

Travel Guidelines

Applicability	These guidelines apply to all employees, students, and non-employees who have been authorized to travel on behalf of the University.
Reasonable and Necessary	VCU will reimburse individuals traveling on official University business for reasonable and necessary expenses incurred. Travel expense accounts are open to the public and must be able to sustain the test of public review. When planning and paying for travel, economy, prudence and necessity are of primary concern. The use of State funds to accommodate personal comfort, convenience, and taste is not permitted. VCU assumes no obligation to reimburse for expenses that are not in compliance with this policy. Travel expenses for individuals not on official business for the University are not allowed.
More Restrictive Guidelines	Schools, centers or departments may develop additional guidelines with more control than required by VCU's guidelines, but never less. These guidelines must not be arbitrary or capricious and must be fully documented, and equally applied. Careful consideration should be taken to minimize the loss of efficiency and additional administrative time required. Travel Services should be consulted when developing guidelines.
Sponsored Program Funds	All payments for meals, lodging, airfare, etc. funded solely from sponsored program funds are governed by the terms and conditions of the individual grant or contract. If the grant or contract is silent regarding these monetary reimbursements, the limitations VCU's guidelines will apply.

Responsibilities

Traveler	Individuals traveling on behalf of the University must exercise good judgment with respect to incurring travel expenses and are expected to spend the University's funds prudently. Travel related expenses will be paid by the University if they are deemed to be reasonable, appropriately documented, properly authorized and within the guidelines.
Schools and Centers	Each school must ensure that anyone traveling on behalf of the University is aware of and will abide by the University's travel guidelines and to assign a hierarchy of responsibility to the preparation and approval of travel pre-approval and reimbursement based on VCU policies and guidelines.
Authorized Approver	Must verify that expenses and expense reports meet the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the travel expense was incurred while conducting University business,• the expenses were necessary and consistent with University policies,• the information contained on the expense report and in the attached documentation is accurate,• the expense meets any and all sponsor guidelines, if applicable

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Fiscal Approver	Must verify that expenses and expense reports meet the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• expenditures are charged to the appropriate index(s) and are properly categorized• receipts provided are valid and reconcile with the claimed expenses• claimed expenses are in compliance with University guidelines and policies
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Definitions

Authorized Approver	Should be the traveler's direct supervisor, cannot be the individual seeking reimbursement, and must always move up the chain of command from the expense owner, not down, to prevent the situation of a subordinate approving a supervisor's expenses.
Fiscal Approver	Assigned by the department, documented with Banner Finance to have approval authority associated with the index(s) used on the expense report.
Base Point	Place, office, or building where the traveler performs their duties on a routine basis. Multiple base points are not allowed.
Commuting Mileage	Round-trip mileage traveled routinely by the employee between his residence and base point. <i>Mileage and other commuting cost incurred during commuting status are considered a personal expense and are not reimbursable.</i>
International Travel	International travel consists of all travel to areas outside of the 48 contiguous United States.
Lodging	Temporary quarters, room, hostel, hotel, motel, house, apartment, etc.
Official Station	The area within a 25-mile radius of an employee's designated base point.
Per Diem	Specific daily allowance for meal expenses based on the travel location without receipts.
State Employee	Any elected, appointed, classified, or non-classified employee of the Commonwealth.
Travel Status	Travel on behalf of the university outside of an employee's official station.
Trip	Any period of continuous travel between when the traveler leaves their residence or base point and returns to their residence or base point

Trip Planning

Pre-Approval	Chrome River Pre-Approval is required for trips for VCU employees in which expenses exceed \$500 or when booking air or rail tickets. The estimate should include lodging, transportation, meals, conference registration, and any other travel costs or course fees. Costs of the trip that may be direct billed, such as conference registration should also be included in the cost estimate.
Mandatory Travel Contract	VCU faculty and staff are required to book air and rail tickets for official business using University funds through Christopherson Business Travel. Business travelers are encouraged to utilize Christopherson Business Travel for lodging and vehicle rental as well to receive the benefits associated with VCU's managed travel program.
Combining Personal & Business Travel	<p>Travelers who include personal travel when traveling for authorized VCU business must obtain the cost for the business travel portion only. This cost must be obtained through Christopherson Business Travel (online or agent) and must be at the time of booking. Air and rail tickets must be purchased through Christopherson Business Travel regardless. The university must not pay more than the travel cost for business portion only. (see Page 7 Documentation Requirements)</p> <p>Travel days that extend <u>more</u> than one day before and one day after the business dates of the trip must be fully explained and justified.</p>
Visa & Passports	Expenses associated with required business travel may be reimbursed.
Registration Fees	Registration fees may be personally paid and reimbursed (after the trip) or paid on the department's Pcard. Fees that are considered tax deductible, a contribution, or fund raiser require the President's approval. Sponsorships must approved by University Relations. http://www.identity.vcu.edu/requests/
Paying for Travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agency Travel Card (ATC) – available for air and rail bookings through Christopherson Business Travel• University Travel Card (Personal Liability) –used for travel related expenses• Personal funds• Travel Cash Advance

