

07 Travel Policy and Procedure	
Author: Finance and Administration	Approved by: NMHU Board of Regents December 15, 2017
Scope: Business Office, New Mexico Highlands University Policy and Procedure	Issue Date: February 1, 2018
Version: 3.0	Revision Dates: July 2003 July 2017 December 2017

1. General

This document provides policy guidelines for the reimbursement of reasonable and allowable costs incurred by members of New Mexico Highlands University's Board of Regents, faculty, staff, and qualifying students traveling on official university business.

- 1.1. The policy is intended to establish maximum reimbursement levels. In all cases, travelers are required to use ethical and sensible judgment when incurring and claiming travel expenses. All applicable forms are designed and approved by the Business Office. Forms are located at www.nmhu.edu.
- 1.2. A traveler submits to the Business Office a completed and approved Travel Request Form prior to the start of the trip. The request shows an itemized list of estimated travel costs, including those paid for directly by the University. Upon return from the trip, the traveler submits a Voucher to claim reimbursement for allowable travel costs incurred by the traveler. Actual costs for miscellaneous expenses, standard mileage, per diem for lodging, meals, and incidental expense reimbursement may be claimed. Original receipts and other required documentation must be attached, if actual costs for miscellaneous expenses are claimed. Receipts are not required when submitting a Voucher for mileage or per diem reimbursement.

2. Eligibility With No Reimbursement

For travel where no reimbursement will be sought, a Travel Request Form must be completed and submitted prior to the start of the travel for supervisor approval and employee insurance coverage purposes.

3. Eligibility and Reimbursement

- 3.1. All travelers seeking reimbursement of travel costs incurred by using personal funds should submit a completed Travel Voucher to the Business Office within 30 working days of completion of the travel. **If submitted more than 30 working days after completion of travel, it will be considered null and void and therefore, no reimbursement will occur.** The Voucher must contain all necessary information for reimbursement and be signed by the person who has authority over the account and over the traveler. If the total amount on the Voucher exceeds the total estimated, reimbursable amount per Travel Request by 10% or \$25.00, whichever is more, the Voucher needs to be signed by a Vice President or the Comptroller and needs to include a brief explanation.
- 3.2. Reimbursement for travel that is after-the-fact, when no Travel Request has been submitted prior to the trip, will not be processed.
- 3.3. All appeals need to be submitted in writing to the President or a Vice President first, then to the Comptroller for consideration.

4. Prior Approval

- 4.1.** Out-of-state travel requests must be submitted to the Business Office at least 10 working days prior to the start of the trip. In-state travel requests must be submitted at least 3 working days prior to the start of the trip.
- 4.2.** All out-of-state /international travel requests must be approved by the President or her/his designee.

5. Travel Time Defined

For purposes of computing per diem allowances, travel time includes the time required to travel to and from the business destination, excluding the time required to travel from the traveler's principal residence to and from the post of duty, also referred to as commuting. Travel time also does not include time spent for personal business.

6. Transportation

Allowable transportation expenses are those incurred while traveling from the traveler's post-of-duty to the destination and back. The starting or ending point may be the traveler's residence, if it is closer to the destination than the post-of-duty.

6.1. Commercial Airlines

The University will pay the reasonable cost of commercial "coach" airfare. Travelers are required to plan their travel far enough in advance to be able to receive the lowest available airfare while accommodating travel schedules. Upon approval of a Travel Request, travelers are encouraged to purchase airfares via the internet. The chosen airfare must be the least expensive of three quotes, all of which must be attached to the Travel Request Form. All frequent flyer mileage or other incentives obtained by an employee while on university business may be retained by the employee for university or personal use.

- 6.2. Chartered Transportation** Chartered transportation will be reimbursed in full when there is a financial savings to this method of travel or when there are unique time constraints that favor chartered transportation. Otherwise, chartered transportation will be reimbursed at the lower cost of commercial "coach" airfare or the actual charter expense.

- 6.3. Automobile Rental** Travelers are encouraged to use cost-effective, public transportation but are authorized to rent automobiles when necessary. Only employees on University business should be transported. Otherwise, a Waiver or Release of Liability should be submitted for approval prior to the trip. Collision and comprehensive insurance is no longer provided on rental vehicles through the State of New Mexico Risk Management Division. Travelers must obtain this insurance when contracting for rental vehicles. The car rental Loss & Damage Coverage Program typically covers property damages to the rental vehicle due to collision, fire, theft, or vandalism.

- 6.4. Personal Automobile** Use of a personal automobile for official university business will be reimbursed at the standard mileage rate. The new rate, effective March 1, 2018, is **\$0.545** per mile traveled in a privately owned vehicle. The rate is intended to cover all costs associated with owning the vehicle, such as gasoline, insurance, depreciation, maintenance and repairs, etc.

- 6.4.1. Map miles:** mileage reimbursement is based on a standard mileage chart (available from the Business Office) or approved website, such as www.randmncally.com or www.yahoo.com. Supporting documentation must be attached to the Voucher.

- 6.4.2. Actual miles:** mileage reimbursement is based on actual odometer readings, which must be indicated on the Voucher (i.e. beginning and ending reading. If actual miles claimed exceed map miles (as determined by the Business Office) by more than 25 miles, a point-to-point justification must be attached to the Voucher. Trip meter readings are not acceptable.

6.4.3. University vehicle: mileage is not reimbursable; odometer readings and mileage are not to be listed on the Voucher.

