

Travel, Meals and Entertainment Policy

OFFICE OF BUDGET & OPERATIONS TRAVEL, MEALS AND ENTERTAINMENT POLICY VERSION 1.5

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Purpose and Scope

This document, along with University guidelines and procedures, is intended to provide guidance to College of Visual and Performing Arts ("VPA" or "the College") employees, students, and others who are traveling, entertaining, or incurring meal expenses on behalf of the College when University funds are used. Additionally, this policy is designed to assist with compliance with Federal and State laws and regulations, provide for safe travel guidelines for those traveling on University business, provide a clear and comprehensive description of the policies and procedures for reimbursement of travel and entertainment expenses, and to ensure consistent and fair treatment between Schools and Departments throughout the College.

"Travelers" in this policy refers to VPA employees (including those with dual appointments), students or guests traveling on authorized University business. All travel and entertainment expenses must meet federal regulations, including Internal Revenue Service (IRS) rules.

A full list of IRS requirements may be found in Publication 463, available at <https://www.irs.gov/public/p463/>

At VPA, those in supervisory roles (Deans, Chairs and Directors) are responsible for ensuring compliance by their direct reports with this travel policy.

The intended audience for this document is the faculty and staff of the College.

Sponsored projects, such as National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) or National Education Association (NEA) may have additional requirements.

General Guidelines

VPA will pay for reasonable, appropriately documented, and properly authorized travel, meal, and entertainment expenses within the guidelines of this policy. The cost of travel accommodations, entertainment, and other related business expenses must be governed by the business purpose. Reimbursable business expenses should be incurred at the lowest cost consistent with good business practices.

Documentation of a business purpose will include: who participated in the incurring of the expense and the relationship of those who participated; what the expense was for; where the expense was incurred; when the expense was incurred; and why the expense benefited the University.

1. University funds shall not be used for personal travel or for travel by members of their party who are not traveling on University business. Further, travelers will not be compensated for personal travel costs incurred in conjunction with business travel.
2. Under IRS rules, travelers will be advanced or reimbursed tax-free for certain travel expenses provided the following three conditions are satisfied:
 - a. Advances and payment or reimbursements must be legitimate expenses as defined by this policy and be paid or incurred by the traveler in connection with his or her services to the University;
 - b. Travelers must substantiate through documentation the date, place, amount, names of attendees (University and non-University individuals), and explicit business purpose of each expense within 60 days of the trip end date to avoid part or all of the reimbursement being treated as taxable wages; and
 - c. Advanced amounts in excess of these expenses must be returned within 60 days after the trip end date.
3. Travelers are strongly encouraged to book travel at least 21 days in advance to yield the best overall value for the College.
4. Travelers will be reimbursed for actual expenses incurred based on itemized receipts, but will not exceed the "per diem" rates for meals, incidentals, and lodging costs.

5. In the event that travel must be changed or cancelled for business conflicts or illness, the College will pay all fees that can't be cancelled. In the event there is a resulting credit, this credit must be applied to the current or subsequent business trip. Per IRS guidelines, under no circumstances can unused tickets be used for personal travel. Change fees and cancellation fees incurred other than those for a University related business conflict and/or illness will be at the expense of the traveler.
6. The Purchasing Department maintains discounts with preferred vendors with which it has contracted for below market rates. Refer to the Purchasing Department website <http://purchasing.syr.edu> for these vendor discounts.
7. The use of direct deposit is encouraged for all travel reimbursements to College employees. This provides the most expedient method to have funds returned to the traveler. Log on to [Myslice.syr.edu](https://myslice.syr.edu) to establish direct deposit.
8. All exceptions to this policy must be approved by the Dean and/or Director of Budget and Operations.

Failure to follow the guidelines set forth in this policy may prevent travelers from being reimbursed or may result in part or all of the reimbursement being treated as taxable wages and reported as additional wages on the traveler's W2 form.

NOTE: University employees and students do not have the authority to act on behalf of the University to make procurement agreements or contracts with outside vendors for materials or services. All contracts with external parties must be submitted to the VPA Office of Budget and Operations for review and submission to Risk Management and Legal Council.

