



Policy FA031: Travel

Recommended for Approval by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fawn L. Petrosky", written over a horizontal line.

Fawn L. Petrosky, Vice President for Finance

Approved by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dr. Dale-Elizabeth Pehrsson", written over a horizontal line.

Dr. Dale-Elizabeth Pehrsson, President

Effective Date: 07/01/2022

A. Intent

The policy establishes responsibilities and guidelines for ensuring that travel and business expenses are valid, necessary, in compliance with University accounting procedures, and by the most economical means.

B. Definition(s)

Not Applicable.

C. Policy

This policy pertains to travel and business expenses for all sources of University funds. The Public Funds Regulations and Supplemental Public Funds Regulations also apply to all faculty and staff who incur expenses while engaged in University business or related travel and who intend to receive reimbursement from the University. The PASSHE Board of Governors and Chancellor establish these guidelines, standards, and limits on the spending of public funds.

D. Procedure(s)

- **Travel Authorization:** All travel must be approved by the appropriate Department Chair, Dean, and area Vice President. Grants related travel must also be approved by Grants Accounting.

All International travel must be approved by the President's office.

Travel requests without the required approvals will be considered unauthorized travel. Properly authorized travel is necessary to protect not only the University, but also the traveler.

Unauthorized trips can result in an employee losing Insurance and Worker's Compensation coverage for any accidents that he/she may be involved in while on an unauthorized trip. In addition, any expenses associated with unauthorized travel will not be reimbursed.

Travel Authorization Timeline – below you will find the minimum suggested time that you should allow in order to obtain the required travel approvals:

- President’s Signature – minimum of 3 weeks (3 months for International Travel)
- Provost’s Signature – minimum of 2 weeks
- Dean’s Signature – minimum of 2 weeks
- International Travel – minimum of 3 months

Travel Funding – the appropriate funding must be in place at the time the travel is going through the approval process. No travel should be approved if the required funding (to cover the estimated travel expenses) is not available, especially if the traveler is requesting payment for registration fees, booth fees, etc. If, for any reason, travel is approved without the necessary funding, the traveler will be responsible for any unfunded expenses.

- **General:** Employees shall be entitled to receive reimbursements for out-of-pocket expenses incurred while in the performance of their official duties. All reimbursements will be made in accordance with the guidelines established by Pennsylvania Western University, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (Management Directive 230.10), Board of Governors (Policy 1986-07-A), and *Expenditure of Public Funds Policy* (PASSHE Board of Governors Policy 2010-01-A).

Reimbursements will be based on an employee’s approved Request for Approval of Travel/Travel Expense Report, which is subject to audit by the Office of Accounting, Accounts Payable, and the Commonwealth’s Internal Auditors. Employees will be responsible for payment of any expenses that are disallowed as a result of any travel audit.

Employees will not be compensated or reimbursed for using credits to obtain tickets for official university travel. Employees will not be reimbursed for expenses associated with unapproved travel.

Travel expenses (i.e., conference registrations, hotel stays, etc.) totaling \$100 or less must be paid by the traveler who can then submit for reimbursement, provided the required documentation is attached to their approved travel paperwork.

Travelers who are not employed by the university must follow the same procedures as employees if the university is paying their travel expenses.

- **Travel Prepayments:** When requesting prepayment for registration fees, hotel stays, booth rentals, etc., (in excess of \$100) the approved travel paperwork, with all of the required approval signatures, must reach the Office of Accounting no later than 20 business days before the required payment is due. In addition, all of the required documentation (registration form, credit card authorization form – for hotel stays, etc.) must be attached, if the required documentation is not provided the requested pre-payment will not be processed and the travel will be returned to the department.

If travel requests are received less than 5 business days before the required payment is due, the traveler will be responsible for paying the required fees and submitting for reimbursement following the completion of the approved travel.

- **International Travel:** International travel must be approved by the President prior to confirming any expenses (airfare, hotel, conference fees, etc.) associated with the travel. Travelers must remember to allow a minimum of three (3) months for approval through the President’s Office.

