



# THE ABCs OF TRAVEL



## ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

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**This presentation is meant to be interpreted as a guide, and it is not intended to be a policy manual. University policies always take precedence over any element in this presentation.**

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## **OBJECTIVES OF THE BOOKLET**

To provide a basic understanding of JMU's Travel Policy, documentation, and procedures

## **MISSION**

**Your Mission** is to fulfill your travel needs with the best value for the dollar and ensure that all federal, state, and university policies and procedures are followed.

**Our Mission** together is to support James Madison University by:

- Ensuring compliance with all federal and state laws and all university regulations.
- Acquiring travel services at competitive prices.
- Exercising proper financial stewardship for payments.
- Providing responsive service and prompt gathering of documentation, for all University travel.

## **ROLES OF THE TRAVELER/DEPARTMENT**

- Requesting assistance from Accounts Payable, when in doubt.
- Understanding and following State and University policy.
- Getting the best value for the University.
- Obtaining necessary approvals prior to travel and prior to committing the university to expenditures.
- Obtaining all approvals on paperwork submitted for payments.
- Keeping all original receipts to submit for reimbursement.
- Traveler must submit travel reimbursements and supporting documentation using Chrome River (JMU's electronic travel management solution) within 60 business days from the date of return.
- Department must approve the expense report and supporting documentation within 5 business days.

## TRAVEL PRE-APPROVALS (FPM 4215.311)

- ***International Travel***
  - Required for all International Travel and entered in Chrome River.
  - Required for all incoming Foreign National Visitors and entered in Chrome River.
- ***Departmental Off Campus Authorization Form***
  - Required for all off campus retreats where only JMU employees are in attendance.
- ***Domestic Travel***
  - Before arranging domestic travel, the traveler must have some form of approval from an Approving Authority.
  - The university does not require an approved Pre-Approval for planned domestic travel but expects prudent judgement and reasonableness when incurring travel costs.

## BOOKING TRAVEL ONLINE

- Only use secure sites (**https**).
- Print the receipt page.
- Print itemized charges.
- Print price comparisons.

### **CAUTION WHEN USING PACKAGE DEALS!**

**Package Deals must have itemized detailed documentation and comparisons showing cost savings. You must be able to show that the package was a better deal. Print itemized charges before booking online!**

## REGISTRATIONS – CONFERENCES, CONVENTIONS, SEMINARS AND TRAINING WORKSHOPS

- Cannot prepay registrations more than 180 days in advance of event.
- May use Small Purchase Charge Card.
- When 5 or more employees are to attend, the department shall investigate the option of bringing the trainer on site.
- Must attach the conference agenda to the expense report.

## DRIVING YOUR OWN CAR

- See online [Mileage Rate Table](#) in effect at time of travel, **Section FPM 4215.334.1**, for applicable rates.
- Employees electing to use their personal vehicle as a matter of convenience for trips exceeding an average of 280 miles per day will be reimbursed for mileage at the reduced rate.
- Cannot be reimbursed for normal commuting mileage.

### **TAXI, SHUTTLE VANS AND OTHER “FOR HIRE” TRANSPORTATION**

- Receipts are required only if the reimbursement claim exceeds \$75 per instance.
- Limousines or other forms of luxury transportation are not allowed.
- A maximum tip of 20% of the taxi cab or shuttle service fare is allowed and tip must be separate from the amount of fare.
- Public transportation from place of lodging to restaurants is allowed only for official business needs.

### **RENTAL VEHICLES**

- Must request through Transportation Services if travel is initiated locally.
- Must use most economical type of vehicle available.
- Refuel before returning the vehicle to contractor.
- Keep original receipts for vehicle rental and fuel.
- Employees must decline insurance for domestic travel. *(When renting a vehicle in a foreign country, employees **must** purchase LDW and CDW protection.)*

### **TYPES OF RENTAL INSURANCE**

PAI – Personal Accident Insurance  
 RLP – Renter Liability Protection  
 ERLP – Extra Renters Liability Insurance  
 SLI – Supplemental Liability Insurance  
 PEC – Personal Effects Coverage  
 LDW –Liability Damage Waiver  
 SLP – Supplemental Liability Protection  
 CDW – Collision Damage Wavier  
 RAP – Roadside Assistance Protection

- If any of these appear on the rental vehicle receipt, please deduct from the total, as these charges are **not** allowed to be claimed by employees.

