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Parent Policy: [Supply of Goods and Services Policy](#)

Travel Expense Procedure

Office of Administrative Responsibility:	Supply Management Services
Approver:	Associate Vice-President (Finance and Supply Management Services)
Scope:	Compliance with this university procedure extends to all Academic Staff and Colleagues and Support Staff as outlined and defined in Recruitment Policy (Appendix A and Appendix B).

Contact for questions about this procedure:	SMS Customer Service 780-492-4668 customerservice@sms.ualberta.ca
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Overview

As a publicly funded institution, the University of Alberta is accountable for the prudent and effective stewardship of University funds. **Travel** activities are highly regulated by the University, and in the case of research funding, by donor/sponsor restrictions. Donor/sponsor restrictions may differ from those of the University and determine the expense qualifications or criteria. In those cases where donor/sponsor restrictions do not address a particular situation, University policy and procedures will apply.

All expenses must be reasonable and reflect prudence, good judgment, **due regard for economy**, and be defensible to an impartial observer. The University strongly discourages the use of travel advances and reimbursements when more cost-efficient and effective methods of procurement are available. The University has established preferred vendor relationships with qualified travel service providers in order to obtain preferred pricing and to reduce the burden on traveler's personal finances. The Travel Management unit of Supply Management Services is responsible for administering the University travel program and all users should refer to the [Travel Management Website](#) for assistance.

Where personal funds have been used for approved University business travel, the traveler will be reimbursed for appropriately receipted, legitimate and reasonable expenses at the approver's discretion.

Purpose

This document sets out the requirements for charging travel expenditures to the University.

PROCEDURE

Summary:

1. [Allowable Travel Expenses and Payment Options](#)
2. [Travel Advances](#)
3. [Reimbursement of Travel Expenses](#)
4. [Approval of Travel Expenses](#)
5. [Financial Adjustments and Corrections](#)

6. [Record Retention](#)
7. [Subsequent Audit and Adjustment](#)

1. ALLOWABLE TRAVEL EXPENSES AND PAYMENT METHODS

Only the cost of the most economical mode of travel will be reimbursed. Where the traveler has, for personal reasons, chosen to use a more costly mode of travel, the maximum reimbursement will be based on the lowest cost alternative. Travel expenses must be defensible to the approver and impartial observers; therefore explanations are required where the travel expense exceeds reasonable economy rates.

The preferred method of payment for each type of expense is indicated under each category below. In all cases, the University Travel Card is a primary option and personal credit card the final option.

Cancellation of trips may occur. However, it is strongly recommended that if there is a possibility that the trip may not occur or plans could be rescheduled that you avoid booking travel plans on websites where you must prepay. In many cases these types of bookings are non-refundable and non-changeable. If this type of booking is used and the trip does not occur the individual may be out of pocket for the expenses. These expenses are the responsibility of the individual and it is at the discretion of the approver if they wish to reimburse the claimant.

Reimbursement of travel expenses to the University/Edmonton, for any employee who does not reside in the Edmonton area, are not eligible unless explicitly stated in the employee's contract.

[Appendix A – Schedule of Allowable Travel Expenses](#), provides a complete list of allowable travel expenses. Expenses that are not included in Appendix A cannot be charged to the University.

a. Airfare and Ground Transportation (Bus/Train)

Only the cost of the lowest available fares can be charged to the University. The use of the University negotiated contract for Travel ensures discounts are gained and consideration for expenses relating to baggage, cancellation and rescheduling fees are determined prior to travel and are included or negotiated into the price of the ticket. Fees and service expectations have been negotiated with the Travel Agent and this can minimize additional unforeseen costs associated with booking through discount sites.

Airfare exceeding the lowest available economy may only be charged to the university in the following circumstances:

- A medical condition necessitates an upgraded travel class.
- A business reason can be demonstrated.
- Travel is outside of Canada and the USA (excluding Hawaii).

In all cases, the claimant's Dean or Vice-President must review the reasons for upgraded travel and approve prior to booking. This written pre-approval must be attached as supporting documentation for the expense. Airlines and fare class cannot be chosen based on personal frequent flyer program incentives or personal preference. Flights purchased using frequent flyer points are not reimbursable. A full economy airfare will only be reimbursed when supported by business requirements and cannot be used solely to obtain a reduced fee to upgrade to a higher fare class, such as business or higher.

While personal travel may be added to a business trip, all additional costs are the sole responsibility of the employee. The traveler is required to submit written proof supporting the cost of the travel without the personal portion and may only claim the return fare from the original destination or the personal destination, whichever is lower.

