

# Travel and Expense Reimbursement Guidance and Procedures

## General Procedures

Individual, itemized receipts must be attached to each expense report. This is a mandatory requirement for all expenses except for the following three expense types for which no receipt is required: Per diems for meals (as noted in Section C in this procedure); mileage; and minor expenses (non-meal items under \$15).

If receipts are lost, destroyed, or stolen, the date, a detailed description of expense and proof of payment must be provided as part of the request for reimbursement. A Missing Receipt Affidavit in the Expense Claim System (ECS) and payment proof must be provided by the claimant and approved by the approver before the expense report will be processed.

Additional justification on the claim or supporting documents for an expense item may be submitted mainly in these situations: when it may be viewed as not the most economical; when it could be viewed as a personal expense by an independent observer; when it is required for a specific grant or project; or anything requiring exceptional approval as per Exception Approval below.

Travel arrangements may be booked and direct billed through various travel agencies, using the [Travel Authorization Form](#). The Travel Authorization Form must be approved by the traveler's one-up approver.

Purchases from the University's contracted vendors (SMCs) should not go through the expense claim system, but directly billed to the University. Please refer to [Suppliers by Commodity](#).

The University does not reimburse expenses purchased with frequent flyer points, gift cards, vouchers, loyalty points or digital/cryptocurrency.

Requests for reimbursement should be submitted through the expense claim system (ECS) within thirty (30) days following completion of each trip, or the date the expense was incurred. In limited exceptional cases where an advance was received, claims that account for the advanced funds should be submitted within thirty (30) days from the termination date stated on the advance request form. The total advance amount should not be beyond 6 months of estimated spending and should normally be cleared within the fiscal year wherever possible.

It would be unreasonable to expect reimbursement more than one year after related expenses have been incurred. If the receipt date of the related expenses is older than one year, the request for reimbursement will require approval as per the exceptions section below.

Where the University is to reimburse the travel costs for visiting faculty or other individuals, a Payment Requisition form is to be prepared and submitted to Accounts Payable. The Payment Requisition form is available at the Financial Services website.

## **Procedures By Sections**

### **A. TRANSPORTATION**

The following guidelines regarding class of service apply to general business travel. Where the funding source (i.e. granting agencies) has more restrictive guidelines, the more restrictive guidelines will apply. Please be aware that most grant funding agencies specifically limit air, ground and rail travel reimbursement to the lowest available fare unless there is a medical reason for the requirement and the funding agency pre-approves the expense. If you are uncertain, please contact Research Financial Services prior to booking travel arrangements to obtain clarification.

When a traveler prefers to use a higher class than the one authorized for reimbursement, the traveler must pay the incremental cost. A Standard/Base Economy quote must be included with the claim, and the cost is the amount that would be eligible toward the higher-class purchase.

Claimants are expected to obtain the lowest logical fare by taking advantage of seat sales, one stop flights, connection flights, non-refundable fares, and advance purchase fares, all of which may result in a fare much lower than economy.

#### **1. Air Travel**

All air travel should be at the lowest available economical airfare by the most direct route. For purposes of this policy, economical airfare is defined as the lowest economy class airfare (sometimes referred to as, standard or base economy depending on the airline). Additional costs such as a reserved seat, one personal item, one carry-on bag, and one checked bag where not included with the airfare cost, are considered eligible costs. Where there is a high likelihood that the itinerary may change, it is appropriate to purchase a refundable (unrestricted) or flexible (Flex Economy) ticket. The justification for purchasing a refundable ticket must be documented for review and approval purposes.

The use of higher classes for air travel (such as Economy Comfort, Premium Economy or Business Class) is not encouraged, but in circumstances where it is deemed appropriate, approval must be obtained in advance of booking the flight. Business Class airfare must be approved by Dean, Director or above as per Exceptional Approval section. This approval cannot be delegated.

In assessing a request for approval of a higher class for air travel, the approver should consider whether a reasonable and objective member of the general public would agree that the higher class is justified. Examples of circumstances that may justify travelling in a higher class could include:

- A higher class is necessary to reasonably accommodate a disability or medical need of a traveler.
- The trip includes continuous air travel exceeding nine hours. Continuous air travel starts at the scheduled departure time and ends with the arrival at the destination.
- The use of the lowest economical fair would be more expensive or unduly time consuming due to scheduling difficulties resulting in circuitous routing, unduly long layovers and/or unnecessary hotel expense.
- An itinerary involves overnight travel without an opportunity for normal rest before the commencement of normal working hours.

The lack of availability of standard economy seats due to late travel arrangements which could reasonably have been avoided through better planning, would generally not be viewed as adequate justification for travelling in a higher class.

If claimants choose upgrades for personal reasons, reimbursement will be at the standard or base economy class rate and supporting documentation (standard or base economy class flight quote at time of booking) is required.

#### i. Receipt Requirement

Claims must include itemized receipt with flight detail, and proof of payment. Wherever possible, evidence that the trip has been completed must also be provided. Evidence of completion of travel is normally a boarding pass. Where a boarding pass is not available, other acceptable documentation that identifies the city and dates travelled (for example, hotel bill, meal receipts, taxi chits) must be provided.

