

Travel Approval and Reimbursement

Version 2

 Print

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Title	Travel Approval and Reimbursement
Category	Finance, Operations and Auxiliary Services
Sub-category	Travel
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Contact	Disbursements Manager (737-1084; traveloffice@ecu.edu (mailto:traveloffice@ecu.edu))
Related Policies	Reimbursable Travel for Non-State Employees PRR (https://policy.ecu.edu/07/80/01) Third Party Lodging PRR (https://policy.ecu.edu/07/80/03)

**Additional
References**

ECU Travel Procedures Manual (<https://financialservices.ecu.edu/travel-office/>)

State of North Carolina Budget Manual, Section 5 (<https://www.osbm.nc.gov/budget/budget-manual#Sect50>)

Travel Allowances of State Employees (General Statute 138-6) (pdf) (https://www.ncleg.gov/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/PDF/BySection/Chapter_138/GS_138-6.pdf)

Travel Exceptions (General Statute 138-7) (pdf) (https://www.ncleg.gov/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/PDF/BySection/Chapter_138/GS_138-7.pdf)

Overpayment of State Funds (General Statute 143-64.80) (pdf) (https://www.ncleg.gov/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/PDF/BySection/Chapter_143/GS_143-64.80.pdf)

Penalties for Filing False Claims (General Statute 143C-10-1) (pdf) (https://www.ncleg.gov/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/PDF/BySection/Chapter_143C/GS_143C-10-1.pdf)

Civil Liability (General Statute 143C-10-2) (pdf) (https://www.ncleg.gov/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/PDF/BySection/Chapter_143C/GS_143C-10-2.pdf)

Internal Revenue Service Publication 463 (pdf) (<https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p463.pdf>)

Reimbursements - 26 CFR1.62-2(g)(2)(i) (<https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/CFR-2020-title26-vol2/CFR-2020-title26-vol2-sec1-62-2>)

Private Use of Publicly Owned Vehicles (General Statute 14-247) (pdf) (https://www.ncleg.gov/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/PDF/BySection/Chapter_14/GS_14-247.pdf)

Department of Administration Central Motor Pool (General Statute 143-341(8)i) (pdf) (https://www.ncleg.gov/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/PDF/BySection/Chapter_143/GS_143-341.pdf)

Department of Administration (Motor Fleet Management Regulations) (<https://ncadmin.nc.gov/government-agencies/motor-fleet-management>)

U.S. Government Accountability Office B138942 (Fly America Act) (pdf) (<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/USCODE-2011-title49/pdf/USCODE-2011-title49-subtitleVII-partA-subparti-chap401-sec40118.pdf>)

ECU Office of Research Administration U.S. Flag Carrier Procedures (<https://rede.ecu.edu/ora/wp-content/pv-uploads/sites/462/2019/07/POL-US-CARRIER.pdf>)

ECU Basic Spending Guidelines (<https://cdn.ecu.edu/docs/prr-uploaded-docs/ECUspendingguidelines-1.pdf>) (https://www.ecu.edu/cs-admin/financial_serv/customcf/ECUspendingguidelines.docx)

ECU Account Maintenance Form (<https://financialservices.ecu.edu/procard/>)

1. Purpose

The purpose of this regulation is to provide a comprehensive reference for uniform interpretation of the conditions under which ECU may reimburse or bear allowable employee expenses pertaining to all official travel, including, but not limited to, transportation, subsistence, conferences, training sessions, and management retreats. This regulation applies to all funding sources.

2. ECU Travel Procedures Manual

The ECU Travel Procedures Manual on the Travel Office website is a current reference and procedures manual with guidance related to the detailed requirements of the University, state and federal laws and various regulatory agencies. It should be followed for all travel related activities.

3. Management Travel Directive

The Chancellor or Vice Chancellor of Administration and Finance may issue a more restrictive travel directive due to budgetary constraints. The directive will take precedence over this regulation and the ECU Travel Procedures Manual until lifted.

4. Employee Responsibilities

4.1 General Requirements for Reimbursement or Payment for Travel Expenses

Employees must obtain written travel authorization prior to travel. Approval within the online travel system satisfies this requirement.

An employee traveling on official business is expected to exercise the same care in incurring expenses that a prudent person would exercise in traveling on personal business and expending personal funds. Excess costs, circuitous routes, delays or luxury accommodations, and services unnecessary or unjustified in the performance of official business are not acceptable under this standard. Employees will be responsible for unauthorized costs and any additional expenses incurred for personal preference or convenience. Each traveler is responsible for his or her own expenses. Travel that does not directly benefit the University will not be reimbursed.

Per G.S. 138-6, requests for reimbursement shall be submitted to the Travel Office within 30 days after the travel period ends for which the reimbursement is being requested. (See section 7.1 on late submission of travel forms.)

Employees are responsible for following the requirements of the ECU Travel Procedures Manual.

