

Travel

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POLICY

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Northeastern State University (NSU) Travel Procedures have been developed in accordance with Oklahoma State Statutes. The Travel Procedures cover NSU officials and employees who are performing a substantial and necessary service for Northeastern State University. NSU participates in the State of Oklahoma Agency Travel Program, which establishes the use of an online booking tool (OBT) through a Travel Management Company (TMC) for acquisition of travel services in support of official State Business. The OBT is credit card driven to assist NSU departments with tracking and managing travel purchases. All purchases shall be made in accordance with State statutes, administrative code and policy, which includes but may not be limited to:

- Central Purchasing Act, 74 O.S. § 85.1 et seq.
- State Travel Reimbursement Act, 74 O.S. § 500 et seq.
- Office of Management and Enterprise Services (OMES) Codified Rules 260:115
- NSU Purchasing Card (PCard) Policy and Procedures
- State of Oklahoma Travel Policy
- NSU Internal Purchasing and Travel Policies and Procedures

Non-employee travel expenses may be paid by NSU if the travel expenses are:

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

PROCEDURE(S)

TYPICAL TRAVEL REQUEST SEQUENCE

A typical travel request consists of the following steps:

1. An NSU Travel Pre-approval Request form shall be required for overnight travel, both in-state and out-of-state indicating that the travel has planned and approved internally according to department procedures and policies, and establishing a maximum budget for said travel.
2. The traveler or Travel Coordinator (person who books travel) accesses the OBT and makes travel reservations using an NSU PCard or the employee's personal credit card.
3. The traveler or Travel Coordinator completes the registration or booking of other services not available through the OBT, using an NSU PCard or the employee's personal credit card.
4. Following travel, receipts and other documentation of expenditures, whether claimed for reimbursement or paid through an NSU PCard are submitted with the Individual (TAF) Travel Action Form. Expenses to be reimbursed will be processed for payment and a check will be mailed to the traveler's primary address.

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Travel reflected on an Individual (TAF) Travel Action Form (Substitute OSF Form 19) must be within a 31-day window of time. Two reports can be prepared in the event of a reporting period lasting more than 31 days. All travel must be documented on an NSU (TAF) Travel Action Form. Failure to follow travel policy may result in the reimbursement request being denied.

Reminder, if travel expenses have been paid with an NSU PCard, a copy of the TAF should be maintained in the cardholder's PCard documentation file.

TRAINING

It is mandatory that travelers, Travel Coordinators, and Travel Approvers attend travel training provided by the Travel Technician prior to utilizing the OBT in order to gain access to the OBT system. Training notifications will be emailed and available on the website. For more information, call Accounts Payable Technicians at ext. 2803, ext. 2174, or ext. 2169.

TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION

Travel must be necessary for the proper execution of official University business or in justifiable pursuit of the University's educational objectives. An NSU Travel Pre-approval Request form, found at <https://procedures.nsuok.edu/BusinessFinance/BusinessAffairs/AccountsPayable/Travel.aspx> must be completed with appropriate signatures prior to booking an overnight trip whether in-state and out-of-state.

GENERAL EXPENSE INFORMATION

Limitations:

- University travel authorization and reimbursement is based upon actual expenses incurred.
- 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 from the amount allowed by the NSU Travel Procedures. Documentation from the specific grant or contract must be attached to the TAF.
- An expense that is at the official duty station of an employee will not be reimbursed. The "official station" is defined as the primary employment location.
- 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 that apply to various types of travel expenses are listed on the next several pages. If you have any questions about reimbursement of expenses, please call the Travel Technician at ext. 2803.
- University PCards may be used to pay for most, but not all travel expenses. Care should be taken to use the PCard only for authorized expenses. If there should be an error, the traveler shall reimburse NSU immediately. Repeated use of a PCard for non-authorized expenses will result in the loss of the use of the PCard and/or disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Non-Reimbursable Expenses

There are several travel expenses that the traveler may incur, however they are not reimbursable. These expenses include, but are not limited to:

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- Late check-out/room guarantee charges.
- Baggage tips (with the exception of baggage assistance related to a known disability).
- Entertainment.
- Parking tickets or other traffic tickets.
- Transportation tip amounts exceeding authorized amount of \$1.00 or 15%.
- Airline seat preference charges (unless documented disability or medical condition exists and authorized by the appropriate NSU Vice President or the President of the University).
- Valet services.
- Pre-flight convenience check-in fees.
- Unauthorized airline ticket change fees (if not approved by NSU President or appropriate Vice President airline ticket changes will be considered unauthorized).
- Travelers may use pre-check (TSA Pre✓®) program offered by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) for expedited security screening. Any fees that may be associated with this program are the responsibility of the traveler and are not reimbursable expenses.

