

POLICY

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 Approved By: President Bruce Shepard

Authority: RCW [43.03](#); RCW [42.52](#)
 SAAM [Chp 10](#); SAAM [70.20](#)

See Also: [PRO-U5348.10A](#) Requesting Travel Authorization
[PRO-U5348.10B](#) Reconciling and Reporting Travel Expenditures
[PRO-U5348.10C](#) Reconciling Travel Expenses and Advances
[PRO-U5348.10D](#) Collecting Past Due Travel Advances
[PRO-U5348.10E](#) Reporting and Reconciling Travel Expenses Associated with Cancellations Due to CIVID-19 Virus
[FRM-U5348.10A](#) Traveler Profile and Acknowledgement Form
[FRM-U5348.10C](#) TEM Delegate and Supervisor Approver Maintenance Form
[FRM-U5348.10D](#) Proxy Approver Maintenance Form
[POL-U5320.03](#) Authorizing and Defining Financial Responsibilities
[POL-U2105.01](#) Traveling Outside the United States
[POL-U5400.19](#) Receiving Honoraria
[Basic Driver Safety Program](#)
[Travel Services Webpage](#)

POL-U5348.10

AUTHORIZING AND REIMBURSING TRAVEL FOR OFFICIAL UNIVERSITY BUSINESS

This policy supports the University's commitment to be accountable for the administration of all travel funds in accordance with state regulations. This policy applies to all travel for official University business, including students, student employees, and other participants, regardless of the source of funds. Expenditures of grant and contract funds for travel are subject to the same rules except where specifically noted.

Definitions:

Common Carrier: A person or company that transports passengers or goods for a fee.

Local Travel: Travel within county of official workstation.

Non-Employees: A student, volunteer, or any individual who receives no financial compensation from the University but has a need to travel for official University business.

International (Foreign) Travel: Travel in all areas of the world outside of the United States of America and its possessions.

Official University Business: Activities performed by an official or state employee, authorized non-employee, or employee of another governmental jurisdiction as directed by the supervisor in order to accomplish state programs (including non-academic programs sponsored by the University), or as required by the duties of the position or office.

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Per Diem Expenses: Daily travel costs covering both lodging and subsistence expenses while in travel status.

Privately Owned Vehicle: A vehicle privately owned, leased, or borrowed by a state driver for which the driver receives, or is entitled to receive, monetary reimbursement or per diem when the vehicle is used to conduct official University business.

Travel Expense Management (TEM): The University's on-line system used to process travel authorizations and travel-related reimbursements.

Transportation Expenses: Those costs covering the following but not limited to: a) travel by commercial carriers such as bus, train, ship, and airplane; b) travel by a privately owned motor vehicle(s), such as a car, motorcycle, van, or truck; c) travel by rental motor vehicle; or d) some combination of a), b), and/or c) above.

Traveler: A person in travel status who is on official University business.

Valid Receipt: A receipt that is the original document or a receipt scanned as required via the University's Nolij system.

1. Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs Ensures an Effective System for Management of and Control Over Travel-Related Costs

The Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs (VP for BFA) will ensure the University uses all appropriate means for making and paying for travel to support the University's mission in the most cost effective and efficient manner possible. Methods used will be based on standard industry practices and be compliant with federal accountable plan requirements.

The VP for BFA delegates the daily operations, including compliance monitoring, to the Director of Procurement/Business Services (P/BS).

2. Travelers Required to Participate in Training and Acknowledge Responsibilities

Prior to the first travel event (or for those employed before [date of policy approved], the next travel event requiring authorization), the employee needing to travel for official University business will:

- a) Attend a Travel Rules and Responsibilities training, and
- b) Sign the *Traveler Profile and Acknowledgement* form (FRM-U5348.10A).

Exception: a) and b) above are not required for non-employees. However, financial managers are responsible for ensuring non-employee travelers are provided travel rule

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information when applicable and comply with all other sections of this policy. See Travel Services website for information on Non-Employee Travel.

3. Financial Managers and Supervisors Responsible for Compliance

When reviewing travel authorization, advances, and reimbursement requests, the appropriate financial manager(s) and supervisor(s) must review compliance with state rules.

