College of Journalism

Step by Step Guide

procedures before and after your travel
Topic Menu

- **Before you travel**
  - Items to keep in mind before and during travel.
  - How do I get college approval and have my reservation purchased?
  - What role does the college business office play when arranging my trip?
  - Combining business and personal travel
  - What if my plans change before or during travel?

- **After you travel**
  - Expense statement checklist
  - What to look for in a receipt
  - Tips to preserve your receipts
  - How to complete an Expense Statement
  - Meal per diem, mileage rates, limits of travel budget

- **Contracts and Meetings**
- **Campus links for more information**
- **Business Office Contact information**
Items to keep in mind before & during travel

- **Complete and submit your Travel Approval Request form BEFORE your trip:**
  You must submit a travel approval request form to the business office before any overnight trips. You run the risk of not receiving university approval upon return. The traveler will have to cover their own expenses in these cases. Travel forms can be accessed at http://merrill.umd.edu/faculty-and-staff/forms-central/.

- **Remember to keep all valid itemized receipts** (verifying payment) for the following: airfare, train fare, hotel, conference fees, auto rental, taxi, internet, parking, baggage fees, fuel (for rental cars), and any meal exceeding per diem. If you are not sure keep the receipt just in case.

- **Insurance on auto rentals**
  - Employees: **DO NOT** purchase any insurance for domestic travel, you will not be reimbursed for the cost. Employees may purchase CDW / LDW for international car rentals only.
  - Non-employees may be reimbursed for CDW / LDW only.
  - **LIS / PAI / PEI** coverage is **NEVER** reimbursable for any travelers.

- **Complete your expense statement quickly**
  You must submit your expense statement in a reasonable amount of time (2 weeks ideally). If there is an extended delay (over 90 days) you will need to submit an explanation.
How do I get college approval and have my reservation purchased?

- Visit the college’s website and complete a Travel Approval Request form. Please provide the name of the travel agency that is holding your reservation in the form (choose “other” if you did not use one of our agencies)
  - Please be specific with your travel purpose (conference name, seminar/lecture topic, meeting subject, etc.).
  - Include all anticipated expenses for your trip (include lodging, car rental, meals, ground transportation, conference fees, etc.).
  - If you would like the business office to arrange payment for room & tax charges at your hotel please provide the hotel name, telephone number, and reservation confirmation number in the message section of the request form (step 3).

- Once you complete the Travel Approval Request form, please send it to Vanessa Nichols-Holmes at vnholmes@umd.edu or bring a hard copy to the business office in 2202 Knight Hall.

- When the business office electronically approves the request an email is automatically sent to the travel agency authorizing the purchase of the air or rail ticket.

- The travel agency will email E-ticket information to you. Please take this with you to the airport or train station.
What role does the business office play when arranging my trip?

- Keep in mind that the business office does not make reservations for your trip. We process your UMD travel approval forms and can assist with making payments on your behalf.

- **We can only pay for airfare, train, and/or hotel reservations through our 3 approved Travel Agencies.** (You are welcome to purchase tickets through a website or other agency but you are responsible for retaining proper receipts for reimbursement. You cannot request reimbursement until after your travel is complete.)

- **If you would like our office to pay for your air/train fare please call one of our travel agencies to make your reservation.**
  - Globetrotter 301-570-0800 or 866-235-5467 after hours: 800-639-9278
  - Travelon 301-403-4278 or 800-333-2115 after hours: 800-366-2100
  - Omega 877-403-4282 after hours: 800-285-6342

- Let the agent know that your ticket will be purchased on the College of Journalism’s profile.

- Your ticket can be held for 24 to 48 hours (depending on the airline) until the electronic approval has been received for purchase.

- **Travel insurance policies are available through our 3 approved Travel Agencies.** (Travel insurance policies cannot be reimbursed if you purchase from any other source)
Combining personal & business travel

- **When combining personal travel with your business trip:**
  - If you modify your business travel to include personal travel you must obtain a comparison itinerary showing the cost for airfare on just the business travel dates **before** you travel.
  - Any additional costs incurred due to stopovers or route modifications made for the convenience of the traveler will be borne entirely by the traveler.