All international travel documentation (i.e., travel paperwork, export control documents, etc.) must be processed as soon as possible. It is strongly recommended that you process your travel

paperwork, and supporting documents, as early as 6 months, but no later than 3 months, prior to your anticipated departure date.

A copy of all of your completed documentation must be kept for 5 years from the date of your travel.

- Sanctions Programs and County Information:
 - <https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Programs/Pages/Programs.aspx>
 - <https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/SDN-List/Pages/default.aspx>
 - https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Programs/Pages/faq_10_page.aspx
- Travel Alerts and Warnings:
 - <https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/alertswarnings.html>
- **Export Control:** On October 12, 2012, the Office of the Chancellor enacted a procedure (#2012-14) entitled, “Compliance with United States Export Control Laws”. This procedure specifies that, “Any individual intending to travel with or transmit/ship-controlled items outside the U.S. (or to foreign nationals) should first consult with the appropriate University office to determine if there are any export control issues or requirements.”

Failure to comply with export control laws and regulations might result in prosecution by the federal government and the imposition of federal, civil, criminal and/or administrative penalties or sanctions. It might also result in disciplinary action in accordance with the appropriate Collective Bargaining Agreement or personnel policies.

University administrators who approve official travel requests must be aware that, when traveling to **embargoed or sanctioned** countries, regulations may actually prohibit traveling with research equipment, a laptop, GPS, smartphone, or similar data devices and prevent one from purchasing certain in-country business services. In addition, travel advisories containing general precautions and entry requirements are posted by the Department of State and should be consulted and followed. Travel to countries with comprehensive embargoes or sanctions, specifically (as of August 2012) Sudan, Cuba, Iran, Syria, and North Korea, must be reviewed with the Export Control Officer. In addition, the SDN list identifies individuals and entities with which the University may not do business. Financial transactions involving SDNs will be blocked, so advance screening is required.

In general, the majority of international travel can go forward without the requirement of an export license, provided they do not concern detailed information regarding controlled items or technologies.

When traveling outside the US, taking encrypted software and/or research equipment, including a laptop, smartphone, and/or a data storage device, the traveler might require an export license or certification/documentation of an export license exception.

The university is required to document the export of licensed items, or exceptions, if the items are owned by the university. Any individual intending to travel with or transmit/ship-controlled items outside the US should first consult with the appropriate university office to determine if there are any export control license requirements and/or issues.

BEFORE proceeding with any foreign travel, it is important for the traveler to consider the following:

- **WHAT** are you taking with you?
- **WHERE** are you going?
- **WHO** are you meeting/working with?
- **WHY** are you traveling (what is the desired end result of your trip)?

It is important to consider all of the above before each international trip because federal regulations frequently change.

- **Air Travel:** Travelers are expected to book the lowest priced coach class airfare for domestic and international flights. **Business and first-class tickets are not reimbursable.** It is not permissible to confirm a higher fare for upgrade eligibility or personal reasons. **Upgrades at the Commonwealth's expense are not permitted.** A complimentary upgrade must be noted on the travel expense report.

Optional airline fees are not reimbursable, including advance seat reservation fees, travel protection insurance, Internet, snacks, and any other fees imposed by the airline that are not essential to air travel.

Travelers who are combining personal travel with business travel may only do so when the personal portion of the trip does not add any cost to the Commonwealth. Travel arrangements must be made to accommodate the business duties of the traveler and not their personal preference.

Travelers who are not employed by the university must follow the same procedures as employees if the university is paying the travel expenses.

Employees must be mindful of booking the **lowest logical airfare** available. Travelers on official business must book the lowest priced coach airfare that meets their approved itinerary and Commonwealth policy. They are expected to use their best judgment to save on airfare cost.

Lower cost flights must be chosen within two (2) hours before or after the preferred flight time when the alternative flight saves \$200.00 or more roundtrip.

Connecting flights must be chosen over nonstop flights when the connection does not add more than two (2) hours to travel time and the connection saves \$200.00 or more. Travelers are not required to take a lower fare if a change of airline at the connection point is required.

Domestic flights over \$800 roundtrip must be approved, prior to booking, by the appropriate area Dean, the Provost, and/or the area VP. Alternative options may be offered.

Lower cost fares, as outlined above, that are declined must be justified and imperative to the job functions of the traveler.

