

## Northern District Travel Reimbursement Best Practice

### Application

This best practice applies to travel reimbursement procedures for all VCE Northern District (ND) employees.

### Best Practice

It is the best practice of the ND and its offices to follow University/Office of The Controller and VCE reimbursement procedures. By adhering to these policies and showing good stewardship of public funds set forth in this best practice, VCE earns the trust of the Commonwealth and University such that more funding/investments in VCE become available.

### Purpose

This best practice provides uniform guidelines for travel reimbursement and ensures that these procedures are consistent throughout the district.

### Authority

- [Virginia Cooperative Extension Travel Policy](#)
- [Office of the Controller policy 20335a – Travel Overview](#)
- [Office of the Controller policy 20335b – Hotel and Motel Accommodations](#)
- [Office of the Controller policy 20335c – Meal and Incidental Expenses](#)
- [Office of the Controller policy 20335d – Automobile Travel](#)
- [Office of the Controller policy 20335r – Rates for Lodging MI&E](#)
- [Office of the Controller Policy 20335v – Meal and Expense Reimbursement Request](#)

### Related University Policies (Links)

- [University policy 3615 – Electronic delivery of wages, salaries, reimbursements, and refunds](#)
- [University policy 3100 – Fiscal responsibility](#)

### Administrative Procedures

## ROUTINE MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT

Mileage reimbursement is calculated from either a start point of “home” or “office” (traveler’s home or office/base). You cannot start or end your travel from a destination other than those mentioned above. Exception: Final day in overnight travel status [“from” destination] and first day in travel status “to” location, or cost incurred with securing a rental car. Mileage should be calculated using the start or end point that is most cost beneficial (“closest/shortest”) to the agency (either home or office).

**For non-linear travel each destination should be accounted for.**

Source: Office of Controller Policy 20335a

Staff are reimbursed for travel in personal vehicles while in an authorized travel status. According to University policy, No. 3410, July 16, 1991: "Mileage payments are calculated from the distance between the destination and the employee's residence or official station, whichever is less." However, mileage is reimbursable if the traveler's base point is his/her home. Base point is the actual place, office, or building where the traveler performs his/her duties.

Source: VCE Travel Policy

1. If a state car or county / “in-kind” car is available and you elect to use your personal vehicle for **convenience**, the reimbursement rate is currently *.42 cents per mile*. This rate will be applied when you select “Lesser Rate” during the TA/TR process.
2. For any travel over 200 miles, and when claiming the higher mileage rate, use the [Cost Benefit Analysis](#) to determine if it is more cost beneficial to use an Enterprise rental or your personal vehicle.

**\*\* Please note when travel plans require a cost benefit analysis (ex. higher mileage rate is requested when round trip is 200 miles or more and fleet service vehicle, or state enterprise car, is available), this must be completed prior to traveling. This must be prepared during planning and attached to your travel reimbursement request for reimbursement. This will help ensure documentation requirements are met and that reimbursements are processed in a timely manner. Examples of factors that can be considered in the cost benefit analysis are:**

- Distance to the nearest car rental location and the hours of operation
- Administrative time required to obtain the rental car
- The type of vehicle required and the number of travelers

Source: Office of Controller Policy 20335a, note we do not have access to campus/fleet cars

2 B. When submitting a CBA, please include justification / unique factors such as change in vehicle type, need for personal vehicle if requesting one, etc.

## **NON-ROUTINE TRAVEL REQUEST PROCESS**

Step 1. Determine if a separate TA/TR is required other than the normal Blanket Travel Authorization (BTA) (all travel must have approval; routine fieldwork approval is included in your BTA). **All non-routine fieldwork; i.e. overnight travel, requires a separate TA/TR.**

**A. Approval of Travel Activity**

For all official business travel, the traveler must be able to demonstrate, with documentation, that a reasonable effort was made to secure the most cost beneficial means of travel for the University. All official business travel must also be properly approved based on the following guidelines:

ALL travelers (including presenters, students, visitors, and other business associates) whose travel expenses are to be charged to university public funds are encouraged to prepare an estimate of the total cost of any proposed travel (travel authorization). Total cost includes lodging, meals, conference registration, airfare, and any other travel costs or course fees. Approvals on the travel reimbursement are sufficient documentation for reimbursement through the Controller’s Office and the travel authorization is not required to be submitted to the Controller’s Office. For departments who will maintain internal procedures beyond what is required for reimbursement, and in order to meet other University department’s requirements (see information below), the TEM travel authorization can serve as a means of documentation.

Source: Office on Controller Policy 20335a

Condition	Travel Specifications	Separate TA/TR Required	Separate TA/TR <b>Not</b> Required	CBA Required
<b>A1</b>	Routine daily travel within the district, <200 miles		✓	
<b>A2</b>	Routine daily travel within the district >200 miles		✓	✓
<b>B1</b>	Out-of-State/ Over-night travel	✓		
<b>B2</b>	Out-of-State/ Over-night travel <i>and mileage is expected to exceed 200 miles</i>	✓		✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b><i>Per Office of Controller policy 20335b, when in-kind per diem/lodging is received a separate TA/TR must be submitted for over-night travel. This allows the District to track efforts outside of an Agents normal program area and will also lessen the financial burden of an agent’s BTA.</i></b></li> </ul> <p><b>No cost lodging</b> - If a traveler stays overnight with relatives or friends where no charge is incurred, an explanation should be made on the reimbursement request so that meal or lodging expenses will not be questioned. The traveler may take the host(s) to a restaurant for one meal in lieu of hotel accommodations. An itemized receipt is required and the names of the host and hostess must be provided.</p> <p>Source :Office of Controller Policy 20335b</p>				

Step 2. ALL travel, routine or overnight, must be submitted within 30 days of the last day expense is incurred. For late submission, please key a comment in the TR description to alert the controller’s office as to why travel is being submitted late. The district office, in turn, has 5 (five) working days to approve.

