Expediting the Travel Reimbursement process – Employee Travel

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 travel voucher can do to help expedite the reimbursement process.

Completing the Travel Voucher:

When completing a travel voucher for reimbursement to an employee, all of the expenses incurred for the trip should be included. This includes the expenses paid directly by the employee, as well as the expenses directly paid by the university. The costs of travel include such things as registration fees, transportation costs, lodging, meals and some various miscellaneous expenses.

The travel voucher should be fully completed and reviewed before sending it to the Accounting Office to be 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/fileadmin/vpfa/forms/FM-RentalVehicleInformation.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 voucher.

3. When completing the actual voucher, fill in the top portion with the full name, address, employee id number, and department information of the traveler.

4. Purpose of the trip should include a description and business purpose. 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.

5. Complete the expenses incurred section of the voucher.
   - Fill in the correct dates, points covered by travel, departure and return times
   - Select the appropriate column for the expenses incurred; account codes – 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 voucher. For instance, if the airfare is paid using the P-card, notate ‘Pcard’ in the appropriate amount column for that item, or if paid via an Accounts Payable voucher, notate the voucher number in the appropriate amount column on the voucher.
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- Original, itemized receipts are required to be attached to the voucher. The receipt needs to show method of payment in the traveler’s 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
- Complete the ‘Misc. Expense Detail’ section for any expenses incurred that are part of the Other Transportation and Miscellaneous Expense column. Provide detailed information to explain what the expense is for.
- 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.
- Make sure all of the appropriate and authorized signatures have been obtained.
- 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 travel voucher before it is sent to the Accounting Office to be processed.
- Make sure the signature section of the voucher is completed. This includes the traveler’s signature, an authorized departmental approval signature, as well as the name and phone # of the employee completing the form.
- 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 tips 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, priority boarding, trip flex, special seating, 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 travel voucher to the Accounting Office for payment will assist in expediting the reimbursement to the traveler. Although, it must be noted that the above 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.

- Ricki Martin, Lead Accounts Payable Auditor, 231-7433 or ricki.martin@ndsu.edu
- Lori Olson, Accounting Clerk, 231-7361 or lori.olson@ndsu.edu
- Ramona Adams, Associate Controller, 231-5661 or ramona.adams@ndsu.edu