TRANSPORTATION EXPENSES

Transportation for persons traveling should be by common carrier (air, train, bus) wherever practical. Travelers should take advantage of round trip rates when available. Travel should be by the most direct route possible. 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 the amount documented through the OBT for coach airplane fare.

Airfare

Airfare travel shall be purchased either through a designated departmental Travel Coordinator or by the traveler using the OBT. If the assistance of a travel agent is needed, the Travel Management Company (TMC) may be contacted directly at (405) 522-4812 or agency.travel@omes.ok.gov (contacting the agency to book a flight will cost an additional \$16).

Travel Coordinators may enter their PCard number in a traveler's profile to purchase airfare. The Travel Coordinator's email must be in the traveler's profile and upon receipt of the invoice; the Travel Coordinator should delete their card number from the traveler's profile. If the Travel Coordinator needs to book several trips within a short period of time, the card number may be left in the traveler's profile for a finite period of time.

The use of airplane travel is required when traveling out of state except in instances when it is cheaper to drive. Accommodations should be limited to coach class. A refundable ticket should be purchased. Trip or ticket insurance would be allowed only in the case where the combined total of the airfare and the insurance is less than or equal to the cost of a refundable ticket.

Travelers booking through the OBT may use pre-check (TSA Pre✓®) program offered by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) for expedited security screening. Any fees that may be associated with this program are the responsibility of the traveler and are not reimbursable expenses.

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Personal credit or debit cards shall not be entered into the online booking tool to hold a flight reservation unless the traveler is paying out-of-pocket and being reimbursed for airfare. The card number entered to hold the reservation will be charged for the airfare.

Using a Different Online Booking Tool (web based)

There may be instances when a traveler is able to document additional savings by using a web based booking tool other than the one offered by the State. Travel booked through another tool will only be authorized with documentation of those savings.

In order to document savings between two booking tools, a quote for the same travel (including dates, approximate times, and point-to-point locations) from the State OBT and the alternative OBT must be provided. Authorized travel will be limited to the lower cost option. If the traveler does not provide an acceptable comparison, their airfare will be considered non-authorized and the traveler will be responsible for payment of this expense.

Flying vs. Driving Cost Comparison

A cost comparison to document savings must be done if the claimant drives a vehicle outside the state on an overnight trip. In order to do the comparison, the Cost to Fly and Cost to Drive must be determined.

Cost to Fly

1. A quote from the OBT for the cost of airfare must be obtained before travel (unless it's an emergency trip) at least 21 days before the date of travel. The quote should be for dates and time reasonably applicable to those reflected on the conference agenda or trip itinerary.
2. The cost of the mileage to and from the airport.
3. The cost of the mileage or other ground transportations from the airport to the conference/hotel at the destination. The mileage can be obtained from the internet Google Maps. A copy of the map showing the mileage should be printed and included with the TAF.
4. The total of the above three items will equal the total "cost to fly". All three items can be totaled on the airfare quote with the words "cost to fly" noted.

Cost to Drive

A comparison must be documented with a copy of a map from Google Maps showing the miles from the point of entry of travel and the destination. The total number of miles driven times the mileage rate will equal the "cost to drive." The map must be included with the TAF.

The lesser of the "cost to fly" or the "cost to drive" will be paid. The amount that is being paid is listed under mileage, with a note of explanation attached.

Any questions concerning the purchase of air travel should be directed to Accounts Payable Technicians at ext. 2803, ext. 2174, or ext. 2169.

AUTOMOBILE TRAVEL

Generally, automobile travel pertains to in-state travel. Mileage is reimbursed following the State of Oklahoma reimbursement rate, which is calculated for 2017 at \$0.47 per mile. Reimbursements are based upon shortest distance using Google Maps or the Car mileage map function in Concur.

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Automobile transportation for out-of-state travel 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 University employees are making the trip. A Flying vs. Driving cost comparison detailed above is required.

Using Google Maps

- [Google Maps](https://www.google.com/maps) may be found at <https://www.google.com/maps>
- If filing a TAF for multiple trips be sure to use the Mileage Worksheet for miles to be claimed.
- The shortest distance from the employee's residence (if leaving from home) or official duty station to the destination point of travel will be considered for reimbursement of mileage.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Public Transportation refers to local transportation at the traveler's destination and includes taxi, limousine, bus, subway, shuttles, etc. Local transportation to and from the airport may be paid by PCard. A receipt or ticket stub for transportation fare must be maintained as documentation for a PCard expenditure, or submitted with a request for reimbursement.

