

Travel Procedures

Summary

Columbus State University (CSU) adheres to the [State Accounting Office Statewide Accounting Policy \(PDF\)](#) and the [University System of Georgia Board of Regents Travel Business Procedures](#). Below is a brief summary of the steps needed for travel reimbursement. For more details or items not covered below, please refer to the two policies listed above.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline the travel procedures that outline the BOR USG polices on travel, to include travel method, lodging, and meals.

Policy

5 Steps for Travel Reimbursement:

Travel Authorization

- Complete and submit a [Travel Authorization Form \(DOC\)](#) unless traveling on a [Standing Authorization to Travel \(DOC\)](#)
 - If international travel is required, travelers must also review, sign, and submit the [International Travel Authorization Form \(DOCX\)](#).
- The Department Approver(s) will forward the application to that CSU Purchasing Department at travel@columbusstate.edu upon approval
- It is the traveler's responsibility to ensure that the Travel Authorization form is approved prior to submittal to the CSU Purchasing Department and before traveling

Select Method of Transportation

Mode of Travel must be approved by the traveler's direct supervisor Travel via Car:

- CSU Fleet Vehicle: Before an employee can drive a CSU owned vehicle, they must review and pass the [CSU Authorized Driver Program](#)
- Authorized Employees should reserve a university fleet vehicle when available using the [eQuest System](#). Gasoline expense reimbursement will be handled via the Fuel Card
- Visit the [CSU Department of Transportation Website](#) for more information regarding the rental of CSU owned vehicles

Personal Vehicle – Mileage Reimbursement Only:

- Mileage Reimbursement rates for travel in a personal vehicle will be based on the mileage rate provided in accordance to the State Accounting Office Statewide Accounting Policy on Mileage Reimbursement
- Always check the [State Accounting Office Statewide Accounting Policy on Mileage Reimbursement](#) website for updated mileage rates
- Normal commuting miles must be deducted when calculating the business miles if the employee departs and/or returns to their residence

Rental Car

- CSU will reimburse employees for rental car expense and any gasoline expense associated with the rental car. Travel via rental car does not require a car cost comparison
- As explained below, it is mandatory to use either Hertz or Enterprise rental car companies

for university employees who may rent a car originating in the state of Georgia, while on official university business

- Only employees of the University over the age of 21 will be authorized to drive the vehicle
- The State Liability Policy is only in effect while the employee is using the rented vehicle for official State business. Personal use of the vehicle, including allowing friends or family members to ride, is prohibited. Passengers being transported in a motor pool fleet vehicle or car rental under State contract must have an official State business relationship
- Traveler must decline optional fuel offerings per SAO Travel Policy
- Rental cars under the statewide car rental vendor contract should be returned with the same amount of gas that it had when it was picked up. Travelers should pay close attention to the fuel amount when they pick up the vehicle to ensure there are no overcharges for gas upon return of the rental car
- Traveler must present valid driver's license and state employee identification card (CSU photo ID)
- The rental car can be picked up from any location in Georgia. You may pick up a car from a location that is most convenient to you
- When renting a vehicle outside of the local area, please let the reservationist know that we are tax-exempt and insurance coverage is already included in our rate
- Please contact the [CSU Purchasing Office](#) to request rental agreement contract information before contacting Enterprise or Hertz
- Contact Information: Columbus Enterprise Office (706) 660-1090 OR 1-800-Rent-A-Car
Contact Information: Columbus Hertz Office (706) 324-2725 OR 1-800-654-3131

Insurance

- When renting using the state contract, the [Loss Damage Waiver \(PDF\)](#) is included in our rental fee if traveling on official state business
- On infrequent occasions, a State contract car rental provider may not have an agency presence at a "destination" out-of-state airport location OR may not have availability of cars for rental within the State contract. Should either of these specific situations occur and an employee must rent a vehicle from a company not on state contract, it is very important that the employee purchase the additional insurance coverage that addresses loss or damage to the rental unit (Loss Damage Waiver/Collision Damage Waiver)
- Do not choose additional insurance options if on state business (rates have been negotiated nationally to include insurance coverage under State of Georgia guidelines with the exception of 15 passenger van rentals)
- Both Enterprise and Hertz provide roadside assistance for all vehicles rented through the statewide contract

Reimbursements

- Keep Enterprise **AND** Hertz receipt(s) to submit for reimbursement with your travel expense statement

Event of Accident

- In the event of an accident while driving a rental vehicle, ensure that local authorities have been notified, then contact DOAS Risk Management (877-656-7475) and Ric Barrow in the CSU Office of Risk Management at 706-507-8233

or barrow_richard1@columbusstate.edu for claims handling. Instructions are provided on the [State of Georgia Government Vehicle Liability Insurance Identification Card \(PDF\)](#)

