

UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA WESTERN

TRAVEL GUIDELINES & PROCEDURES

The Legislature creates laws governing travel; the Montana Department of Administration prescribes regulations to follow, and the effective managerial controls and enforcement rest with University of Montana Western.

The three references with information regarding state employees' travel are:

- Montana Codes Annotated
- Administrative Rules of Montana
- Montana Operations Manual

For questions not covered in the University of Montana Western Procedures, refer to the above procedures & policies for clarification.

- University departments and offices are authorized to approve travel and are responsible for the proper use and management of Travel resources. The managers of departments/offices are responsible to ensure that travel is directly related to an objective of the university, that adequate funds are available and that all travel is in accordance with University Travel Guidelines.
- All travel requires pre-authorization by the traveler's supervisor and by the administrator/manager in charge of the department index code funding the travel. This is accomplished by completing the Request and Authorization Travel form.
- Travel should be in the most efficient and cost effective manner possible which still allows for the purpose of the trip to be accomplished.
- The number of personnel attending a given function requiring travel will be held to the absolute minimum.
- Transportation should be the most economical in terms of direct cost to University of Montana Western and the employee's time away from the office. All commercial air travel should be the least expensive service available. Trips should be scheduled to avoid unnecessary backtracking and overlapping.
- Employees using automobiles in an approved travel status (transportation services, rental or personal car) will obey all posted speed limits.
- Request and Authorization to Travel Form should be completed prior to leaving on an Out-of-State/Out-of-Country UM business trip.
- A Travel Expense Report should be submitted within 30 days of the trips completion

AIRLINE TICKET

- **Airline tickets should be purchased using the UM Procard for all employee travel.** This applies to ticket purchases made through a travel agent, purchased directly from an airline, or purchased from an online travel source.
- Luggage fees may be charged on the UM Procard and should be included as part of the airline fees.
- Additional travel insurance should not be purchased unless traveling to a foreign destination.

HOTEL/MOTEL & TAXES

- **Hotel/Motel and taxes should be paid using the UM Procard. A copy of the itemized receipt from the hotel/motel is required to be submitted with the Travel Expense Report.**
- No Personal charges may be charged to the hotel bill, please ensure to check your bill prior to checking out and pay such charges with a personal card.
- Nightly lodging costs should not exceed the federal per diem room rate as established by **GSA**. When looking this up you should look at the base nightly charge excluding the tax.
- The Department head or designated approving authority may authorize the actual lodging cost without the GSA cap for the following circumstances:
 - Lodging costs below the GSA caps provided for the area are temporarily unavailable due to special functions such as fairs, sporting events, or conventions or seasonal demand; or
 - Emergency travel arrangements preclude being able to find accommodations below the caps; or
 - Remote locations with limited accommodations within a 15-mile radius preclude obtaining accommodations below the caps; or
 - The traveler is employed in a regulatory or undercover function and has reasonable cause to believe there is risk to personal safety.

When the department head has authorized the cap to be exceeded the traveler must complete and submit an approved "Request for Reimbursement of Actual Lodging Costs" form. (This has been combined with the Request and Authorization to Travel form now.) For in-state travel where the lodging rate is exceeded please fill in the top portion of the Request and Authorization to Travel form with the travelers 790# through destination, mark the appropriate reason for the lodging cost being exceeded, and have the traveler and supervisor sign the bottom.)

- If externally funded and sponsor terms and conditions mandate that federal travel requirements apply, costs above the allowable rates are the responsibility of the PI and department.
- Travelers staying in a location that a receipt cannot be obtained or fail to obtain a receipt will be reimbursed based on the un-receipted lodging rate. Credit Card Receipts (unless fully itemized), Credit Card Statements, canceled checks are not sufficient documentation as an itemized receipt.

AUTOMOBILES

Motor Pool Vehicles

- When traveling from campus, employees should use a Motor Pool vehicle whenever possible.
- Procards should not be used to purchase gas in Motor Pool Vehicles. A state gas card is provided in each vehicle.

Rental Vehicles

- **All rental car costs should be paid using a UM Procard and secured using the University of Montana Rental Car contracts in place with Enterprise Rental and Hertz. (Accounts Payable can provide the membership information)**
- Do Not Accept additional Liability & Comprehensive/collision insurance. Travelers are automatically covered through the State of Montana and Visa.
 - Individuals may choose to add additional insurance at their own expense through the rental car agency to cover personal items as these are not covered under the State of Montana's Property Insurance. This coverage cannot be charged on the Procard.
 - Rental Vehicle should be refueled prior to return.