#### ii. Other Charges

Cost of flight cancellation insurance is an allowable expense. However, there are very few categories of cancellation that are covered by this insurance, and most claimants will find that it is not economical.

Additional costs such as seat selection, one personal item, one carry-on bag, and one checked bag where not included with the airfare cost, are allowable expenses.

Charges for use of airport lounges are not allowable expenses.

### 2. Intercity Public Transportation (Train, bus, etc.)

The standard class of service is the least expensive economy class fare. All other classes (such as business class or premium economy), inclusive of any upgrades, must be approved as per the Exceptions section above.

However, to destinations where the travel time exceeds 4 hours (e.g. Ottawa or Montreal) a business class fare is allowed. The rationale is that the cost of business class rail service in these cases would generally be less expensive than travel by air when considering the

inclusion of meals in business class rail fares, potential savings in travel to the airport, and fare differentials.

### 3. Vehicle Rental

Rental cars should be used when they provide the most economical form of transportation. In many cases one-day vehicle rental is more economical than public transportation or use of a private automobile. The standard for a vehicle rental is a mid-size car. The costs of the rental vehicle plus fuel are allowable expenses.

Rental cars should normally be a direct billed item and not included in an expense claim. For more information regarding the University's vehicle rental contract, please refer to [Suppliers by Commodity](#).

#### i. Limitations

Traffic fines (for example parking, speeding tickets, etc.) are not allowable expenses.

#### ii. Insurance

Please see section H: Insurance - Vehicle Insurance – Rental vehicle used on university business

### 4. Use of Employee Owned Vehicle

It is recommended that a personally owned vehicle be used only for short journeys where this constitutes the most economical and effective means of transportation considering all factors such as costs, time constraints, itinerary etc.

The current rate of reimbursement is fixed at \$0.55 per km (as of October 17, 2022). Departments may choose to reimburse only the cost of fuel or implement a cap on the amount of KMs reimbursed. The cap must be lower than the actual mileage.

#### i. Limitations

Personally owned vehicles would normally be used for trips within a 250km radius of the traveler's regular place of work, unless it is deemed to be the more economical option. If a private automobile is used out of personal preference, beyond this radius, reimbursement will be limited to the cost of the most economical alternative mode of travel. For the protection of all parties, the university does not permit the borrowing of a vehicle; instead, a rental vehicle should be used. Traffic fines (such as parking or speeding tickets) are not allowable expenses.

ii. Insurance

Please refer to section H: Insurance - Vehicle Insurance – Private vehicle used on university business.

5. Local public transportation (bus, taxi, etc.)

Receipts must accompany the request for reimbursement.

6. Tolls/Parking

Cost of parking and tolls may be claimed. Receipts must accompany the expense report.

**B. ACCOMMODATION**

The standard for accommodation is a single room with a private bath in a business class hotel. Use of luxury accommodation will not be reimbursed. Within Canada, the [CAUBO website](#) may serve as a guide for the cost, location, and selection of accommodation. Outside Canada, the [federal government hotel directory](#) may serve as a guide for the location and selection of accommodation.

Itemized receipt for accommodation is required to be attached to expense claim and coded separately to the proper object code for meals and parking.

1. Accommodation provided in private residences

Accommodation provided in private residences may be reimbursed at the discretion of the approving authority. This amount should not exceed \$50.00 per day supported by specifics.

2. Accommodation for Extended Periods of Time

Persons required to stay in one location for a continuous period of one month or more shall obtain appropriate approvals in advance of travel. Where possible and more cost-effective, accommodation bookings on a weekly or monthly basis should be arranged.

3. Laundry and Dry-Cleaning Services

Laundry and dry-cleaning services are allowable for reimbursement on or after the sixth day since departure.

**C. MEALS**

Travelers may obtain reimbursement for meals using either per diems, or actual costs by submitting itemized receipts.

When meals are already included elsewhere, such as in the transportation fare, or in the cost of the conference fees, no claim for meals should be made.

### Per diems

Per diem amounts are limited to maximums as detailed in the table below. No receipts are required. If travelling for one meal period, the claimant will only be reimbursed for the per diem allowance for that meal.

	In Canada	USA or International
Breakfast	\$12.00 CAD	\$12.00 USD
Lunch	\$18.00 CAD	\$18.00 USD
Dinner	\$40.00 CAD	\$40.00 USD
Total Daily Allowance	\$70.00 CAD	\$70.00 USD

### Reimbursements based on receipts

Fully itemized receipts, including tax and gratuities, are required for each meal to be reimbursed. Alcohol will not be reimbursed, except in the limited circumstances as defined by the Hospitality Policy. The cost of alcohol plus the applicable tax must be removed from the receipt total.

## D. OTHER ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

In general, an expense incurred as a result of business conducted on behalf of the University of Guelph is permissible and reimbursable.

