



# PA State System of Higher Education Board of Governors

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**Effective:** October 12, 1986

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## **Policy 1986-07-A: Travel Expense Regulations**

**See Also:**

**Adopted:** October 12, 1986

**Amended:** April 9, 1998

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### **A. General Policy**

These travel expense regulations are applicable to management and all non-coalition bargaining unit employees. In cases where specific travel matters are addressed in the collective bargaining agreements of employees covered by this policy, the collective bargaining agreements shall take precedence over this policy. An employee not covered by this policy should refer to the appropriate provisions of the collective bargaining agreement covering the employee's classification.

The chancellor (or designee) may authorize Office of the Chancellor employees to travel at Office of the Chancellor expense, and in accordance with any regulations of the local council of trustees not inconsistent with the provisions of this policy, each president (or designee) may authorize travel on official business at university expense. All persons who travel at State System expense are expected to exercise prudence and economy. The chancellor, for the Office of the Chancellor, and the president at each university, may establish their own procedures to administer this policy.

Reimbursement to employees for official travel shall be made on the basis of approved travel expense vouchers. Travel vouchers shall be audited by the respective university prior to payment. Each voucher must be signed by the employee and by the employee's supervisor, with the exception of the chancellor and university presidents, whose travel vouchers shall be submitted to the chair of the Board of Governors or council of trustees, respectively. Employees are liable for repayment of expenditures disallowed by any audit of a travel voucher or other travel related documents.

At the discretion of the chancellor (or designee), for the Office of the Chancellor, and the president (or designee) for each university, amounts may be advanced up to the sum of the anticipated reimbursable travel expenditures to

employees, with such advances to be deducted from the allowable reimbursement. Travel advances shall not be larger than anticipated out-of-pocket costs to the traveler. Employees receiving such advances shall file a settlement travel voucher within 20 working days of return from the travel. No further travel advance shall be granted until a settlement voucher is filed from the previous advance.

## **B. Special Provisions**

Within the limitations of available funds, members of the Board of Governors, university councils of trustees, the chancellor, vice chancellors, university presidents, university vice presidents, and—when designated by the chancellor or a president—official volunteers in service to the State System, are not subject to the maximum rates herein prescribed and shall be eligible for reimbursement for actual expenses associated with official travel. Receipts shall be attached to the travel voucher when actual expenses are claimed in excess of the maximum rates.

## **C. Rates of Reimbursement**

Employees shall be entitled to receive reimbursement of expenses incurred in the performance of their official duties within prescribed maximum rates.

### **1. Personal Automobile**

Actual mileage incurred by an employee on official business will be reimbursed at the mileage established by the chancellor. An employee traveling as a passenger in a personal automobile is not entitled to mileage reimbursement.

The mileage rate reimbursement is the only reimbursement the employee may receive for use of a personal automobile on official travel, except for parking and tolls (see item C.3). The reimbursement rate includes depreciation, fuel, insurance, fees, licenses, oil, repairs, tires, and all accessories.

### **2. Commercial Transportation**

The most economical means available, including automobile rentals, should be used consistent with the purpose and constraints of the travel. An employee who does not use the most economical means of travel available, consistent with the purpose and constraints of the travel, will be reimbursed as if the most economical means of travel has been used.

Employees are not permitted to use, for personal travel, frequent flyer miles or credits of any other kind obtained as a result of State System paid travel, regardless of funding source; however, employees may use such credits on other State System business travel. An employee may not be compensated

or reimbursed for using credits obtained as a result of personal travel to obtain tickets for official State System travel. Employees must take adequate precautions to segregate credits obtained from State System travel from credits obtained from personal travel.

### 3. Miscellaneous Expenses

Employees may be reimbursed for business expenses incurred for such items as telephone, telegraph, registered or certified mail, taxi, local transportation, and other miscellaneous expenditures. Charges for laundry, dry cleaning, or other personal services are not reimbursable unless the employee is in continuous travel status for more than five days.

Employees may be reimbursed for parking, tolls, and similar expenses, regardless of the type of vehicle used (i.e., personal, State System, or rented). Employees may be reimbursed the actual cost of fuel for rented or State System vehicles, but not personal vehicles. Employees may not be reimbursed for the cost of citations for traffic violations of any kind, regardless of the type of vehicle used.

Itemized receipts are required for any single miscellaneous expense reimbursement requested for amounts in excess of a minimum amount established by the chancellor.

### 4. Overnight Lodging

Lodging costs are limited to rates established by the chancellor. The chancellor may set separate rates for high cost areas. Lodging costs may be paid directly to the provider by the State System (see Section D for use of Hotel Orders) or reimbursed to the employee. Reimbursements to employees are limited to the actual cost of lodging and must be supported with receipts. Employees may not be reimbursed for personal services such as the incremental cost of lodging family members or friends, movies, recreational charges, etc.

