

POLICY SOURCE: Office of Financial Services Purchasing	PROCEDURE NO. PUR-0001
TITLE: Travel Policy	SUBMITTED BY: Purchasing
REVISED DATE: March 13, 2017	APPROVED BY: Dr. T. Dwayne McCay, President

Travel Policy

Policy Statement

“Travel costs are the expenses for transportation, lodging, subsistence, and related items incurred by employees who are in travel status on official business of the non-Federal entity. Such costs may be charged on an actual cost basis, on a per diem or mileage basis in lieu of actual costs incurred, or on a combination of the two, provided the method used is applied to an entire trip and not to selected days of the trip”

Uniform Guidance, Section 200.474

It is the policy of Florida Institute of Technology to reimburse employees for allowable and properly documented expenses incurred when authorized to travel on official university business. Terms of any grant or contract take precedence if they are more restrictive. Federally funded travel is subject to the Federal Uniform Guidance: 2 CFR Part 200 and the Green Book administered by the Florida Department of Education. To remain an accountable reimbursement plan under IRS rules and avoid taxation of reimbursements made to all employees, Florida Institute of Technology is required to ensure that all travel has a business purpose and is documented in a reasonable period of time subsequent to the travel and/or expenditure.

The University Travel Policy applies to both domestic and international travel.

Pre Travel

Travel Authorization

All employees must have their travel approved by their immediate supervisor by completing a [Travel Itinerary Approval Form](#) in advance of travel. Travel sponsored by a research grant MUST have advance approval from the Principal Investigator and the [Office of Sponsored Programs](#). Any exceptions to this entire policy must be noted on the Travel Authorization and approved by the Department Head. In addition, International travel requires approval by the Executive Director for Compliance and Risk Management.

Travel Advance

Travel advances are available for those employees who do not have a procurement card, personal credit card or personal cash. The amount of the travel advance requested is a minimum of \$150. A signed [Promissory Note](#) is required and per that document the advance is to be paid back within 10 business days of the completed travel. If the advance is not reconciled with receipts within the specified time allowed, the amount due will then be payroll deducted from the individual’s next paycheck. All travel advances require Department Head approval and if over \$2,500 is required, additional approval by the President or Chief Financial Officer or their designee if necessary.

Procurement Card Usage

Employees are encouraged to use their university procurement card whenever possible to pay for travel expenses. Employees are also encouraged to carry a Certificate of Exemption for sales tax. See the Office of the Controller’s website page “[Tax and Compliance](#)” for all specific state tax-exempt certifications for FIT. Use of Procurement card must follow the established [Procurement Card Rules](#) agreement signed by each cardholder.

Emergency

Accidents, thefts, and other crimes while traveling on University business must be reported immediately to the proper authorities, in accordance with local/state laws. In addition, report such incidents to the [Department of Security & Safety](#) (tel. 321-674-8111) and your department immediately.

Long-Term Travel

Long-term travel is defined as research or business trips greater than 30 days in one specific location. Lodging and per diem rates are based on short-term visits, therefore it is financially beneficial to seek other living arrangements than hotels and restaurant meals. Actual receipts for long-term travel are allowable for reimbursement. Per Diem rate reimbursement is not allowed.

International Travel

International currency must be converted to U.S. dollars for the expense report and the exchange rate used must be provided within the notes. Fluctuating exchange rates make reimbursement for foreign travel somewhat complex. Hotel and dining bills paid with a credit card will be charged in the foreign country's currency, and the credit company will convert the bill to U.S. dollars before billing the traveler. To ensure accurate and fair reimbursement, a copy of the credit card statement in U.S. dollars is required for reimbursement in addition to the original charge slip from the foreign country. If waiting for the credit card statement will delay accounting for an advance, travelers should account for all other expenses and may request reimbursement for charged items at a later time.

Post Travel

Expense Documentation

The traveler is responsible for all expenses and is required to submit an expense report in the same fiscal year as travel, with all required approvals to the Accounts Payable Office regardless of trip crossing fiscal years.

- Domestic travel within 10 business days of the completed travel.
- International travel within 15 business days of the completed travel.

The original approved itinerary must accompany the expense report. Allowable travel expense reports totaling less than \$50 may be reimbursed to the employee through petty cash at the [Student Financial Services – Cashier's Office](#). All other reimbursements will be paid via Accounts Payable. The employee must return unused travel advances to the [Student Financial Services – Cashier's Office](#). Expense reports submitted on grant funded travel should refer to the [Office of Sponsored Programs](#) for further guidance.

Non-Reimbursable Travel Expenses

- Costs incurred by unreasonable failure to cancel transportation or hotel reservations;
- Fines;
- Parking, speeding tickets, or towing due to illegal parking;
- Luggage;
- Towing or booting;
- Lost or stolen tickets, cash, or property;
- Accident insurance premiums;
- Membership in AAA or airline clubs;
- Other personal expenses such as "pay per view" movies, health and grooming services or supplies; hotel mini-bars;

- The portion of rental car, hotel or other travel expense unrelated to university business;
- Excessive tips (greater than 20%);
- Expenses not directly related to, or necessary for, the performance of the travel assignment;
- Laundry expenses for trips less than 5 days;
- Gasoline costs for personal automobile;
- Alcohol (unless authorized through the p-card program). Refer to [Office of Sponsored Programs](#) for further guidance on alcohol reimbursement, specifically on grants.

Airline, Train, Taxi and Shuttle

The University requires a traveler to seek the least expensive mode of transportation to best serve the purpose of the trip. Reimbursement will be the coach or standard fare for the service used. Business and first class fare are not reimbursable.