- Rental vehicle gas may be charged on the Procard
 - Out of Pocket rental gas can be reimbursed on the Travel Expense Report. The itemized gas receipt needs to be submitted for reimbursement.
 - If Rental Contract is longer than 30 days, please notify the University Risk Management Coordinator.

Private Vehicle

- Reimbursement rates for private vehicle mileage are defined by state statute. Please contact Accounts Payable for the current rates.
- To report mileage the beginning odometer and end odometer readings should be submitted.
- Procards should not be used to purchase gas for private or department vehicles. If an error occurs and the Procard has been used the abatement needs to be promptly processed.
- Personal vehicle reimbursement is justified when one of the following occurs, and must be documented on the TER:
 - No Motor Pool Vehicle Available
 - Driving less than 25 miles per day i.e. errands to pick up/drop things off
 - Weather/field research location-need 4x4 and one is not available from Motor Pool
 - Physical Limitations requiring own vehicle

CONFERENCE/REGISTRATION FEES

- **Conference/Registration Fees should be paid using the UM Procard.** If paid by employee list as an out of pocket expense on your Travel Expense Report and attach the registration receipt.
- Special conference events of a personal nature, such as entertainment, are non-reimbursable and must be paid by the traveler personally.
- When trips are canceled that include a prepaid fee, it is the departments responsibility to apply for a timely refund.

MEAL PER DIEM-EMPLOYEES/STUDENTS/NON-EMPLOYEES

- A meal per diem allowance may be obtained by UMW employees and students in travel status if the total is over \$50. If the meal per diem is less than \$50 you will need to submit this on your travel expense report to be reimbursed.
- Meal per diem advances need to be submitted on your Request and Authorization to Travel and turned in to Accounts Payable for processing. Allow a minimum of 10 Business days processing time.
- Accounts Payable issues checks once a week on Thursday. Checks are mailed to the travelers' home address. Signing up for [Direct Deposit Application and Authorization for Accounts Payable](#) is encouraged.
- The UM Procard **CANNOT** be used to pay for travel per diem meals.
- The meal per diem rates have been established by the State of Montana based on a fixed rate and travel times.
- Travelers do not need to submit receipts for in-state and out-of-state meal per diem. Meal receipts are required for foreign travel if above state per diem rate.
- Travelers may not claim per diem for meals that are included in or provided by a conference or meeting traveler is attending.
- To be eligible for a meal allowance while traveling on state business, you must be in travel status for more than three continuous hours and be at least 15 miles from the headquarters or home whichever is closer.
- In-State travel is considered any travel that occurs within or to the State of Montana.

Meal Per Diem

To be eligible for reimbursement for travel meals you must have been in travel status for at least three (3) continuous hours within one of the following time ranges:

Time Range	Meal Allowed	Per Diem	
		In State	Out of State
12:01 am to 10 am	Morning meal	\$ 7 .50	\$13.00
10:01 am to 3 pm	Midday meal	\$ 8 .50	\$14.00
3:01 pm to midnight	Evening meal	\$14.50	\$23.00

- Travel is considered to be out-of-state from the time a flight is boarded with a destination outside of Montana.
- Travel status for airline travel begins 1 ½ hours before the flight departure time.

Non-Overnight Meal Per Diem

- Non-Overnight meals are determined by the travel shift.
- A travel shift is defined as 1 hour before the employees regularly assigned work shift begins and 1 hour after the work shift ends. Standard Montana Western Shift is 8-5.
- During this travel shift only one (1) meal can be claimed.
- When a departure or a return occurs outside of the travel shift that additional meal can be reimbursed.
- When travel is totally outside of the daily travel shift times all 3 meals can be claimed for reimbursement.
- Non-Overnight meals are a taxable benefit. Meals are paid by accounts payable and reported to Human Resource Services for tax deduction from your paycheck.
- Group travel cannot be used for non-overnight travel due to the tax liability.

OUT-OF-COUNTRY TRAVEL-EMPLOYEES/STUDENTS/NON-EMPLOYEES

- Any travel outside of the 50 United States is considered Out-of-Country/Foreign Travel.