- James Madison University employees and students are already covered by Risk Management.
- Visitors and students may be reimbursed for LDW and CDW protection.

## AIRLINE TICKETS

- May purchase tickets from the contracted travel services agencies listed in [FPM 4215.322](#)
- May purchase tickets using the Travel Card, Small Purchase Charge Card, or personal credit card.
- Expenditures charged to Travel Card or personal credit card will not be reimbursed until after the trip.
- Must have proof of payment.
- Must have **proof of seat class** such as the description of coach, tourist, or economy, and not just the airlines code for seat class. Upgrades in the coach seating area are enhancements and are not reimbursable.
- Additional costs added for flight insurance or refundable tickets are not reimbursable.
- See [FPM 4215.335](#) for Public Transportation including additional airline information.

## LODGING

- May be reimbursed for travel while on official business when traveling outside the official station.
- May use the services of a JMU contracted travel agency.
- All lodging rates are governed by the GSA and travelers must search the website, <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104877> for the effective rates before booking.
- Approving Authorities may approve reimbursements for lodging up to 50% over the guidelines when circumstances warrant.
- The Assistant Vice President for Finance, or designee, may approve reimbursements for lodging up to 100% over the guidelines when circumstances warrant.
- **An explanation of circumstances justifying the lodging exceptions must be explained in the Chrome River expense report.**
- Lodging may be charged on a Travel Card or personal credit card.

- Must submit original itemized hotel bill.
- When two or more people travel on official State business and stay in the same hotel room, the cost of the room cannot exceed the amount each individual could be reimbursed at the per diem guideline, had they stayed in separate rooms.

## TRAVEL MEALS

- All Meals and Incidental rates are governed by the GSA website, <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104877> , and travelers must enter the correct location in Chrome River.
- The M&IE Rates are reduced to 75% on travel days (day leaving and day returning). Leave day rate is determined by where you lodge that night. Return day rate is determined by where you lodged the night before returning.
- The meal breakdown table can be found at <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/101518>
- Rates must be reduced by the applicable meal when meals are provided at no cost to the traveler, such as breakfast at hotels, meals at conferences, etc.

## BUSINESS MEALS

- Meals while on official business must involve a substantive and bona fide business discussion with a non-University employee.
- Reimbursements are entered into Chrome River.
- Tips are limited to 20% of the food/drink amount before taxes.
- An Approving Authority, with sufficient justification, may approve up to 50% over guidelines.
- NO alcoholic beverages will be reimbursed.

## DAY TRIPS

- Cannot receive reimbursement for meals on day trips.
- Can receive overtime meal allowance for a travel in overtime status. Overtime status is established by overtime work being essential to the agency's mission and is in excess of employee's normal, scheduled work hours. ***This allowance is taxable.***
- Hours worked and normal work hours must be documented on the Travel Voucher, to

support expenditure.

## **FOOD AND BEVERAGES PROCEDURES**

- A Business Meal Certification and Food and Beverage Form (BMCF) must be completed for each event.
- *Official Business Function* – Meals hosting prospective employees or guest speakers may be provided when they involve substantive and bona fide business discussions. Working meals for non-routine events and receptions open to the public are also considered official business meals.
- *Internal Training Function* – Food and beverages may be provided during formal training sessions conducted through the time of the meal. Departmental retreats must be conducted as training, two hours in length and only one per semester. A *Departmental Off Campus Authorization Form* is required for all off campus retreats.
- *Student Academic Function* – Food and beverages may be provided at student functions that contribute to the academic mission of the university.
- *Student Programming/Club Function* – Food and beverages may be provided at functions that contribute to student engagement and support the mission of the University.
- *Employee Engagement Function* -- Food and beverages may be provided at employee engagement functions that center around social, recreational, and educational programs. Programs may include employee family members, however, must be reasonable in terms of time and costs. Activities are limited to once per semester and are subject to per diem rules and alcohol restrictions. Examples include school start-up planning meetings and employee recognition events. It is preferred that these events be held on-campus, however, for events held off-campus, completion of an Off Campus Authorization form is required prior to committing.
- Departments must utilize JMU's Catering and Dining Services unless:
  - Advance permission is given by Aramark that they cannot provide the service.
  - The purchases are for grocery items.
  - Potluck events.
  - Events do not meet the Catering department's minimum order of \$100 per delivery.
  - The purchase is for pizza only.
- For payment processing to the vendor when purchasing food and/or beverages, a BMCF



must be completed for each event and submitted with an Accounting Voucher, along with the original itemized receipt to the office of Accounts Payable for payment processing.