Traveler Responsibilities

For University-funded travel, travelers must obtain pre-approval from their Dean, Chair or Director using the Travel Preauthorization Form one month in advance of travelling. The form can be found at <https://info.vpa.syr.edu/administrative/travel/>. This allows the traveler and approver to agree on expected costs before travel is booked, identify the funding source and obtain emergency contact information. For trips funded by a chart string outside their area, they must also obtain pre-approval from the Dean, Chair or Director responsible for that area.

Travelers must obtain approval from the Dean or Director of Budget and Operations in advance of booking any upgrades or exceeding spending limits as defined by this policy for air travel, car rental, lodging, meals, and fees resulting from international travel.

International Travel Requirements

1. Before traveling internationally, please contact the Office of Risk Management at (315) 443-0315 or 443-5334, for guidance related to international travel safety matters.
2. Before traveling internationally, travelers are required to register with International SOS ("ISOS") <https://www.internationalsos.com>, a University vendor that provides worldwide access to emergency medical, security and travel assistance, as well as evacuation services, if necessary. For more information on use and the University's group membership code, please contact the Office of Risk Management at (315) 443-0315, or 443-5334, or <http://riskmanagement.syr.edu>. ISOS provides additional coverage that travelers may use for personal travel. This additional coverage is not reimbursable.
3. Before traveling internationally, travelers are strongly encouraged to register with STEP (Smart Traveler Enrollment Program; <https://step.state.gov/step/>) so that the local U.S. Embassy can contact the traveler in an emergency.

Business Meals

Travelers will be reimbursed meal expenses incurred while traveling away from home or entertaining on University business. When traveling, meals will be reimbursed for actual costs, not to exceed the per diem meal rates for the travel city. Higher expenses are not subject to this general guidance if a medical or religious justification has been documented and approved by the University's Equal Opportunity, Inclusion and Resolution Services Office. Travelers must provide an itemized receipt and substantiate through documentation the date, place, amount, names of attendees, and explicit business purpose of each expense within 60 days of the trip end date. A schedule of per diem meal rates may be found on the GSA website (<http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104877>).

1. Tips on meals will not be reimbursed above 20% of the pre-tax bill.
2. Reimbursement of alcohol is permitted when hosting dinner involving non-University personnel or entertaining College guests at no more than two alcoholic beverages per person or one bottle of wine (reasonably priced) per group of 4. The University's Alcohol policy can be located at http://supolicies.syr.edu/fac_teach/alcohol.htm
3. The costs of alcoholic beverages are not allowed to be charged to federal grants and contracts. See the "Additional Requirements for Sponsored Travel" for further information.

Reimbursement for in-town meals involving non-University personnel is allowable if there is a legitimate business purpose. The inclusion of University employees should be limited to no more than two to three other employees in attendance. The College will reimburse expenses associated with lunches hosted by faculty or staff that includes an external guest (i.e. visiting artist, guest speaker, faculty recruit) up to \$25.00 per person. The College will reimburse expenses associated with dinners hosted by faculty or staff members that include an external guest (i.e. visiting artist/scholar, faculty recruit) up to \$50.00 per person (including alcohol). Additional participants/charges included on the bill will not be reimbursed. Note that reimbursement for in-town meetings that do not involve non-University personnel (i.e. faculty meetings), should be kept to a minimum and should follow University procurement guidelines. Requests for reimbursement of alcohol at meetings/events that do not involve non-University personnel must be pre-approved by the Dean.

Entertaining College guests while traveling for an identified business purpose (i.e. advancement, alumni, etc.) is permitted and must be coordinated with the VPA Office of Advancement, as applicable. All efforts should be made to provide meal arrangements using reasonably priced restaurants or catering services. All attendees should be directly involved in the business purpose of the meal and should not include spouses, partners, or friends (unless they pay separately). If including your spouse or companion, there must be a business purpose directly benefiting the University when charging their meal expenses to the College.