When planning trips, travelers must review **alternative airports** for additional savings opportunities. Alternative airports within 90 miles of the home airport should be considered if the savings is \$200.00 or more. When there is a savings of \$300.00 or more, the alternative airport must be used.

Employees will be reimbursed for mileage when using a personal vehicle, or car rental and gasoline (whichever is less costly), and parking, if necessary.

In select areas, Park-and-Fly (a hotel and parking in one rate) packages have been negotiated and may be utilized when selecting an alternative airport and a flight departure prior to 8:00

am.

Cancellations - If the ticket is refundable, the travel agency must be notified and a refund requested. It is the traveler's responsibility to closely examine the cancellation/exchange rules and fees before purchasing.

Exchanges - Credits for cancelled tickets should be used as soon as possible. Most airlines require tickets to be exchanged and used one (1) year from original purchase. Unused tickets that are not used prior to their expiration lose their value.

It is the traveler's responsibility to use airline credits prior to expiration. Credits shall be used for their next trip if the airline serves the destination.

Airport Parking – Travelers will be reimbursed for parking at a rate equal to the Extended Parking rate when parked overnight at the airport.

Hourly parking (for pick-up and/or drop off) will be reimbursed at the actual ticketed parking rate.

A receipt is required in all instances.

- **Ground Transportation:**

University Fleet Vehicles - For campuses that offer fleet vehicles, whenever possible, a fleet vehicle should be used prior to renting a vehicle or using a personal vehicle. Fleet vehicles include a Wright Express fuel card and an EZPass transponder. Fleet vehicles are to be refueled using the Wright Express fuel card.

In order to reserve a fleet vehicle, please contact the Fleet Vehicle Team, via email at fleetvehiclerequest@pennwest.edu, and request a fleet vehicle, please provide the following information:

- Departure Date
- Departure Time
- Return Date
- Return Time
- Destination
- Justification
- Driver's Name
- Type of vehicle requested (car or van)
- Quantity of vehicles needed

While there currently is no charge for the use of a fleet vehicle, the following charges do apply:

- **Cancellation Fee** – if a fleet vehicle is reserved but not needed and the traveler fails to cancel the vehicle reservation or cancels and provides less than 24-hours' notice from the scheduled departure date/time, the travelers department will be charged a \$25 cancellation fee. Exceptions will be made at the discretion of the Fleet Vehicle Team. This fee was rendered necessary due to vehicles being reserved and not used, often resulting in an additional expense to the university (i.e., mileage reimbursements, rental vehicle expense) if other fleet vehicle requests are denied based on vehicle reservations that are made by not used.
- **Cleaning Fee** – if a traveler returns a fleet vehicle in poor condition which requires special cleaning prior to re-issuing the vehicle, the travelers department will be charged a \$25 cleaning fee. Exceptions will be made at the discretion of the Fleet

Vehicle Team. This fee was rendered necessary due to vehicles being returned in very poor condition (interior filthy with food, drinks, grass/mud, animal hair, etc.) and requiring additional time to clean and detail before releasing back into service.

- Late Fee – if a fleet vehicle is not returned on time and the Fleet Vehicle Team was not notified of the delayed return, the traveler's department will be charged at \$25 late fee. Exceptions will be made at the discretion of the Fleet Vehicle Team. This fee was rendered necessary due to travelers returning their assigned vehicle well after their scheduled return time which impacts other travelers who were assigned the vehicle but could not leave on time or were forced to take their personal vehicle in order to make it to their destination on time.

Rental Vehicle - Justification for the use of a rental vehicle must be provided. If a justification is not provided, or if the justification is not valid, the traveler will be responsible for reimbursing the university for rental charges that were placed on the university's corporate account. If the traveler paid for the rental and is seeking reimbursement and the rental is not justified, then the reimbursement will be denied.

If the travel in question combines business and personal travel, the justification for the rental cannot be related to the personal portion of the travel.

Enterprise is the university's preferred car rental company; please contact travelrequest@pennwest.edu with questions regarding your campus Enterprise Corporate Account number. Rentals should be used when it is determined that renting a car is the most economical form of transportation.