Employees are required to identify themselves as State System employees and request state or governmental rates when obtaining price quotations for lodging. Lodging costs in excess of the maximum are authorized as follows:

- a. When lodging cannot be located with a reasonable effort within the maximums.
- b. When employees must stay in a specific hotel or motel where their presence is required by the nature of the official business.
- c. When employees reside at a host establishment while attending a conference or convention on official business.

- d. Claims for lodging and meal expenses will be allowed under the American Plan (i.e., when the cost of lodging and meals is contracted as a package) when contracted for at the minimum rate, and when incurred by employees residing at a host establishment while attending a conference or convention on official business.

A complete explanation of lodging costs in excess of the maximum must be included on the travel expense voucher.

5. Subsistence - Subsistence shall be paid as follows:

Overnight travel status - Employees in overnight travel status may be paid for the actual cost of meals and other subsistence expenses, up to maximum rates established by the chancellor. The subsistence rate shall cover meals, tips, tax, and all other expenses not specifically addressed in this policy, for each 24-hour period spent in a continuous overnight travel status. The travel period begins at any time of day or night that the employee leaves headquarters or residence to embark upon overnight travel on official business. The chancellor may set separate subsistence rates for high cost areas.

For overnight travel not part of a full 24-hour period, the subsistence rate shall be prorated (rounded to the nearest dollar) as follows:

0 minutes to less than 3 hours	No reimbursement
3 hours to less than 6 hours	25%
6 hours to less than 15 hours	62.5%
15 hours to less than 24	100%

The maximum allowable reimbursement amount must be reduced for meals provided to the employee at no cost, included in a registration fee, facility rental, or the cost of lodging. The maximum amount must be reduced by the following rates: 21% for breakfast; 21% for lunch; and 58% for dinner.

Non-overnight travel status

- a. An employee who works more than two hours before the normal start of the work day or past the scheduled quitting time in non-overnight travel status will be reimbursed for the cost of a meal, up to the maximum rate established by the chancellor, only if the travel assignment takes the employee 50 miles or more from both residence and headquarters. An employee must state his or her normal work hours on the travel voucher.

- b. Reimbursement for the cost of noonday meals is not permissible for employees not engaged in overnight travel except as specifically provided for in this directive or in labor agreements.

6. Expenditures Incurred while not in Travel Status

Vice presidents and other employees designated by the chancellor or a president are eligible to be reimbursed for actual meal expenses incurred by themselves and on behalf of others in the conduct of official business. Such reimbursement may be made for incurred meal expenses only when the meal is an integral part of the business meeting and includes employees from more than one State System entity or participants who are not State System employees. Each of the universities, each of the university councils of trustees, the Office of the Chancellor, and the Board of Governors are State System entities. The branch campuses are not separate entities, but are considered part of their respective university entity.

The business purpose of the meeting must be documented on the voucher. Receipts are required for this reimbursement.

Employees on official business may receive reimbursement for the actual costs of meals in connection with workshops, organization luncheons, business meetings, or similar events. Receipts are required for this reimbursement. Such events must meet the following criteria:

- a. The employee's attendance at the event must be approved by the employee's immediate supervisor.
- b. The meal must be an integral part of the event.
- c. The event must have a business purpose, which must be documented on a voucher.
- d. The event must include employees from more than one State System entity or participants who are not State System employees.

**D. Hotel and Transportation Orders**

The State System may issue Hotel and Transportation Orders to State System employees to be used for official travel. Hotel Orders are to be used only for room rent and parking fees at the same lodging establishment by the persons to whom issued, and not for meals, telephone, or other expenses unless the cost of lodging and meals is contracted as a package (American Plan). Hotel Orders shall be subject to the same limitations on the cost of lodging as apply in the case of reimbursement for lodging expenses.

**E. Reimbursement of Travel Expenses Incurred by Applicants**

The chancellor and each president may reimburse applicants for employment for the cost of travel in connection with the interview process. Hotel or Transportation Orders may be utilized, but no cash advance may be granted. The number of applicants authorized to travel at State System expense shall be held to the minimum required, in the opinion of the chancellor or the president.

**F. Responsibility**

The State System and a third party (e.g., professional organizations, governmental agencies) may share in the payment of travel costs as long as an employee is not reimbursed twice for the same costs. If an employee receives payment by a third party, the employee must reduce the amount of reimbursement requested from the State System by the payment received, or refund that amount to the State System.

Supervisors are responsible for reviewing and approving travel vouchers submitted by employees. Employees are responsible for insuring that expenses claimed on their travel reimbursement vouchers are proper and accurate. Careless, fraudulent, or negligent preparation of a travel voucher will require financial restitution and may result in disciplinary action. A traveler who knowingly presents a false, fraudulent, or fictitious claim may be subject to penalties under criminal statutes.