College-Sponsored Events

University funds used to purchase alcohol for College events/functions must be approved in advance by the Dean. Alumni and development events must be coordinated with the VPA Office of Advancement. Consumption of alcohol at any College-sponsored event must follow University policies for approval of alcohol (http://supolicies.syr.edu/fac_teach/alcohol.htm) and is the responsibility of the individual(s) and/or group(s) operating a licensed facility or sponsoring an event. Alcohol reimbursement at College events should not exceed two alcoholic beverages (or appx. \$20) per person. Prudence should be used in the purchase of such beverages and all efforts should be made to use reasonably priced venues.

Lodging

Travelers should choose convenient, safe, and reasonably priced accommodations. The Purchasing Department has preferred lodging vendors with negotiated rates, and travelers are encouraged to use these vendors. Refer to the Purchasing Department website <http://purchasing.syr.edu/university-travel/hotel-information/> for these vendor discounts. Original itemized hotel folios are required for all lodging expenses.

1. No lodging expense is authorized for trips under 50 miles from a traveler's residence unless a special exception due to compelling need or business reason is granted by the Dean, Chair or Director before booking.
2. Lodging should be reserved at the best available rate that allows for the convenience and safety of the traveler.
3. When booking accommodations on a personal credit card, travelers may take advantage of frequent guest programs. However, only the out-of-pocket cost will be eligible for reimbursement when booking is done using a hotel or credit card rewards program.
4. Lodging gratuities (i.e. tips for maids, porters, valets, and concierge) may not exceed \$5 per day.

Air Travel

The Purchasing Department has preferred vendors with negotiated rates, and travelers are encouraged to use these vendors. Refer to the Purchasing Department website <http://purchasing.syr.edu/university-travel/airline-information/> for these vendor discounts. It is strongly encouraged that tickets be purchased at least 21 days in advance to reduce costs.

1. University travelers are expected to purchase the lowest fare ticket available that meets their travel needs.
1. When booking travel on a personal credit card, travelers may take advantage of frequent traveler programs. However, flight charges will not be reimbursed if booked using travel reward programs.
2. Ground transportation to and from the airport is reimbursable. This includes mileage when using personal vehicles, public transportation, and taxi transportation. Travelers should use the lowest cost option.
3. The first piece of checked baggage will be reimbursable. However, additional bags or special baggage fees will not be reimbursed unless these bags only contain items required for University business (e.g., art work, musical instruments, conference equipment or documents).
4. Travelers are not authorized to fly or travel in a personally-owned, corporate noncommercial, chartered, donated, or leased aircraft on University business without prior written authorization from the Dean. A certificate of liability insurance of at least \$5,000,000, naming Syracuse University as additional insured and approved by the University's Risk Management Department, must be provided. Other documents (i.e., evidence of air worthiness) may be required by the University.

Personal Vehicle Use

Personal vehicles may be used when traveling for University business, and their use is encouraged to save time or reduce costs when there are multiple travelers to the same destination. Normal commuting costs of traveling to and from work will not be reimbursed.

1. The University does not cover comprehensive or collision insurance for a traveler who drives his/her personal vehicle on University business. The traveler is responsible for primary liability insurance. The University does carry non-owned liability coverage to protect the University and traveler (s) (excess basis) in the event of a suit resulting from an accident in which a traveler was driving on University business. (http://riskmanagement.syr.edu/RiskManagement/display.cfm?content_ID=%23%2881%20%0A).
2. Business trips will be reimbursed up to the current IRS authorized mileage rate (<http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-drop/n-13-80.pdf>) for miles incurred rounded down to the nearest penny; travelers must take a direct route to their final destination.
 - a. Mileage-based reimbursement covers all costs related to the operation of the vehicle, including service, maintenance, insurance, depreciation, and fuel. These expenses cannot be reimbursed separately. Mileage reimbursement may only be submitted by the vehicle owner or driver.
 - b. Parking fees and highway tolls will be reimbursed. Tickets, fines, and/or lock-out fees will not be reimbursed.

Trips in personal vehicles of over 500 miles one way must be approved in advance of travel. Travelers are encouraged to consider air, rail, or car rental alternatives if they are less expensive options before using their personal vehicles for long distance travel.

See also student travel.

