

TRAVEL

GENERAL TRAVEL POLICIES

The Northeastern Oklahoma A & M College travel policy has been developed in accordance with Oklahoma Statutes. The policy covers state officials and employees who are performing a substantial and necessary service for the State of Oklahoma.

Non-employee travel is covered under the policy if the travel expenses were:

1. Incurred by a student traveling at NEO's request.
2. Incurred at NEO's request by an individual in the course of seeking employment with the college
3. Provided for in a grant or contract for a conference participant when no other honoraria or contract will be made for the individual's service or participation.
4. Incurred by an individual who has volunteered his services and payment for the individual's service will not be made.

Travel expenses incurred by a vendor or consultant must be included in the total amount of the contract award.

JUSTIFICATION FOR TRAVEL

Travel must be necessary for the proper execution of official NEO business or in justifiable pursuit of NEO educational objectives. Meetings and conferences attended must be of a professional nature that will increase the attending individual's usefulness to NEO.

LIMITS OF EXPENSES

Reimbursement for travel is based upon actual expenses incurred, subject to the limitations established by NEO travel policies.

If travel expenditures are to be paid from a grant or contract account, travel policies of the grant or contract may specify reimbursement of expenses at a rate different than the amount allowed by the college travel policies. Documentation from the specific grant or contract must be attached to the travel summary.

An expense which is at the official station of an employee will not be reimbursed. The "official station" is defined as the office headquarters or the designation location of employees established in the field.

The limits on travel expense reimbursement specified in this policy are not to be construed as an indication of the amounts that should be spent. These are maximum amounts above which reimbursement cannot be made.

Specific policies which apply to various types of travel expenses are listed below. Any questions regarding reimbursement of expenses should be directed to the travel clerk in the Personnel Office.

TRANSPORTATION EXPENSES

Transportation for persons traveling singly should be by common carrier (air, train, or bus) wherever practical. Advantage must be taken of round trip rates when available. Travel must be by the most direct route possible, and any individual traveling by an indirect route must bear the extra expense.

Regardless of the mode of transportation (including privately owned vehicles), reimbursement for out-of-state transportation shall not exceed that of coach air fare.

AIR TRAVEL

The use of airplane travel is recommended when the cost of the employee's time is an important factor and when the trip is so long that other methods of travel would increase the lodging and meals expense. Accommodations should be limited to coach class.

All air travel must be purchased from a travel agency designated by the Central Purchasing Division in accordance with the Oklahoma Statutes. This can be done by using NEO's purchasing system and purchasing directly from one of the designated travel agencies or requesting reimbursement on the State of Oklahoma Travel Voucher after the trip's completion.

Exceptions to the designated travel agency rule are as follows:

1. If it can be proven that the air travel services can be secured at a lower cost from another source.
2. When the travel was initiated on an emergency basis, such as changing itinerary and route or emergency travel after hours.
3. If air travel is originated from a location outside of Oklahoma, making it impractical to arrange for air travel through appropriate channels.
4. When air travel is part of a package arranged by an organization scheduling a meeting or conference.

TRAIN/BUS TRAVEL

A receipt or ticket stub for transportation must be submitted with the request for reimbursement.

AUTOMOBILE TRAVEL

Automobile transportation may be used to save time when common carrier transportation cannot be satisfactorily scheduled to cover a number of outlying places or to reduce expenses when two (2) or more NEO employees are making the trip.

VICINITY TRAVEL

Travel that is in excess of map mileage performed in a privately owned vehicle while conducting NEO business. It may include transportation by private auto to and from the airport or other public transportation terminal. Vicinity travel is not a reimbursable mileage expense (with the exception of various federal programs).

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Local transportation at the traveler's destination and includes: taxi, limousine, bus, subway, etc. If reimbursement for local transportation is being claimed within the State of Oklahoma, an original and one copy of a letter of justification must accompany the request for reimbursement.