The reimbursement request should be submitted for payment by the employee to his/her approver within thirty (30) working days after completion of the trip, where overnight travel is involved, or in case of continuous travel, within thirty (30) working days of the last day of travel for which reimbursement is requested. In all instances, the reimbursement request must be submitted to the authorized approver for approval and forwarded to the Controller's Office within sixty (60) days after return from the business trip. For all travel reimbursement

Source: Office of the Controller Policy 20335V

Step 3. When separate TA/TR is submitted for overnight travel the following must be submitted if claiming expenses incurred in travel status. **Note: Reimbursable expenses, while not in travel status, should be processed through HokieMart.**

Back-Up Documentation with Paper Copy of TR	Comments
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft agendas are acceptable**</li> </ul> <p>** documenting this information. If the full meal per diem is claimed for a conference or training event with no deductions for meals provided as part of the registration fee, the conference/training agenda must be attached to the expense report to substantiate the full meal per diem.</p> <p>Source: Office of the Controller Policy 20335C</p>
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit mileage reimbursement following the policy outlined above; if a rental car is used, all receipts must be uploaded with the TR. This includes the cost of the rental car plus fuel receipts. <b><u>See policy 20335d, B.2 for unallowable rental car expenses.</u></b></li> </ul>
Baggage Fees, Parking, Metro, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Tolls and parking fees are reimbursable when paid for by the traveler in the course of conducting official University business.</b></li> <li>• <b>Receipts must be uploaded when the TR is submitted.</b></li> <li>• <b>Note parking/tolls are never to be paid from using a University Small Purchase Charge Card (SPCC)/P-Card, this should always be paid by the traveler then be reimbursed as part of the TR that is submitted.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Per policy 20335a the following shall be considered unallowable expenses while in travel status:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Lost or stolen articles;</li> <li>✓ Alcoholic beverages;</li> <li>✓ Excessive meals and lodging;</li> <li>✓ Damage to personal vehicles, clothing, or other items;</li> <li>✓ Services to gain entry to a locked vehicle;</li> <li>✓ Movies charged to hotel bills;</li> <li>✓ All expenses related to the personal negligence of the traveler, such as fines;</li> <li>✓ Entertainment expenses;</li> <li>✓ Towing charges;</li> <li>✓ Expenses for children, spouses, and companions while in travel status;</li> <li>✓ Travel Protection Insurance (Personal Injuries or loss, trip interruption/ cancellation, etc.)</li> </ul>

Cost Benefit Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For <b>any travel over 200 miles, and when claiming the higher mileage rate</b>, use the <a href="#">Cost Benefit Analysis</a> to determine if it is more cost beneficial to use an Enterprise rental or your personal vehicle.</li> </ul>
Lodging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See <a href="https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates">https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates</a> for approved rates by zip code. The TEM system will allow you to go 150% over the GSA rate for the travel lodging. This is to account for hotel taxes and surcharges, lodging expense rates are to be reimbursed using the above rates listed plus applicable taxes. <b>Per policy 20335r the traveler should visit the above link prior to booking their lodging to assure the proper rate is being used.</b> For locations where no set-rate has been defined by GSA, a default rate of \$93 (+ tax) per night will be used for lodging and \$51 for MIE, i.e. "Standard Rate."</li> </ul>
Per Diem	<p>TEM uses the per diem rates specified in the federal GSA rate tables effective for the current fiscal year at <a href="https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates">https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates</a> (per policy 20335r/c)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On a travel departure or return days, only 75% of the MIE is reimbursed. The TEM system will perform this calculation.</li> <li>When meals are provided at no cost to the traveler, the applicable TR shall be reduced by the amount shown for the meal provided.</li> <li>TEM will calculate MIE rates based off of trip destination zip code.</li> </ul>
Registration Fees	Registration receipts should be attached to the TR for conferences/workshops

## Glossary

- Base-point:** The primary place, office, or building where the traveler performs his/her duties on a routine basis.
  - MIE:** Meals and Incidental Travel Expenses.
  - State car:** state-owned vehicles used by employees while on University business.
  - TR:** Travel Reimbursement
  - TA:** Travel Authorization
  - BTA:** Blanket Travel Authorization, used for July-Dec and January-June *routine field work*
  - Travel Status:** When the traveler is over 25 miles past their routine base-point for overnight travel
  - TEM: Travel Expense Management System**, the University system used to process travel reimbursements

## Attachments

- Daily contacts logs; this will assist travelers when preparing monthly BTA Travel Reimbursement Requests (not mandatory, but suggested)  
<http://www.intra.ext.vt.edu/related/documents/VCEDAILYCONTACTSLOG.pdf>

**Best Practice Administration**

**Reviewer:** \_\_\_\_\_

Matthew R. Lail, MBA, VCA  
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Date

**Approver:** \_\_\_\_\_

John G. Thompson, MS  
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