Vehicle Rental

The use of rental vehicles should be avoided whenever safe, reasonable, and less expensive alternatives exist, such as taxis, trains, and personal or public transportation. Travelers are encouraged to share cars when traveling in groups. Vehicle rental agencies may have minimum age requirements. The Purchasing Department has preferred vendors with negotiated rates, and travelers are encouraged to use these vendors. Refer to the Purchasing Department website <http://purchasing.syr.edu/university-travel/car-rental-agency-contacts/> for these vendors.

1. Individual travelers may rent mid-sized vehicles or smaller if traveling individually or full-sized vehicles if there are at least three travelers traveling together.
2. For safety reasons, travelers are not permitted to rent a 15-passenger or larger van.
3. Only Global Position System (GPS) upgrades are reimbursable; other upgrades (e.g. satellite radio) will not be reimbursed.
4. Travelers should decline pre-fill options and make every effort to refuel at a gas station prior to returning the vehicle at the end of the rental period. Fuel charges will be reimbursed.
5. Travelers are encouraged to decline "collision damage waivers," also referred to as "loss damage waivers," when traveling in the United States, but to accept this when traveling outside the United States on University business. Travelers outside the United States should inquire with the Rental Car Agency as to what the requirements are within that country and purchase the mandatory insurance required by the country of travel. International insurance coverage is limited to 30 days from the date of contracting the vehicle. Additional coverage is necessary for international rentals lasting longer than 30 days.
 - a. Travelers using the University Credit Card (and, typically, personal credit cards) are covered under the card carrier's business automobile policy in the U.S. The University Credit Card holder must pay for the car rental and must be the primary driver of the vehicle in order to guarantee coverage.
 - b. Travelers using other forms of payment are typically covered under the University's business automobile insurance policy. Full details on the policy are available on the Risk Management website. (http://riskmanagement.syr.edu/RiskManagement/display.cfm?content_ID=%23%2881%21%0A)

6. Travelers may accept "Personal Effects and Personal Accident" coverage to insure against loss of personal items due to theft at their own discretion. However, this expense is not reimbursable.
7. Parking fees and highway tolls are reimbursable expenses. Tickets, fines and/or lock-out fees will not be reimbursed.

Bus & Rail Travel

The use of bus or rail is encouraged when it provides a cost-effective and safe travel alternative.

1. Tickets should be purchased in advance, that meets the traveler's needs, to limit costs.
2. Tickets should be booked at the lowest available fare, except as stated in (a) below. If travel does not meet this exception, travelers may upgrade by paying out of pocket, but this payment will not be reimbursed.
3. Ground transportation to and from the bus or rail station is reimbursable. This includes personal vehicles, public transportation, and taxi transportation. Travelers are encouraged to use the lowest cost option.

In the event that travel plans must be changed or cancelled for business conflicts or illness, VPA will pay related fees for bus and rail travel. In the event that there is a resulting credit, this credit must be applied to the current or next business trip. Per IRS guidelines, under no circumstances can unused tickets be used for personal travel. Change fees and cancellation fees incurred other than those for a University-related business conflict and/or illness will be at the expense of the traveler.

University Procurement Card

The University Credit Card may make travel easier for travelers to pay for business travel expenses by eliminating the need for travel advances and reimbursements and eliminating most out-of-pocket expenses. See complete University Credit Card policy at http://supolicies.syr.edu/ethics/travel_card.htm

VPA restricts the authorization of University credit cards to those employees that incur business expenses on a regular basis (travel and/or operating). The College maintains the right to set spending limits and to restrict the type of spending that may be incurred on a University issued credit card.

1. Employees using the University Credit Cards should make a good faith effort to advise the vendor that purchases are tax exempt. The New York State tax free number is located on the front of the card. Some vendors require the applicable state-issued sales tax exemption form. To obtain the appropriate form, see Appendix B or contact the VPA Office of Budget and Operations.
2. An employee's credit card statement should be reconciled, approved and all supporting documentation submitted to the VPA Office of Budget and Operations by the 12th day of each month.

If inappropriate or unallowable expenses as defined by this policy are charged to the University Credit Card, the traveler will be required to reimburse the University for these charges prior to the reconciliation being processed and upon repeated violations may have his or her credit card privilege revoked.

