

**Travel Policy Handbook**  
**Pittsburg State University**  
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Introduction ..... 2

Travel Authorization ..... 2

Trip Expenses ..... 2

Cash Advances ..... 2

Registrations ..... 2

Meal Allowance Policy & Rates..... 3

Motor Pool ..... 3

Mileage Reimbursement..... 3

Rental Cars ..... 4

Lodging..... 4

Airfare and Other Public Transportation ..... 5

Other Miscellaneous Charges ..... 5

Same Day Travel..... 5

International Travel..... 6

Receipts..... 6

Transaction Documentation ..... 6

## **Introduction**

University personnel and other individuals representing the university in an official capacity may be required to travel in fulfilling their official duties for the University. Travelers may be reimbursed for travel related costs in accordance with all applicable Federal, State, University, and other policies. When incurring expenses for travel, the most economical option available should be chosen. The University Procurement Card is the preferred method of payment for travel expenses.

## **Travel Authorization**

When representing the university in an official capacity, authorization for travel is required for those trips exceeding \$1,000 in total estimated expenses. A "Travel Request Form (T-Form)" should be completed and e-mailed to the Business Office with appropriate signatures. If the total estimated expenses exceed \$1,000, but the University is providing the funding for less than that amount, a T-form is still required. Travel Request Forms may be completed for trips with an estimated cost less than \$1,000 at the discretion of the University Department, but should not be submitted to the Business Office. If actual expenditures exceed the approved T-Form by more than 10% of total cost, an amended T-Form must be completed and submitted to the Business Office.

## **Trip Expenses**

Procurement Card is the preferred method of payment for all incurred expenses. As an alternative, expenses may be reimbursed to the traveler once the trip is completed. The traveler is responsible for ensuring that proper documentation, including itemized receipts, is provided upon trip completion. When planning a trip, the traveler should examine the possible modes of transportation, lodging rates, parking fees, and other related costs to determine the most economical and advantageous options. Per IRS guidelines, reimbursement for travel expenses must be requested within 60 days of when the expenses were incurred. Failure to request reimbursement within 60 days may make the reimbursement taxable income to the employee.

## **Cash Advances**

In some circumstances, an advance payment may be requested for travel expenses prior to the trip taking place. A T-Form must be attached to the cash advance request in GUS Cloud, along with documentation for how the cash advance amount was calculated (generally an M&IE calculation worksheet). By submitting a cash advance request, the traveler is agreeing that all receipts for expenses incurred during travel will be submitted on an expense report within two business days after the end of the trip. Any unused funds must be deposited at the Cashier's Office prior to submitting the expense report so that a receipt may be attached. If the cash advance request is approved by the Business Office, a check will be issued prior to the trip start date noted in the cash advance request.

## **Registrations**

Registrations for conferences and other events should be paid by procurement card. If the supplier does not accept credit card payments, an invoice can be submitted for payment by check or ACH. Travelers should make every effort to register early when discounts are available.

### **Meal Allowance Policy & Rates**

Reimbursement of expense for meals will be paid using the Federal standards for per diem rates, as required by the State of Kansas. Per Diem rates for the State of Kansas are based on CONUS Meals and Incidental Expenses (M&IE) Rates. M&IE includes the cost of meals, taxes, and tip, as well as fees and tips to hotel porters, bellhops, doormen, and maids.

When meals are provided to the employee during a given travel day, the M&IE rate will be reduced for the meal provided based on State guidelines. The percentage of total M&IE deducted per meal will be:

- Breakfast – 15%
- Lunch – 35%
- Dinner – 50%

When traveling to an official conference or event, the traveler is allowed one travel day at the beginning of the trip and one travel day at the end of the trip. M&IE reimbursement can be claimed for these travel dates at the rate in the city that the traveler spent that night. Employees cannot be reimbursed for M&IE if the place where the official business is conducted is within 30 miles of the employee's official station.

### **Motor Pool**

The Pittsburg State Motor Pool provides vehicles for employee travel and is frequently the most cost effective option for the University. Employees should consider motor pool vehicles when available. The University's motor pool policy can be found [here](#).

