TRAVEL FAQ

TRANSPORTATION:

General:

1. Can tips be paid on taxis?
   Answer: Yes, up to 15% of the fare and $1 to $2 per bag.

2. If the traveler wants to drive, but it is cheaper to fly, what amount will be reimbursed?
   Answer: The amount of the flight since it is less.

3. How is gas paid for when driving a state vehicle?
   Answer: Every state vehicle should possess a gas card. If the car does not have one or if the one that is in the car does not work, the traveler can buy gas and be reimbursed. The original receipt that shows how many gallons of gas were purchased and the price per gallon should be submitted.

4. When is gas reimbursed?
   Answer: Gas may be reimbursed when using a rental car on State business. When driving a personal vehicle, employees may be reimbursed for gas only if the amount is less than the amount based on mileage. Employees cannot claim reimbursement for mileage and gas; reimbursement will be either/or.

5. How many days in advance can an airline ticket be purchased?
   Answer: Departments should consider the length of time to obtain the most cost-effective purchase as well as the risk of a cancellation. There is not a specific number of days.

6. Can choice seats (anything other than coach fare) be purchased?
   Answer: Choice seats will not be reimbursed unless there is a need based on a documented disability. Approval from Disability Support Services (DSS) is required before payment for choice seating can be processed. Prior approval is strongly encouraged. Unless the traveler obtains prior approval, he/she will bear the risk that the request will not meet the requirements for choice seating. Note: Nausea is not a reason that DSS will approve.

7. If someone pays for an airline ticket or hotel bill for someone else that is traveling, who is reimbursed?
   Answer: The person paying for the ticket or hotel will be reimbursed.

Mileage:

8. What mileage rate is paid when driving a personal vehicle?
   Answer: Mileage is $.575 per mile (effective for travel that has occurred on or after January 1, 2015). This rate may be paid from state, auxiliary and grant funds only when the round trip does not exceed 100 miles or when a state-owned vehicle is not available and the unavailability is documented by the department and Central Motor Pool and documentation must be included to show that a state car was not available. Mileage is $.30 per mile (effective May 1, 2010) for employees paid from state, auxiliary and grant funds who choose to use a personal vehicle when a state-owned vehicle is available.
9. If a state car is not available what documentation is needed to get the higher IRS mileage rate?
   Answer: An email from the Central Motor Pool stating that there was no state car available is required to be submitted with your travel packet only when state, auxiliary or grant funds are used. An email from Central Motor Pool is not required if paid from other funding sources. Note: Central Motor Pool will not provide a state vehicle if it will be parked at a mass-transit location more than four days and three nights. If this is clearly documented (ex. dates and airport location) on the travel request form, a notice of unavailability from Central Motor Pool is not required by the Travel Office.

10. I am a small business counselor who resides in Fuquay-Varina but I’m assigned to an office at ECU (duty station is ECU). I have an office on campus and I’m a traditional 8 to 5 employee in my University Office. I stop off to see clients in Raleigh, Wilson, etc. on the way to the office. Can I get reimbursement for the entire mileage from home to clients to office?
    Answer: No, employees may be reimbursed only for the extra miles driven as a result of the client visits. The total mileage driven less the miles from home to duty station (substantiated by MapQuest or something similar) = mileage to be reimbursed.

11. I am a retired teacher serving as an adjunct faculty member in the College of Education. My University duties are to supervise senior interns assigned to schools in my local area (e.g., Nags Head). My duty station is documented and approved as my home. I do not have an ECU office and I rarely come to campus. On a routine basis, I am reimbursed for mileage from home to various assigned schools. I am coming to the campus for a specific College of Education meeting. May I be reimbursed?
    Answer: Yes, the reimbursement will consist of the mileage from home to campus and return at the current IRS rate.

12. How is mileage paid on a roundtrip?
    Answer: A roundtrip is measured from the duty station or point of departure (whichever is closer) to the destination and back to the departure point.

13. Will mileage be paid for two round trips to the airport if someone takes the traveler and picks them up?
    Answer: Yes, the reimbursement will be for two round trips.

Rental Vehicle:

14. Can collision damage insurance be paid on rental cars?
    Answer: Insurance can be paid on rental cars if rented in a foreign country. Usually insurance cannot be paid on rental cars within the United States, Canada, Puerto Rico and territories or possessions of the US.

15. Are rental car add-ons reimbursable?
    Answer: No. Add-ons, including but not limited to: GPS, LDW – Loss Damage Waiver, CDW – Collision Damage Waiver, PAC – Personal Accident Coverage, PAI – Personal Accident Insurance, SLI – Supplemental Liability Insurance, RSN – Roadside Safety Net, RAP – Roadside Assistance Program, Child Safety Seats, UCA – Universal Cell Adapter – used for charging the phone, and UCH – Universal Cell Holder – used to ‘perch’ the phone making it hands free will not be paid by the University and are not reimbursable.
16. How is a state car reserved?
   Answer: The traveler or preparer can make the request online with Central Motor Pool.