Expense Reimbursement

VPA travelers are not allowed a "per diem" option for expenses. Detailed itemized receipts are required for all transactions (except for tips and other incidentals that are typically not receipted.) Travelers will be reimbursed for reasonable business expenses incurred for authorized travel on University business provided actual receipts are submitted, and those expenses comply with this policy. This includes lodging, transportation expense, and meal charges, in accordance with Internal Revenue Service guidelines. Meal charges for persons other than travelers on University business are reimbursable only when names, positions, University affiliation, and business purpose are indicated. Requests without this information will not be reimbursed.

Travel Advances

For travelers who cannot otherwise use a University Credit Card or their own personal credit card, travel advances may be issued for estimated out-of-pocket expenses. However, a travel advance will not be issued to travelers who have an overdue or delinquent advance or a University Credit Card violation.

Travel advances may be requested, once travel has been approved, by submitting a travel advance form (http://administrativeforms.syr.edu/administrativeforms/display.cfm?content_ID=%23%28%285%2D%0A) to the Disbursements Office at least two weeks prior to the scheduled departure to allow for sufficient time to process a check payable to the traveler.

While traveling using a travel advance, travelers must retain receipts for expenses incurred. A completed travel voucher form must be submitted to the VPA Office of Budget and Operations to settle actual travel business expenses within sixty (60) days after a traveler returns from a trip. Approved actual expenses that total more than the advance amount will be reimbursed; approved actual expenses that total less than the advanced amount will require the traveler to pay the excess money to the University. Advance amounts not refunded to the University by the end of the calendar year will be reported as additional wages on the traveler's W2 form and taxes withheld accordingly.

Incomplete Documentation

The VPA Office of Budget and Operations will perform a pre-audit of all documentation submitted to ensure compliance with the guidance defined in this policy. Persons that have submitted a reimbursement request and/or procurement card reconciliation with missing or incomplete documentation will be contacted immediately upon review. All efforts should be made to substantiate the expense to ensure timely reimbursement.

The Disbursements Office will return any requests with incomplete/missing information or inappropriate/unallowable expenses as defined by this policy to the individual in the department who has signed as expense approver.

University Internal Audit personnel routinely examine invoices, procurement card reconciliations and expenditure reimbursement request forms to monitor compliance with University Policies and regulatory agencies.

Student Travel

This policy is intended to cover students traveling on official University business, such as employment, research, or University sponsored events. As referenced under Traveler Responsibilities on page 2 of this document, a travel pre-authorization form must be completed one month in advance of travel involving students. This form must be approved by the Dean, Chair or Director as well as submitted to the VPA Office of Budget and Operations for review and approval.

Student International Travel

1. All enrolled student travel fully funded by the College will be expected to abide by the guidelines set forth in this policy as defined in the "General Guidelines" section above.

Student Travel in Traveler Vehicles

1. For safety reasons, student participants choosing to ride in a traveler's personal vehicle do so voluntarily and at their own risk. Whenever possible, student travel in rental vehicles is preferred for insurance reasons. For additional details, please see the Field Trip Guidelines outlined by Risk Management. ([http://riskmanagement.syr.edu/RiskManagement/display.cfm?content_ID=%23\(-!%0A\)](http://riskmanagement.syr.edu/RiskManagement/display.cfm?content_ID=%23(-!%0A)))

Non-employee Travel

Presenters/Performers/Artists/Consultants

1. Individuals contracted - paid or unpaid - to perform services for the University who have travel requirements that are to be paid or reimbursed by the University are governed by this policy unless superseded by the written contractual terms of their service.

Prospective Employees

1. Travel for prospective employees will be reimbursed if it conforms to this policy. This must be approved in advance by the Dean, Chair or Director responsible for interviewing candidates.

Travel Emergency Guidelines

In the event of an emergency, resources exist to help travelers and students, particularly those traveling abroad.

In the event of an international travel emergency, travelers are required to contact International SOS ("ISOS"; <https://www.internationalsos.com/en/Pre-travel-advice.htm>), a vendor that provides worldwide access to emergency medical, security, and travel assistance, as well as evacuation services, if necessary. For more information on use and the University's group membership code, please contact the Risk Management Department at (315) 443-0315, 443-5334, or <http://riskmanagement.syr.edu>.