### 1. Telephone charges

Employees travelling on business trips will be reimbursed for reasonable, necessary personal calls home for each night away; and additional business expenses such as:

- Business calls
- Internet connections and computer access charges
- Facsimile transmissions
- Photocopying services

### 2. Home Internet and/or Cell Phone Service

Detailed guideline please see procedure: Guideline for Reimbursement of Home Internet and/or Cell Phone Service.

### 3. Visas and Immunization

The cost of a visa plus the cost of required immunizations for international travel will be reimbursed.

### 4. Conference/Course Fees

Registration fees for courses, conferences, or seminars should be paid by procurement card whenever possible.

### 5. Gifts / Near-cash gifts /Awards

- Employee is the recipient:

Gifts and Awards to Employees related policy, please refer to three HR policies below:

[710 Service Recognition and other Performance Based Awards](#)

[711 Gifts to Employees and Recognition of Significant Events](#)

[712 Recognition of Bereavement or Illness](#)

Any other gifts, non-cash gifts and awards not outlined in the above HR policies will be assessed for eligibility of taxable benefit based on [CRA guidelines](#).

Detailed receipts for gift cards/certificates must be attached to the claim. The claim must list the name(s) of the recipient(s). Where possible, the claimant should include signature/initial confirming receipt.

- Research Participant is recipient:

When claiming for research purposes, please refer to relevant procedure: “Guidelines and Procedures: Incentives, Compensation, and Honoraria for Research Participants”

- Other External Payee is recipient:

As per the Hospitality Policy, gift cards/certificates can be given as gifts for visitors, e.g. a visiting speaker. The University has a responsibility to report this as income of the recipient wherever applicable.

## E. NON-ELIGIBLE ITEMS

- Bank charges;
- Interest charges;
- Loss or damage to personal possessions;
- Parking and traffic fines, or any other fines or late fees;
- Personal expenses including living expense, kennel fees, movies, mini-bar charges;
- Travel, accident and life insurance costs if already covered through University's benefit plan
- Expenses of family members;
- Expenses for failure to cancel transportation or hotel reservations;
- Passport expenses;
- Donations

## F. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENTS

Information on the policies governing faculty and professional staff professional development can be found in various collective agreements. Expenditures must be incurred by the member for actual out-of-pocket expenses during the period of employment with the University for expenses that are allowable within this policy and all related policies, procedures, and guidelines. All goods and equipment reimbursed remain the property of the University.

## G. MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS

### 1. Foreign Exchange

The ECS will perform currency exchange calculations based on the location of the expense and the date of the receipt and convert to the Canadian amount in the expense report. A claimant may over-ride the exchange rate if the amount charged to the claimant's credit card is different than the exchange rate showing in the ECS. If overridden and the rate is beyond the acceptable variance in system, documentation supporting the rate applied must be submitted with the expense report.

### 2. Combining Personal with Business Travel

If an employee combines business travel with personal travel, expenses related to direct travel to the business event are reimbursable. The University will only reimburse the claimant for accommodation and meal costs for business travel days.

### 3. Spousal/Family Member Travel

Expenses related to an employee's spouse or family member are considered personal expenses and are not reimbursable. If there is a business purpose for their presence, it will be approved as per the Exceptions section.

### 4. Harmonized Sales Tax (HST)/Goods and Services Tax (GST) – as applicable



The University is eligible for a rebate on a portion of HST/GST paid. The ECS will automatically calculate the HST/GST portion of the receipts entered based on purchase location.

#### 5. Sabbatical Leave Expenses

No living expenses (meals, accommodations, etc.) will be reimbursed while on sabbatical, however, travel for approved University business to and from the sabbatical location and appropriate, related expenses will be reimbursed.

## H. INSURANCE

The University provides a variety of insurance coverages and employee benefits to address the risks associated with travel for faculty, staff, and students. Not all coverages are available to extend to all groups or to all circumstances. It is the responsibility of the traveler to ensure they have adequate insurance for themselves and family members.

For life insurance, medical insurance, travel insurance or other personal insurance related information, please refer to the [University's Group Benefits Plans](#). Specific questions should be directed to your Benefits coordinator, Human Resources;

The University insurance coverages for property and vehicle liability is the same on-campus as off-campus. A traveler should be aware of the rental rules that are listed on the University of Guelph's [Insurance website](#). Specific questions should be directed to the Director, Treasury Operations at extension 52758.

Personal Activities - Claimants should be aware that insurance coverage provided by the University (for example – Liability Insurance) only applies when the traveler is conducting University business. Vacation periods before, during and after University business are not covered. In addition, family members and travelling companions are not covered under University insurance policies.

### **Other Related Procedures & Documents**

- Hospitality Expense Reimbursement Procedures
- Travel and Expense Reimbursement Policy
- Faculty Professional Development Reimbursement Procedures
- Sessional Lecture Professional Development Reimbursement Procedures
- Professional and Management Professional Development Reimbursement Procedures
- Payments to Research Participants – Guidelines and Procedures
- Honorarium Payments to Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Holders – Guidelines and Procedures

## **Appendix**

- Appendix A: Cell Phone and Internet Claims Reimbursement Guideline
- Appendix B: Keeping Electronic Images in Expense Claim System Procedure
- Appendix C: Expense Claim System Approver Change Form