Supervisors may approve a travel request if the purpose of the travel is:

- Directly related to official University business,
- Both critical and necessary for University business,
- Not influenced by personal travel plans, and
- In compliance with provision #12 of this policy.

Financial managers must ensure prudent judgment is used in approving all estimated and incurred costs and that they are:

- The most efficient and economical (see Western's Travel Services [website](#)),
- Allowable by meeting the criteria, limits and/or exceptions under state rules, and
- Purchased via the proper payment methods.

Both supervisors and financial managers must ensure travelers are not treated differently under like travel circumstances.

Exception: A financial manager may authorize a less economical alternative when the situation meets certain criteria as listed on the Travel Services [website](#).

Supervisors may delegate their approval role which must be in writing. Financial managers may delegate the role of approving travel expenses and reimbursements to a budget authority (see also [POL-U5320.03 - Authorizing and Defining Financial Responsibilities](#) policy). Both supervisors and financial managers who delegate their approval roles remain accountable for the compliance requirements listed above.

4. Prior Approval Required

Travelers must obtain prior approval via TEM for all travel that will result in a travel reimbursement, including local travel.

Exception: Travel authorizations for non-employees are not required through the TEM system but must be approved in accordance with the Non-Employee Travel guide on Travel Services website. Other exceptions to using TEM may be granted by the Director of P/BS when warranted.

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Travel to Hawaii or international travel (excluding British Columbia) requires management approval.

For local official business travel that will not result in a reimbursement, divisions and/or departments should implement their own approval requirements that should include, at a minimum, verbal pre-approval of the travel by a traveler's supervisor.

Travelers who do not obtain prior approval as required may be responsible for any unauthorized expenses and may jeopardize other support provided by the state for travelers in official travel status.

5. Use of Proxy for TEM Approvals Limited

A supervisor or financial manager (or delegate) may assign a TEM proxy, however supervisors and financial managers remain accountable for their responsibilities as required by this policy. Internal control procedures must include how a proxy reviews travel related requests with the supervisor and/or financial manager to obtain their approval outside the TEM system.

A traveler may not assign a proxy to submit travel authorizations and reimbursement requests in TEM. All travelers must review and submit the requests on their own behalf. However, a delegate may be assigned to initiate and input the travel/expense information for the traveler to review.

6. Blanket Travel Authorizations are Limited

To ensure proper internal control and timely reimbursement and liquidation of encumbrances, approval of blanket/open travel authorizations are limited to the President, Provost, Vice Presidents and Vice Provosts and those who frequently travel to perform duties essential to the employee's job, such as research, meetings and field study.

7. Travel Advances May Be Approved

Travel advances are limited to the payment of lodging and meals while performing official University business. No travel advance shall be considered for any purpose as a loan to an employee. Exceptions may apply to travel advances for group travel.

A financial manager may not approve travel advances for:

- a) Non-employees,
- b) Use of a privately-owned vehicle,
- c) Purchase of commercial air fares,

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- d) Equipment or supplies, or
- e) For a travel period that exceeds 90 days.

Any unauthorized disbursement of a travel advance is considered a misappropriation of state funds by the employee.

8. Traveler Must Account For Advance Following Travel Within Specific Timeframe

In accordance with and within the timeframes specified in the *Reconciling and Collecting Travel Advance* procedures (PRO-U5348.10C) travelers must:

- a) Fully justify and reconcile the expenditure of any portion of the travel advance for legally reimbursable items on behalf of the University, and
- b) Repay any portion of a travel advance that is unexpended.

9. Advances Not Accounted for or Repaid When Due are Subject to Income Tax, Interest, and Collection

When a traveler defaults in accounting for or repaying an advance:

- a) The full unpaid amount will become immediately due and payable with interest of 10% per annum for the date of default until paid in full (see PRO-U5348.10C), and
- b) Be reported by the University as taxable income if payment or reconciliation does not meet IRS timeliness criteria ([SAAM 10.80.70.c](#)).

10. Departments and Travelers Must Comply with Method of Payment Procedures

Following approval to travel, departments and travelers must comply with procedures and rules for purchasing allowable travel-related expenses.