In the event of a domestic travel emergency, such as a car accident or medical emergency, contact local authorities as necessary using 911. Then contact the University Department of Public Safety Communication Center at (315) 443-2224. The Department of Public Safety will contact Risk Management and the traveler's supervisors to inform them of the emergency and coordinate help. The Department of Public Safety can also notify family members.

Miscellaneous & General Expenses

Telecommunications Expenses

1. Business-related long distance phone and fax expenses will be reimbursed according to IRS rules only if the business purpose is documented with the receipt.
2. Cell phone calls or data charges on personal cell phones, in excess of normal monthly plan costs, that are incurred for University business will be reimbursed according to IRS rules only if the business purpose is documented with the receipt. Travelers are discouraged from using cell phones internationally due to high costs.
3. Internet access charges while traveling on University business will be reimbursed.

Conferences and Professional Events

1. Conference registration or professional organization event fees, associated room rental fees, and conference related copy fees are reimbursable.
2. Meals included in conference fees will not be reimbursed beyond the conference registration fee. In instances where medical or religious reasons prevent the traveler from consuming a conference-provided meal, the traveler may be reimbursed.
3. When attending a conference, travelers are permitted to stay in a hotel specifically designated for the conference by the conference sponsor

Fees Related to International Travel

1. Passport, travel visa, and supporting documentation, including passport photographs and birth certificates, costs will be reimbursed with prior approval from the Dean, Director or Chair.
2. Required vaccinations and immunization costs will be reimbursed with prior approval of the budget/expense approver.
3. Currency exchange conversion fees will be reimbursed when traveling on international business.
4. Guide, interpreter, or driver costs incurred outside the United States for the purpose of conducting field research will be reimbursed. Travelers are strongly encouraged to agree on acceptable prices with their expense approvers in advance to facilitate rapid reimbursement.

Laundry Expenses

1. Laundry expenses or dry cleaning charges will not be reimbursed unless travel exceeds six or more consecutive nights. Any charges must be incurred while travelers are on travel status.

Unallowable Expenses

The following list provides additional guidance on common expenses that are considered personal and will not be reimbursed.

- Annual fees for personal credit card
- Barbers / hairdressers
- Car washes and detailing
- Clothing, luggage, and toiletries
- Delinquency and/or late fees for personal credit cards
- Hotel or car "no-show" charges without a business purpose
- In-room entertainment (e.g., movies, games, etc.)
- Separate lodging for family and friends traveling with the traveler
- Membership (including airport clubs) and reward fees
- Meals for social occasions or local meals with University travelers that lack a Business Purpose
- Meals covered by the conference fee
- Meals for family and friends traveling with the traveler
- Mini-bar alcoholic refreshments
- Non-business postage
- Normal commuting expenses
- Optional baggage insurance
- Parking tickets, speeding tickets, traffic tickets, or court costs
- Personal effects and/or personal accident coverage - Rental vehicles
- Personal entertainment (e.g., sporting events without a business purpose)
- Personal mobile phones and data devices
- Personal medical or medication expenses (prescription or over the counter) unless approved as necessary
- Personal vehicle insurance
- Personal vehicle repairs
- Personal property insurance
- Pet care or kennel costs
- House-sitting fees
- Reading materials for use during travel
- Sauna/massages or other health club fees
- Shoeshine
- Souvenirs and personal gifts
- Travel-sized toiletries for personal use
- Trip insurance
- Vacation and personal expenses when on business trips

Web sites for further information.

Description	URL
Syracuse University Policies: Travel Policy	http://supolicies.syr.edu/admin/travel.htm
College of VPA Travel Policy and forms	https://info.vpa.syr.edu/administrative/travel/
IRS Publication 463	https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p463.pdf
Risk Management	http://riskmanagement.syr.edu/
Per Diem Rates	http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104877
Syracuse University Policies: Alcohol Policy	http://supolicies.syr.edu/fac_teach/alcohol.htm

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9/1/19	Christina A. Eiffe	1.5	Revised to change 45 day requirement to 60 days, consistent with University policy.