- **When traveling with non-UMD travelers:**
  - UMD will not reimburse any expenses for travel companions unless the college approves their travel expenses prior to travel and documents that their travel is on behalf of the University of Maryland.
  - Detailed records must be kept to separate business expenses when traveling with companions who are not on university travel.
    - For lodging we need written documentation of the hotel's single rate to be submitted along with the actual receipt when requesting reimbursement.
What if my plans change?

- **Always notify the business office in writing of any changes to your trip.** Even when no payment arrangements have been made we still need to update your file. When payment arrangements have been made we need to document everything and ensure any credits or refunds are tracked and put back in the correct account. Please email our office right away when you have any changes.

- **Airline / Hotel Cancellation and Change Fees cannot be paid** except in cases of emergencies and for the convenience of University of Maryland. Please contact the business office for assistance with these changes.

- The University of Maryland will not reimburse or pay for travel insurance other than that purchased through or 3 approved Travel Agencies.

- Be sure to consider and fully understand the airfare's applicable restrictions as well as change and cancellation penalties before accepting the itinerary. Such penalties are reimbursable only if your approving authority agrees that an itinerary change or cancellation is in the best interest of the university.

- The university cannot purchase or reimburse fully refundable fares without justification and prior approval by the college.
Once you return from your travel...

► Go to the Philip Merrill College of Journalism website, click on “Faculty & Staff” in the menu on the top. Then “Forms Central” on the left side of the page and fill out an expense statement form.

► Complete the form with your out of pocket travel expenses.  
  **Do not include expenses already paid by the business office.**

► Return the signed expense form to the business office with all of your original receipts:
  
  Philip Merrill College of Journalism  
  2202 Knight Hall  
  College Park, MD 20742  
  (301) 405-2388  
  vnholmes@umd.edu

► The business office will then process the reimbursement or contact you if there are any problems with the approval.
Expense Statement Checklist

- Include your employment status and contact information (you or a designated contact person).
- Remember to include all valid itemized receipts (verifying payment) for the following: airfare, train fare, hotel, conference fees, auto rental, taxi, internet, parking, baggage fees, fuel (for rental cars), and any meal exceeding per diem.
- Mileage can only be calculated using whole miles, no decimals.
- Enter only the meals that you are allowed given your times of travel.
  Do not include meals paid as part of lodging costs or registration fees.
- Include proof of conversion rates.
  Valid proof: print-out from OANDA.com or xe.com that reflects the rate you used; receipt for the exchange rate; hotel or credit card documentation. Please DO NOT simply write down the rate you used without any back up documentation, this is not adequate proof. (If we cannot verify your conversion rate we will use our own which can result in a lower reimbursement)
What to look for in a receipt

- Is it itemized? Does the receipt clearly show what products or services were purchased and the individual costs? *(highlighted in blue)*

- Does the receipt show payment was made, method of payment, and that there is no balance due? *(payment highlighted in yellow)*

- Is the receipt on letterhead or list enough vendor information to contact them if there were any questions? *(highlighted in red)*

Helpful hints: Only use light yellow highlighter to accent a receipt or credit card statement. Other colors do not copy or scan well and information can be lost. Also be aware that tape (and highlighter) can cause thermal printed receipts to fade very quickly.
Tips to preserve your receipts

- Be careful when using tape or highlighters on thermal receipts. Tape causes the printing to disappear as can highlighter ink. The edges of this receipt have been taped and the printing underneath has disappeared.

- Only use light yellow highlighter when possible on documents. Here is a parking receipt showing various color highlighters. The darker colors obscure information once the receipt is copied or scanned. All 3 images are the same receipt.
Double check your account #, SSN, and name spelling.

Provide your address, contact information, and detailed travel purpose.

