



University Travel Expense Policy # 1110.060

INITIAL EFFECTIVE DATE: August 30, 2007	LAST REVISION DATE: November 17, 2020	RESPONSIBLE UNIVERSITY DIVISION/DEPARTMENT Office of the Controller
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POLICY STATEMENT

The University reimburses employees and others who undertake previously authorized travel on behalf of the university (university travel). The expenses must be directly related to the purpose of the trip, evidenced by receipts and/or other supporting documentation, and must receive prior approval by the appropriate approver. Travel expenses must be authorized and expended within established budgetary limits. Any reimbursements prohibited by state statutes or regulations will not be reimbursed to the traveler.

TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION

All university travel must be approved by the designated university administrator with budgetary authority for the department or project funds being expended. No University administrator may approve the use of department or project funds for travel or travel related costs to countries identified by the U.S. Department of State as "state sponsors of terrorism." The countries that have been identified can be viewed at the website address <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/list/c14151.htm>. A Travel Authorization request for a traveler must be approved by the traveler's supervisor, indicating that the travel is for official university business along with the purpose of the trip. Travelers are not to make commitments to travel or to incur travel expenses without first obtaining the appropriate approval. The University Chief Financial Officer shall approve the University President's travel authorization requests and travel vouchers subject to the procedures established by the FIU Board of Trustees.

TRAVEL RELATED EXPENDITURES

The university requires that all travel expenditures must be reported on a travel voucher form subsequent to the completion of the trip. IRS rulings require any unsubstantiated travel expenses paid to or on behalf of a traveler to be either returned to the university or reported as income to the traveler. Therefore, individuals may be required to reimburse the university for any travel expenditures that the university has paid directly to a vendor or employee that has either not been substantiated in a travel voucher within a reasonable amount of time after

completion of the trip or is not in compliance with this policy. Please consult the FIU Travel and Other Expense Manual for the maximum time allowed to submit a Travel Voucher.

Reimbursement for travel related expenditures will only be processed upon submission of a legally permissible travel voucher approved by the designated university administrator with budgetary authority for the department or project funds being expended.

Requests for travel reimbursement not in compliance with this policy will not be processed. Specific travel-related expenditures are discussed below:

Airfare

The university reimburses coach/economy class airline travel. However, classes other than coach may be allowed under exceptional circumstances due to medical necessity. Requests for an upgrade must be submitted to the University Chief Financial Officer or designee for prior approval. If business class is available for travel due to medical necessity, first class travel is not reimbursable. Within the acceptable class of travel, the most efficient and economical means should be considered and approved by the appropriate individual.

Car Rental

The university will reimburse travelers for the rental of compact cars, or the most economical class available for rental if compact cars are not available.

With supervisory approval prior to travel taking place, the university will reimburse travelers for the rental of a larger size car when:

- the automobile is shared with other travelers, resulting in a savings to the university;
- the circumstances would necessitate a larger size vehicle, such as a physical or medical condition; or
- the nature of the travel is such that it would be reasonable to expect additional passengers, such as travel for development and fundraising purposes.

Cash Advances

Cash advances may be authorized for travel when use of a credit card is not possible. The amount of the cash advance cannot exceed 80% of the total out of pocket expenses as computed on the TAR. Advances not settled within 60 days after the trip may be deducted from the employee's salary. The request for a cash advance must be submitted and authorized by the appropriate approvers.



Foreign Travel

The university uses the U.S. Department of State Foreign Per Diem Rates for foreign travel. The current rates can be obtained at website address

https://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per_diem.asp

The university will not reimburse meal allowances in excess of the indicated rate.

Justification will be required for a room rate that exceeds the indicated rate, unless the stay is at the "official" hotel of the conference/convention/workshop/seminar and the rate claimed is less than or equal to the stated conference/convention/workshop/seminar rate.

Receipts issued in foreign currency must show a computation converting the amount into US dollars, unless the conversion is already indicated on the receipt or credit card statement. All claims in the Travel Voucher must be in US dollars. USD exchange rates can be found on the Web at <http://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/>.

Hotel Accommodations

Lodging reimbursement is limited to single occupancy unless rental accommodations are shared by more than one authorized traveler. The most economical means should be considered. Justification is required if the hotel rate is in excess of \$200.

The university uses the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) domestic maximum lodging as the reference rate for all hotel accommodation in the continental United States. When the city being traveled to is not in the GSA website, the reference rate will be the standard CONUS GSA rate for all destinations not specifically listed. The Department of Defense (DOD) maximum lodging should be used as the reference rate for non-continental United States as well as U.S. territories and protectorates. No justification is required, even if the hotel rate exceeds \$200, if the rate complies with these reference rates. Additionally, if the stay is at the "official" hotel of a meeting/convention and the rate claimed is less than or equal to the stated meeting/convention rate, justification is not needed. For foreign travel hotel rates, please refer to Foreign Travel section above.

The university can only make direct payments to hotels for room accommodations if either a benefit to the university can be justified or team/group travel is required.

Incidentals

Certain incidental travel expenses are eligible for reimbursement. Please consult the FIU Travel & Other Expenses Manual

(https://controller.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/24/2021/01/Travel_Manual.pdf)

for specific examples.