Preferred Method of Payment: Travel Authorization Payment (TAP)

A TAP is the most economical and efficient method of payment for most business travel bookings and payment. The TAP is a department issued purchase order used for air, train- and bus bookings and related expenses through the University's Travel Agent. It allows the U of A to negotiate greater discounts with the travel providers and eliminates the need for administrative staff, researchers and professionals to spend time searching for airfare rates.

Prior to booking, a TAP form must be completed and approved. The speed code and TAP number are required to complete the booking, whether through the University travel agency or the on-line **UALBERTA Travel Booking Tool**. Supply Management Services receives a monthly electronic statement of TAP charges and distributes these charges to the speed code and account specified on the TAP form. Upon completion of the booking, the original signed and approved TAP form must be submitted to Supply Management Services where it will be retained for future reference (auditing).

Group bookings for 2 or more people may be made on a Single TAP with an attached list of the full names of the travelers. The group booking must be for the same dates and destinations and use the same speedcode for all travelers.

b. Accommodations

Reimbursement is limited to a standard single occupancy rate (with a private bathroom) in a business class hotel, or whatever class of available accommodation is the most reasonable or most efficient (such as a conference hotel which, while not necessarily the most economical, will avoid taxi and other ground transportation charges and offer a safe and efficient location for conference attendees). The use of luxury accommodation (e.g. resorts) will not be reimbursed.

Accommodation for one night before and after an event is acceptable if the start and end times warrant such travel logistics. Longer periods are also acceptable if airfare savings can be demonstrated. Where applicable, accommodation dates should coincide with those on the air ticket.

The choice of accommodation should be based on business travel requirements rather than personal membership program incentives. The traveler may also choose to stay with family or friends and claim the rate allowed on Appendix A for a gesture of appreciation. This will also be the maximum allowable claimed when no accommodation receipt is provided. The University Travel Agent and the Canadian Association of University Business Officers (CAUBO) have negotiated rates available for all faculty and staff working at the University. These rates are available and maintained on the [Travel Management website](#). U of A travellers are encouraged to use these rates as in most circumstances; they are the most cost effective.

Preferred Method of Payment: Hotel Authorization Payment (HAP)

Other Method of Payment (Non HAP Hotels): Corporate Travel Card

The Hotel Authorization Payment is a department issued purchase order used for the booking of accommodations with a select group of hotels, located in Edmonton, in other Alberta locations and in limited locations throughout Canada. Prior to booking, a HAP form must be completed and approved. Group bookings can be completed on a single HAP form for between 2 and 9 travelers as long as all have the same destination, dates and speedcode, (attach a list of all travelers and provide this to the hotel). [Supply Management Services](#) website provides a list of the hotels that participate in the HAP

program. Once a booking is made and a confirmation number is issued by the hotel, a signed copy of the HAP form must be provided to the hotel prior to the arrival date and the original submitted to Supply Management (via email or fax). Upon arrival, the traveler may be required to provide the hotel with a credit card to which incidental charges will be applied (e.g. long distance telephone, room service) as these are not paid centrally by the University. Upon completion of the traveler's stay, the hotel provides an invoice and a copy of the HAP form to Supply Management Services (SMS) for payment. SMS distributes these charges to the speed code and account specified on the HAP form.

When using a HAP form it is important to ensure compliance with the hotel's policy on cancellation. This should be confirmed at the time of booking. Failure to cancel a reservation by the established date may result in unnecessary charges.

c. Vehicle Rental

Vehicle rental is limited to a compact, mid-size or full-size vehicle, depending on justifiable need and the prudent expenditure of University funds. For example, several cab rides could be more economical than a car rental and parking. Reimbursable expenses include the rental fee, the kilometer/mileage charged by the rental agency, fuel charges and insurance coverage, when applicable. It is the responsibility of the traveler to ensure that they have the appropriate license to drive a vehicle while on University business and to ensure that adequate insurance is in place for all drivers of the vehicle. Detailed information regarding insurance coverage can be found on the [Risk Management Services website](#).

Method of Payment: Corporate Travel Card

The Corporate Travel Card is the preferred method of payment for vehicle rentals. If the traveler does not have a corporate travel card a personal credit card may be used. When renting a vehicle for University business, the kilometer rate cannot be claimed and all gas purchases must be claimed using original receipts.

d. Conference Registration

Conference registration is limited to the fees required for conference activities. Optional conference activities such as golf tournaments or group tours are not allowable expenses.

