
TO: WM Colleagues
FROM: LaDonna Brown, Travel Program Manager
SUBJECT: **Travel News**
DATE: February 21, 2024

Welcome back, team! We hope you're feeling refreshed and rejuvenated after your well-deserved break. As we dive into the new year, we're excited to reconnect and embark on another exciting journey together.

Change/Cancellation of Travel Plans and how it may impact your reimbursement.

Understanding the ramifications of altering or cancelling travel plans is crucial for reimbursement considerations. Expenses incurred due to a *traveler's unexpected emergencies* leading to changes or cancellations are generally not eligible for reimbursement; it is expected that travelers coordinate with vendors directly for any necessary adjustments and refunds.

To qualify for reimbursement, a *valid business purpose* for the change or cancellation must be provided, such as a cancelled conference/meeting, airline-initiated flight cancellations, or a determination by the university that travel would endanger the traveler's health and safety.

Please note that this list is not exhaustive, and the Travel Office collaborates with the Legal Office to assess the feasibility of reimbursements in such cases. Thank you for your attention to these guidelines.

Third-Party Lodging Policy (Airbnb, VRBO, HomeAway, Placemakr, Front Desk, etc)

The Travel Office has noted a rising number of expense reports containing Third-Party Lodging that do not meet the requirements of the policy. Third-Party Lodging is only permissible in specific circumstances, outlined in the policy, and requires appropriate documentation for approval.

Third-Party Lodging can be booked under the following circumstances:

1. International Travel – Employee is traveling internationally and will fully pay for services and seek reimbursement after the fact. Third-Party booking must be charged to a Grant or Local fund.
2. Domestic Travel – Employee may only use domestically when there is no conventional lodging in the area (remote area), or when conventional lodging facilities are in short supply because of an influx of attendees at a special event. Proof of non-availability is mandatory, and lack of proof will result in non-payment. There are no exceptions. Third-Party booking must be charged to a Grant or Local fund.

Please review the policy in its entirety and if you have any questions, please contact the Travel Office directly prior to booking. <https://www.wm.edu/offices/financialoperations/announcements/thirdpartylodging.php>.

Chrome River Approver Responsibilities and Approver Manual

If you find yourself designated or assigned as an approver in Chrome River, it is crucial to understand both your role and the associated requirements within the approval process. Please refer to the listed approver roles in Chrome River to gain a comprehensive understanding of your responsibilities in the approval process and ensure that you have thoroughly reviewed the Chrome River Approver Manual.

The Chrome River Approver Manual is a document provided to users within the system that are authorized to approve Pre-Approvals and Expense Reports.

<https://www.wm.edu/offices/financialoperations/travel/images/cr-approver-manual.pdf>

Approval Roles in Chrome River:

Supervisor Role	Primary or Budget Approver Role	International Approver Role	Office of Sponsored Programs Role (OSP)
Supervisor approvers ensure that travel requests support the W&M mission. Pre-Approvals are routed to the supervisor as first level once submitted. The supervisor role is the expense owner's timesheet approver listed in HR Banner.	Budget approvers verify the availability of funds for travel requests, review expenses for compliance with W&M policy, and ensure the necessary documents are attached. They are designated as the allocation (index) approvers and are identified by the Business offices for the role.	International Approvers are mandatory for all travel to foreign destinations and are routed through the Pre-Approval process. In addition, they grant approval for lodging exceptions where the non-conference hotel room rate exceeds 150%-200% of the standard per diem rate. Similarly, they authorize business meal exceptions when the meal exceeds between 150%-200% of the standard per diem rate. This role is assigned by the Dean/VP, and/or Director	The OSP Approver is required for all travel funded by a grant. The approval is routed through the Pre-Approval process and the role is designated to all grant administrators.

Rental Car

The Travel Office receives an abundance of questions regarding rentals for university business. The rental contract and vehicle use policy can be found on the Procurement Website

<https://www.wm.edu/offices/supplychain/procurement/purchasing/rental-vehicles-enterprisereentalcars/>

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the university contract code for W&M and who can use the services?
The employee Enterprise contract code is XZ21032 . Guests and Non-WM Affiliates cannot use the Enterprise contract or have any rentals direct-billed to the university. Guests must book their own rentals using any rental agency and seek reimbursement in Chrome River.
What type of car can I rent for university business for Enterprise? What if there are no economy rentals available?
The Policy allows for Compact/Economy rentals only. An employee may rent a larger vehicle if there is a business justification. The business justification must be submitted on the Chrome River expense report or on the Direct Payment in buyW&M. If there are no economy rentals available, you may opt to rent the next largest vehicle under the contract. Please provide documentation that shows that there was no economy vehicle available at the time of online booking.
What if there are no other rentals available at Enterprise at all?
If Enterprise has no rentals available, the documentation must be saved showing that no cars are available. An employee may proceed to book at another rental agency but must provide explanation and backup documentation on the expense report. W&M does have a contract with Hertz for lower rate options.
What if I decide to still rent a larger vehicle other than Compact/Economy?
If you decide to rent a larger vehicle, the university will only reimburse up to the amount of the Compact/Economy rental rate per policy.
Can Students use the university contract for travel?

Yes, if they are driving on official university business and at least 21 years old. It must be completed as a direct bill through the department and Van Safety Training is required through the Risk Management Office.

Can Graduate Students use the university contract for travel?

Graduate students that are on Payroll are treated as employees and will use the same process as employees for renting a car for university business through Enterprise. They must complete the Faculty/Staff Drivers Authorization Form prior to booking. https://www.wm.edu/offices/publicsafety/riskmanagement/_documents/FacStaffAuthorizationFormNov2009.pdf

Are we able to book one-way rentals that include a drop fee?

It is not recommended to book one-way rentals. Our contract does not include unlimited mileage on a one-way rental Enterprise charges a drop fee. If a traveler still opts to book a one-way rental, the additional mileage charges and the drop fee must be charged to a local fund for reimbursement.

Are we able to add “Refueling” to our car rental?

Refueling is only allowable under local funds with justification. Refueling cannot be charged to a direct bill unless the refueling fees are allocated to a local fund.

What optional fees are reimbursable?

Drop fees, Additional Driver fees, Late Return fees must all be allocated to a local fund for reimbursement.

Reminders!

Per IRS requirements, Travel Reimbursement must be submitted within 60 days of the last travel day or the corresponding expense. Employees consistently submitting reimbursement beyond the 60-day timeframe must be reported as income to the employee.

- Travel Reimbursements submitted greater than 180 days are not eligible for reimbursement.
- New Requirements for Travel to Europe – Postponed until January 2025!
- New IRS Mileage Rates, as of January 1, 2024 – IRS rate .67 per mile
- The Travel Website is your sole source of information and training documentation. User Manuals and Quick Guides can be found at <https://www.wm.edu/offices/financialoperations/travel/>.
- All archived Travel Newsletters can be found on the Travel Website- Announcements <https://www.wm.edu/offices/financialoperations/travel/announcements/travel-newsletters.php>

We want to hear from you!

We are committed to making your interaction with the Travel Office smooth and efficient. Your feedback is crucial for us to better understand your needs and enhance our services. Please spare a moment to fill out the brief survey below.

Whether it is additional training, improved communication methods, or specific assistance you need, your input will help us identify areas for improvement and tailor our services to better serve you. Thank you for your time and participation.

Survey Link: https://wmsas.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_2oCYFu6dZIoKkjs