Per Diem and Meal Allowances

The university utilizes the per diem and meal allowance rates adopted in Florida Statute, Section 112.061. Travelers on Class A or B travel are entitled to travel expense reimbursement and have two alternatives:

1. The flat per diem rate for each day of travel to cover the cost of lodging and meals.
2. The maximum meal allowance per day plus the allowable cost of lodging (see Hotel Accommodations).

A meal allowance cannot be claimed in addition to the flat per diem rate. Please consult the FIU Travel & Other Expenses Manual (https://controller.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/24/2021/01/Travel_Manual.pdf) for the current flat per diem and maximum meal allowance rates.

University personnel performing travel under a sponsored research grant or contract paid with grant or contract monies will be reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with the OSRA Travel Policy which can be found at <https://policies.fiu.edu/policy/358>.

Private Automobile

Authorization may be granted for the use of privately-owned vehicles to conduct official travel. Travelers using their own automobiles are reimbursed for the official mileage between cities and/or states traveled and are entitled to a mileage allowance at a fixed rate. Please consult the FIU Travel & Other Expenses Manual (https://controller.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/24/2021/01/Travel_Manual.pdf)

for the current mileage allowance rate. The traveler is not entitled to a mileage allowance when transported gratuitously by another person or if using a university owned vehicle. When traveling to the airport, the traveler is authorized to claim mileage from his/her official headquarters or home. Costs of operation, maintenance and ownership of a vehicle are the responsibility of the traveler and are not eligible for reimbursement. Similarly, fines imposed for traffic or parking infractions are the traveler's responsibility.

Registration Fees

The university reimburses registration fees for university employees attending a convention, conference, workshop or seminar which will serve a direct benefit to the university. Reimbursement shall not be allowed for any meal or lodging when said expenses are included in the registration fees for the convention, conference, workshop or seminar.



Vicinity Travel

A traveler may not claim per diem or reimbursement for lodging for vicinity travel unless extraordinary circumstances that necessitate the overnight travel are fully explained by the traveler and approved in writing by the University Controller prior to the expense being incurred. Criteria for approval shall include late night or early morning job responsibilities and excessive travel time because of traffic conditions that would jeopardize the business operations.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all persons authorized to travel on behalf of the University.

REASON FOR POLICY

The reason for the University Travel Expense Policy is to provide direction for employees and others, such as vendors and interview candidates, who undertake travel on behalf of the university. The University seeks to ensure efficiency and promote accountability when authorizing travel. Travelers are not to make commitments to travel or to incur travel expenses without first obtaining the appropriate approvals. Travel costs are to be allocated and expended within established budgetary limitations and serve an official university purpose.

DEFINITIONS

TERM	DEFINITIONS
Cash Advance Request	This is required to request a cash advance for 80% of out of pocket expenses for university employees only when traveling on behalf of the university.
Class A Travel	Continuous travel of 24 hours or more away from official headquarters. The travel day for Class A is based on a calendar day (midnight to midnight).
Class B Travel	Continuous travel of less than 24 hours which involves overnight absence from official headquarters. The travel day for Class B travel begins at the same time as the travel period.
Class C Travel	Short or day trips in which the traveler is not away from his/her official headquarters overnight. State statutes do not allow the reimbursement of per diem or meals for class C travel.



Foreign Travel	Travel outside the United States and United States territories and possessions.
Official Headquarters	The city or town where the employee’s office is located. If an employee is stationed in any city or town for over 30 continuous days then that city or town becomes the employee’s official headquarters unless the President, or appropriate Vice President, or his/her designee extends this period of time.
Per Diem	A subsistence allowance that a traveler is authorized to receive when traveling on official business. The rate and method of computation is governed by Section 112.061, Florida Statutes.
Travel Authorization Request	The Travel Authorization Request (TAR) is the formal document to secure approval to incur travel expenses. This request must be submitted for all travel performed by individuals traveling on official business of the university.
Travel Voucher	The Expense Report for reimbursement of traveling expenses, commonly referred to as "Travel Voucher", is the document used to reimburse travelers for expenses incurred while on travel.
Vicinity Travel	Travel within 50 miles (one-way) of the traveler’s headquarters.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

FIU Travel & Expense Department – Review Travel Vouchers and ensure that all travel expenses adhere to University policy. Verify Travel Authorizations (TAs) are approved prior to processing expense reports if a TA is required. Reconcile cash advances issued to employees and collect any monies owed to the university for any unused funds.

Travelers – Ensure that all travel expenses are in compliance with University policy. Make restitution to the university for any unallowed expenses prepaid by the university.

Approvers – Ensure all travelers in department comply with University policy and that only travel related to university business is authorized.

RELATED RESOURCES

Florida International University Controller’s Office Travel & Other Expenses Manual:



https://controller.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/24/2021/01/Travel_Manual.pdf

Florida Statutes 112.061 and 1011.90(6):

http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=0100-0199/0112/Sections/0112.061.html

[Florida Statutes 1011.90\(6\)](#)

OSRA Policy - Travel on a Sponsored Project:

http://policies.fiu.edu/record_profile.php?id=358

U.S. Department of Defense Rates for Non-continental United States and Other Non-Foreign Areas:

<https://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/perdiemCalc.cfm>

U.S. Department of State Foreign Per Diem Rates:

https://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per_diem.asp

U.S. General Services Administration:

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

CONTACTS

Questions about this policy should be directed towards the office with administrative oversight of this policy.

Office of the Controller
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HISTORY

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