Rental rates do not include fuel and travelers must decline optional fuel offerings. In addition, travelers **MUST** make sure that their rental vehicle is returned with a full tank of gas, or at the very least the vehicle must be returned with the fuel level the same as when they picked up the vehicle – this information is provided on the rental agreement. If the vehicle is not refueled and the university is charged a Fuel Surcharge, the traveler will be responsible for reimbursing the university the full amount of the surcharge. Reimbursement will be in the form of a check (payable to Pennsylvania Western University) or the traveler's reimbursement request will be reduced by an amount equal to the fuel surcharge.

Travelers who are 21 years or older and have a valid driver's license may operate vehicles under the agreement. For 15 passenger vans the minimum age is 25.

Approved car rental sizes are economy, compact, or intermediate (midsize) including hybrids. Other vehicle types require business-related justification.

Personal accident and personal effects coverage is optional and not reimbursable.

The rental receipt and car rental contract must be included with reimbursement submission of receipts.

If renting from any agency other than Enterprise the traveler **MUST** purchase the additional insurance coverage.

Shuttles/Public Transportation/Taxi - Employees who are traveling by air or train should use shuttle services or public transportation when such options are available and less expensive than other means of ground transportation.

Taxi - Travelers will be reimbursed for the use of a taxi (to/from airport/hotel) provided it is the less expensive option. Submission of receipts for taxi service beyond airport/hotel

transportation must be accompanied with a justification for the additional transportation expense. If the additional taxi service is not warranted, or the justification is not valid, the additional reimbursement will be denied. Submission of dated receipts is required.

Train - Coach class is the only approved service when traveling by domestic Amtrak train. Amtrak is encouraged when traveling to/from Harrisburg, Philadelphia, New York City and Washington DC and a cost savings is realized. Other cities served by Amtrak should be considered when there is a savings.

Amtrak tickets must be reserved directly through Amtrak at www.amtrak.com or telephone and paid for with a personal card. Amtrak passes are available for frequent trips.

Personal Vehicles - the **University's mileage reimbursement** is equivalent to the rates established by the U. S. General Services Administration (GSA). The current rate can be found on the GSA web site (www.gsa.gov) under POV Mileage Reimbursement. The Commonwealth's reimbursement rate changes when the GSA reimbursement rate changes.

The mileage reimbursement rate includes depreciation, fuel, insurance, fees, licenses, oil, repairs, tires, and all accessories.

Mileage Reimbursement Calculation is based on the mileage traveled between an employee's residence and their official headquarters is considered commuting mileage and is not reimbursable.

Each claim for mileage reimbursement must include a "from" and "to" street address or location specific enough for an auditor to validate the distance traveled via an online mapping application such as Google Maps or Map Quest.

When an employee travels to a work site other than their official headquarters, either the distance from their residence to their temporary work site, or their headquarters to their temporary work site – whichever is shortest – will be used to calculate their mileage reimbursement. Local travel while at the travel destination must be documented if requesting reimbursement.

If there are multiple routes to a destination, the shortest distance should be used to calculate reimbursement. Only if there is strong justification, such as an accident which caused the person to be rerouted, can a longer distance be used.

This is backed by the Board of Governors and Commonwealth policies that state the most economical means must be used when traveling on Commonwealth business.

If an employee is required to work on a holiday or scheduled day off, the employee may be reimbursed for mileage from their residence to a point of public transportation or designated worksite, other than their headquarters. An employee may never be reimbursed for mileage between their residence and headquarters.

The use of ground transportation at a higher cost will require justification and may result in an audit review. Employees will be responsible for any expenses disallowed as a result of any audit.

When using a personal vehicle for business travel, the employee's own insurance is primary, in all cases.

The employee should notify his/her insurance company that they are using their personal vehicle for business travel. This may result in an increase in the employee's insurance premium; however, if the employee is receiving reimbursement for mileage, there is a built-in factor for

insurance expense to possibly cover the additional premium.

If an employee chooses to drive their personal vehicle, then their personal auto insurance would be considered primary for repair/replacement expenses. The Commonwealth provides excess "liability" insurance coverage (liability coverage addresses claims against the individual that may result from their actions) when the employee's policy limits are exhausted. It is strongly recommended that employees seek prior approval from their department head before they take their own vehicle.

