Online Expense Report Guide

Upon your return from travel, you should enter your expense report online within 14 days of your return from travel.

Travel Receipts to Submit

The University’s reimbursement policy is based on documentation of reasonable and actual expenses, supported by original itemized receipts. Original itemized receipts must be submitted for all travel expenses. Monthly credit card statements and/or travel agency invoices and statements alone are not acceptable as backup documentation. Receipts are not required for meals and incidental expenses if the per diem reimbursement method is selected (see “Per Diem” section below for more information).

Transportation
- Airfare: E-ticket receipt and boarding passes
- Ground transportation: taxi, rail, shuttle service, and parking
- Personal auto use: Google map showing route origin, destination and mileage

Lodging
- Hotel: Final bill showing number of nights and amount paid

Conference Registration
- Registration receipt showing conference fee payment and the name and dates of conference and payment method.

Meals
- Itemized receipt from the restaurant listing the items purchased.
- Documentation or receipt reflecting gratuity if applicable.
- You will only be reimbursed for your portion of a group meal. Identify your purchases on the receipt.

Exceptions

If you are requesting to be reimbursed for travel more than 90 days after your return, if you are missing a receipt for a purchase over $40, or if you are requesting reimbursement for an expense that falls outside of the travel policy guidelines, you will be required to complete the Reimbursement Exception & 90-Day Exception Form.

Per Diem

An alternative to submitting receipts is the use of per diem. Per diem is a method of reimbursement for travel expenses that allows a set dollar amount per day. The maximum rate is determined by the federal government and varies by location where the expenses are incurred. Northwestern University has instituted the use of per diem for M&IE (Meals and Incidental Expenses) only. Partial per diem is allowable. The first and last day of travel are charged at 75% of the daily rate.

When submitting your expense report with per diem, print the table showing the rate for the city you visited from the GSA website.
Expenses Include in the per Diem M&IE Rate

- Meals
- Snacks
- Tips and fees

**Personal Automobile Mileage**

Travel using privately owned vehicles may be desirable to save time, transport equipment, or reduce cost when a number of persons are traveling together. The mileage reimbursement rate is based on U.S. Federal Government reimbursement rates. This reimbursement covers all fuel, maintenance, insurance, transportation, and operating costs. Fuel costs are included in the per-mile reimbursement rate and are not reimbursed separately for use of privately owned vehicles. Tolls and reasonable parking charges will be reimbursed in addition to the mileage allowance.

**Commercial Rental Vehicles**

Commercial rental vehicles should not be used if less expensive transportation is available. The University’s designated [vehicle rental agency](#) should be used whenever possible and midsize, economy, compact or subcompact vehicles should always be rented. Travelers should not purchase a collision damage waiver (CDW) from the rental agency if the rental is in the U.S or Canada; coverage should only be purchased for international rentals. Travelers must report all accidents to the Office of Risk Management within 24 hours, and immediately when any accident results in any personal injury or towing of a vehicle. The traveler should follow the rental agency accident report instructions, in addition to forwarding a copy of the report to the Office of Risk Management.

**Foreign Travel**

Use of foreign-based carriers is restricted on sponsored programs. Use of foreign carriers is allowed on non-sponsored sources of funds. See the "Fly America Act" for more information.

For a transaction in a foreign currency, the original itemized receipt plus documentation of the exchange rate is required in the form of:

- a credit card statement, or
- a calculated U.S. dollar equivalent on the date of the transaction. For currency conversion please use [Oanda](#).