In this grid list each day’s expenses in a column. List the cost next to the appropriate category. For example:

On 3/5/14 there is a $10 lunch & $33 taxi.
The Expense Statement (part 2)

On the bottom portion of the expense statement you will list your travel itinerary.

Last but not least… Remember to sign the form! We cannot process your reimbursement request without your signature.

Return the completed form and all receipts to the business office.
Budget limits, meal rates, & mileage

- **Request authorized amount**
  If there is a limit on your total trip cost or reimbursement total please do not submit expenses in excess of that figure.

- **Current domestic meal per diem**
  - Breakfast $9.00
  - Lunch $11.00
  - Dinner $25.00

- **International meal rates** can be found on the State Department Website
  - The M&IE rate should be entered in your expense statement:
    - Breakfast 15% of daily rate  
      (ex: $100/day M&IE rate = $100 * 15% = $15 breakfast per diem)
    - Lunch 25% of daily rate
    - Dinner 60% daily rate

- **Mileage rate** (effective for travel after January 1, 2016)
  - $0.54 per mile  
    (only enter whole miles, no decimals)

- **Mileage calculation**
  Mileage is measured from the closer of the duty station or point of departure to destination and return for travel on days during the employee's normal work schedule. For travel on days that are not part of the employee's normal work schedule, actual mileage driven is reimbursable.

  **Example:** When traveling to BWI airport on a Tuesday that you would normally report to work mileage should be calculated from your office location to the airport unless your origin (home) is closer to the airport. On Saturday (if you would not normally work on a Saturday) actual mileage traveled is appropriate.
Contracts and meetings

- **Individuals are not authorized to enter into any contract on behalf of the university.**
  All contracts need to be reviewed and signed by Travel Services before any payment is made.

- **We cannot pay for any alcoholic beverages regardless of funding source.**

- **When possible, it is best to work with our travel agencies to find a vendor and negotiate all contracts or meetings, especially when costs exceed $5,000.**
  We can make purchases above the $5,000 delegated purchasing limit with our approved agencies so it reduces the college’s documentation burden. When we use one of our agencies they know the university policies and can steer the contract process away from unallowable clauses.

- **If you are not working with one of our travel agencies we will need a copy of the contract to forward onto Travel Services along with any additional documentation that might be needed.**

- **In order to process a contract we will need a Travel Approval Request completed and an expected list of attendees.**

- **Be sure to allow enough time to complete contract review and negotiations.**
  Travel Services asks for a minimum of 2 weeks to review a contract. During busy times of the year and right before breaks please allow extra time for the review. Keep this in mind when setting up payment schedules and deadlines with the vendor.
Campus links for more information

- **Department of Business Services—Travel Services**
  [http://www.dbs.umd.edu/travel/](http://www.dbs.umd.edu/travel/)

- **Department of Business Services—Travel Services “Traveler’s Guide”**

- **Department of Business Services—Travel Discounts**
  Provides a list of corporate discounts provided to University of Maryland affiliates.

- **UMUC Marriott Reservations**
  Visit this link for information regarding UMUC reservations & corporate discount codes.

- **Motor Transportation Services at the University of Maryland**
  The Motor Transportation Services unit of the Department of Business Services offers a wide variety of transportation-related services to the university. The goal of Motor Transportation Services is to provide the university community with quality, convenient and cost-effective vehicle services.

- **ORAA Foreign Travel Approval Tools** include:
  - Toolkit for Review and Approval of Foreign Travel on Sponsored Projects
  - Fly America—More Than Just A Name (pdf)
  - Use of United States Flag Air Carriers (pdf)
  - Fly America Act Waiver Checklist

- **ORAA Visitor Screening System**
Philip Merrill College of Journalism
Business Office
2202 Knight Hall
College Park, MD 20742
Phone: (301) 405-2388
Fax: (301) 314-1978
Email: vnholmes@umd.edu or ehartz@umd.edu