Transportation

Travel Routing	Travel routing, whether by public transportation, privately-owned vehicle, State-owned vehicle or for-hire conveyance, shall be the most direct, practicable route.
Personally-Owned Vehicle	Employees are permitted to use their personally owned automobile vehicle when a contracted rental vehicle is not available, or when the use of a personally owned vehicle is cost-beneficial to the university.

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Mileage Rates VCU reimburses at the current Standard Mileage Rate established by the IRS.
<http://www.irs.gov/taxpros/article/0,,id=156624,00.html>

Travelers are encouraged to use the Chrome River mileage widget powered by Google Maps. This will ensure the origination and destination addresses are documented as required.

Air & Rail Tickets VCU faculty and staff are required to book air and rail tickets for official business using University funds through Christopherson Business Travel.

Generally, airline & rail travel cannot exceed the rates charged for coach class accommodations. The Authorized Approver may grant permission for above economy class travel when:

- Trips with an international destination, the international air/rail segments may be business class and domestic segments air/rail must be economy/coach.

OR

- When Business class does not cost more than the lowest available coach fare.

Change Fees Charges for changes to tickets/reservations to accommodate personal comfort, convenience and taste are not reimbursable. Change fees must be fully explained

Baggage Fees Charges for checking bags on a flight are reimbursable. Charges of \$75 or more must be fully explained.

Vehicle Rental Vehicle rental expenses are limited to official business use only. Travelers are encouraged to utilize the Enterprise/National contract when practical. The traveler must select the most economical type of vehicle available, and acquire the appropriate commercial rate or government discount available when the vehicle is rented.

Rental Insurance The option to purchase insurance offered by rental car contractors depends upon the following circumstances:

If traveler	Then	Notes
<u>State Employee</u>	Decline	The Department of Treasury, Division of Risk Management, provides a Statewide Self-Insured Automobile plan for State employees. Rental insurance will not be reimbursed.
<u>Non-State Employee</u>	Accept	Liability Damage Waiver (LDW) and Collision Damage Waiver (CDW) insurance are reimbursable expenses.
<u>All International Rentals</u>	Accept	Individuals traveling outside of the contiguous 48 States <u>are required to purchase</u> and will be reimbursed for LDW and CDW insurance. Other types of insurance offered such as trip cancellation, personal, health or life insurance are not reimbursable.

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Vehicle Refueling	Travelers must ensure that the rental vehicle is refueled before returning the vehicle to the rental contractor unless an exception is noted. Reimbursement will be based on the fuel used and receipts provided. Travelers must never authorize prepayment for fuel as there is a potential for purchasing fuel over the amount needed and rental car vendors do not return a credit for unused fuel.
Optional Add-ons	Proper Business justification is required for optional add-ons (GPS, toll passes, etc.)
Tolls & Parking	Receipts are required for any individual claim of \$75.00 or more.
Ground Transportation	Taxis, shuttles, buses, and other forms of “for hire” transportation are allowed for official business needs. A receipt is required for reimbursement claims where each individual claim is \$75.00 or more.
Mileage vs. Air Costs	When travel is by personally-owned automobile, the total of the expenses reimbursed, including meals and lodging, should not exceed the total cost of the trip using the most economical public transportation fare available, also including meals and lodging. Authorized Approvers are authorized to grant exceptions to this policy when justified. Comparative statements should be attached to the travel voucher for reimbursement.
Personal Use Aircraft	The use of personal aircraft is permitted for official state travel with the prior approval of the President or Designee. Documentation of comparable costs for other travel means must be included in the reimbursement request. The reimbursement shall be limited to the most economical means of travel available at that time. Please contact travel@vcu.edu for further guidance and instructions.
State-Owned Aircraft	State-owned aircraft are available on a priority basis and can be scheduled through the Department of Aviation (DOAV). Refer to the Aircraft Use Policy and Guidelines that can be found on DOAV’s website at www.doav.virginia.gov . Costs should be compared with commercial rates to determine the best air carrier travel for State travel.

