (Finance & Administration).

Private Vehicle

1. Personal vehicles may be used as long as the personal vehicle is the most economical mode of transportation. The traveler may claim reimbursement for kilometers. Eligible distance is the lesser of
 - The actual distance traveled, or
 - The difference between the actual distance traveled and the distance normally traveled to the workplace.
2. Ineligible travel includes the distance between the employee's residence and place of employment, or between two places of employment even when employees are hired to work at off-campus locations.
3. When it is necessary to travel by personal vehicle, the employee is entitled to kilometric reimbursement at the University-approved rate published on the University website <http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/index/financial-srvs-faqs>, or as allowed by the research funding agency. This rate is intended to cover the wear and tear, cost of gasoline, repairs, maintenance and insurance, etc. of the employee's vehicle while on University business. Repayment of direct expenses for use of personal vehicles (eg. gasoline, insurance, repairs, etc...) is not permitted.

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4. Cost of parking is eligible for reimbursement in addition to the mileage allowance except where travel arrangements accommodate personal preferences.
5. Kilometric reimbursement is allowed for only one personally owned vehicle where persons traveling together could reasonably be expected to travel in one vehicle. When exceptions arise, approval for kilometric reimbursement for more than one vehicle must be noted on the University Travel Expense Claim Form. Passengers may not claim mileage or cost of equivalent public transportation.
6. Employees using personal vehicles for business purposes should ensure their vehicle has the correct classification for insurance purposes.
7. When there is an insurance claim resulting from the use of a vehicle on University business, the University will reimburse the traveler for the deductible amount, up to \$200, if assessed on “comprehensive” type claims (e.g., fire, theft of vehicle, vandalism).
8. All costs incurred by a traveler as the result of “collision” (i.e., own damage) type claims are not reimbursable by the University and are the responsibility of the faculty or staff member. Such costs include the policy deductible, costs resulting from the loss of a safe-driver’s discount and of personal property, and loss-of-use costs while the owner’s vehicle is undergoing repairs.

Ground Transportation

The most inexpensive ground transportation shall normally be used, taking into account scheduling and safety concerns (e.g., an airport bus rather than a limousine), unless a group shares the expense which makes the shared use more cost effective.

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Accommodation

Reimbursement of reasonable accommodation expenses is normally limited to a single room rate per traveler. Travelers may stay in the designated hotel when attending a conference. The lowest rate and/or Government/CAUBO rates should be requested. A list of hotels that have arrangements with CAUBO is available on the CAUBO website.

When accompanied by a spouse or other personal companion(s), the traveler must claim the single room rate.

If an employee is required to spend more than one continuous week in a single location, appropriate arrangements for accommodations at weekly or monthly rates are to be made prior to or as soon as possible after the start of travel.

If staying with friends or relatives, a reasonable sum (no more than the cost of a one night stay at a hotel) will be allowed for a token gift/meal. A receipt is required for any such expenditure. The name, location and relationship to the employee of the person supplying accommodation must be provided with the University Travel Expense Claim Form. This may not be a reimbursable expense for certain research grants.

Original hotel receipts are required for reimbursement as charge card slips do not provide sufficient information.

Personal incidentals (e.g., movies, minibar, etc.) will not be reimbursed.

All rooms should be guaranteed for late arrival and cancelled in a timely manner if not required to avoid no-show charges. No-show charges are not reimbursable except in extenuating circumstances as approved by the Associate Vice President (Finance and Operations).

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Meals & Per Diems

The cost of meals may be claimed by either:

1. Submitting detailed receipts (not credit card slips) for the reasonable and appropriate cost of food, beverages, and gratuities; based on actual out of pocket costs, **or**
2. Requesting the per diem rate (the per diem rate includes gratuities and taxes)

For a given trip it is requested that travelers choose option 1 or 2 (noted above), not mix and match reimbursement and per-diems. It is recommended that the per diem rate for the appropriate meal be used as a guideline in determining maximum reasonable and appropriate meal charges. Reimbursement should be calculated on a per meal basis. The current per diem rate can be obtained from the University website <http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/index/financial-srvs-faqs>

In the absence of actual receipts, the maximum amount reimbursable daily is an amount equal to the per diem rate in effect at the time of travel or expenditure. Per Diems should only be claimed in the event that the traveler paid for a meal. (e.g. If a meal is provided by a host or conference, no per diem should be claimed.)

Personal alcohol consumption shall be covered when consumed as part of a meal and claimed within the per diem limits.

Meals provided as part of airline tickets or conference registration fees are to be recognized and not claimed in the per diem.

Where only employees are in attendance at a meal, the most senior employee must pay for and submit the claim for reimbursement.

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Incidentals

The following principles shall be applied to claims for Incidentals. Also note that if a trip is being paid for with research funds, expenditures should only be incurred if they are eligible under the terms of the grant. .