### **Mileage Reimbursement**

Private Vehicle Mileage can be reimbursed when it is the most cost effective option for travel. When assessing if private vehicle mileage is cost effective, consideration should be given to motor pool, rental cars, airfare, and other transportation options. Mileage will be reimbursed according to the maximum mileage reimbursement rates set by the Kansas Secretary of Administration. The reimbursement rates are considered to cover all costs associated with the privately owned vehicle (gasoline, oil, tires, repairs, insurance, etc.).

When calculating mileage reimbursement amounts, the usually traveled, most direct route should be used regardless of the actual route taken. The reimbursement amount will be based on exact calculated miles and rounding is not allowed. The preferred mileage calculator is the [AAA TripTik Travel Planner](#). However, MapQuest, Google Maps, and other common calculators will be accepted.

Sometimes an employee's beginning or ending point of a trip is their home rather than the University. In these cases, the employee can either be reimbursed from the employee's domicile or the official station and the destination, whichever is less.

Vicinity miles (mileage driven in a personal vehicle over multiple days in a small area i.e. recruiting) are allowable expenses when the mileage relates to an official business purpose. The traveler should keep a log of miles traveled that includes the trip dates, beginning and end points, and purpose of destination.

## **Rental Cars**

A rental car may be the most advantageous mode of travel in some circumstances. When this is the case, the most economical mode of rental car should be utilized per the current State of Kansas rental car contract. Vehicle size should be determined by the number of travelers and use. The below table can be used as a guide for determining when a larger vehicle may be required. If the vehicle rented is not the most economical option that adequately fulfills the needs of the traveler, supervisor approval must be documented.

<b>Average Rental Car Capacity</b>		
<b>Car Size</b>	<b>Seating Capacity</b>	<b>Luggage Capacity</b>
Economy	4	3-4 pieces
Compact	4-5	4 pieces
Mid-Size	5	4 pieces
Full-Size	5-6	6 pieces
Mini-Van	7	8 pieces

Rental vehicles requisitioned at travel destinations will require additional justification. In most cases, the most economical and advantageous option is utilizing public transportation, Taxis, etc. to travel from the airport, train, or bus terminal to the hotel.

The procurement card should be used for all rental car expenses. Collision damage waiver insurance should be declined when paying for a rental car by Pcard because the VISA sponsored Pcard includes a collision damage waiver provision. This provides adequate insurance coverage for covered vehicles rented with the card. VISA defines which vehicles are considered to be covered. Exclusions include: expensive, exotic, and antique automobiles; certain vans; vehicles that have an open cargo bed; trucks; motorcycles, mopeds, and motorbikes; limousines; and recreational vehicles. The benefit is provided for only those vans manufactured and designed to transport a maximum of eight (8) people including the driver and which is used exclusively to transport people. Only state employees or individuals reasonably engaged in official state business are allowed to ride in rented vehicles. Travelers are responsible for ensuring the rented vehicle is properly insured in all cases.

## **Lodging**

When travelling on official business, lodging expenses should be paid via procurement card. Allowable lodging rates are determined based on CONUS rates published by the State of Kansas. These rates are based on location and dates of travel. The maximum lodging rate allowed is 150% of the CONUS Rate (not including any taxes charged). Allowed expenses are limited to the lodging establishment's lowest available rate for normal single occupancy on the day (or days) of travel.

The University is exempt from state sales tax on hotels in Kansas and some other states. Other taxes such as county, city, and occupancy taxes are not exempt. If state sales tax is charged, a refund should be requested. Sales tax exemption certificates can be found at <https://www.pittstate.edu/office/purchasing/forms.html>.

If a traveler is attending a conference and the conference hotel rate exceeds 150% of the CONUS rate, an Actual Conference Lodging exception can be requested. The hotel used must be identified in conference documentation as an official conference hotel. The term 'conference' means any seminar, association meeting, clinic, colloquium, convention, symposium, or similar gathering that is attended by a state employee in pursuit of a goal, obligation, function, or duty imposed upon PSU or performed on behalf of PSU.