Method of Payment: Corporate Purchasing Card (P-Card)

The P-Card is the preferred method of paying for conference registrations in order to avoid being out of pocket for an extended period of time. If the traveler does not have a corporate P-Card the department can book the registration on behalf of the traveler with a departmental P-Card. Supply Management Services distributes the charges to the speed code and account provided by the cardholder on the monthly P-Card statement, which may often be months in advance of the conference.

e. Private Automobile

When using a private automobile for University business within Alberta, the claimant will be reimbursed at the current approved kilometer allowance rate. This allowance is intended to cover the cost of fuel, insurance (provided by the claimant) and vehicle "wear and tear" (e.g. tire wear, cracked windshield, oil changes, etc.).

A supplement will be reimbursed where travel takes place on roads with seriously adverse road conditions (e.g. off main or secondary highways). In such cases the supporting documentation must include the complete travel itinerary and indicate the portion travelled under adverse road conditions.

Private automobiles used for University business are not covered by the University's insurance policy. Claimants are advised to check with their own insurance provider to secure any necessary additional insurance coverage. The University does not reimburse for personal insurance or registration costs.

Private automobile cannot be used for business travel that will exceed 800 kilometers in distance (round trip). The use of the University car rental agreement is more cost effective, in most cases, depending on the length of stay.

Method of Payment: Mileage Rate Claim

Gas Purchases may be charged to the Corporate Travel Card or Personal Credit Card but reimbursement will be based on the mileage rate only.

f. Travel Meals

Meal Allowance rates are mandated at the University in order to reduce the administrative cost in gathering, submitting and reviewing meal receipts. Receipts are not required when claiming meal allowance rates.

Faculties and units are able to set lower rates as appropriate (such as a group of travelers doing field work where groceries will be a less than the allowance rate), but must do so in advance of the travel and document the rate.

Meal costs that exceed the allowance rate (excluding alcoholic beverages, plus a gratuity of up to 15%) may be reimbursed at the discretion of the approver but only if they are receipted, provide a reason for exceeding the allowance rate, and deemed reasonable and appropriate.

Where meals are provided at no additional cost (such as with conference registration or accommodations) an allowance rate or receipted meal will not be reimbursed unless a dietary restriction or business reason is provided.

If a claimant pays for a meal for others, then the [Hospitality Procedure](#) applies (including the requirement for a receipt, the names of attendees and the justification for the hospitality) and the allowance rate cannot be claimed.

The individual travelling may claim breakfast if departure is 7:30 am (from home) or earlier or return is 7:30 am or later (to home); lunch if departure is 1 pm (from home) or earlier or return time is 1 pm or later (to home); dinner if departure time is 6:30 pm (from home) or earlier or return time is 6:30 pm or later (to home).

Method of Payment: Meal Allowance Claim

Travel Meals may be charged to the Corporate Travel Card or Personal Credit Card but reimbursement will be based on the meal allowance rates. (Either an individual meal or the daily rate may be claimed.)

g. Incidental Allowance

The incidental allowance rate is the maximum that may be claimed to cover costs such as newspapers, tipping, water and coffee. Receipts are not required. The incidental allowance rate may be claimed only when travel includes an overnight portion. See [Appendix A: Schedule of Allowable Expenses](#)

Method of Payment: Incidental Allowance Claim

Incidental expenditures may be charged to the Corporate Travel Card or Personal Credit Card but reimbursement will be based on the incidental allowance rate.

2. TRAVEL ADVANCES

University employees, graduate students and professor emeriti who travel on behalf of the University of Alberta may request a travel advance. However, travel advances are strongly discouraged and are to be requested as a last resort when central payment methods (e.g. TAP, HAP, Travel Card and P-Card) have been ruled out. Travel advances can only be used for the purchase of goods and services when field research is being completed in a remote location and other means of purchasing are not available (Purchasing Card). Failure to comply with these procedures will result in the loss of future access to Travel Advances.

a. Requesting a Travel Advance

A travel advance may be requested by completing a PeopleSoft *Travel Advance Request* at least two weeks prior to the travel but not more than 45 days prior to the travel start date. A travel advance may not be requested when the expenses will be claimed from Professional Expense Reimbursement (PER) funds.

For all Travel Advances of any value, a detailed budget for the trip must be attached to the PeopleSoft online Travel Advance Request. The budget must include the purpose of the trip and why the travel advance is required.

