

University of St. Thomas Policies

TRAVEL POLICY

Policy Number: G.00.01

SCOPE

All faculty, staff, administrators and students

PURPOSE

The University of St. Thomas will pay for all travel-related expenses that are reasonable and necessary for authorized travelers to conduct university business. This policy outlines essential expenses and supporting documentation for travel items that may be listed on travel and expense reports for reimbursement. This policy will simplify travel procedures for UST employees, allow departments to maximize travel funds and provide supervisors with an efficient means to manage expenses.

Exceptions to the University travel policy must be approved ahead of time by the traveler's supervisor whenever possible and documented on the expense report as to the reason.

POLICY

1. General

Travel at the expense of the University must be in connection with official university activities. The authority to approve reimbursable travel resides with the employee's supervisor, vice president, provost, or president. Travelers should exercise the same care in incurring expenses that a prudent person would exercise if traveling on personal business. Travelers are expected to take advantage of all savings opportunities when possible. Travel should be booked as early as possible to maximize savings.

2. Travel Agency

All travel (airfare, hotel, rental car and/or additional travel arrangements) must be made through the official travel agency of the University. Any business exceptions to this policy must be pre-approved by the traveler's supervisor, vice president, provost, or president. Refer to the Travel Procedures document for details on booking based on type of travel.

3. Expenses

A. Expenses that may be reimbursed include:

- a. Travel costs, including air fare and any necessary ground transportation at the destination, including shuttle bus, bus, and taxi, other public transportation, or rental car if no other feasible form of ground transportation is available. For automobile travel from the University, tolls and mileage will be paid at the current reimbursement rate.
- b. Lodging costs, including the cost of a room and associated taxes, plus parking expenses. The University has obtained tax-exempt status in Texas and may avoid payment of taxes from hotels located in Texas. The Texas Hotel Occupancy Tax Exemption Certificate may be obtained from the Business Office.
- c. Meals, including costs for food and beverages. See Travel Procedures for the per diem rate.
- d. Tips, up to 20% of the bill.
- e. Parking costs.

B. Expenses that *may not* be reimbursed:

- a. Travel insurance. The University carries an accident policy that insures employees.
- b. Cost of mileage beyond the amount that would be required to travel on university related business.

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- c. Dry cleaning or laundry service.
- d. Any items not included in the above deemed to be of a personal nature.

4. Air Travel

When the most efficient means of transportation is air travel, reimbursement for domestic travel will be limited to coach class. For international air travel greater than 10 hours, reimbursement will be limited to business class airfare – with prior approval from the divisional Vice President. No reimbursement will be made for any first class airfare including any costs associated with upgrading an existing ticket to first class.

5. Transportation to and from Hotels and Terminals

Whenever practical, the most economical mode of transportation should be used to and from hotels and terminals (air and rail). These expenses (including gratuities) will be reimbursed. Many hotels provide complimentary shuttle service to and from airports. The traveler should inquire about this service when making hotel reservations.

6. Automobile Rentals

- A. Automobile rentals should be limited to situations where other means of transportation are not practical, economical, or available. The most economical car should be used as a general rule.
- B. When the traveler rents a car, the collision damage waiver insurance does not need to be purchased and will not be reimbursed. The University insurance provides collision damage coverage. Reimbursement will be made for fuel costs when renting an automobile for university business use.

7. Personal Automobile Travel

Reimbursement for use of personal automobiles by employees traveling on University business will be at the current University approved mileage rate. Contact the Business Office to obtain the current rate. Gas, oil, insurance premiums, repairs, or other costs presumed included in the mileage rate will not be reimbursed. Fines for automobile violations, parking violations or personal misconduct will not be reimbursed.

8. Lodging

The traveler can stay at the hotel where a meeting, convention, or conference is being held, or at a nearby moderately priced hotel. The University has obtained tax-exempt status in Texas and may avoid payment of taxes from hotels located in Texas. The Texas Hotel Occupancy Tax Exemption Certificate may be obtained from the Business Office.

9. Meals

Meals will be reimbursed on a per diem basis (see Travel Procedures for rate).

10. Entertainment

Reimbursement will *not* be made for entertainment expenses not related to University business, such as, but not limited to, in-room movies, theater, spa treatments, or optional conference-related side trips.

11. Gratuities

The reasonable costs of gratuities to porters, bellhops, and other service personnel will be reimbursed.

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12. Supporting Documentation – Receipts

- A. In order to comply with IRS regulations and avoid duplicate reimbursements, original receipts are required for all expenditures in excess of \$25 except where specifically discussed in this policy or in the travel procedures. These receipts must be submitted with the expense report.
- B. Reimbursements for gratuities paid in cash and certain other miscellaneous expenses such as fees to store or transport baggage is exempt from the receipts requirement.
- C. Receipts for expenses incurred by the traveler must be attached to the approved travel/expense report that is submitted to Accounts Payable Office for reimbursement.
- D. Receipts are required to substantiate all travel advances regardless of whether the actual expenses incurred were less than or more than the amount of the advance.
- E. Receipts are required for **all** expenses except for mileage when using a personal vehicle and any others previously noted in this policy. When using a personal vehicle, the total miles traveled must be submitted when claiming expenses.

13. Travel with Companion

The University will not pay or reimburse expenses for companions who accompany travelers on official University business, except in unusual circumstances and with advance written approval from the traveler's vice president, or from the president in the event the traveler is a vice president. Evidence of the advance approval must be attached to the expense report when requesting reimbursement.

APPROVED: Dr. Robert Ivany

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