Lodging

Lodging may be reimbursed when an individual is traveling overnight on official business outside his/her official station. Lodging expense reimbursement varies with the travel destination, but all expenditures must be necessary and reasonable.

Lodging Rates Reimbursement for lodging is limited to actual expenses incurred up to 100% over the CONUS and OCONUS rates, plus taxes and surcharges.

CONUS and OCONUS rate tables
<https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>

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Conference Lodging	Exceptions may be granted should the conference lodging rate exceed the 100% overage allowance. Conference documentation is required.
Non-Canceled Reservations	Communicate travel plan changes as soon as possible when a confirmed reservation is being held. Since charges may be incurred for non-canceled reservations, these charges will not be reimbursed if the traveler is negligent in canceling reservations.

Per Diem - Meals & Incidental Travel Expenses

Meals and certain incidental travel expenses are paid on a per diem basis (not actual expenses) for **overnight** official business travel outside the traveler's official station. The applicable M&IE per diem is payable to the traveler without receipts.

Per Diem Meals Travelers must follow the meal limits published on the Government CONUS AND OCONUS travel charts for the travel destination. The M&IE per diem must correspond to the location of overnight lodging.

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

Incidental Allowance The incidental allowance is to cover typical gratuity associated with travel. Reimbursement of these expenses as separate items is not permitted when claiming per diem.

Miscellaneous Expenses Miscellaneous business related expenses that are not covered by the incidental allowance are reimbursable. Receipts are required for any individual claim of \$75.00 or more.

Proration and Reductions On a travel departure or return day, 75% of the M&IE is reimbursed. The reduction is based the location per diem where the night was spent as follows:

Departure Day: Where the traveler spends the night.

Return Day: Where the traveler spent the night *before* returning home.

When meals are provided, the applicable meal per diem (breakfast, lunch, dinner) must be reduced by the amount shown for the applicable meal on the Government CONUS AND OCONUS travel charts

When meals are provided on a travel departure or return day, the full day's per diem rate is reduced by the full amount of the appropriate meals, followed by prorating the balance by 75%.

Travel Reimbursement Requirements

Travel Expense Reimbursement Request Travelers should submit the Travel Expense Reimbursement request to the Authorized Approver within 30 working days after completion of the trip. In the case of continuous travel, the traveler should submit the reimbursement request to the Authorized Approver within 30 working days of the last day of travel for which reimbursement is requested.

In all instances, the travel reimbursement must be submitted to the Authorized Approver within 60 days. Expenses submitted after 60 days must be fully explained.

Documentation Requirements Although **not all-inclusive**, the following information is **required** for expense reimbursements:

- Business purpose for travel
- Receipt for each expenditure of \$75 or more
- Itemized receipt for lodging (regardless of dollar amount)
- Itemized receipt for car rental (regardless of dollar amount)
- Business purpose for unusual fees (e.g. change fees, phone calls)
- Final itinerary with form of payment for air or rail reimbursements
- Personal & Business travel - Christopherson Business Travel documentation in the form of OBT search page or agent email or “Airtinerary” showing the cost of the business portion only and must be the same date trip is booked.

Missing Receipts If a receipt is missing, the traveler must provide proof of payment in the form of a redacted credit card statement or copy of cashed check.

Disallowed Expenses Although **not all-inclusive**, the following expenses are not reimbursable:

- Lost or stolen articles
- Damage to personal vehicles, clothing, or other items
- Services to gain entry to a locked vehicle
- Movies charged to hotel bills
- All expenses related to the personal negligence of the traveler, such as fines
- Towing charges and tickets for violations
- Expenses for children, spouses, and companions while on travel status (car seats, cribs, etc.).
- Interest on credit cards
- Parking for employees attending meetings /training in a VCU owned or occupied space.
- Mileage between Monroe and MCV campuses.

Exceptions Exceptions must be paid with local funds and approved by the President, Vice President, Provost, Dean, or Executive Director. Exception approval by a Dean Designee, Associate or Assistant Vice President or Vice Provost is not allowed.