1. Telephone Calls

Personal telephone charges while travelling away from the University will be reimbursed if necessary and reasonable. Employees are required to use the most cost-effective method for long-distance telephone calls.

Travelers with University cell phones or cell enabled mobile devices are expected to advise Technology Solutions Centre (TSC) when they will be leaving the country and arrange to alter their plan to the least expensive alternative.

2. Laundry

Reasonable laundry/dry cleaning expenses shall be covered for trips which are five (5) days or longer in duration, or in an emergency situation, in which case an explanation is required. Actual receipts must be submitted.

3. Entertainment

Entertainment costs are governed by the University Travel, Hospitality and Business Expenditures Policy. Reimbursement shall be limited to functions directly related to the work of the University and shall be supported with original receipts indicating the reason for the entertainment and the names of the individuals entertained.

4. Parking

Fees for parking when on University business shall be reimbursed. Receipts are required for lot parking but not for metered parking.

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5. Exchange rates

Information regarding foreign exchange rates shall be provided by the traveler to Financial Services for verification.

6. International visa fees/immunizations

Costs of obtaining foreign visas and immunizations are eligible for reimbursement if incurred for the sole purpose of international travel for University business. Passport and immigration related charges are not eligible for reimbursement.

7. Safety –related expenses

Employees may claim for safety-related expenses incurred during field work, such as protective gear.

8. Insurance coverage

The University’s extended health care plan is sufficient to cover most out-of-country medical emergencies. Personnel who do not receive any such benefits for the University and/or other sources may claim reasonable reimbursement.

9. Dependent Care

Overnight dependent care expenses when travelling may be reimbursable if unpaid alternatives are not available (for example when a single parent is traveling). The claim requires a supporting receipt, a brief written explanation as to why the claim should be reimbursed and must be authorized by the supervising Vice-President. The amounts must be reasonable given the cost of care.

The eligible cost for a nursing mother who is travelling with a caregiver and a child is limited to the customary cost of child care or travel and accommodation costs up to a maximum of \$1,000 for the traveling caregiver, in lieu of child care expenses.

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Spousal Travel

Travel expenses for a spouse are not reimbursable unless it can be shown that the spouse's presence was both essential and directly related to the effective accomplishment of the University mission. In these limited instances, faculty and staff must obtain written approval in advance authorized by the supervising Vice-President.

Research

Where policies or guidelines provided by a funding agency or sponsor conflict with these procedures or the Travel, Hospitality and Business Expenditures Policy, **those of the funding agency take precedence**, unless the University's Policy or procedure is more rigorous.

Most granting agencies do not allow hospitality or entertainment expenses or alcoholic beverages as claimable expenses.

Submission of Travel Claims

All travel claims must be submitted on the University Travel Expense Claim Form accompanied by the relevant Travel Authorization form and receipts supporting all expenditures. This form also requires travelers provide a record of kilometers traveled be submitted as part of the claim. Normally, travel claims are expected to be submitted to Financial Services within two (2) weeks of the date of return from travel. Travel Claim forms should be signed by the traveler as well as the appropriate supervisor in compliance with the "one-over-one approval" principle.

Faculty and staff with a corporate credit card are required to go online on the date specified by the University's Visa Program Coordinator and reconcile their charges for the previous month. Reconciliation includes providing a description of the purpose for the charges and the account number (s) to which they should be charged. Once reconciled a copy of the online report generated along with original receipts are to be forwarded to the Accounts Payable Supervisor for consolidation.

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Where the Corporate Visa card is used, the expenses should be included in the Travel Claim, supported by copies of the receipts. The amounts paid by Visa should be identified in the claim, and deducted from the amount payable, similar to advances. Original detailed receipts should be submitted with the Visa reconciliation.

Claimed expenses shall be supported by original receipts providing detail of expenditures (visa slips which do not show what was purchased are not adequate). In the rare circumstance that a receipt is not available, or is lost, a note of explanation should be attached to the claim and initialed by the appropriate administrator.

Instructions for completion of the University Travel Expense Claim Form can be found on page 2 of the Form.

Authorized Travel Agency

The University of Winnipeg has entered into an agreement with Out'n About Travel Inc. (Out'n About) for the arranging of all travel services paid from University operating accounts. **If the account number paying for the travel begins with "10", "20", or "30", the use of Out'n About when booking travel is mandatory.** We also encourage those paying with designated or research funds to use Out'n About, however it is not mandatory.

Bookings are made by Out'n About for the University personnel (client) and a confirmation is sent directly to the client. Billings from Out'n About are forwarded to Accounts Payable for reconciliation and payment, on a monthly basis.).

Out'n About can be reached at (204) 985-9200 or 1-800-254-5552. If you encounter any problems with Out'n About, please contact the Director of Purchasing.

Review:

These procedures shall be reviewed in conjunction with the Policy review at least once every five years.

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