Reasonable tip expense shall be not more than \$1.00 if the reimbursable fare charge is \$5.00 or less; or 15 per cent (15%) of the reimbursable charge when it exceeds \$5.00. If the 15% calculated tip amount is less than \$1.00 or is not a multiple of 5, the reimbursable tip amount may be rounded up to \$1.00 or up to the next \$.05, as applicable.

If reimbursement for local transportation is being claimed within the State Of Oklahoma, a letter of justification, signed by an Account Sponsor, must accompany the request for reimbursement.

LEASED OR RENTED AUTOMOBILES

NSU participates in the State of Oklahoma vehicle rental contract and has its own Motor Pool department from which a vehicle may be reserved. The current vendor is Enterprise. To lease an Enterprise vehicle, within the State of Oklahoma, please contact [NSU Motor Pool](#).

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

- In-State Vehicle Liability Coverage – The State of Oklahoma is self-insured through the Risk Management Division of OMES. A copy of NSU's Certificate of Coverage may be obtained from your NSU Risk Management Coordinator or Motor Pool.

The actual cost of leasing or renting an automobile outside of the State of Oklahoma to be used on official business for the state may be charged to the traveler's PCard subject to approval by the Account Sponsor. This will include the liability insurance policy offered by the rental company.

- Out of State Vehicle Coverage – The commercial insurance policy, provided through the Risk Management Division of OMES, provides liability coverage for out-of-state travel; however, an additional physical or Collision Damage Waiver (CDW) is advisable if not renting a vehicle from the statewide contract vendor, Enterprise. Personal Accident Insurance (PAI), Personal Effects Insurance (PEI) and other supplemental liability insurance are considered personal expenses and are not reimbursable.

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- Purchasing Liability coverage offered by the vendor nullifies state coverage and should not be purchased.
- Foreign Vehicle Coverage – It is strongly recommended that a Collision Damage Waiver (CDW) be purchased from the rental company, if renting a vehicle in a foreign country.
- Foreign Travel Coverage – All foreign travel should be reported to the Risk Management Division at least 30 days prior to overseas travel to receive area specific insurance coverage information. NSU's Risk Management office can assist with this.

MISCELLANEOUS TRAVEL EXPENSES

All miscellaneous travel expenses must be itemized on the TAF. Original receipts are required to document PCard expenditures or to request personal reimbursement.

Authorized Miscellaneous Expenses

Reimbursement may be claimed for the following miscellaneous expenses:

- Communications: Telephone and internet charges may be reimbursed when incurred while conducting University business; a memo of explanation must be attached.
- Registration: Registration is an authorized expenditure.
 - A copy of the registration form is required documentation.
 - If registration was paid with an NSU Purchase Order, please include the PO Number and the amount.
 - If it was charged to an NSU PCard, please write NSU CC on the TAF and the amount.
 - If the claimant paid for the registration, please include a copy of the receipt showing a \$0 balance or both sides of a canceled check, or a copy of the credit card statement.
 - If meals were included in the registration fee, the number of meals provided should be indicated on the form and one-fourth of one day's Per Diem allowance should be deducted from the total Per Diem for each meal provided.
 - If a dinner/banquet ticket is purchased along with the registration, include the cost of the ticket in the cost of the registration and subtract the meal from the total Per Diem amount.
- Parking Tickets: or moving vehicle violation fines are the personal liability of the travel and are not reimbursable expenses (except tickets for broken lights, etc. on State vehicles when the employee is not at fault). All fines shall be paid to the ticketing entity by the traveler. Fines may not be paid with the NSU PCard.
- Parking: Parking fees are authorized expenditures that may be paid with a PCard, with the exception of Valet Parking with is a non-reimbursable expense.
- Toll Road Fees: Tolls are authorized expenditures; however, the cost may not be paid with a PCard. Receipts are required if over \$25.00.
- Baggage Fees: Baggage fees are authorized expenditures limited to one bag each way. Receipts are required to document PCard expenditures or to request personal reimbursement.
- Optional Business Activities: Optional business activities are authorized expenditures, however may not be paid with a PCard. A paid receipt that itemizes any optional business activities is require for reimbursement. These expenses should be "essential and necessary"

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activities that are related and connected with the general purposes 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 TAF. If the optional business activity included a meal, it must be deducted from the Per Diem total as described with the registration fees.