11. Combining Business Travel with Personal Travel Allowed Under Specific Conditions

Travelers may combine a vacation or other personal use onto a legitimate business trip when all of the following conditions exist:

- a) The primary purpose of the trip is official University business,
- b) The traveler uses, where necessary, his or her approved leave for the vacation or personal part of the trip, and
- c) The University does not incur any extra expenses beyond what it would normally incur had the trip occurred without any personal use added.

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12. Supervisors Must Ensure Travelers Complete Driving Safety Program

When a traveler will be driving a state vehicle, or a rented or privately owned vehicle for official University business, supervisors must ensure the traveler has completed the state *Basic Driving Safety Program* (and the *Large Passenger Van Training Program* when applicable).

13. Supervisors Must Ensure International Travelers Satisfy Additional Requirements

- a) Travel involving employees – Supervisors of employees engaged in international travel must be familiar with and communicate to those employees the applicable policies, procedures, and best practices on international travel when applicable. See the International Travel [webpage](#).
- b) Travel involving students – Notwithstanding paragraph a) above, supervisors of credit and non-credit study abroad and exchange programs, and any other academic travel abroad program that is required, sponsored, organized, funded, endorsed or contracted by the University, must also comply with *Traveling Outside the United States* policy ([POL-U2105.01](#)).

Examples include:

- Faculty-led study abroad programs,
- Study abroad programs at foreign institutions, study centers, outside contractors or affiliates,
- Student exchange programs with a foreign institution, or
- Students doing independent study abroad, including internships.

14. Expenditures May be Approved When Traveler is Unable to Participate in Official University Business Due to Illness or Injury During Travel

When a traveler takes leave of absence of any kind because of being incapacitated due to illness or injury that is not due to the traveler's own misconduct:

- a) The authorized reimbursement for meals and lodging may continue during the leave period, and
- b) Providing the traveler is able to travel, reimbursement is not to exceed in total the cost authorized for motor vehicle car mileage or common carrier in returning the traveler to his/her official workplace or residence, whichever is closer, and then back to the assignment.

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When the leave of absence for illness or injury is due to the traveler's own misconduct, the authorized reimbursement for meals, lodging, transportation, and all other travel expenditures may not be continued during the leave period.

When a leave of absence of any kind is taken while in travel status, the exact hour of departure and return to the temporary duty station must be documented.

15. Reimbursements Must be in Accordance with Other University Policy and State Regulations

Requests for reimbursement must comply with the criteria specified in the *Reimbursing for Official University Business* policy ([POL-U5348.12](#)) which includes complying with deadlines.

If a traveler travels on University time, and the travel-related expenses are to be fully or partially paid for by an external entity, the payment is not to be more than the actual travel expenses incurred, except that meals may be reimbursed using the state per diem. The type and cost for travel-related expenses paid must also be allowable in accordance with the criteria and restrictions under state rules. Where payment or reimbursement of expenses is made by an outside entity, the employee may not request reimbursement for the same from the University.

If an employee agrees to be reimbursed for travel-related expenses, the external entity must pay the employee directly.

Travelers receiving an honorarium must comply with the University's *Receiving Honoraria* policy ([POL-U5400.19](#)).

16. Documentation Required

When appropriate, documentation is to be submitted to the supervisor and budget authority to approve the travel authorization request. For example, a copy of a conference agenda could be submitted and reviewed to validate dates and meals provided.

Original receipts and other supporting documentation of expenses are to be scanned into and be retained by the TEM system in accordance with the University's retention schedule. Original receipts should be kept by the traveler until reimbursement is received.

Any supporting documentation not scanned into TEM must be retained by the department for six years.

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17. Rules for Non-Employee Student Travel May Differ

Exceptions to this policy may apply to non-employee students who have a need to travel for the purpose of supporting the mission of student academic or non-academic activities. Exceptions will be established in department or program policy and procedures approved by the Director of P/BS. Exception to this policy includes the requirement to use TEM until otherwise directed by the Director of P/BS.

18. Training and Information is Provided by Business Services

The Director of P/BS will ensure appropriate training and information on rules, travel options, and TEM instructions are provided to departments.