

# **Travel – Frequently Asked Questions**

## **Out-of-State Travel**

1. What approvals are required for out-of-state travel?

Out-of-state travel requires the approval of an employee's supervisor/chair, budget manager (if different), Dean (required for all Academic Affairs travel) and VP or Provost. For travel outside of the contiguous United States, the University President's or Provost's approval is also required.

## **Personal Automobile**

1. If I embark on business travel from my residence, will I be reimbursed for mileage between my residence and the travel destination, or between headquarters and the travel destination?

If an employee embarks on travel from his/her residence, the employee will be reimbursed for mileage either between residence and the travel destination, or headquarters and the travel destination, whichever is shorter. Local travel while at destination must be documented for reimbursement purposes.

2. What is the policy for travel on a scheduled day off?

If an employee is required to work on a holiday or scheduled day off, the employee may be reimbursed for mileage from his/her residence to a point of public transportation or designated worksite, other than headquarters. An employee may never be reimbursed for mileage between his/her residence and headquarters.

## **Commercial Transportation**

1. Can I extend business travel to obtain savings on transportation costs?

Yes, an employee may extend travel to obtain savings on transportation costs. The employee must document the savings via an attachment to the travel expense voucher. If extending travel does not save money, the employee is liable for any incremental costs (i.e., subsistence and accommodations).

Example: Conference ends on a Friday and employee extends travel to Sunday.

	Example 1 Extended Travel Justified		Example 2 Extended Travel Not Justified	
	Return Friday	Return Sunday	Return Friday	Return Sunday
Airline Cost	\$700.00	\$300.00	\$700.00	\$500.00
Hotel Cost @ \$100/night	0	\$200.00	0	\$200.00
Subsistence @ \$46/day	0	\$92.00	0	\$92.00
Total Expenses	\$700.00	\$556.00	\$700.00	\$756.00

2. Is it mandatory for an employee to extend travel to obtain savings on transportation costs?

No, it is not mandatory; however, employees are encouraged to extend travel, if reasonable. Cost of travel is very often the determining factor in whether or not an employee receives budgetary approval to travel.

3. Can I extend business travel for personal purposes?

Yes, an employee may extend business travel for personal purposes. The employee will be reimbursed for expenses incurred up to the point when he/she would have returned under normal circumstances. If extending travel causes the cost of transportation to increase, the employee is liable for paying the incremental cost of the transportation. Employees are expected to take appropriate leave in accordance with the leave policy.

4. If I change my itinerary and incur additional costs (e.g., flight change charges), who is responsible for paying these costs?

The University will pay for additional costs incurred if an employee changes his/her itinerary for a valid business purpose, and the change is approved by his/her supervisor. An employee who changes his/her itinerary for personal reasons is responsible for any additional costs resulting from the change.

5. If I cancel my travel arrangements, who is liable for costs that are not recoverable?

The University will pay for any costs that are not recoverable if an employee cancels his/her travel arrangements for a valid business purpose, and the change is approved by his/her supervisor. An employee who cancels his/her travel arrangements for personal reasons is liable for any costs that are not recoverable.

6. May I use a rental car while on business travel?

Use of a rental car is prohibited unless it is the most economical means of transportation available (e.g., less expensive than a taxi or airport shuttle). The rental car may be used for business purposes only. The employee must pay for any incremental cost of personal use of the vehicle.

7. May I travel by air within the state of Pennsylvania?

Because of the relatively high cost, air travel within the state is prohibited. Exceptions may be made by the University President.

8. If traveling in a University-owned vehicle or rental vehicle, may a guest accompany me if there is room in the vehicle?

No, all occupants of a University-owned or rental vehicle must be employees of the System or members of the public or private sector necessary for the conduct of official business for which the vehicle is assigned.

9. If personal frequent flyer miles or card member reward points are used to purchase airline/hotel or car reservations can I be reimbursed?

No, a traveler cannot be reimbursed the cash value of any reward points/frequent flyer miles used.

10. Can I be reimbursed for travel insurance on airline tickets, hotel reservations or rental cars?

No, as a member of PASSHE we are self-insured and therefore, cannot enter into contracts for the purchase of insurance as defined in the procurement code.

11. If I am renting a vehicle am I required to use Enterprise Rental car?

The preferred rental agency is Enterprise or National (at airport locations) as we have a contract with them in which we receive discounted rates for both the rental and fuel.

**Lodging**

1. Is overnight lodging permitted in places with reasonable commuting distances?

Expenses for lodging will not be allowed at sites located within a reasonable commuting distance of headquarters or residence. Generally, either 50 miles or 1½ hours of travel time are considered reasonable commuting, subject to itinerary, weather, and time considerations.

**Subsistence**

1. How do I determine the proper reimbursement for subsistence while in overnight travel status?

Subsistence reimbursement is based on the number of hours an employee spends in overnight travel status. The maximum allowable reimbursement amount must be reduced for meals provided at no cost, included in a registration fee, facility rental, or the cost of lodging. Please remember that subsistence is an allowable maximum, it is not an automatic allowance. A traveler should request what was actually spent.

Example:

Depart on April 1 at 9 a.m. and return on April 3 at 10 p.m. 1 Lunch and 1 Dinner were provided Destination is Erie, PA Rate of Reimbursement = \$46	
\$46.00	April 1—9 a.m. to April 2—9 a.m.
\$46.00	April 2—9 a.m. to April 3—9 a.m.
\$28.75	April 3—9 a.m. to April 3—10 p.m. (13 hours)
\$120.75	Maximum Allowable Reimbursement
-\$9.66	Provided Lunch (21% of \$46)
-\$26.68	Provided Dinner (58% of \$46)
\$84.41	Total Reimbursement

2. Can I be reimbursed for subsistence while in non-overnight travel status? If so, how much?

Yes, an employee who works more than two hours before the normal start of the work day or two hours past the scheduled quitting time, and is 50 miles or more from both residence and headquarters may be reimbursed an \$8.00 meal allowance.

3. Can I be reimbursed for subsistence if required to participate in a non-overnight travel assignment on a holiday or scheduled day off?

Yes, an employee is eligible to be reimbursed for a percentage of the 24-hour subsistence rate as listed below.

There are no mileage requirements in this situation

Less than 3 hours	No reimbursement
3 hours to less than 6 hours	25%
6 hours to less than 15 hours	62.5%
15 hours to less than 24 hours	100%

4. Can I be reimbursed for alcohol as part of subsistence reimbursement?

No, alcohol is not considered subsistence and will not be reimbursed.

### **Telephone Calls**

1. Are telephone calls reimbursable?

Business telephone calls are reimbursable. Personal telephone calls are not reimbursable.

### **Purchase of Food**

1. What is the appropriate use of public funds with respect to the purchase of food?

See [PASSHE Expenditures of Public Funds \(Spending Guidelines\)](#).