Non-authorized Miscellaneous Expenses:

- Food, including room service. All food expenses are reimbursed at Per Diem rates.
- Personal services such as haircuts, shoeshines, etc.
- Gas, oil and repairs to privately owned vehicles.

MEALS AND LODGING EXPENSES

Meal Per Diem

Expenses for food while in travel status are authorized only on a reimbursement basis using established Per Diem rates. PCards may not be used to purchase food items or meals for an employee while traveling. Per Diem is only available for overnight travel. Because a Per Diem rate is used, it is not necessary to provide meal receipts as documentation.

Per Diem rates will vary depending on the location of travel as identified in the Government Services Administration's (GSA) Continental United States (CONUS) rates for domestic locations. Special rates apply to out of the country trips. A complete listing of these rates can be obtained from the [GSA Per Diem](#) website. A copy of the Per Diem page for the location of travel must be printed and included with the TAF.

There are currently three Per Diem rates for travel within the State of Oklahoma.

- Oklahoma City and all of Oklahoma County
- Enid and all of Garfield County
- All other locations within Oklahoma – standard rate

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. Forty-Eight (48) hours applies to out of the country trips. A copy of the conference agenda must be included. The agenda must have the beginning and ending dates and times of the conference. The dates and times will be used to figure the amounts of Per Diem eligible to be paid.

If the agenda shows a meal was provided it should be deducted from the total Per Diem unless it was an extra cost and was not purchased. If a meal was available it must be deducted even if the claimant did not attend, unless he/she was in another meeting at that time, special dress was required, or there is a medical reason they could not participate. A statement signed by the claimant attesting to the circumstances of non-participation in the meal function must accompany the TAF.

Partial day Per Diem is calculated by dividing the rate of Per Diem listed on the Per Diem chart by four. For each meal that is provided subtract $\frac{1}{4}$ of the daily Per Diem rate from the total Per Diem amount. 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

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separate meals and lodging (the receipt must reflect a breakdown between meals, lodging, registration, etc.).

Lodging

Lodging is an authorized expenditure when in overnight travel status. When required by the lodging establishment, the traveler's lodging may be posted to the PCard in advance provided there is a full refund cancellation policy in place. A copy of the cancellation policy is required documentation for the PCard expenditure.

Lodging expenses authorized will vary depending on the location of travel as identified in the Government Services Administration's (GSA) Continental United States (CONUS) rates for domestic locations. Special rates apply to out of the country trips. A complete listing of these rates can be obtained from the [GSA Per Diem](#) website. GSA updates rates on October 1 of each year. A copy of the Per Diem page for the location of travel must be printed and included as documentation for the TAF.

There are currently three lodging rates for travel within the State of Oklahoma.

- Oklahoma City and all of Oklahoma County
- Enid and all of Garfield County
- All other locations within Oklahoma – standard rate

If lodging has been designated by a conference, the daily room charge may be paid instead of the GSA rate. Documentation reflecting that the conference was held at that hotel and the published conference rate is required to accompany the TAF.

Claimants who acquire less expensive lodging are authorized to be reimbursed up to the actual lodging expense. The designated hotel information must be included with the TAF. Travel expenses between the hotel and the meeting is covered but is limited to a dollar amount not to exceed the cost of staying at the designated lodging.

The lodging establishment must provide a final detailed receipt (folio) to the travel once lodging services have been provided. It is the traveler's responsibility to obtain the folio. Folio must be retained by the PCard holder for the corresponding PCard transaction and by traveler for the employee's corresponding reimbursement claim.

Please examine the hotel receipt to ensure that it reflects a \$0 balance:

- If the receipt shows more than one person in the room you must supply additional information to document reimbursement is being requested appropriately.
- Amounts that can be reimbursed under lodging are the daily single room charges plus taxes.
- Verify that in-state lodging does not include charges for the State of Oklahoma lodging tax, Municipality tax, City tax, Occupancy tax and Tourism tax. NSU's tax ID # is printed on the PCard or the traveler can obtain a tax-exemption letter from the Purchasing department.
- NSU is not exempt from the taxes listed above when traveling in other states.
- NSU is not exempt from Tribal Tax.

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Overnight travel must be at least **60 map miles** one-way from claimant's official duty station to qualify for reimbursement of lodging expenses.

If there are no lodging expenses claimed on the TAF (as in when a claimant stays overnight with family or friends) in Lieu of Subsistence may be claims. Please write on the TAF that the claimant stayed with family or friends in the Remarks box at the bottom of page and increase the basic per diem by \$10.00 per day.