An individual may not have more than one travel advance outstanding unless the time period between the return date of the 1st trip and the start of the 2nd trip is less than 30 days or does not allow sufficient time to reconcile the original advance. Travel advances are coded to the deptID of the budget owner paying the advance and account 100701 (Travel Advance).

b. Approval of a Travel Advance

Both the claimant and the approver are accountable for ensuring that the travel advance request is reasonable and supported by appropriate documentation, that the trip is necessary for University business and that budgeted expenses are in compliance with University policies, procedures and guidelines and donor/sponsor restrictions (where applicable). It is at the discretion of the budget owner to approve a travel advance.

c. Clearing a Travel Advance

Travel advances must be cleared by applying the advance to a PeopleSoft Travel Expense Claim within 30 days after completion of the travel.

If the amount of the travel advance exceeds the total reimbursable expenses, the claimant must attach a cheque payable to the University of Alberta to the printed PeopleSoft Travel Expense Claim. A copy of the Deposit Form, cashier receipt and Travel Advance ID number must be sent to SMS Travel Management to clear the advance from the department's Travel Advance account. If the trip is cancelled, the employee must clear the Travel Advance immediately by submitting a cheque payable to the University of Alberta. Payroll deduction will be used by the University to recover any outstanding Travel Advance balance from the traveler. (The total balance owing will be recovered over a period not exceeding three months). Outstanding Travel Advances for all terminated employees are reviewed prior to issuing of final paycheck from the University and any outstanding funds will be deducted from final paycheck. It is the responsibility of the unit to review and manage Travel Advances to ensure that they are cleared within 30 days of the completion of travel. This review is completed in the PeopleSoft Module.

3. Reimbursement of Travel Expenses

While expenses charged directly to the University (e.g. TAP, HAP, procurement card) may not be claimed for reimbursement, they must be included on the travel claim by selecting the "Non Reimb" checkbox on the PeopleSoft Travel Expense Claim.

Once reimbursed, the same expenses cannot be claimed again from the University of Alberta, any other organization or deducted from income for tax purposes.

Request for reimbursement of travel expenses must be submitted within 30 days upon completion of the specified trip. Expenses must be submitted in the fiscal year that they occurred. Expenses that were incurred in the previous fiscal year may only be claimed up to 45 days into the new fiscal year or they become non-reimbursable.

Any personal portion of travel, or any additional expense incurred as a result of combining personal travel with business travel, cannot be claimed.

The appropriate process for reimbursement of travel expenses is determined by the traveler's relationship to the University.

a. Non-Employee Travel Expense Payment

For the purposes of travel expense reimbursement, a non-employee is generally described as an individual without an employment relationship requiring reimbursement of travel expenses on a one time basis, or infrequently. Examples include:

- visiting speakers, lecturers or researchers;
- students participating in field trips or other curricular activities; and
- interviewees for University positions.

When a reimbursement has been identified as relating to a non-employee, refer to the *Payment Procedure* for completing the Non-Employee Travel Expense Payment Form. Units may not create Guest IDs for the purposes of processing non-employee claims in PeopleSoft, as the Non-Employee Travel Expense Payment is the required process.

b. PeopleSoft Travel Expense Claim (on-line)

Reimbursements for employees, graduate students and professor emeriti are obtained through the use of a PeopleSoft Travel Expense Claim. Claimants that are not considered staff (e.g. residents),

are directed to use the non-employee travel expense form which is processed through Payment Services.

All expense reimbursements, regardless of funding source, must include the following:

- Purpose of the trip, including names of conferences, details of meetings, departure and return dates.
- For reimbursements from research and special purpose projects, the traveler's affiliation with the project.
- Application of travel advance and appropriate repayment if advance amount exceeded the travel claim total.
- A description for each expense line.
- Any expenses related to the trip paid directly by the University, such as TAP, HAP or procurement card (e.g. conference registration), are to be included on the claim and indicated as non-reimbursable using the "Non Reimb" checkbox on the PeopleSoft Travel Expense Claim.

Supporting documentation required but not limited to:

- **Original itemized receipts** as indicated on Appendix A: Schedule of Allowable Expenses. Unsupported expenses will not be reimbursed. If an original receipt has been lost, the claimant must ask the vendor to reissue the receipt. Photocopies of receipts and credit card receipts are not acceptable supporting documentation.
- Boarding Passes are only required if other acceptable documentation is not included in a claim as proof of air/rail travel. Other acceptable documentation can include hotel receipts or taxi receipts to/from the airport. It is the responsibility of the traveler to provide the necessary proof of air/rail travel if a boarding pass is not provided. The start and end date of travel and the travel location must be identified.
- Itineraries for air and ground travel that provide details relating to the purpose of the trip.
- Conference, meeting and event agendas.
- Copy of TAP and/or HAP, where applicable.
- Any other information that relates to the transaction that adds to a review/audit understanding of the entry.