17. How many days are allowed on a rental car?
   Answer: Rental cars must be cheaper than taxis. There is no time limit on rental cars.

18. Should I purchase the rental agency’s physical damage coverage when I rent a vehicle for University business?
   Answer: No. State policy does not allow reimbursement of expense for Physical Damage coverage with one exception for foreign countries, other than Canada. Instead, the State has procured comprehensive and collision coverage for commercial vehicles rented by employees for less than thirty (30) days in conjunction with the conduct of official University business. The coverage is underwritten by the Travelers Insurance Company with limits of $30,000 per vehicle, with no annual aggregate and no deductible for comprehensive or collision coverage. Coverage is provided in the United States, its possessions and Canada.

19. Will the rental agency accept the University’s Physical Damage coverage on rental vehicles?
   Answer: Yes. If the rental company requires a Certificate of Insurance, please use the Certificate of Insurance Request Certificate of Insurance for Rental Vehicles form, which may be obtained by calling the Risk Management and Insurance Office at 328-2010.

20. Does the University’s policy provide coverage in foreign countries?
   Answer: No. There is no coverage in other foreign countries, except Canada and certain American possessions and territories. Because the coverage underwritten by Travelers Insurance Company does not extend to most foreign countries, the State Budget Office does allow reimbursement on the expense for this one exception to the rule, when employees are conducting official University business in the foreign countries not covered by the policy.

21. Can students drive rental vehicle under the University’s coverage?
   Answer: No. Only students who are employed by the University and receive a salary, or a payroll check may drive vehicles rented by the University while performing duties within the scope of the job for which they are being paid. Students, such as those on scholarship or fellowship, who are not employed by the University, are not permitted to drive vehicles rented by the University.

22. How do I report an auto accident involving my rental vehicle?
   Answer: Notify police no matter how small the incident. File an accident report with the rental agency. Report the accident to the Risk Management and Insurance Office, 252-328-2010 by noon the following day. Then fax the police report, rental agency accident report, and the front and back of the rental agreement to Risk Management and Insurance 252-328-0792 and email confirmation to boydm@ecu.edu as soon as possible. Note: NEVER TELL THE OTHER PARTY INVOLVED THAT YOU OR THE UNIVERSITY ACCEPTS RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ACCIDENT.
SUBSISTANCE:

23. Will laundry, movies, or spa treatments be reimbursed?
   Answer: No, these are considered personal choices and will not be reimbursed.

24. Will internet usage be reimbursed?
   Answer: Yes, internet service will be reimbursed as long as it is for a business purpose. The business purpose must be noted on receipt.

25. Will personal phone calls be reimbursed?
   Answer: Personal phone calls are not reimbursed unless traveling outside the continental U.S. and only up to $5.00 every 2nd night.

26. Can a traveler spend the night if he/she is leaving one conference and continuing on to another one?
   Answer: Yes, both trips should be recorded on one travel request and add a comment that there are 2 trips on the form. Normally, it is much cheaper for the University if the person were to spend the night instead of flying back to Greenville and going to the next destination.

27. If a meeting is in Raleigh for one day, can traveler get a hotel room?
   Answer: It would depend on your department and how early the conference/meeting starts.

28. Will meals be reimbursed if they are part of the registration?
   Answer: No, any meals that are included in the registration cannot be reimbursed unless the employee is traveling during that time.

29. What funds can be used for a banquet that is over per diem?
   Answer: State, auxiliary or grant funds can be used up to per diem and the difference paid on non-state funds, or the employee can pay it all on non-state funds.

30. What is the gratuity max for meals? How should it be calculated?
   Answer: The meals gratuity for state, auxiliary and grant funds is included in the per diem rate; all other funding sources have a 20% maximum which may be calculated on the total cost of the meal (food, drinks and tax).

31. A traveler headed to a conference in Atlanta has a long layover in Charlotte and has lunch at the airport. Would they be reimbursed at the in-state or out-of-state rate for that meal?
   Answer: A meal eaten in-state while en route to or returning from an out-of-state destination is reimbursed at the in-state rate regardless of the final destination. The in-state account code should be used for the meal.

DOCUMENTATION:

32. What happens if a travel reimbursement is submitted late?
   Answer: A late travel reimbursement request will not be processed until a memo is provided and signed by the department head and the appropriate Vice Chancellor approving payment for the late submission. Travel requests on state funds received beyond the 30-day
33. How can a traveler be reimbursed for a lost receipt?

Answer: One of the following should be provided to the travel office: 1) a copy of the bank or credit card statement, with account information redacted, 2) a copy of the cleared check (front and back), with account information redacted, or 3) a written statement signed by the traveler stating he/she paid cash. If the airline ticket is lost, please contact the airline for a copy of the flight itinerary showing the traveler’s name. The travel office will accept an itinerary copy if it shows how it was paid.