- **Lodging:** Travelers should expect services and accommodations that are safe and comfortable, not lavish, or extravagant.

Employees traveling on university business are allowed lodging expenses when their destination is located more than 50 miles (one way) from both their headquarters and residence. Written justification and pre-approval from the area Dean/Vice President must be obtained when lodging is required within 50 miles from both the employee's headquarters and residence. The Dean's/Vice President's approval must be submitted with the traveler's receipts when requesting reimbursement. Employees will be personally responsible for paying hotel expenses that are not pre-approved.

Lodging expenses are reimbursed at actual cost within travel policy limits. Detailed receipts, showing a zero balance, are required from the hotel. Travelers must obtain a detailed Final Guest Folio upon checkout.

Upgraded accommodations that are an additional charge are not allowed. A complimentary upgrade must be noted on the expense report.

Booking - When booking a hotel, travelers are required to request the hotel's state/government rates. If state/government rates are not requested, resulting in a higher rate, the traveler will be responsible for reimbursing the university for the difference between the state/government rate and the rate that was paid.

Please note that some states will extend their state employee lodging rates to Pennsylvania's state employees who are traveling on Commonwealth business. When making your reservation please ask if the hotel offers a state rate and if so, if they will extend their discounted rates to Pennsylvania state employees. If the rate is extended, please make sure to check and see what form of identification may be required (at check in) in order to obtain the discounted rate.

Travelers are not required to stay in tourist class properties to obtain a lower rate.

Maximum Allowable Lodging Rate - The Commonwealth's maximum per night lodging rates follow GSA per diem rates. GSA rates can be found at www.gsa.gov. Travelers will only be reimbursed for actual expenses incurred and may be subject to reimbursement of the lesser of the actual expense or the maximum allowable rate.

In instances where a GSA rate is not obtained in the area, specific business justification is required. If an audit determines that the maximum allowable rate could have been obtained, the traveler may be responsible for the additional cost. Justification for booking must be imperative to the employee's official business, must be given at the time of booking, and must be submitted with reimbursement.

Tax Exemption - (42 Pa C.S.A. 8522) The Commonwealth is not subject to hotel occupancy or sales taxes imposed by local or county governments. The Commonwealth is subject to state hotel occupancy tax, which is 6% (72 P.S. 7210). Travelers will be reimbursed for this 6%.

Travelers must present the completed REV1220 form for tax exemption to the hotel upon check-in. These tax provisions apply only to lodging within Pennsylvania as lodging outside of Pennsylvania is not tax exempt and all taxes are reimbursable.

Cancellation - Travelers should avoid nonrefundable rates. It is the traveler's responsibility to understand the cancellation rules of the room confirmed. Nonrefundable rates cannot be changed or cancelled; therefore, the traveler is accepting the risk of a non-reimbursable cancel fee.

Travelers must cancel lodging arrangements according to the property's cancellation policy. No-show charges and penalties will not be reimbursed when the traveler does not cancel reservations within the allotted time.

In the case of an emergency, when all efforts have been taken, and a fee is still charged, the traveler must provide a written explanation for the Cancellation Fee so that it can be determined if the fee will be reimbursed.

Conference Lodging - Conferences are not always confirmed at the lowest rate or a government rate. Travelers are required to attempt to find lower cost lodging when the conference rate is higher than the maximum allowed rate. Efforts to obtain lower cost lodging shall consist of attempting to obtain a lower rate at the same property or obtaining a lower rate at an alternative property within close proximity to the conference location. When required to book with a hotel directly, and the rate is in an acceptable range, the traveler may book through the conference or hotel directly.

When the conference does not have an official hotel, travelers are required to obtain a property within reasonable proximity to the conference at or below the maximum allowed rate, using preferred properties when possible. Additional transportation cost, if not staying at the conference headquarters, should be considered in the evaluation.

When a conference/event requires an attendee to stay at a particular property and/or confirm their accommodation through the organization, the traveler's Request for Approval of Travel form **must** include documentation (such as the registration form and/or instruction sheet). Failure to provide documentation may result in a reduction in the traveler's reimbursement request.

