Travel and Business Expense Reimbursement

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<th>Section: Operating/Administrative</th>
<th>Policy Number: 1019</th>
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<td>Responsible Office: Accounts Payable and Purchasing</td>
<td>Effective Date: 04/01/01</td>
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**Policy**

The Accounts Payable Department’s goal is to reimburse all business expenses incurred by employees on behalf of the University in a timely and efficient manner. Approval to travel and reimbursement of travel and business expenses should be requested by submitting a Travel Request and Expense Reimbursement Form (T&E Form). Below are basic rules that must be adhered to when making travel arrangements and requesting reimbursement for business expenses. For additional detailed information about travel and business expense reimbursement procedures please refer to the Business Expense Policies and Procedures Manual on the University’s Intranet site (on the Employee Resources page under the Travel Benefits heading). Failure to adhere to these procedures will result in the return of the T&E Form to the requester, and violations of this policy by an employee may result in disciplinary action.

**Procedures**

- All requests for reimbursement of business related expenses must be submitted on a completed and approved T&E Form (Sections A-D) within 30 days of the date of travel or the date the business expense is incurred. Provided all reimbursement information received is complete and accurate, the T&E will usually be processed and paid within ten business days of receipt by Accounts Payable.

- All expenses related to an individual trip or event must be reported on one travel and expense form.

- Once the T&E Form has been fully processed, a reimbursement check will be mailed to the employee’s home address or directly deposited into the employee’s bank account on record. Checks may not be picked up from the Accounts Payable department unless special circumstances arise. (If the employee is currently enrolled in the payroll direct deposit program, he or she is automatically enrolled to receive T&E reimbursement through direct deposit. If the employee is not enrolled in the payroll direct deposit program and would still like to receive T&E reimbursement through direct deposit, please call Accounts Payable at (718) 990-6854.)

**Making Travel Arrangements**

Employees traveling on University-related business may make travel reservations using any travel provider, directly with the airlines, Internet, or may utilize the services of the University’s preferred travel agency, Austin Travel.

Austin Travel, located at 265 Spagnoli Road in Melville, NY is available to assist employees with all business travel arrangements. Austin Travel can charge employees’ airfare/rail fare to the University’s Ghost Corporate American Express charge account, using the budget account number provided on the approved travel request form. A legible copy of the completed and approved travel request form (Section A of the T&E form) must be
faxed to and received by Austin Travel before any ticket can be issued. Please fax this form to Austin Travel at (516) 390-6939. Austin Travel charges a $25.00 ticket-processing fee per transaction. Original itineraries from Austin Travel must be included when submitting travel and expense forms for final reimbursement.

Employees can reach Austin Travel toll-free at (800) 783-8234. A 24-hour toll-free telephone number for emergency situations and/or change of travel plans is provided at no additional cost; this number is (800) 858-6319; use code A9J0. Other benefits include access to Austin’s discounted contracts with various airlines as well as Austin’s Preferred Hotel and Car Rental discount programs. Employees can visit Austin Travel on the web at www.AustinTravel.com and create a Travel Profile. Austin Travel is open 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Approvals and Required Documentation

All employees must obtain proper written approval from their appropriate budget administrator, Vice President or Dean prior to any University travel. Approval must be documented in Section A of the T&E Form. Once the trip is completed or expenses are incurred, proper approval must be documented in Section B of the T&E Form. All expenses must be approved by the employee’s superior, who has budgetary authority for the account being charged. Employees, including vice presidents and budget administrators, cannot approve their own reimbursement requests. By signing the form, budget administrators are confirming that the account numbers are correct and there are budget funds available to pay for the expenses.

➢ An original receipt must evidence all expenses of $25.00 or more. Reimbursements can only be made directly to an employee (with the exception of prepaid conference registration fees). Payments cannot be made directly to Diners Club, American Express or other personal credit cards.

➢ The University reimburses employees for business meals. All business meals must be evidenced by original receipts and must be reasonable in amount. Excessive charges may be disallowed. The business purpose and list of attendees, for all meals and entertainment expenses, must be documented, as required by the IRS. This information must be documented on the original receipt and in Section B of the T&E Form. (Attach additional information to the form as necessary.)

➢ Personal use of automobiles for business-related travel (in excess of the employee’s normal commute) will be reimbursed on a per mile basis. The University’s current reimbursement rate is 48.5 cents per mile. Because rates are periodically adjusted to conform to IRS Guidelines, employees should contact Accounts Payable at the time of travel to confirm the current rate. This rate covers gasoline, wear and tear, and insurance; therefore, requests for reimbursement for gas charges or other automobile-related charges are not permitted. An original EZ-Pass statement must evidence EZ-Pass charges of $25 or more.

➢ All purchases of supplies and equipment must be processed through the University’s Purchasing Department to take advantage of significant volume discounts with vendors and to avoid paying sales tax.

➢ The University does not issue travel advances to employees.
The University is exempt from state sales taxes in the following states: Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Texas, and West Virginia. Therefore, employees making lodging reservations in the above noted states should contact Accounts Payable, after the reservation has been confirmed, to have the tax-exempt forms forwarded to the appropriate hotel or establishment.

All requests for conference registration fees, to be paid in advance, must be submitted on a completed and approved T&E Form and noted as a pre-payment in Section A of the form. The form must include all original registration forms, including the name and address of the company or association that is to be paid and the employee participating in the conference. The conference fee payment deadline must allow for the ten business day processing period required by Accounts Payable. Employees may charge conference registration fees to their corporate or personal credit card.

Employees should download an electronic version of the T&E Form to their PC from the University’s Intranet site (on the Employee Resources page under the Travel Benefits heading) and use this form to request approval and reimbursement of expenses. The form has the ability to add and calculate expenses. Manually completed forms are discouraged. Accounts Payable can be reached at extension 6854. Purchasing can be reached at extension 6372. All business travel expenses are subject to internal audit.