### **Airfare and Other Public Transportation**

PSU employees should travel via the most economical and advantageous method to the University. The State of Kansas does not allow for the payment of any travel upgrades, early/priority boarding, or other additional fees. When the most economical mode of public transportation is not used, specific justification must be provided with documentation to support the additional cost. If the most economical class is not available, written proof (screenshots are acceptable) must be provided documenting what was available at the time of booking.

In some cases, available flight times may warrant travel to the airport city the day before the flight. This causes the traveler to incur additional lodging and per diem. In general, if the employee can leave their official station by 7:00am and arrive two hours prior to flight time for check in, they should depart the day of the flight. When planning a trip, the traveler should consider the additional lodging and per diem costs associated with earlier flight times.

Trip insurance on airfare may be allowed in rare instances. Prior approval must be obtained and documented from the Department Manager and attached to the transaction in GUS Cloud.

### **Other Miscellaneous Charges**

Employees may be reimbursed or use the procurement card for other miscellaneous charges incurred during travel, such as:

- Taxicab, shuttle, and other local transportation – local transportation can be used for travel between the airport and hotel, to attend business meetings, and other business related purposes. Local transportation cannot be paid for if the charges are personal in nature, such as traveling from a hotel to a restaurant where there is no clear business purpose.
- Baggage fees – charges for checked baggage are allowed if the baggage is used for official business. Written justification will be requested if the expense exceed one checked bag or fees are incurred for excess baggage weight or storage charges.
- Parking – fees incurred at airports, train stations, hotels, etc. are allowed expenses. The most economical parking option at the location should be used. When expenses exceed the most economical rate, approval from a supervisor must be documented.
- Tolls – Turnpike tolls are reimbursable.

### **Same Day Travel**

Employees may be required to travel on official PSU business in a single day. When the required travel extends the employee's regularly scheduled work day by three hours or more, the employee may receive an M&IE reimbursement for one meal. The meal reimbursed should be determined by the department, but must be appropriate for the time of travel. If a meal is provided to the employee

during their official business at no cost, then M&IE would not be allowed for that meal. For example, if an employee's regular schedule is 8:00am-4:30pm and they travel from 4:00am to 4:00pm with no meals provided, their schedule has been extended by more than 3 hours. They can be reimbursed at the appropriate M&IE rate for one meal. Because the traveler returned at 4:00pm, the reimbursement should be for either breakfast or lunch.

### **International Travel**

Occasionally, a PSU employee may travel outside the fifty states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. Territories and Possessions on official business. In these cases, allowable expenses and how they are calculated may differ. M&IE rates are determined according to the US Department of State at [this website](#). Provided meals, including in-flight meals, must be deducted from M&IE reimbursements. Lodging expenses and reimbursements are allowed at actual lodging amounts rather than CONUS maximums.

When a traveler incurs expenses in a foreign currency, the expenses must be converted to United States Dollars (USD). Visit [this site](#) to convert charges for the appropriate dates of travel.

### **Receipts**

Travelers are responsible for obtaining and retaining itemized receipts for travel related purchases. In the rare occurrence that a receipt is lost or a vendor is unable to provide an itemized receipt, an Exception Request Form can be completed. Travelers should make every effort to obtain an itemized receipt.

### **Transaction Documentation**

When submitting procurement card expenses or cash reimbursement requests in GUS Cloud, the following transaction documentation must be provided:

- T-form when over \$1,000
- Official itemized receipt
- Who (traveler(s), What (method of travel), When (dates of travel), Where (geographic location), and Why (business purpose)
- Screenshot of TripTik, MapQuest, Google Maps, etc. showing trip distance (exact amounts must be used and rounding is not allowed) for mileage reimbursements. This is replaced by a travel log for Vicinity Miles
- M&IE Spreadsheet with appropriate meals deducted for M&IE reimbursements
- Conference Agenda