Extended Stay - Employees who are required to work away from their residence or primary worksite for 60 days or more may enter into an extended stay lodging agreement. Requests for extended stay authorization must be approved in advance through the appropriate Dean, VP, and the Provost. If the extended stay requires a lodging/housing contract, the contract will need to be approved through the Accounting Office.

Failure to obtain approval prior to entering into an extended stay agreement will result in the employee being liable for all lodging costs.

Detailed justification comparing regular travel reimbursement and alternative lodging costs must be provided.

Reimbursement will be limited to lodging, necessary utilities (cable and phone are excluded), and mileage or transportation costs for a biweekly roundtrip between the worksite and the employee's permanent residence or headquarters. **Subsistence expenses are not allowed. Mileage is not paid between lodging and temporary worksite.**

- **Subsistence:** Allowances for subsistence are based on rates provided on the GSA website www.gsa.gov/perdiem Reimbursement is subject to the limitations set forth in this section.

Subsistence is not allowed for employees who have been granted extended stay lodging agreements.

Reimbursement for alcoholic beverages is prohibited.

Reimbursement Amounts - Employees who are not in travel status should refer to their collective bargaining agreements for guidelines with regard to when and at what rates subsistence reimbursement may be available. Employees who are not a union member may be reimbursed for a meal up to \$8.00 if they are 50 miles or more from their residence and headquarters and work more than two hours past their regular shift. Employees who are less than 50 miles away may be reimbursed for a meal up to \$8.00 if they are required to work two hours past their regular shift and are given less than two hours' notice of the requirement.

Employees in overnight travel status while on official business may be reimbursed for meals, including tax and tips; the maximum reimbursement is not to exceed maximum GSA overnight subsistence allowances for a 24-hour period. The 24-hour period begins upon departure from home or headquarters, whichever is applicable.

Current GSA subsistence rates can be found on the GSA website: www.gsa.gov/perdiem.

Subsistence allowances include tips and tax.

Employees who are provided meals during the course of their travel **must** deduct a corresponding meal rate from their subsistence reimbursement claim for each meal provided: 22% breakfast; 22% lunch; 56% dinner or the corresponding equivalent in a high-cost area.

Meals include those provided by hotels, meetings, conferences, or any other source. Meals classified as continental breakfast do not need to be deducted. When a meal is provided in the cost of the hotel room and the employee opts to eat elsewhere, reimbursement for that meal will be made within the prescribed maximum daily meal reimbursement rate.

- **Tip Allowances**

- Meals/Transportation - 20% or less
- Baggage - \$1.50 per piece of luggage
- Hotel - \$5/night

In circumstances when a receipt cannot be provided, such as a tip for hotel maid service or valet service, the traveler can use the Declaration of Missing Receipt form and provide an explanation in the designated field.

High-Cost Area - Increased subsistence allowances are available in locations designated as high-cost areas. Subsistence allowances for these areas follow the GSA Meals and Incidental Expenses table (www.gsa.gov). The Commonwealth will only reimburse the meal portion of these allowances and will not reimburse the incidental amounts as defined by the GSA. Incidental amounts are defined on the GSA web site.

Meetings - Luncheon or dinner meetings sponsored by the Commonwealth will be paid under contract; therefore, no claims for such expenses may be presented on the travel expense report.

Employees on official business attending luncheon or dinner meetings, not sponsored by the Commonwealth, are entitled to receive reimbursement for actual costs incurred. Provided that:

- The luncheon or dinner meeting is planned in advance and includes persons not employed by the Commonwealth.
- The meal is an integral part of the meeting.
- The meal is served at the same establishment that hosts the meeting.

- The purpose of the meeting is to discuss business and the nature of the business is stated on the travel expense report.

Employees and members of boards, commissions, and councils who are required to attend non-Commonwealth-sponsored luncheon or dinner meetings will have actual costs reimbursed.

Detailed receipts and justification are required and must be attached to the employees approved travel paperwork when submitted for final reimbursement.

