TRAVEL FAQ

Please note: The ProCard is the preferred method for payment of all University travel costs except per diem meals while in travel status. If a ProCard is used, please write the travel request number on each receipt and/or provide the number to the ProCard holder. Do not send documentation for purchases made with the ProCard to the Travel Office.

TRANSPORTATION:

General:

1. Can I add a tip for taxi/Uber drivers?
   Answer: Yes, you can add a tip up to 15% of the base fare and $1 to $2 per bag. Submit your receipt with your travel reimbursement request. If the ProCard was used, please write the travel request number on each receipt and/or provide the number to the ProCard holder.

2. What amount is reimbursable if the traveler wants to drive, but it is cheaper to fly?
   Answer: The amount of the flight since it is less.

3. Can I be reimbursed for gas when driving a rental vehicle or my personal vehicle?
   Answer: Gas may be reimbursed when using a rental vehicle on University 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.

4. 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 are not a specific number of days.

5. 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.

6. If someone pays for an airline ticket or hotel bill for someone else that is traveling, who is reimbursed?
   Answer: The person who pays for the ticket or hotel bill will be reimbursed. If a ProCard is used by a ProCard other than the traveler, the ProCard Expense must be moved to the traveler’s eWallet in Chrome. The process for moving this charge is in Chrome River SOP and training documentation.

7. The policy states “All travel authorizations and reimbursement requests, except for those of vice chancellor direct reports, must be approved by a minimum of two people upward in the organizational hierarchy.” Does an invitation to interview to a prospective professional candidate by a selection committee constitute preapproval to travel?
   Answer: A selection committee’s invitation to a prospective EHRA Faculty Position or an EHRA Non-Faculty candidate to interview will be considered as pre-approval for the prospective professional employee to travel. This invitation should be documented and attached as backup to travel reimbursement request.
Mileage:

8. What mileage rate is paid when driving a personal vehicle?

   Answer: Mileage rates effective for travel that has occurred on or after January 1, 2020 are:

   - 100 Business Miles, or less, per round trip: $0.575
   - Any Business Mileage OVER 100 miles per round trip: $0.33

   Reimbursement may not exceed these rates from state, auxiliary and grant funds. If approved by the traveler's Vice Chancellor, or designee, and the Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance, the department may choose another funding source to reimburse the traveler up to the IRS rate of $.575 per mile. Reimbursement will not exceed $.575 per mile from any fund source.

   The mileage calculator, which can be found on AP's website or in the Resources block of the main screen in the online travel system, can be used to calculate the mileage reimbursement. Below is an example:

   PERSONAL AUTOMOBILE MILEAGE RATE REIMBURSEMENT CALCULATOR
   (Effective 01/01/20)

   Date Began Travel: 01/02/20
   Date Return Travel: 01/05/20
   Total Round Trip Miles Traveled: 100.0

   Mileage eligible for the IRS Business Standard Rate: 100.0
   Mileage at the North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management Rate: All Mileage, if Total Trip is Over 100 Miles

   Total Miles Traveled: 100.0

   IRS Business Standard Rate Per Mile For Trips Under 100 Miles: $0.575
   Office of State Budget and Management Rate for Trips Over 100 Miles: $0.33

   Reimbursement at IRS Business Rate: $57.50
   Reimbursement at the Office of State Budget and Management Rate: $0.00
   Total Mileage Reimbursement: $57.50

   * For Blanket travel, enter # of miles per day

9. I am a small business counselor who resides in Fuquay-Varina but I am assigned to an office at ECU (duty station is ECU). I have an office on campus, and I am 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.
10. 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. The reimbursement rate depends on the number of business miles driven. See question 8 above.

11. 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 return.

12. Will mileage be paid for two round trips to the airport if someone takes the traveler and picks them up? What mileage rate will be paid? 
   Answer: Yes, the reimbursement will be for two rounds trips. See question 8 for the mileage rate.

Rental Vehicle:

13. 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.

14. 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.

15. 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.

16. 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 except when driven in 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 $40,000 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.

17. 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.

18. Does the University’s policy provide coverage in foreign countries? 
   Answer: Yes, but only outside of the United States, Canada, Puerto Rico and territories or possessions of the United State of America).
19. Can students drive rental vehicles 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.

20. 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. Fax the police report, rental agency accident report, and the front and back of the rental agreement to Risk Management and Insurance 252-328-0129 and email confirmation to surlesj16@ecu.edu as soon as possible. Note: NEVER TELL THE OTHER PARTY INVOLVED THAT YOU OR THE UNIVERSITY ACCEPTS RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ACCIDENT.

SUBSISTANCE:

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

22. 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.

23. 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.

24. Can a traveler spend the night if he/she is leaving one conference and continuing 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 the employee’s duty station and going to the next destination.

25. If a meeting is in Raleigh for one day, can the traveler get a hotel room?
   
   Answer: It would depend on your department and how early the conference/meeting starts. Please ask your supervisor. Reminder: the travel destination must be at least 35 miles from the employee’s duty station or home, whichever is less.

26. 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.