34. What if the traveler does not have a detailed receipt?

Answer: For a missing meal detailed receipt, contact the restaurant directly to have them regenerate a detailed receipt. If the restaurant is unable to furnish a detailed receipt, go to the restaurant website and regenerate a detailed receipt from their menu online.

35. If a person is flying and extending their business trip for personal time, what documentation is needed?

Answer: Steps to Follow When Combining Personal and Business Travel (refer to p. 12 of Travel Procedures Manual for details)

1. Traveler prepares and signs a memo that no additional costs were incurred to the University.
2. Traveler provides documentation (ex. an analysis of expenses breaking out business costs and personal costs to his/her supervisor.
3. Supervisor and department head sign statement on memo that they have reviewed the documentation and no additional costs were incurred to the University.
4. Documentation remains on file in department.
5. Memo is sent to the Travel Office with the TR packet (or, if paid via ProCard, please send to the ProCard office with monthly statement).

BLANKET TRAVEL:

36. What expenses are allowed on blanket travel?

Answer: Blanket travel can be used to pay mileage or gas, parking and tolls.

37. What is the deadline for blanket travel?

Answer: Blanket travel has to be in the Travel Office by the last working day of the next month. For example: October blanket travel is due in the Travel Office by November 30th. June blanket travel is due earlier than end of month in July due to closing out prior fiscal year blanket requests. This date changes yearly and is communicated to the preparers in June each year.

TRAVEL ADVANCE:

38. How soon before a trip does a travel advance need to be in the travel office?

Answer: At least 14 calendar days before the trip.

39. Who can get a travel advance?
Answer: Any employee whose salary is under $50,000.00 a year and the advance has to be at least $200.00. Exceptions are given for recruiters, admissions and gift officers who travel regularly each month; they may get a semi-annual travel advance.

40. Can an individual have more than one travel advance?
Answer: No, a travel advance must be paid back before another one can be issued.

41. Can a student be given a travel advance?
Answer: Travel advances are not given to students unless they are a permanent employee of the University. In rare instances, a travel advance may be given to a student from non-state funds only with the approval of the appropriate Vice Chancellor and the Associate Vice Chancellor for Financial Services.

ON-LINE TRAVEL SYSTEM:

42. Can student travel be done online?
Answer: Yes.

43. How is an online travel request cancelled?
Answer: An online travel request can be “cancelled” by “locking it”. First add a comment on why the TR should be locked (ex: trip was cancelled, traveler could not attend, etc.) by editing the explanation box in Section 1. Then click the “Status” button at the top right and choose “Lock”.

44. If an online request does not require reimbursement, how is it closed?
Answer: In the explanation box, add “No funds requested” by editing the explanation box in Section 1. Then click on the “Status” box and click on “Lock”. This will put the travel request into your closed files.

45. How are preparers and approvers added or deleted in online system?
Answer: This can be done by adding or deleting signatures. Click the “View” button and select “Signatures” and delete and add as needed. DO NOT DELETE THE PREPARER BEFORE ADDING NEW NAME FIRST! It does not matter about approvers, authorizers or budget persons. Simply add and delete them as needed.

46. How can the traveler’s address be changed?
Answer: Addresses cannot be changed in the Travel Request System. The traveler will have to change their information in Self Service Banner. Once the traveler has made the change, the next form should be updated.

MISCELLANEOUS:

47. Can traveler’s insurance be purchased?
Answer: No, traveler’s insurance will not be reimbursed.

48. If attending a conference in Greenville and only paying registration, is a travel request form necessary? Is prior approval needed? What if the Traveler is already approved for Blanket Travel?
Answer: A travel request form and prior approval would be necessary and the employee would need to show how the registration was paid. If no reimbursement is needed,
then lock the Travel Request as NFR (No Funds Requested). Blanket Travel cannot be used when a registration fee is involved.

49. Can medical insurance be provided for someone traveling to a foreign country?
   Answer: Yes, check with International Affairs. Medical insurance can be purchased through that office.

50. How and when is candidate’s spouse/partner paid?
   Answer: A candidate’s spouse/partner can be paid on the second trip but not from state funds. Also, the spouse/partner will have to have a separate travel reimbursement form.

51. Can a membership be paid on a travel form?
   Answer: Memberships should be paid on the ProCard when possible. If the ProCard cannot be used, memberships must be paid on a Direct Payment Form unless it is included in the registration amount and cannot be paid separately.

52. Are moving expenses paid on a travel form?
   Answer: Yes, as long as the traveler moved their own belongings (i.e., rented U-Haul). If traveler pays a moving company, the traveler is reimbursed via Direct Payment Form. Note: If paid via travel reimbursement, all expenses (mileage, meals, hotel, etc.) need to be coded to moving expense (73086).

53. When must travel reimbursement forms be submitted?
   Answer: Approved and signed forms must be received in the Travel Office within 30 calendar days of the last day of travel.