

### **35-1 Travel by System Employees and Students**

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1. **Purpose.** This policy is intended to establish maximum reimbursement levels and guidelines for travel expenses incurred by Eastern New Mexico University System (the System) officers, employees and students when they travel.
2. **Policy.** The general policies established in furtherance of the foregoing purpose are as follows:
  - A. Pursuant to NMSA 1978 §§ 10-8-1 to -8 (1953 as amended through 2009), (the Per Diem and Mileage Act), ENMU System officers (including Board of Regents and Community College Board members) and employees shall be reimbursed for reasonable and allowable costs incurred when traveling on official University business. The Per Diem and Mileage Act provides that the governing board (ENMU Board of Regents) may set rules and regulations defining out-of-state travel, prorating per diem, authorizing advance payments for travel expenses, authorizing use of credit cards, authorizing reimbursements of actual costs in lieu of per diem, and reducing per diem and mileage rates for System officers and employees.
  - B. NMSA 1978 § 6-5-8 (2003) provides that all public vouchers shall be in the form and contain the information required by the Board of Regents of the System. All vouchers must be certified as true and correct by the officer or employee designated to approve payments of claims against state agencies and local public bodies.
  - C. Colleges and units may establish reasonable reimbursement procedures which define lower limits than those defined herein.
  - D. In all cases, travelers are urged to use good judgment when incurring travel expenses.
  - E. Travelers who neglect to follow these policies or approved procedures regarding travel expenses risk having to cover incurred charges at their own expense.

### **Procedures**

3. **Definitions.**
  - A. "Travel time" includes the time required to travel to and from the business destination or designated post of duty, excluding the normal time required to travel from the traveler's principal residence to and from the place of employment. Travel time does not include time used for personal business or time required to travel by car which exceeds travel time by commercial airline, unless travel by car is necessitated by the nature of the trip.
  - B. "In-state travel" refers to travel within the official state boundaries in a 24-hour period.
  - C. "Out-of-state travel" refers to travel beyond the official state boundaries in a 24-hour period including travel outside the continental limits of the United States.

- D. "Oversight Administrator" refers to deans; directors; division, department, or unit heads; chancellor; etc.
4. **Administration.** The ENMU system chief financial officer (CFO) shall have the responsibility for administering and enforcing these policies and procedures in conjunction with an oversight administrator on each campus.
5. **Eligibility for Travel Reimbursement.** To be eligible for travel expense reimbursement, travelers must be on official University business. There are three groups of individuals who are eligible for reimbursement:
- A. Employees—all faculty, staff, and student employees recorded in the University's active payroll file at the time of the trip.
- B. Student Teams or Participant Groups—all official University-sponsored groups of students enrolled at the University at the time of the trip or other University-sponsored groups.
- C. Members of the Board of Regents of the System and Community College Board members.
6. **Prior Approval.** Colleges and units may establish procedures for requiring prior approval of travel. The Business Office shall process claims for reimbursements that have been appropriately approve.

If a relative or family member is traveling with the employee, normally a personal vehicle should be used. If the employee is using a University-owned or University-leased vehicle, permission for the accompanying individual(s) to ride with the employee must be approved by the supervisor or dean/department head and the executive administrator prior to travel. Instances of family members' traveling with the employee should be occasional or rare. It shall be understood by the employee that any individual(s) riding with the employee shall not be present at or participate in any of the employee's meetings, meals, receptions, or other work-related activities during the business trip, unless specifically invited to be present.

7. **Transportation.**

- A. Commercial Airlines. The University shall pay the cost of commercial airline travel at the lowest available rate at the time of the reservation based on a reasonable flight schedule. Travelers are encouraged to plan their travel far enough in advance to be able to receive the lowest available airfares. Programs funded by federal awards are required to follow the Fly America Act (travel by U.S. flag air carriers).
- B. Chartered Transportation. Chartered transportation shall be reimbursed in full when there are financial savings to this type of transportation or where there are unique time constraints that favor chartered transportation. Otherwise, chartered transportation will be reimbursed at the lower of the cost of commercial travel at the lowest available rate at the time of the reservation or actual charter expense.
- D. Automobile or Van Rental. Travelers are encouraged to use cost effective public transportation when available but are authorized to rent automobiles or vans when necessary. Charges incurred will be billed directly to the department or grant account. Reimbursement for expenses incurred when traveling by rented automobile or van in lieu of air travel for out-of-

state travel may not exceed the cost the traveler would have otherwise incurred if the traveler had flown.

- E. **University Vehicles.** All travelers using University vehicles (either owned or leased by the University) must have a valid United States driver's license, a current Defensive Driving Certificate, and must comply with all applicable state and federal laws. (See 35-4 Use of University Motor Vehicles.)
- E. **Personal Automobile.** Use of a personal automobile shall be reimbursed at 80% of the IRS Standard mileage rate set January 1 of the previous year (**PER DIEM CHART**). Mileage may be documented using online map miles (MapQuest or similar), reasonable odometer readings, or a standard mileage chart not to exceed more than 10% in excess of standard miles. A standard mileage chart for travel in New Mexico and various locations out of state is available from the Business Office or online using the traveler's post of duty to city or city to city. Personal miles shall not be reimbursed.

Documentation is not required to be provided for mileage requests less than the standard mileage chart. Employees can be reimbursed only for miles actually driven while conducting University business. To be reimbursed to or from a location other than the designated post of duty that is in excess of the standard mileage chart, prior written approval must be obtained by the oversight administrator. The rate is intended to cover all costs associated with owning the automobile including fuel, maintenance, repairs, insurance, etc.

Reimbursement for expenses incurred when traveling by personal automobile in lieu of air travel may not exceed the cost the traveler would have otherwise incurred if the traveler had flown.

