

The University appreciates the efforts of those who travel on University business. A part of the travel process includes understanding all travel related policies, and obtaining reimbursements in a timely manner. There are some things the preparer of the expense report can do to help expedite the reimbursement process.

### **Completing the Expense Report:**

When completing an expense report for reimbursement to an employee, all of the expenses incurred for the trip should be included. The expenses paid directly by the employee should be separated by expense type with a separate line for each expense or receipt, and the expenses paid directly by the university should be documented in the notes section. The costs of travel include such things as registration fees, transportation costs, lodging, meals and some various miscellaneous expenses.

The expense report should be fully completed before the employee submits it to be approved and processed for payment. The following are a list of items that may help in expediting the process:

1. Know the travel policies and guidelines, by reviewing the following links:  
<http://www.ndsu.edu/accounting/travel/employees/>  
[http://www.ndsu.edu/accounting/travel/travel\\_reference\\_guide/](http://www.ndsu.edu/accounting/travel/travel_reference_guide/)  
<http://www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/policy/515.pdf>  
<http://www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/policy/170.pdf>  
<http://www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/vpfa/forms/FM-RentalVehicleInformation.pdf>
2. Ask questions! We encourage you to contact us with any travel reimbursement questions you have. This includes questions you may have before the travel has occurred, as well as questions you may have when completing the expense report.
3. A business purpose and report description are required in the top portion of the expense report. If attending a conference, list the name of the conference, but also attach a printout/brochure of the conference. This will help provide important information in the auditing of the reimbursement and will help speed up the reimbursement. A brochure or itinerary includes not only the name of the conference attended, but also gives a description (business purpose), the dates of the conference, if lunch is included as part of the conference, and if lodging is available at the conference location.
4. Complete the expenses incurred section of the expense report.
  - Fill in the correct dates, start and end times are important for the days the travel begins and ends
  - Select the appropriate expense type for the expenses incurred; account codes will populate automatically based on the expense type selected – does the code fit the expense?
  - Airfare receipts – Ticket class information (only the lowest ticket fare is allowable), itemized detail of the charges.
  - Rental Cars – generally discouraged unless cost effectiveness is self-evident for needing a rental car vs. taxi or other public transportation. Review the Motor pool guidelines.
  - Complete and attach a Banquets & Meeting form when necessary. Review that it has been completed fully and a signature has been obtained. Review for reasonableness of the meal cost. If the average cost per person exceeds this amount, justification and VP approval signature is required.
  - If an expense is directly paid by the university, it must be noted on the expense report. For instance, if the airfare is paid using the P-card, notate 'airfare paid with Pcard' in the notes section of the expense report, found on the 'summary and submit' screen. Alternatively, if an expense is paid via an Accounts Payable voucher, notate the voucher number in the notes section.

# Expediting the Employee Travel Reimbursement Process

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- Original, itemized receipts are required to be attached to the expense report. The receipt needs to show method of payment in the travelers name and must show a **zero balance due**.
- If a receipt was not obtained or was lost by the traveler, then a photocopy or faxed invoice should be obtained with a notation by the employee that the original receipt was lost.
  - Credit card receipts are not sufficient
- If an expense has been incurred that might not make sense or is outside of the Accounting Office guidelines/policies, provide written justification to explain the expense. This will provide the necessary justification in determining if the expense is allowable.
- If a grant is used in funding the expenses, be sure that the expenses are allowed on the grant.
  - The Grant & Contract Accounting Office will complete a review of the expense report before it is electronically routed to the Accounting Office to be processed.
- When personal and business travel is combined, expenses must be clearly documented. Reimbursement for airfare may not exceed the lowest available cost of a direct or uninterrupted route. If the traveler uses an indirect route or interrupts travel for personal convenience, any additional expenses incurred are the sole responsibility of the traveler.
- Some additional guidance that may help in expediting this process include, but are not limited to the following **unallowable** expenses:
  - Spouse or travel companion(s) expenses
  - Personal miscellaneous expenses, such as laundry, movies, bar bills, room service, etc.
  - Airfare excess fees, trip insurance, trip flex, priority boarding and special seating (unless there is a unique medical issue making this a necessary cost), etc.
  - Alcohol
  - Asking for reimbursement for meals that are included in the cost of registration and are provided during the conference.

Completing the above steps before submitting the expense report will assist in expediting the reimbursement to the traveler. Although, it must be noted that the above information is not all inclusive, as there are many different travel situations, and therefore, the department may still be contacted by the Accounting Office for additional documentation or a cost/benefit justification.

Please do not hesitate to call the following Accounting Office employees with any questions in regards to Employee Travel.

- Lori Olson, Accounts Payable Processor, 231-7361 or [lori.olson@ndsu.edu](mailto:lori.olson@ndsu.edu)
- Shelly Gustafson, Accounts Payable Specialist, 231-7899 or [shelly.gustafson@ndsu.edu](mailto:shelly.gustafson@ndsu.edu)
- Patty Lindgren, Lead Accounts Payable Specialist, 231-9520 or [patricia.lindgren@ndsu.edu](mailto:patricia.lindgren@ndsu.edu)