Foreign meal per diem rates established by the State of Montana: Section 2-18-501(4) MCA are:

Breakfast - \$7

Lunch - \$11

Dinner -\$18

Total Daily - \$36

Nightly Lodging - \$155

- If the daily meal or lodging costs exceed the rates established by the MT State Statute the employee, student, or non-employee may be reimbursed for the actual meal and lodging expenses up to the daily maximum established by the United States Department of State for that specific area. With itemized receipts. Rates are available here: [click here](#).
- **Please contact Debi Richardson in Business Services for more information regarding foreign travel.**

MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES

- Miscellaneous business expenses associated with business travel are reimbursable.
- Individual expense items of \$25 or greater must be supported by paid receipts and itemized as out of pocket expenses on the travel expense report.
- Examples of allowable miscellaneous expenses include: taxi fares, baggage handling.
- Non-Reimbursable expenses: personal telephone charges, alcohol/food charges, tips and meal taxes, exercise facility charges, hotel movie charges.

STUDENT TRAVEL

- Student Travel is authorized when the travel is related to University business and is pre-approved by the appropriate supervisor.
- All travel procedures outlined apply for student travel; therefore the students department should try to secure Flight, Lodging, Transportation and Registration with a UM Procard when possible. Since it may not always be possible for this to occur Accounts Payable will issue a travel advance to students with a request and authorization to travel form.
- Items that may be included in the advance calculation:
 - Lodging, rental vehicle, airline tickets, conference registration, ground transportation, anticipated mileage for a personal vehicle
 - Students may only have one (1) travel advance outstanding at any one time.
 - Once travel is complete a Travel Expense Report should be completed to reconcile the travel advance. If money is owed back to the University a check made payable should be attached to the Travel Expense Report and given to Accounts Payable. Accounts Payable will review the Travel Expense Report and clear the travel advance balance and charge the expense to the departmental index and expense account. If money is not owed to the University or the traveler is owed a reimbursement complete the Travel Expense Report. Accounts Payable will review for travel policy compliance and issue a reimbursement and/or clear the travel advance balance and charge to the department index and expense account.
 - If a Travel Expense Report is not submitted to Accounts Payable within 40 days of the trip conclusion the travel advance amount less any per diem advance will be placed on the student's bill and a hold put on the students account. The department will be charged the entire amount of the travel advance.

GROUP TRAVEL

- To qualify for group travel 4 or more travelers must be traveling at the same time, in the same mode of transportation, to the same event, and stay at the same hotel. If any of the travelers have any deviation from that the travel they cannot be included as part of a group travel.
- One employee will be designated as the prime traveler. The Prime traveler is responsible for paying for the expenses incurred by the group during the trip. All per diem and reimbursements are issued to the Prime Traveler.
- A group travel notification identifying the Prime Traveler and all others must be completed and attached with the travel paperwork.

- Group travel may only be used for overnight trips.

REQUEST & AUTHORIZATION FOR TRAVEL

- The Request and Authorization for Travel needs to be completed for all travel.
- For any per diem advance or student travel advance that is being requested the completed Request and Authorization to Travel form will need to be submitted to Accounts Payable. Accounts Payable checks are only issued on Thursday; please ensure that you are entering a Per Diem request at least 2 Thursdays prior to the traveler's departure.

TRAVEL EXPENSE REPORT

- The Travel Expense Report-TER documents and summarizes all costs incurred by the traveler related to that trip.
- TER should be completed within 30 days of the trip conclusion. The completed TER should have copies of all Procard receipts and out of pocket receipts.
- TER's require a supervisor's signature.
- In situations where travel funds are limited and full reimbursement of travel costs allowed by state regulations is not possible the traveler must initial the reimbursement waiver acknowledgement. The University assumes no responsibility for maintaining records to support un-reimbursed expenses deducted by employees when they file their personal income tax returns.
- Travelers who do not file their TER within 60 days after the trip conclusion may forfeit their right to reimbursement.

THIRD PARTY TRAVEL

- Travel requested for non-employee & non-students to the University of Montana Western or to other destinations on behalf of the University of Montana Western are considered 3rd party travel.
- These travelers may make their own travel arrangements and be reimbursed on a non-employee reimbursement form including their receipts. These forms must be processed within 30 days of trip completion.
- University of Montana Western Departments can also coordinate travel arrangements and use UM Procard to pay for travel expenses.

PERSONAL TRAVEL

- If the traveler is authorized by their supervisor to combine a personal component of travel to their business trip, additional costs associated with personal travel must be paid by the UMW traveler at their own expense.
- Documentation must be attached to show no additional cost is being paid by the University of Montana Western. For Example: If the traveler is staying in a location for additional days they must print the flight cost for what travel would have been had they just traveled for just the normal business days at the time you are making your arrangements, single occupancy for employee lodging; additional costs for family needs to be paid by the traveler.