LEASED OR RENTED AUTOMOBILES

Reimbursement for automobiles leased or rented within Oklahoma from car rental agencies or private parties, to be use din lieu of a privately owned vehicle on official business for the state shall not exceed the rate provided for the use of privately owned automobiles.

The actual cost of leasing or renting an automobile outside of the state to be used on official business of the state shall be reimbursed subject to approval by the Division Chairman or Administrative Supervisor and the President of NEO.

NEO VEHICLES

NEO vehicles shall not be used or assigned on a long-term basis to an individual employee. For more guidelines on the use of College vehicles, see the back of the "Request for Use of College Vehicle" form.

PRIVATELY OWNED VEHICLES

Travel in a privately owned vehicle shall be reimbursed at the approved rate based upon the distance on the latest State Highway Commission road map. For more guidelines on the use of Personal vehicles, see the back of the "Request for Use of College Vehicle" form.

MISCELLANEOUS TRAVEL EXPENSE

All miscellaneous travel expenses must be itemized on the Travel Reimbursement Summary with receipts attached. Travel reimbursement may be claimed for the following miscellaneous expenses.

COMMUNICATIONS

Telephone, fax, etc. charges may be reimbursed if they are incurred in the performance of official NEO business. A memo of explanation must be attached.

REGISTRATION FEES

A paid receipt or copies of both sides of a canceled check should be attached to the Travel Reimbursement Summary form, if reimbursement is being requested for registration fees.

If registration fees are being processed against an established purchase order, the invoice must show the name and date(s) of the conference, workshop, etc. and the name(s) of the person(s) who attended.

If meals were included in the registration fee, the number of meals provided should be indicated on the Travel Reimbursement Summary and deducted from the daily meal allowance provided. In addition, a statement similar to the one listed below should be attached to the invoice:

“The documented meal and incidental expenses filed on related travel claims(s) will be (has been) adjusted accordingly.”

The State of Oklahoma Travel Voucher – OSF Form 19 should reference the purchase order in which the registration fee is being paid and the number of meals for which the documented meal and incidental expense is being adjusted.

NOTE: “Continental breakfasts” and refreshments, such as coffee, tea, soft drinks, etc., provided during meeting breaks are not considered meals.

Also, exceptions may apply if there were special circumstances which prevented the claimant from participating in the function at which the meal was provided. Examples of special circumstances would include special dress requirements, diet restrictions, transportation availability, etc.

Payment or reimbursement would not be permissible in instances where the claimant merely chose not to attend the function. A statement signed by the claimant attesting to the special circumstances of non-participation in the meal function must accompany the invoice or the OSF Travel Voucher.

Purchase orders for registration may not be processed earlier than 30 days from the beginning of the conference.

PARKING FEE CHARGES

Receipts for parking fee charges must be attached to the Travel Reimbursement Summary form for reimbursement.

OPTIONAL BUSINESS ACTIVITIES

Attach a paid receipt and itemize any optional business activities. These expenses should be “essential and necessary” activities that are related and connected with the general purpose of the conference meeting, seminar, etc. A statement signed by the claimant attesting that these activities were “essential and necessary” expenses and a brief description of their importance must accompany the State of Oklahoma Travel Voucher form.

If the optional business activity includes meals, the meal must be deducted from the cost of the activity and included in the documented meal and incidental expense as described in the registration fee section. This includes admission or event fees.

TRAVEL EXPENSES NOT COVERED

Reimbursement may not be claimed for the following expenses:

Personal services such as haircuts, shoe shines, etc.

Gas, oil and repairs to privately owned vehicles. These expenses are covered in the reimbursement rate allowed.

MEALS AND LODGING EXPENSE

Reimbursement for meals and lodging shall not begin more than twenty-four (24) hours before or continue more than twenty-four (24) hours after the objective of the trip, such as the meeting, workshop, conference, etc. Indicate on the State of Oklahoma Travel Voucher the nature of the official business, the meeting dates and starting and ending times.