- 8. **Lodging and Meals.** Subject to oversight administrator approval, travelers may elect to be reimbursed for per diem or actual expenses for lodging and meals in accordance to the limitations of this section.

- A. **Per Diem (Per Diem Chart)**

Per diem is a fixed daily maximum allowance for meals and lodging and does not require the submission of receipts with the travel voucher. The purchasing card **may not** be used to pay for meals or lodging when claiming per diem.

- 1. **Overnight Per Diem**  
In order to be eligible to claim overnight per diem, employees must travel at least 50 miles from their primary, official place of work (post of duty). Employees who elect to stay with family and friends and have no lodging costs cannot claim the full per diem amount and must claim the "without lodging" per diem rate.
- 2. **Partial Days and Days with No Overnight (Per Diem Chart)**  
For partial day travel, when overnight travel is not required, or when it follows a twenty-four (24) hour overnight travel.
- 3. Employees cannot claim reimbursement for meals included in a conference fee or a University sponsored event. However, continental breakfasts and receptions do not require a reduction in meal reimbursement. **See Per Diem Chart.**

### B. Reimbursement for Actual Expenses (Per Diem Chart)

Reimbursement for actual expenses allows use of the purchasing card for lodging, or an employee may be reimbursed for actual lodging. Meals may not be charged to a hotel room or the purchasing card, and reimbursement is limited to the meal per diem amount. Itemized receipts must be attached to the travel voucher for reimbursement.

1. Employees cannot claim reimbursement for meals included in a conference fee or a University sponsored event. However, continental breakfasts and receptions do not require a reduction in meal reimbursement. See the Per Diem Chart for meal reduction amounts.

### C. Prohibited Expense

Reimbursement for alcoholic beverages is never allowed.

9. **Miscellaneous Expenses.** Taxi or other ground transportation, tips not in conjunction with meals, parking fees, and/or other incidental expenses incurred in connection with approved travel may be reimbursed. Receipts are required on all claimed expenses.
10. **Travel Advances (Employees).** Travel advances will not be allowed unless there are extenuating circumstances, and the travel advance is approved in advance by the employee's supervisor, oversight administrator (if required), and the CFO. A traveler may obtain a travel advance for up to the estimated reimbursable expenses for mileage or transportation costs and lodging. See section 14 for travel advances with regard to student or participant travel.

To request a travel advance, a traveler must submit a completed travel advance request form signed by the employee, the employee's supervisor, the oversight administrator (if required), and the CFO. After the travel advance is approved by the Business Office, the employee may pick up a check from Accounts Payable no earlier than five (5) working days prior to the trip.

Upon receipt of the check, the traveler will be required to sign a statement which reads as follows: "If I do not file the Reimbursement Travel Voucher within five (5) working days of my return, I hereby authorize the necessary deductions from my payroll checks to repay the travel advance to the University."

11. **Travel Reimbursements and Travel Advance Repayment.** The traveler must submit a completed travel voucher signed by the traveler, his or her immediate supervisor, and oversight administrator (if required) within five (5) days after returning from the trip. Reimbursement requests submitted after the five (5) days may not be reimbursed at the discretion of the Business Office. A detailed description of the purpose of the travel including dates and times traveled must be provided as well as attaching required itemized documentation (agenda, receipts, etc.).

For any advances received, the travel voucher must show the travel advance as a deduction from the total reimbursable expenditures. If the travel advance exceeds the reimbursable expenditures, the traveler must pay the Cashier's Office directly and attach that receipt of payment.

12. **ENMU Purchasing Card.** Employees holding a University purchasing card with travel privileges may use the purchasing card to pay for airline tickets, conference fees, taxi/shuttle fees, vehicle rentals, and fuel for vehicle rentals not to exceed \$2,500 per transaction. The purchasing card **may not** be used to pay for meals or lodging when claiming per diem. However, the purchasing card may be used to pay for lodging when claiming reimbursement for actual expenses, and it may only be used for meals when an employee is traveling with students. See restrictions regarding meals in section 14.

**13. Board Members Travel.**

Non-salaried public officers may elect to receive:

- 1) \$45.00 if they physically attend the board or committee meeting for less than four hours or attends a virtual meeting of any duration during a single calendar day.
- 2) \$95.00 if they physically attend the board or committee meeting for four hours or more during a single calendar day
- 3) Or be reimbursed actual expenses as listed in section 8B for in-state travel.

**14. Student Team, Student Group, and Student Participant Travel.** Employees traveling with students may use the purchasing card for lodging and meals, and departments may elect to set meal limits other than those previously listed.

If the employee uses a purchasing card for his or her meals (while traveling with students), the employee is limited to the per diem amounts listed in the reimbursement chart (**Per Diem Chart**), and must submit the proper documentation with the purchasing card statement:

- 1) A completed meal tracking form
- 2) Itemized receipts with the employee's meal, tax and tip identified
- 3) If the employee exceeds the allowable amount, the employee must reimburse the University via the cashier's office by the due date of the purchasing card statement and attach the receipt for verification of repayment.

If travel advances are obtained prior to travel, the employee receiving the advance must issue the funds directly to the students and have them sign that they received a specified amount. Within five (5) days after returning from the trip, the employee must submit a completed travel advance return form signed by the employee, his or her immediate supervisor, and oversight administrator (if required). A detailed description of the purpose of the travel including dates and times traveled must be provided as well as attaching required itemized documentation (agenda, list of students in attendance with signatures and amounts issued, etc.). If the travel advance exceeds the reimbursable expenditures, the traveler must pay the Cashier's Office directly and attach that receipt of payment.

**15. Exceptions.** Exceptions not previously listed to this policy's reimbursement guidelines must be approved in advance in writing by the System CFO or chancellor.

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