

# Reimbursing Teleworkers for Travel

University Standards: STN-U5410.02A

**Effective:** May 1, 2024

## Authority

[POL-U5348.10](#) Traveling for University Business Policy  
[POL-U5410.02](#) Managing Telework Arrangements Policy

## Application

These standards apply to employees with an approved telework arrangement.

## Purpose of Standards

To communicate when reimbursing travel expenses related to teleworking are permissible.

## Oversight Responsibility

Department: Travel Services  
Department Head: Chief Procurement Officer/Director of Business Services  
  
Oversight Partner: Human Resources  
Department Head: Associate Vice President for Human Resources

## Definitions

### Alternate Workstation

The location where a hybrid or remote employee performs their work (e.g., an employee's Official Residence) as an alternative to where they would normally be assigned to work absent a Telework Arrangement.

### Regular Commute

Travel between the employee's Official Residence and the employee's Official Workstation for Travel Reimbursement.

### Hybrid Employees

Employees with an approved Telework Arrangement designating them as a hybrid employee because their duties are performed partly at a WWU on-site location and partly at an Alternate Workstation on a regular basis.

**Official Residence**

For the purpose of determining eligibility for travel reimbursement, an employee's Official Residence (OR) is the city, town, or unincorporated area in which they officially reside as defined by [state rules](#).

**Official Workstation for Travel Reimbursement (OWTR)**

The OWTR for remote employees is the same as the city, town, or unincorporated area of their Official Residence or Alternate Workstation.

The OWTR for hybrid employees is their designated Official Workstation which is the WWU on-site location where the employee would normally work absent a hybrid telework arrangement.

**Remote Employees**

Employees with an approved telework arrangement designating them as a Remote Employee because their duties are performed remotely at an Alternate Workstation on a full-time basis but may require occasional onsite reporting.

**Temporary Duty Station**

A location where an employee has been specifically assigned to work for a specific period of time which is less than a year.

**Required Standards****1. Travel Expenses Incurred During an Employee's Regular Commute are not Reimbursable**

Per state rules, *Regular Commute* transportation expenses between the city/town in which the employee resides (*Official Residence*) and the city/town of their *Official Workstation for Travel Reimbursement* (OWTR) are not reimbursable. All commute related travel expenses, including but not limited to, mileage and parking fees, are the personal obligation of the employee.

For hybrid employees, their *Regular Commute* is between the city/town of their *Official Residence* and the city/town of their OWTR (i.e., Bellingham to Bellingham; Ferndale to Bellingham).

A remote employee does not have a regular commute.

**2. Travel to a Temporary Duty Station (TDS) May be Reimbursed**

For a remote employee, this would be traveling to a location away from their Alternate Workstation for official University business including attending a mandatory meeting at a WWU on-site location (the TDS).

However, remote employees whose Alternate Workstation is within 50 miles of a WWU on-site location (e.g., WWU's main campus, Shannon Point Marine Center, Olympic Colleges in Poulsbo and Bremerton, etc.) are not reimbursed for travel expenses between their Alternate Workstation and that WWU on-site location.

For a hybrid employee, this would include traveling to a location for official University business that is:

- Not their Regular Commute, or
- In addition to their Regular Commute.

*Example 1)*

A hybrid worker's Regular Commute is between their Ferndale residence and their OWTR (main campus in Bellingham). They must attend a meeting at Shannon Point Marine Center in Anacortes (the TDS). The employee may be reimbursed for travel related expenses between WWU's main campus and Shannon Point Marine Center. Travel between their Official Residence in Ferndale and their OWTR in Bellingham is their Regular Commute and not reimbursable.

*Example 2)*

A hybrid worker's Regular Commute is between their Bellingham residence and WWU's main Bellingham campus. They must attend a meeting at Shannon Point Marine Center in Anacortes. The employee first drives to their OWTR in Bellingham, then to the meeting in Anacortes. Travel between their OWTR in Bellingham and their TDS in Anacortes may be reimbursed.

### **3. Only Allowable Travel Expenses May be Reimbursed**

Only travel expenses that are allowable in accordance with state rules may be reimbursed at the discretion of the Financial Manager responsible for the funds to be used. Point to point mileage is to be determined on the basis of the physical addresses.

Parking fees, when part of the Regular Commute, are not reimbursable. See [SAAM 10.20.20](#) for all other non-eligible expenses.

### **4. Travel to a Temporary Duty Station (TDS) Must be Required to be Eligible for Reimbursement**

Travel expenses are only reimbursable when an employee is explicitly required by their supervisor to travel to a TDS to perform work duties. For example, if in-person attendance is not required by a supervisor for a meeting and the remote employee can attend virtually, the employee is not to be reimbursed for travel if they elect to travel and attend the meeting in person.

**5. Prior Approval Required for Travel Reimbursements**

Per the *Traveling for University Business Policy* ([POL-U5348.10](#)), prior approval is required before traveling for University business. Blanket approvals for re-occurring meetings are permitted for up to a year.

**6. Reimbursement Requests May be Submitted on a Monthly Basis**

Reimbursements are to be submitted through the University's Travel System in accordance with Travel Services policy, standards, and procedures. Reimbursements for multiple trips should be submitted no less than monthly to reduce impact on personnel. However, reimbursements submitted 60 days or more past the travel date will be reported as income and subject to income tax. Employees are therefore responsible for submitting requests in a timely manner to avoid taxation.