27. What funds can be used for a banquet that exceeds 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.

28. 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 that may be calculated on the total cost of the meal (food, drinks and tax).
29. A traveler headed to a conference in Atlanta has a long layover in Charlotte and has lunch at the airport. Would he/she be reimbursed at the in-state or out-of-state rate for that meal?

Answer: Chrome river will reimburse the Out-of-State rate based on the itinerary but the reimbursement will be adjusted to the in-state rate.

30. I will be attending a class in Chapel Hill from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. I plan to drive to the class and return on the same day and the driving time is 2 ½ hours each way from my home, which is closer to Chapel Hill than my duty station on campus. I plan to leave home at 5:30 am and return at 7:30 pm and will be working a 13 hour day. My normal workday is 8 hours. Can I receive reimbursement for meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner)?

Answer: In this situation, you qualify for breakfast only. You met both requirements for breakfast (leaving prior to 6:00 am and extending your workday by 2 hours -- 2 ½ hours in this case). You did not meet the requirements for dinner (returning after 8:00 pm and extending the workday by 3 hours). Lunch is not reimbursable on a one day trip.

DOCUMENTATION:

31. When is a travel reimbursement request considered late?

Answer: A travel reimbursement request submitted after 30 days of return date of travel is considered late. Chrome River will route to the appropriate approvals addressing the late expense report automatically.

32. What happens if a travel reimbursement is submitted late?

Answer: In Chrome River a late travel reimbursement request will automatically route to the appropriate Vice Chancellor for their approval. Travel requests on state funds received beyond the 30-day deadline cannot be paid from state funds. A funding source change will be needed as well as appropriate signatures for that funding. Reimbursement requests received more than 120 days late will not be paid.

33. How can a traveler be reimbursed for a lost receipt?

Answer: If the lost receipt is for a hotel, car rental or airline, please contact the merchant to request a copy of the receipt. Anything else requires a copy of the bank or credit card statement, with account information redacted, or a copy of the front and back of a cleared check, again with account information redacted.

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 “Extended State Travel/Combining Personal and Business Travel” section of the 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 travel request 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.

TRAVEL ADVANCE:

37. 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.

38. Who can get a travel advance?
   Answer: Travel advances for specific trips may be issued for employees who travel regularly each month or employees whose salary is $50,000 or less. Exceptions are given for recruiters, admissions and gift officers who travel regularly each month; they may request a semi-annual travel advance. See the Travel Advance section of the Travel Procedures Manual.

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

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

ON-LINE TRAVEL SYSTEM:

41. Can student travel be done within Chrome River?
   Answer: Yes. Students will be reimbursed within Chrome River. In order to get the student’s profile in Chrome River a Team Dynamics ticket must be completed and submitted. Allow 2 days to get the Student in Chrome River. See Chrome River training documentation for exact process.

42. How is a Chrome River travel request cancelled?
   Answer: If no charges have been incurred, the traveler or delegate can go to the respective PreApproval within Chrome River and expire the funds that were encumbered. No additional steps are required. If there are charges that occur, i.e. cancellation fees, airlines, registration fees, hotels, etc., complete a Travel Expense report for those charges and expire the remaining funds from the respective PreApproval.

43. If a PreApproval request does not require reimbursement, how is it closed?
   Answer: Go into Chrome River and select the respective PreApproval and expire any funds associated with that trip. No further action required.

44. How can the traveler’s address be changed?
   Answer: Addresses are not kept within Chrome River. The traveler will have to change their information in Self Service Banner. Once the traveler has made the change, the next travel form will be updated.

MISCELLANEOUS:

45. Can traveler’s insurance be purchased?
   Answer: No, traveler’s insurance will not be reimbursed.
46. 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: Not for the registration but if the mileage expense from duty station to conference/meeting in Greenville is requested for reimbursement, a Blanket travel reimbursement can be used for the reimbursement. If there is no Blanket travel in place, a separate Pre-Approval must be completed for the mileage reimbursement. Once the conference/meeting is over, a Travel expense report is completed for mileage reimbursement. If additional fees were incurred, either the ProCard holder would expense on a ProCard Reconciliation or, if personally paid, a Non-Travel expense report can be filed within Chrome River.

47. 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.

48. How and when is a candidate’s spouse/partner reimbursed for travel?

Answer: Approved costs of a candidate’s spouse/partner can be paid for the second trip only and must be paid from a non-state fund source. See the Non-State Employee Travel section of the Travel Procedures Manual.

49. 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 should be paid thru Port unless it is included in the registration amount and cannot be paid separately.

50. Are moving expenses paid on a travel form?

Answer: No.

51. When must travel expense reports be submitted?

Answer: Travel Expense reports must be submitted within 30 days after the return of the trip. If it is over the 30 days, the report will automatically be routed to the respective Vice Chancellor for their approval.

52. Who needs to approve the Chrome River Expense Reports?

Answer: Chrome River has ECU business rules built in, so expense reports will automatically route to the respective approvers.

Direct Reports to Vice Chancellors
Chrome River will automatically route to the proper approvers for all expense reports, regardless of position.

International Travel
Chrome River will route all International Pre-Approvals to both Global Affairs for their review, as well as the traveler’s vice chancellor, or designee.