Third party payment

Occasionally the host of a conference may select an NSU employee as a guest speaker. In the event the host chooses to pay the airfare and lodging for the employee the TAF is filed without seeking reimbursement for those expenses. It must be documented on the TAF that there will be no airfare and lodging claimed.

TRAVELERS WITH DISABILITIES OR MEDICAL CONDITIONS

Employees with documented disabilities or medical conditions may be authorized to incur baggage assistance or other disability-related expenses. For passengers of size requiring additional space during travel, consult the airline's policy. Travel requiring the booking of an additional seat will need to be made by phone through the Travel Management Company's toll-free number. It is recommended that a written exception approval be obtained prior to traveling to ensure smooth processing of the TAF. Submit a request explaining the special situation to the appropriate NSU Vice President or the President of the University.

REIMBURSEMENT FOR TRAVEL EXPENSES

Upon completion of travel, a TAF must be filed, including documentation and original authorizing signatures with NSU's Travel Technician in the Business Affairs Office to document the expenditures of the trip whether paid with PCard or to be reimbursed.

Two Employee identification numbers are required for proper and timely processing of the TAF. If assistance is needed in retrieving either number please contact Accounts Payable Technicians at ext. 2803, ext. 2174, or ext. 2169.

- OSF Vendor number must be entered on the Employee ID line. (Ex: 0000123456)
- Your NSU Banner ID number must be entered below the words "Banner ID" (upper right corner). (Ex: N00123456)

The following items should be forwarded to the Travel Technician in the Business Office for auditing and processing:

- One completed original NSU TAF signed and dated by Claimant and the Account Sponsor.
- One Mileage Worksheet with the NSU TAF if claiming mileage for multiple trips signed and dated by the Claimant and Account Sponsor.
- The original of any required letters of justification to explain unusual expenses of amounts claimed.
- The original NSU Travel Pre-Approval Request form for any overnight trip.

Failure to provide the required receipts may result in revision of the claim and/or may not be reimbursable.

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DEFINITIONS

Boarding pass – means a document allowing a traveler to board an airline. A boarding pass may be presented in a digital form on a smart phone, iPhone, or other electronic device.

Folio – means a document issued by a lodging facility detailing lodging charges.

Invoice – means a document issued by a vendor to effect payment for goods and services purchased using the PCard or to be paid by check.

Itinerary – a document in which the places you will be traveling are listed.

Lodging facility – hotel, motel, hostel, etc. that provide resting accommodations for travelers.

Lodging rate – the amount a lodging facility charges for nightly accommodations. Allowable lodging rates for each State are listed on the [Government Services Administration](#) (GSA) website.

Online Booking Tool (OBT) – means an application that assists Travel Management Companies and travel agents to cater economically and quickly to large numbers of travelers. Synonymous with “online booking engine (OBE).”

Payment confirmation – a transaction document that can be part of a receipt, which shows a payment was issued and results in a \$0 balance

Per Diem – the standard daily allowance for meals and incidental expenses (M&IE) incurred while in travel status. Allowable Per Diem rates for each state are listed on the [Government Services Administration](#) (GSA) website.

Reimbursement – compensation by the State of Oklahoma for authorized out-of-pocket expenses incurred by the traveler while conducting NSU business.

Single transaction limit – means the maximum spending (dollar) limit a traveler or Travel Coordinator is authorized to charge to a PCard in a single transaction. For travel purposes, lodging and transportation are considered separate transactions

State Business – business conducted for and in the interest of NSU and/or the State of Oklahoma. Synonymous with “Official Business”.

State Travel – travel required in the process of conducting NSU and/or State of Oklahoma business. Synonymous with “Official Travel”.

State Travel Reimbursement Act (STRA) – the portions of Title 74 that governs the reimbursement of State travel expenses.

Ticket – a document created by an airline or travel agent to confirm that a traveler has purchased a seat on an airline or other public means of transportation.

Transaction – a single purchase. A credit also constitutes a transaction.

Travel Action Form (TAF) – a form filed by a traveler on NSU Substitute OSF Form 19 (Travel Action Form) for reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses incurred as a result of NSU travel.

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Travel Coordinator – means the designated person or persons within NSU who has been assigned the duty of booking travel for NSU for official NSU business.

Travel Management Company (TMC) – a contracted company that uses cost-comparing global distribution systems to locate and book discounted flights and hotels for clients.

Travel status – the time period between the beginning of a trip and the end of a trip (including, but not exceeding 24 hours or 48 hours, as appropriate, prior to or after the event).