1. Employees traveling out of the United States must ensure that they understand and are compliant with U.S. requirements governing export control regulations.
2. Employees are responsible for obtaining approvals and providing documentation for official University business travel trips including both overnight and day trips.
3. Employees must not request reimbursement for more than the actual costs incurred for a University purpose. Care should be taken so that costs paid by an ECU ProCard are not also requested for reimbursement.
4. Employees overpaid for travel must immediately notify the Travel Office and reimburse the University within 30 days. Pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-64.80(a), an overpayment of State funds shall be recouped by the entity that made the overpayment and, to the extent allowed by law, the amount of the overpayment may be offset against the net wages of the person receiving the overpayment.

4.2 Trips for University Business and Non-University Purposes

When an employee travels on University business and includes non-University functions as part of the trip, the employee must ensure that:

1. The trip is necessary and primarily for business purposes.
2. Non-University purposes do not limit, interfere, or minimize the business purpose.
3. Expenses incurred for the business portion are not higher as a result of the non-University purpose.
4. Only the business expenses are charged to the University.

In addition, when an employee extends a business trip to include vacation time or takes a personal guest on the trip, it is the employee's responsibility to provide written documentation to his/her supervisor documenting the fact that no costs related to the vacation or the guest are being charged to the University.

5. Departmental Responsibilities

Departments are responsible for ensuring that the ECU Travel Procedures Manual on the Travel Office website is followed for all travel, including travel paid by ECU ProCards.

Departments must ensure that their employees are aware of the University's policies, rules and regulations, the ECU Travel Procedures Manual, guidelines and any additional restrictions imposed by the department.

Departments are responsible for reviewing and approving all payments and requests for reimbursement related to travel activities including prepayments by departments, written justifications for excess costs and extra baggage fees, and the use of ECU ProCards.

Departments are responsible for the timely and accurate processing of travel reimbursement requests to meet the 30 day statutory requirement.

Departments are responsible for ensuring that travel documentation is adequate and supports the amounts requested for reimbursement. This documentation should verify the following:

1. The travel is entirely University business related.
2. The travel is the most practical way to conduct the University business.
3. Reasonable efforts have been made to keep the cost within statutory limits and to keep the number of travelers to a minimum.
4. Travel expenses can be covered within budgeted travel line items.

When a trip is extended for personal reasons of an employee, departments are responsible for reviewing and maintaining on file written documentation that no additional costs are charged to the University.

Documentation is subject to review by the Office of Internal Audit and Management Advisory Services, external auditors, and Financial Services.

6. Special Rules for Grant Funds

Travel costs paid by grant funds must also comply with sponsor regulations and rates. Transportation costs paid by federal or federal pass-through funds must comply with US Carrier restrictions as required by the Comptroller General U.S. Decision B138942. In the event of conflict between sponsor and University policy, the most restrictive practice/rate will be applied.

7. Non-Compliance

7.1 Late Submission of Travel Reimbursement Form

Any reimbursement requests received in the Travel Office more than 30 days after the last day of travel will be considered late and may be denied. Additional approval procedures and funding restrictions must be followed as described in the Travel Procedures Manual.

7.2 Travel Not Approved in Advance

Any travel, including excess travel, not approved in advance requires written justification and additional approval as described in the Travel Procedures Manual.

7.3 Missing, Insufficient, or Incorrect Documentation

Reimbursement requests with missing, insufficient, or incorrect documentation will be held for correction. If appropriate documentation is unavailable, a statement must be provided explaining the circumstances. Additional approval requirements are described in the Travel Procedures Manual.

8. State Law Penalties for Filing False Travel Claims

The University is subject to the provisions of the State Budget Act and the accompanying Budget Manual published by the Office of State Budget and Management. Section 5.0 of the Budget Manual covers the state's policies and regulations governing travel by state employees. Article 10 of the State Budget Act, N.C.G.S. 143C-10-1, provides the following penalties for violations of the Act as follows:

1. Class 1 misdemeanor – for a person to knowingly and willfully (1) withdraw funds from the State Treasury for any purpose not authorized by an act of appropriation, (2) approve any fraudulent, erroneous, or otherwise invalid claim or bill to be paid from an appropriation, (3) make a written statement, give a certificate, issue a report, or utter a document required by this Chapter, any portion of which is false, (4) fail or refuse to perform a duty imposed by this Chapter.
2. Class A1 misdemeanor – for a person to make a false statement in violation of N.C.G.S. 143C-6-23(c).
3. Forfeiture of Office or Employment – an appointed officer or employee of the State or an officer or employee of a political subdivision of the State, whether elected or appointed, forfeits his/her office or employment upon conviction of an offense under this section.

In addition, pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143C-10-2, a person convicted of an offense under Article 10 of the State Budget Act is liable in a civil action for all damages suffered by the State in consequence of the offense.

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