- For payment processing reimbursing an individual who purchases food and/or beverages, a completed expense report in Chrome River must be submitted, along with the itemized receipt.
- The Small Purchase Charge Card (SPCC) may only be used to purchase pizza from a local vendor. The BMCF and original itemized receipt for each event is to be maintained in the departments' office for future audits or inquiries from the Cash and Investments office. In order to purchase from a pizza vendor, the restaurant exception form must be approved and on file in the Cash and Investments Office.

## **INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL**

- Prior to traveling internationally, a Pre-Approval must be submitted in Chrome River.
- For allowable rates, use the GSA web page <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104877>. There are links for the DOD and State Department sites which cover USA and foreign areas.
- For currency converter use <https://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/>. Currency conversions must be calculated using the rate applicable to the date of the receipt. All receipts must be converted.

## **TRAVEL CHARGE CARDS /ADVANCES**

- Faculty & staff members, who travel on behalf of the University, may partake in the Travel Card Program. This program allows the traveler to take a cash advance on the charge card, up to 20% of the cardholder's limit.
- The ATM feature now available on the Bank of America Travel Cards, is meant to be used only for those expenses for which the card cannot be used to direct pay for travel expenses. Cash must be withdrawn via Bank of America ATM's to avoid transaction fees. Failure to use Bank of America ATM's by the traveler will result in the traveler personally bearing the cost of any ATM transaction fees incurred
- The vendors will send all bills to the individual cardholder. The cardholder is responsible for the travel charge card charges. Timely processing allows for receipt of reimbursements in time to pay travel charge card bills within the period prescribed by the charge card vendor.

- Refer to [FPM 4215.510](#) for more details.

## **REFERENCES**

- Accounts Payable Web Page  
<http://www.jmu.edu/financeoffice/accounting-operations-disbursements/accounts-payable/>
- Financial Procedures Manual\_  
<http://www.jmu.edu/financemanual/index.shtml>
  - [Section 2015 – Expenditure Account Codes and Definitions](#)
  - [Section 4215 – Travel](#)

## **TOP 10 MISTAKES WITH EXPENSE REPORTS**

1. Receipts not attached to the expense report in Chrome River.
2. Need proper explanations of travel.
3. Lodging or M&IE is over the allowed guidelines without proper justification.
4. Extra insurance on the rental car is not allowed.
5. Fueling charges paid on car rental receipts are not allowed.
6. The seat class description is not documented when using air or rail transportation. You must be able to show that it is coach, tourist, or economy, etc.
7. Location of per diems is incorrect. Per diems are based on lodging location.
8. Documentation for telephone/internet charges not included.
9. Business Meal does not include a non-University employee.

10. Charges are not appropriate expenditures of state funds.

### **NON-REIMBURSABLE EXPENSES**

*This list is not all-inclusive. Travelers should use prudent judgment and remember that all travel expense accounts are open to the public and must be able to sustain the test of public review.*

- First Class Airline Tickets
- Costs added for flight insurance or refundable tickets
- Premiums for upgraded coach fare seating on public transportation
- Memberships in clubs for pleasure or recreation
- Airline club memberships
- Annual fees for personal credit cards
- Auto repairs for personal vehicles
- Baby sitting
- Barbers and hair salons
- Golf fees, ski lift tickets, etc.
- Frequent flyer upgrades
- Health club facilities
- Limousines
- Prepaid fuel charges to vehicle rental contractor
- Theft of personal property or funds
- Movies (in flight or room)
- Mini bar refreshments
- No show charges for hotel or car rental
- Personal entertainment
- Pet care fees
- Insurance fees (LDW, PAI, and CDW) for employees (excluding foreign travel)
- Optional travel insurance including flight insurance
- Books for classes (unless they remain property of State)
- Snacks or refreshments unless they meet Food & Beverages Procedures
- Non-business related newspapers or magazine subscriptions
- Tuxedos or other formal wear
- Clothing (non-uniform) or repairs to clothing damaged in the workplace
- All expenses related to personal negligence of the employee, such as parking tickets or traffic fines
- Party or Picnic supplies
- Holiday decorations
- Alcoholic beverages
- Charitable contributions

- Gifts
- Meals or travel for family members
- Navigation systems