6.4.4. Reimbursement for mileage of a personal automobile used in lieu of air travel may not exceed the cost of coach airfare.

6.5. Privately Owned Airplane Use of personal aircraft will be reimbursed at the rate of \$0.88 per nautical mile or commercial coach airfare, whichever is less.

7. Procurement

7.1. Upon approval of a Travel Request, travelers are encouraged to pay for their travel expenses (airfare, hotel, etc.) from personal funds or a personal credit card and request reimbursement after the travel has been completed. Original receipts must be attached to the claim. (Only those receipts should be attached that relate to the reimbursement.)

7.2. All vendors that are prepaid via a University Check Request (e.g. airfare, hotel, registration fees) must be identified on the Travel Request Form. Check Requests must be attached to the Travel Request and submitted simultaneously. The traveler's name should be referenced on all such Check Requests.

7.3. Frequent travelers may submit a blanket Travel Request Form on a monthly or biweekly basis, when practical. Only one Voucher is to be submitted after all travel has occurred in a month or two-week period. Date or itinerary changes should be sent to the Business Office via email.

8. Lodging and Meals (Per Diem) Travelers may be reimbursed for lodging, meals, and incidental expenses at standard per diem amounts, subject to the limitations of this Section. Lodging is only reimbursable if the travel destination is at least 35 miles away (one-way) from the traveler's post-of-duty. When lodging costs exceed the per diem amount due to taxes and fees, an actual receipt will be required to receive full reimbursement.

8.1. Standard Per Diem (Includes Lodging, Meals, and Incidental Expenses):

Per Diem allowance include lodging, meals, and incidental expenses. Incidental expenses include fees and tips for porters, baggage carriers, hotel staff, or laundry and dry cleaning. Per Diem allowances can be found by visiting the following websites:

Continental US States:

<https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates/per-diem-rates-lookup>

Alaska, Hawaii, and U.S. Territories:

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

International Travel:

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

Per Diem for meals and incidental expenses includes applicable taxes and tips. Lodging is the base rate and does not include any lodging taxes or applicable fees and may be reimbursed.

8.2. Partial Per Diem:

First and Last Day of Travel

Meal and Incidental Expense Per Diem will be reimbursed at 75% of the appropriate per diem. Two-day travel will be considered first and last day of travel and will be reimbursed accordingly.

Same Day Travel

Travel between 2 and 6 hours will receive 50% of the per diem allowance for the destination point. Travel 6 hours or more will receive the full per diem of the destination point.

8.3. Conference Meals

When meals are included in conference fees (or under similar circumstances) and a traveler claims per diem, meal reimbursement will be reduced by the separate amounts for breakfast, lunch, and dinner as listed by GSA. Liquor or tobacco purchases are not reimbursable.

8.4. Actual Out-of-Pocket Travel Expenses

Actual out of pocket travel expenses will be reimbursed for lodging when the cost to stay at a hotel where the conference is being held is above the GSA per diem rate for lodging. However, the traveler must perform their due diligence in making the determination that staying at a hotel where an event is being held is the best possible option and there are no hotels located within close proximity that will not incur additional travel costs. Additionally, actual out of pocket travel expense reimbursement may be approved for foreign travel at the discretion of the University. Reimbursement is subject to approval and submission of original receipts. These instances are limited and must be pre-approved by the Vice President of Finance, or his/her designee.

9. Miscellaneous Expenses

Other necessary business expenses, such as ground transportation, parking, business telephone calls, and registration fees, that can be documented as costs directly incurred as a result of the business travel, will be reimbursed when itemized and explained on the Voucher, subject to approval. Original receipts are required and must be attached to the Voucher.

10. Travel Advances

Individuals traveling on University business may request a travel advance, if the calculated amount is at least \$20.00. Travel advances are calculated up to 80% of the estimated reimbursable expenses, as approved on the Travel Request Form. Travel advances are deducted from the traveler's Voucher. Travel advances represent personal loans from the University to the traveler and must be repaid by the traveler. Should the loan exceed the reimbursable amount, repayment is due by the fifth working day after the traveler returns from the trip. Failure to do so can result in denial of future advance requests.

10.1. Travel Advance Request To request a travel advance, a traveler must submit a completed and approved Travel Request Form with the box Travel Advance checked. Upon approval of the travel advance, the traveler may pick up a check from the Business Office prior to the trip or request the check be mailed to the traveler's home address, subject to observation of Business Office timelines.

10.2. Travel Voucher The traveler must submit a completed Travel Voucher, signed by the traveler's supervisor, to the Business Office within 30 working days after returning from the trip. The Voucher must depict the travel advance deduction from the total reimbursable expenditures. If the traveler has repaid the travel advance at the Cashier's Office, the traveler must attach a copy of the receipt to the Voucher. If the travel advance exceeds the reimbursable expenditures, the traveler may attach a personal check to the Voucher. If the reimbursement amount of the Voucher exceeds the amount of the advance, the traveler will be paid the difference.

10.3. Delinquent Travel Advances If the traveler does not submit a Voucher with the full

amount of the advance deducted from the Voucher or repay the travel advance within 10 working days after the traveler returns from the trip, the amount of the travel advance will be deducted from the employee's paycheck.

11. Travel Cancellations

Travel Requests should be cancelled by sending an e-mail memo to the Business Office, indicating the name of the traveler, date of travel, destination, and department. Travelers may have to incur costs of registration, airfare etc. if they do not have a legitimate excuse for canceling a trip. If a travel advance has been issued to the traveler, the advance must be returned to the Business Office immediately