

TRAVEL PROCEDURES

Whenever you travel on university business and you are to be reimbursed by state funds, a “**Travel Estimate and Approval Form**” http://www.co.vt.edu/Forms/request_for_travel_approval_vt.doc has to be filled out and signed by department head **prior to the scheduled conference. Travel costs will be checked against your available professional development funds at the time of approval.** The purpose of trip, conference/name, estimated cost of transportation (Fleet Services and/or ***airline costs**), ****lodging**, meals, conference/seminar fees, and other expenses must be entered on form and totaled.

***Airline Reservations** - Airline tickets may be purchased up to 90 days before the travel occurs. We have three options for purchasing airline tickets.

- 1) **Reserve airline tickets through a travel agency.** The following travel agencies are on contract with the university to provide travel management services:
 - a. Call the travel agency:
Martin Travel, Inc - 951-7854
Omni Travel & Tours Inc. – 552-4120
Short’s Travel – 785-272-7511
University Travel - 961-2700
World Travel Service – 540-982-2200
 - b. Reserve the flight.
 - c. Ask travel agency to email the **itinerary** to gholland@vt.edu. Hokie Mart will be used to purchase the tickets.

- 2) **Purchase the airline ticket and request reimbursement after the trip has been taken.** Original boarding passes are required for all air and rail reimbursements made directly to employees along with proof of payment.

- 3) **Airline tickets purchased with the Department Corporate Card.** Please notify Wendy Hodge with all necessary information if you wish to use the corporate card.

Reminder: Airline travel expenses must be in accordance with the university Air Transportation procedure found on the Controllers Office web site. <http://www.co.vt.edu/Procedures/p20335e.html>

[IMPORTANT NOTICE] **When travel is by personal vehicle instead of public transportation**, the total transportation expenses reimbursed (including mileage, meals, and lodging) shall not exceed the cost of the most economical public transportation fare available. Cost comparison is required as part of your travel reimbursement request. **Cost comparisons are to be done prior to travel. See attached instructions for creating a cost comparison sheet.**

****Lodging Exception Request** will need to be filled out on the form if your **lodging rates greater than 50%** above the guidelines. *An explanation of circumstances justifying the lodging exception must be stated on the form.* **Requests for exceptions above 150% of the published rate charged to university funds must be made PRIOR to the travel.** Requests must include an explanation of circumstances requiring a lodging exception and sufficient documentation showing alternative cost comparisons justifying the excess. Include the name and complete address of the hotels and zip code, used for the cost comparison. The State Department of Accounts will verify lodging availability on all requests and will not approve an exception if adequate lodging within the guideline rate is found near the event.

Submitting Receipts

- A copy of the conference flyer, brochure, advertisement, or first page of the conference itinerary that has the **name of conference, location, and date** should be submitted with your receipts for reimbursement.
- Travelers must submit **original receipts** for reimbursement within 30 working days after completion of the trip.
- **Hotel receipts** must show proof of payment (zero balance). When two or more people are traveling on official business and staying in the same hotel room, the allowable lodging rate is the lodging rate allowed in the area, plus the cost charged by the hotel for any additional persons in the room. Documentation from the hotel listing additional hotel charges for each additional person per room must be provided.
- Provide original transportation receipts such as taxi, shuttle, or other means of transportation.
- If you choose to drive personal vehicle and would like to claim mileage, please provide Geraldine with the date and time you left from home or Blacksburg, the date and time you returned home or to Blacksburg, and if a state car was available for your trip. Will need original parking receipt from airport parking or hotel parking.
- Meals are per diem – no receipts required. On travel days you are reimbursed 75% of the per diem.

Travel Estimate and Approval Form: http://www.co.vt.edu/Forms/request_for_travel_approval_vt.doc

Travel information: <http://www.co.vt.edu/Procedures/p20335a.html>

Procedure 20335r: Travel Reimbursement Rates for lodging and meals & incidental expenses (M&IE):
<http://www.co.vt.edu/Procedures/p20335r.html>

Travel and Meal Reimbursement Voucher: [Procedure 20335v Travel Expense Reimbursement](#).

Instructions for Preparing a Travel Cost Comparison

If you choose to research other sources for airfare prices, instead of using one of the five contract travel agencies, please document what sources you use such as internet vendors, or other travel agents. You should obtain “written” quotes for these fares – such as faxes from agents showing the least expensive airfare costs for the dates you will be traveling, or print the information from websites.

The actual cost comparison should encompass the following items.

Travel via personal vehicle:

- ❖ *Round trip mileage between your base or your home, and your destination.*
- ❖ *Meals and incidental expenses (M & IE) on the days en route TO the destination and on the days en route home FROM the destination.*
- ❖ *Lodging incurred on the day en route TO the destination and on the day en route home FROM the destination. Only one day of expenses is allowed on each end of the trip.*
- ❖ *Any tolls or parking charges incurred en route TO and FROM the destination.*

Compare this cost with the air travel as follows:

- Cost of the least expensive airfare available for the dates of your travel.
- Round trip mileage between your base or your home and the airport.
- Airport parking for the number of days that you would be out of town (any personal days must be deducted).
- Costs of shuttle, other ground transportation, and/or rental car at your destination.
- Any extra M & IE and lodging costs which would be incurred due to obtaining a lower airfare (in some instances, this may be a viable justification for using your personal car).

If travel via air is less expensive than travel via personal car, a disallowance will be necessary.

If travel via personal car is less expensive, no disallowance is necessary; *however, the cost comparison must be done in order to justify the use of your personal vehicle.*

Since this policy is part of the state guidelines for business travel, we must comply with it. If you have questions, you may call the Controller’s Office (Travel Audit Section).