Instructions for travelers

A. Before you travel:
1) You can get money before you leave to help cover out-of-pocket expenses. You should request a travel advance at least 14 days prior to your departure date. You may request a travel advance 20 working days before the start of your trip. This advance must be cleared with your travel report shortly after the end date of the trip (the University guideline is “within two weeks”). Delays, by IRS rules, will result in the advance being charged to you as income—and taxes will be withheld from your next paycheck.

2) You can request the University to prepay some expenses directly to the vendors. The 20-day limit does not apply for these expenses. These expenses include airfare, conference registration, hotel deposits, etc. When possible, the vendor should invoice the University directly. If you choose to pay for these expenses yourself, you can apply for an “extra” travel advance to cover these early, paid expenses.

B. Receipts and allowable expenses:
1) Receipts are required for any “regular” travel expense that is $30 or greater. “Regular” expenses include taxi fares, and tips. Receipts are required for any “irregular” expenses, regardless of the amount. Examples are poster supplies, film and developing, hardware, and batteries.

2) You need to turn in the traveler’s copy of the airline ticket, if you receive one. If not, please submit the e-confirmation notice and/or travel agency itinerary.

3) The University now pays a per diem for meals as an option chosen by the traveler. No meal receipts are required. Otherwise, you must submit meal receipts if any meal is greater than $30. You must itemize each meal for any day whose expenses exceed $50 and submit the required receipts. Please use actual costs for meals. Auditors have questioned reports with identical daily totals, or full day reimbursement claimed for afternoon departures or morning returns. We strongly recommend using the per diem option.

4) Alcoholic beverages, in any quantity, whether consumed with meals or between meals, are not allowable charges to any Federal grant or contract. University funds require the Chairman’s approval for this expense.

5) The University will not reimburse for the cost of insurance on rental vehicles, unless the vehicle will be operated in unusually hazardous conditions (like driving into field terrain), or if you are outside the United States. The University will pay for any repairs if the vehicle is damaged. If you are in an accident, please fill out a police report and get the proper information from any individual(s) involved. This would include name, address, telephone number of the individual, the address, phone number, and policy number of their insurance carrier. Upon your return, please fill out the necessary paperwork with Rich Heuermann.

6) If you share expenses with other travelers (ex. lodging, meals, and car rental…), please be advised that no report can be approved until ALL travelers have turned in their reports. So, you will be reimbursed quicker if you do not share expenses. Shared expenses must be cross-referenced, so please include the names of the individuals you covered. If you paid for dinner for yourself and any other individuals, you will need to identify them by name on the back of the receipt.
C. **Foreign travel:**
   1) We strongly suggest that you discuss any foreign travel with Lisa Klein before making arrangements. Foreign travel is defined as any travel outside of the United States and its territories and possessions. Federal guidelines require the use of American carriers to the maximum extent possible between the U.S. and the foreign country or between foreign countries. An American carrier must be used to/from the United States and as far as a reasonable itinerary permits. Foreign carriers may be used between two points outside the U.S., if American carriers are not available, or if American carriers would cause long delays. Congress has defined “long delays” in two pages of regulations. This requirement cannot be waived because of cost, convenience, or personal preference.

D. **Upon your return:**
   1) University rules require you to file your travel report within two weeks of your return date. If a travel advance was issued to you, IRS regulations require prompt filing. After 90 days, the amount of the travel advance must, by IRS rule, be reported as taxable income paid to you. This will be charged to the Department, not to the source(s) you had intended.

   2) You need to file your report using the University form. Please see Lisa Klein for a spreadsheet version if you prefer. You must sign the report. You may use pencil to complete the paper form, to make changes easier. Bookkeeping will review and finish the form, but will not prepare the form for you. Bookkeeping will add data such as travel advance and check request document numbers as well as budget/object codes. You must supply the source(s) to be charged.

   3) Please include any expenses that were prepaid on your travel report including University credit card purchases. You will then list the amount of any advances or check requests on the bottom portion of your report. If your advance exceeded your actual expenses and you owe the University money, please include your check, made out to Washington University, with your travel report.

E. If you have any question concerning travel policies, please contact Rich Heuermann or Lisa Klein. The main things to keep in mind are: keep all receipts (especially airline tickets), ask questions before you leave or make any arrangements, and try to avoid sharing expenses.