Travel via Flight

- CSU has a Standing Business Relationship with Travels by Donna to provide employees with an option to obtain airfare and have it billed directly to the University
 - Contact the following service representatives by phone or email to request a quote for your desired airfare:
 - Donna Comer: travelsbydonna@knology.net or 706-322-2323
 - Cecilia Coker: cecilia@travelsbydonna.com or 706-322-2323
 - Kathy Pebbles: kathy@travelsbydonna.com or 706-322-2323
- Submit completed and approved travel authorization to the CSU purchasing office
 - If international travel is required, travelers must also review, sign, and submit the [International Travel Authorization Form \(DOCX\)](#).
- Travels by Donna will book flight upon CSU Purchasing Department approval and issue invoices to University within 30 days.
- University will make payments on behalf of employee
- Expense will be charged to department at time of payment; no other action is required by traveler
- Commercial air transportation should be utilized when it is more effective and efficient to travel by air than by vehicle
- Employees who travel by air should obtain the lowest available coach airfare to the specified destination
- Only coach travel fares will be reimbursed
- Baggage charges for one bag can be claimed for departure flight and returning flight
- Travelers should use non-refundable fares when feasible
- Business class is allowable for international travel when approved in advance by the respective department head or designee. First class travel reimbursement is prohibited
- Federal regulations require that U.S. carriers be used for foreign travel for trips funded by federally sponsored programs, unless a U.S. carrier is not available.

Additional upgrade fees for reserved or priority seating are non-reimbursable expenses. Exceptions will be considered if upgraded seating is the only economy seating available for required flight.

- For consideration of reimbursement, traveler must include such information in comments section of expense report submission and receive approval from the authority over the fund source
- Please Refer to the [State Accounting Office Statewide Accounting Policy \(PDF\)](#) and the [University System of Georgia Board of Regents Travel Business Procedures](#) for any other airfare travel questions or concerns

2. Lodging: Employees should inquire about government rate availability or conference lodging rate and select the most cost efficient option

- Tax Exemptions: A copy of the [State of Georgia Certificate of Exemption of Local Hotel/Motel Excise Tax \(PDF\)](#) should be provided to the hotel upon check-in when traveling and lodging in the State of Georgia on official State business. This tax cannot be reimbursed to employees, if charged
- This does not exempt the employee from State Tax
 - If a hotel refuses to accept the tax exempt form, employees are requested to obtain a written statement from the hotel manager, pay the tax at that time and claim it on the travel expense statement
 - For travel outside of Georgia, travelers will be reimbursed for all taxed charged for lodging
- **Miscellaneous Charges:** If miscellaneous charges are included on lodging receipt, and the employee is seeking reimbursement, an explanation of the business use for the charges

should be included. (EX: Internet usage charges, faxing charges, parking fees- Valet Parking is a non-reimbursable expense)

Meal Reimbursements

- **State of Georgia- Meal Per Diems**

	Non-High Cost Areas	High Cost Areas
Breakfast	\$6.00	\$7.00
Lunch	\$7.00	\$9.00
Dinner	\$15.00	\$20.00

- High-Cost Areas in Georgia include:
 - Metropolitan Atlanta (Cobb, DeKalb, Fulton & Gwinnett Counties)
 - Augusta (Richmond County)
 - Brunswick (Glynn County)
 - Savannah (Chatham County)
- **Travel outside of Georgia:** Refer to the [U.S. General Services Administration \(GSA\)](#) website for the current per diem rates.

• Single Day of Travel:

- More than fifty (50) miles away and more than twelve (12) hours, employees may receive the total eligible per diem allowance for that day
- **First & Last Day of Travel:** Travelers are eligible for only 75% of the total day's per diem on the first and last day of travel
- **Meals provided by Conference/Meeting:** The per diem or meal allowance must be adjusted for any meals provided to the traveler. Conference or meeting agendas should be submitted to verify all meal reimbursements requested
- Please Defer to the [State Accounting Office Statewide Accounting Policy \(PDF\)](#) for any other meal reimbursement questions or concerns

3. Completing an Expense Report

After returning from a trip, complete and submit the expense report using the [Travel Expense Statement \(xLS\)](#) . All expenses should be itemized by type of expense and date of expense

- Print a hard copy of the expense report, attach all required receipts and documentation, sign it and submit it to your department manager for approval and signature
- After Approval by your department manager, your department manager must submit your original Travel Expense Statement and accompanying documents to the CSU Accounts Payable Department
- Expense reports should be submitted for reimbursement within sixty (60) days of the completion of travel or they will be reimbursed via Payroll and subject to tax withholding

- Expense reports are usually processed within one business week of receiving both the approved expense report and all required original receipts and documentation

Related USG Policy

N/A

Last Update

N/A

Responsible Authority

Office of the Vice President for Business and Finance