For any portion of expenses reimbursed by Professional Expense Reimbursement (PER) a separate PER claim is required to be completed using the PER template within PeopleSoft.

4. APPROVAL OF TRAVEL EXPENSES

Prior to approval, travel expenses charged to research and special purpose funding are routed to an independent reviewer for compliance and eligibility with donor/sponsor restrictions.

The budget owner is responsible for ensuring that the travel is relevant to University business and the expenditures are reasonable, necessary for University business, in compliance with University policies, procedures and guidelines, and donor/sponsor restrictions, where applicable, are coded accurately (e.g. Chart of Accounts (COA) and GST) and supported by appropriate documentation. The budget owner has the authority to deny inappropriate or reduce excessive expenses.

5. FINANCIAL ADJUSTMENTS AND CORRECTIONS

Corrections to the financial record after a Travel Expense claim has been approved and paid must be done by Travel & Expense Journal Entry (T&EJE). The minimum threshold for a T&EJE is \$250 per transaction line

between operating funds and there is no minimum for corrections involving restricted funds (research or special purpose). Users are only able to make corrections to the speedcode (associated fund, deptid, program, class and project), of reimbursed expenses, they are unable to change the amount claimed, the account or GST code. The system also limits one correction per Travel Expense claim. If a subsequent correction is required, a GLJE – Request must be made using the appropriate GLJE form and procedure, (refer to Forms Cabinet).

The Travel & Expense Journal Entry Form (SMS Forms Cabinet) must be completed and authorized by the budget owner of the debit line. Appropriate supporting documents must be attached, such as a copy of the original Travel Expense Claim or a report of accounting lines. The data must then be entered into the Travel & Expenses, Adjust Paid Expenses component of PeopleSoft. Information for obtaining access to the T&EJE security role and step by step instructions for data entry are available in PeopleSoft Financials under Training Resources, Financials Online Training (UPK).

6. RECORD RETENTION

Units are required to maintain orderly and secure records for six prior years plus the current fiscal year. Records should be filed centrally in the unit or faculty for ready access by auditors. Detailed information regarding records retention can be found in the *Guide to Financial Management* under *Retention and Filing of Source Documents*.

7. SUBSEQUENT AUDIT AND ADJUSTMENT

Travel expenses are subject to subsequent review and audit procedures which may result in adjustments, including possible repayment by the traveler/claimant to the University.

DEFINITIONS

Any definitions listed in the following table apply to this document only with no implied or intended institution-wide use. [\[▲Top\]](#)

Travel	When in the normal course of business activity, an individual must leave their work area to fulfill an academic research or general job duty or to attend a conference, seminar, meeting, workshop and field research relating to the individual's employment or fulfilling an academic obligation. Work area is defined as: any point within and up to 25 km outside the municipal area in which the claimant's office or primary place of work is located. For any claimant who does not have an office or primary place of work, the geographic area in which the employee is required by the terms of their employment to carry out their assigned duties.
Due Regard for Economy	Employees, graduate students, undergraduate students, post-doctoral fellows, professor emeriti and eligible individuals traveling on behalf of the institution are required to use the most cost effective means for air and ground transportation, hotel accommodations, meals and other related travel expenses.
UALBERTA Travel Booking Tool	The University's on-line tool for the purpose of booking travel related services and accessing the University's contracts and education rates.
Original Itemized Receipts	The detailed receipt provided by the merchant/supplier. An online receipt or internet "invoice" is considered an original receipt in the case of an internet purchase. An original Visa / MasterCard chit is not considered an original receipt.

FORMS

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[Employee Travel Expense Reimbursement Worksheet](#) (for claimants with authorized data entry only)

[Non-Employee Travel Expense Payment Form](#)

[Travel & Expenses Journal Entry Form](#) (for corrections to processed travel claims)

[Travel Authorization Form \(TAP\)](#)

[Hotel Authorization Form \(HAP\)](#)

[Travel Advance Request Worksheet](#)

RELATED LINKS

Should a link fail, please contact uappol@ualberta.ca. [[▲Top](#)]

[Appendix A: Schedule of Allowable Expenses](#)

[Travel Card Procedure](#)

[Off Campus Activity and Travel Policy](#)

[Hospitality, Working Sessions/Meetings and University Employee Functions Procedure](#)

[Expense Reimbursement – Goods and Services Procedure](#)

[Guide to Financial Management - Retention and Filing of Source Documents](#)

[Risk Management Services - Insurance & Risk Assessment](#) (Rental Vehicle Insurance)

[Hotel Accommodations](#) (HAP Hotels)

[UALBERTA Travel Booking Tool](#)