If meals and lodging are furnished as a package plan, reimbursement may be based upon a combined receipt but at a daily rate not to exceed the rate that would have been allowed for separate meals and lodging (the receipt must reflect a breakdown between meals, lodging, registration, etc.)

REIMBURSEMENT FOR DOCUMENTED MEAL AND INCIDENTAL EXPENSES

The maximum daily allowance for meals and incidental expenses is shown on the “Travel Reimbursement Authorization Rates”.

Meals and incidental expenses include the cumulative cost of a meal and other objects of purchase incidental to travel undertaken for business reasons. Incidental expenses refer to those purchases necessarily made by chance or without intention in the course of official travel.

Examples of this type of expense include: laundry; cleaning and pressing of clothing; refreshments, such as: beverages and snacks; fees paid to doormen, baggage handlers, cab drivers, and waiters or waitresses. This will be reimbursed at the allowable daily per diem rates.

Examples of expenses which would not qualify include: entertainment or other purchases of a personal nature, prescription or over-the-counter medications; tobacco products, personal clothing, souvenirs, and other similar purchases.

There will be reimbursement for documented meals (or per diem) and incidental expenses only in connection with overnight travel status.

REIMBURSEMENT FOR LODGING

Direct purchase of lodging facilities operated by Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department can be made by obtaining reservations directly with the facility and then processing a requisition in the Purchasing System. Each employee requesting lodging at one of these facilities will be required to provide identification indicating that they are a current State employee.

The requisition must be processed prior to the traveler's departure and must include the following information: dates lodging will be required; name and social security number of individual(s) for whom lodging is to be provided; location; and purpose of trip.

Requests for reimbursement for lodging must be accompanied by an itemized paid receipt from the hotel, motel, etc. The rates for lodging reimbursement are shown on Travel Reimbursement Authorized Rates.

If a motel/hotel is designated by the conference, the actual rates will be paid, not to exceed single occupancy rate, if a document is attached from the conference indicating that this was a designated motel/hotel. The single room rate must be specified on the conference literature or the invoice.

Persons attending meetings, workshops, or conferences which are conducted at a designated hotel, motel, or other public lodging facility and choose to acquire less expensive public lodging shall be reimbursed the actual lodging expense not to exceed the single room rate and the single occupancy rate charged by the designated lodging place. When choosing this option, the claimant will not be reimbursed for local transportation costs incurred traveling between such optional lodging and the designated lodging place.

Reimbursement for other charges appearing on the lodging must be justified in writing. The reimbursement should be included in itemized Miscellaneous Cost on the "Travel Reimbursement Summary" form. Do not include lodging in this section.

AUTHORIZATION TO TRAVEL

All requests for travel must be submitted for approval prior to any travel using either the “Request for Use of College Vehicles-In State Only” or “Out of State Travel Request” form.

The travel clerk will attach this pre-approved form to “Travel Reimbursement Summary” form before processing may be completed by the internal auditor.

REIMBURSEMENT FOR TRAVEL EXPENSES

After completion of travel, the claimant should complete and sign a Travel Reimbursement Summary to obtain reimbursement for expenses. Enter each expense amount in the appropriate space. Any questions regarding completion of this form should be directed to the travel clerk in the Personnel Office.

In order to receive reimbursement for travel, the following items should be forwarded to the Personnel Office travel clerk for processing.

1. The completed Travel Reimbursement Summary should be forwarded to the travel clerk, who will complete the State of Oklahoma Travel Voucher (OSF Form 19) for your signature. The travel clerk will then forward it along with the pre-approved travel authorization form to the internal auditor.
2. The original of all required receipts (lodging; transportation; registration fees rental vehicle charges; and any gas, oil, and repairs to a NEO vehicle). If the original receipts are not available, a letter of explanation must be attached to the Travel Reimbursement Summary form.
3. The original of any required letters of justification to explain any unusual expenses claimed are also attached to the Travel Reimbursement Summary Form.

Reimbursement may be expected within approximately 3-5 business days from the date of submission.