Subsistence Expense Incurred on Behalf of Others - Employees are authorized to incur reasonable* subsistence expenses on behalf of others and to approve reasonable subsistence expenses incurred by their deputies on behalf of others when the expenses are incurred as part of a business meeting under the following circumstances:

- The purpose of the meeting is to discuss official business.
- The meeting includes either persons not employed by the Commonwealth or employees of other Commonwealth agencies whose attendance is relative to the official business being conducted.
- The meal is an integral part of the meeting.

Complete justification for incurring expenses must be included with the travel paperwork.

Justification shall include:

- A list of names, positions, and agencies of individuals for whom the expenses were incurred.
- An explanation of the circumstances requiring expenses to be incurred on behalf of others. **Itemized receipts for expenses incurred are required and must be attached to the approved travel paperwork when submitted for final reimbursement.**

Employees will be personally responsible for expenses that are not allowed.

* Reasonable Subsistence – when incurring meal expenses on behalf of others, the reasonable meal expense is not to exceed the GSA Meals and Incidentals rate for the traveler's location.

- **Travel Credits:**

Ethics - The Governor's Code of Conduct, 4 PA Code 7.151, and the State Ethics Law, 65 PS401, prohibit the acceptance, retention, or use of personal travel/products/services by Commonwealth employees and appointed officials of promotions and offers including; but not limited to, frequent flyer credits, discount car rentals, hotel promotions, award certificates, bonus flights, reduced fare coupons, denied boarding compensation, cash, merchandise, or gifts obtained in the course of official Commonwealth business.

Frequent Traveler Programs – Employees traveling on official business may open and maintain frequent flyer/guest accounts with airlines, hotels, car rental companies, train service and other travel suppliers. **Any credits, promotions, certificates, or other considerations earned in these programs must be used for university travel.**

Travelers may not select a travel supplier based on the benefits of the frequent traveler program.

Other Compensation - Employees traveling on official university business who receive vouchers for denied boarding must use those vouchers for future university travel. If the voucher is transferable, the voucher can be used by another university employee who is traveling on official university business.

Employees traveling on official university business who receive compensation for any customer-service-related issue must use that compensation in the course of conducting their official university business.

- **Reimbursement:** Employees are expected to exercise good stewardship of funds when traveling on official university business. Any expenditure disallowed by Accounting, Internal Audit, etc., will be the responsibility of the employee.

Individuals traveling on official business will receive reimbursement of actual expenses incurred in the performance of their duties within prescribed maximums. Complete justification for travel expenses must be included when the travel is submitted for audit/reimbursement. Justification includes matching receipts and, when required, explanations for expenses incurred.

Reimbursement Claim - For many travelers, meal reimbursements will be managed using the per diem model. In those cases, the traveler will not be required to submit receipts, but instead will be reimbursed based on the per diem rates established by the U.S. Department of General Service Administration.

Any employee traveling using a travel card or purchasing card will be required to submit receipts; please see related policies. Additionally, upon VP approval departments can require actual receipt reimbursement instead of using the per diem rate. Grant travel may require the traveler to submit receipts as well.

It is the traveler's responsibility to verify which method of reimbursement is required for their travel.

Upon completion of their travel, employees must submit their completed Travel Expense Report, along with all of the required documentation attached, within 30 business days following the completion of their travel. Incomplete travel documentation and/or insufficient funds will delay a traveler's reimbursement.

PASSHE Travel Regulations, in conformity with the Internal Revenue Code, require that travel reimbursements be made within 60 days after the completion of the travel. Any

reimbursements made after that time period must be reported as taxable income to the employee and included on the employee's W-2 as compensation. Please ensure that all Travel Expense reports are submitted to the Accounting office no later than 30 days after the end of your travel to allow sufficient audit/processing time prior to the 60-day deadline.

Employees are responsible for ensuring that expenses claimed in the travel expense report are proper, accurate, and incurred in official university business. A traveler who knowingly presents a false or fraudulent claim may be subject to penalties under criminal statutes.

Supervisors must review and approve travel expense reports submitted by employees to ensure the necessity, propriety, and accuracy of the travel expense. Supervisors should ask for receipts, even those not required to be submitted, when necessary. Failure to exercise care in the review and approval of travel expenses may result in disciplinary action.