Personal Automobile

The mileage allowance for private automobiles is based on the [current rate per mile published by the IRS](#). The mileage rate is to cover all expenses incurred for using the privately owned vehicle except parking fees and tolls. An exception might be a grant that requires a reimbursement rate less than the IRS standard mileage rate. The university recommends that the traveler have the appropriate personal automobile insurance. The insurance must meet liability insurance requirements of the motor vehicle financial responsibility laws of the state in which the employee lives. Personal automobile used for business purposes is not covered by the university's insurance. The university does not cover deductibles or other costs associated with being underinsured.

Local travel is reimbursable in most situations and should be submitted on a monthly travel report. All local trips during the month can be combined into one report. For mileage reimbursement requests for trips greater than 10 miles roundtrip, the traveler must provide a map ([Google](#), [MapQuest](#)) showing the submitted mileage. Procurement cards cannot be used to charge gasoline costs for a personal automobile.

University Owned Vehicle

A limited number of vehicles are available for rent by staff or faculty. Borrowing one of these vehicles is less expensive than the costs associated with renting a commercial vehicle. To reserve a university-owned van, please use the Vehicle Request form on the [Security website](#) and be sure to review the [Van Reservation Guidelines](#).

All university-owned vehicles should be filled with fuel from the on-campus secured Fuel Depot area operated by Facilities. The on-campus Fuel Depot can only be used to fill up university-owned vehicles. The Fuel Depot cannot be used to fill up a personal vehicle nor a rental vehicle. Only in instances where the FIT Fuel Depot is closed (after-hours situation) should the university-owned vehicle be fueled at a regular off-site gas station. In those instances, a gas receipt must be obtained with vehicle information documented on the back of the receipt. University-owned vehicles should not be driven for personal use.

Automobile Rental

Automobile rental is allowable for business travel only. The traveler is expected to rent a mid-size or smaller vehicle unless a larger car is required based on the number of bags and/or travelers in the group.

Reimbursable costs include the following:

- daily rental fee;
- mileage fee;
- gasoline charges; and
- tolls.

It is required that the traveler (in the USA or in another country) fill the gas tank prior to returning the vehicle to take advantage of lower gasoline costs. Procurement cards can be used to pay for fuel. **If the traveler rents a car from a car rental agency, the university's blanket auto insurance policy automatically covers these rentals and it is not necessary to purchase additional insurance.** If an insurance claim becomes necessary, a copy of the rental agreement should be submitted to the [Office of Compliance and Risk Management](#). If the traveler is renting a car in another country, it is required that the traveler purchase insurance at the time of rental.

Meals

Meal-expenses are reimbursable if incurred in the course of traveling away from home overnight on university business, or engaging in business related entertainment. Per Diem rates (daily rate for meals) may be used and may be less than, but never more than the federal per diem rates, which can be found at the following websites:

- [Domestic Per Diem rates](#)
- [Foreign Per Diem rates](#)

Per IRS regulations, business travel completed without an overnight stay is not eligible for meal reimbursement. Receipts are required for all expenses unless per diem is pre-approved by department head. The only exception to this rule would be very small items where receipts are not possible such as automated tolls, vending and tips. For any business day, either per diem rates or actual payment receipts can be claimed. However, both per diem rates and payment receipts cannot be claimed within the same trip.

If a receipt is lost, the supervisor must attach a memo that includes what was purchased and the business purpose if the charge is under \$75. For needs beyond this limit, duplicate receipts must be obtained from the vendor in a timely manner. Expenses directly included with a conference or special meeting, such as registration fees and banquets, are reimbursable, providing they are reasonable and supported by original receipts. Meals provided by conference or registration fees are not reimbursable. All expenses, including those paid with the procurement card, must be listed on the expense report. The total amount paid with the procurement card should be subtracted from the total expenses on the bottom of the expense reimbursement form to determine the amount to be reimbursed to the employee.

Group meals are defined as a meal taken with more than 1 person. If one traveler is paying for the meal, they must identify the attendees for the meal if under 5. For groups of 5 or more, include a description e.g., "Volleyball team" or "Marketing group". The individuals who are part of the group cannot claim per diem for the group meal unless each traveler is paying for their own meal.

Lodging

Lodging reservations should be made in such a manner as to secure the best available local rate. The IRS further requires that receipts be provided for all lodging charges, regardless of amount. No reimbursement will be made for overnight lodging closer than 50 miles from the traveler's home except in unusual circumstances as described in a statement of explanation accompanying the travel itinerary.

Miscellaneous Travel Expenses

Travel expenses such as airline baggage fees, baggage handling and storage, required clerical services (such as Internet rental, fax service), laundry expenses necessitated by travel in excess of 5 days, reasonable tips for porter, bellhops, etc. are eligible for reimbursement. Only laundry expenses incurred at the travel destination are reimbursable.

Other Reimbursable Expenses

Entertainment

Entertainment is defined as meals, beverages, and event admission costs for a non-employee deemed to be in the best interest of the University, e.g. local visit by a candidate for a position within the University. Staff and/or faculty are to submit an expense report, list the attendees. Reimbursement submitted on grants should refer to the Office of Sponsored Programs for further guidance.

Interviewee Visiting FIT or Non-FIT individual

For reimbursement, the department interviewing the candidate must submit an approved check request along with the candidates [W9](#) or [W8BEN](#) information. The same applies to an outside individual doing business for FIT that requires a reimbursement.

Notes:

1. Most travel forms referenced in this Policy can be found on the [Accounts Payable](#) website, located on the bottom of the webpage.
2. Electronically scanned receipts can be stored in the Banner Document Management System or on a shared drive regularly backed up to a secure FIT server. It is acceptable to scan and index with appropriate file labelling, followed by a verification step before the hard copies are destroyed. Keep the current fiscal year in hard copy form as a best practice, until September following the year-end close for auditing.