Travel reimbursement requests that are received after the close of the fiscal year (during which the travel took place) will be denied.

Third Party Reimbursement - Travelers must indicate on the travel expense report that a third-party reimbursement is expected. All travelers that are reimbursed by non-state funds must have the vendor remit payment to Pennsylvania Western University. Checks received are not to be cashed but must be endorsed payable to Pennsylvania Western University and submitted to the Office of Accounting for proper processing.

Travelers must include a copy of the invoice being sent to the vendor or some official form of documentation showing the reimbursement agreement along with their receipts. Accounting will audit for the receipt of the reimbursement due.

Receipts - Travelers must always obtain receipts, itemized receipts for travel expenses **must** include:

- Name and address of the vendor
- Date of service
- Description of service
- Amount paid for each individual item

Credit card slips and statements are not acceptable in lieu of receipts.

Travel expense reports may be selected for audit and all receipts must be retained provided.

Receipts are **required** for:

- Hotel expenses.
- Meals.
- Commercial transportation.
- Car rentals.
- Breakfast, luncheon, or dinner meetings.
- Expenses incurred on behalf of others.
- Gasoline for rental and state vehicles.
- Excess baggage fees.
- Any other receipt the university determines to be necessary.

The Declaration of Missing Receipts (Exhibit 1) form should be use when it is impossible to obtain a receipt (i.e., vending machine subsistence, parking meters, or unmanned tollbooth expenses when a receipt is not provided).

No expense will be approved if a required receipt is missing.

- **Audits:** Travel and Subsistence expenses are subject to audit by:
 - Comptroller
 - Accounting
 - Commonwealth Auditors

As part of the audit process, travelers may be asked to provide additional documentation/justification for claimed expenses.

Justifications for expense will be reviewed and may be subject to clarification.

The audit will include reviewing the propriety of the expenses incurred. Additional approvals and/or documentation may be required for future travel when patterns of unusual claims are observed.

- **Miscellaneous Expenses:**

Baggage - Baggage handling and gratuities are limited to reimbursement of \$1.50 per piece.

Fees for baggage check with airlines will be reimbursed at the actual expense and are limited to the first checked bag. Any additional baggage is conditional on a traveler's job function and less expensive alternative avenues of transportation (such as sending the supplies ahead via shipping). A receipt and explanation are required with the travel expense report.

International Travel - With proper documentation, justification, and approval the university will reimburse:

- Commission for currency conversion or traveler checks when deemed necessary.
- Services of guides, interpreters, packers, or drivers when deemed necessary.
- Fees for the issuance of passport or visa, inoculations, and affidavits when required for business international travel.
- Other optional airline fees are not reimbursable, including advance seat reservation fees, Internet, snacks, and any other fees imposed by the airline that are not essential to air travel.

- **Non-reimbursable Items:**

Parking Fines/Traffic Citations – Pennsylvania Code §39.95 (f) states “Operators of state automobiles shall be responsible for the immediate payment of all parking and traffic violations.” This extends to parking fines and traffic citations received while using a personal (or rental) vehicle while in the pursuit of University/Commonwealth business.

Provided Meals/Lodging – Employees are not eligible for reimbursement for meals, or lodging, that is provided (without charge) by friends, relatives, or any other source. Meals and lodging that are provided at no charge must be noted on the employees Travel paperwork.

Alcoholic beverages – Reimbursement for alcoholic beverages is strictly prohibited.

Hotel Incidental Expenses – Fees charged by hotels for movies, room safe, etc.

Early Bird/Seat Reservation Fees – Fees charged by airlines for early boarding and/or seat reservation.

E. Related policies

- FA029 Purchasing Card Policy
- FA032 Travel Card Program
- *Expenditure of Public Funds Policy* (PASSHE Board of Governors Policy 2010-01-A)
[Expenditures of Public Funds, Guidelines, Standards, and Limits.pdf \(passhe.edu\)](#)

F. Contact Information

Office of Finance

G. Policy Review Schedule

All policies will be reviewed every two years or on an as needed basis if a change in BOG, PASSHE or Pennsylvania law would create the need for an immediate change.