



# COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY



Procurement Services



## *What to Know for University Travel*

### **Before traveling:**

Familiarize yourself with the University (and any funding agency) policies and regulations and check with the office that processes reimbursements for your department to find out about any additional requirements.

When possible, book your trip at least 14 days prior to your scheduled departure date. We recommend that you use the University designated travel agency for low fares and hotel bookings at <http://www.campustravel.com/university/columbia>.

### **When making arrangements:**

- Lodging expenses should not exceed **\$350** per night in the U.S., **\$400** per night in international locations.
- Transportation fares (e.g., airline, rail) should be at economy rate.
- Keep the original itinerary, confirmation or quote provided by the travel agency or carrier.

### **While traveling:**

- Save all of your original receipts & documentation to submit to your department for reimbursement.
  - Hotel, original ticket, electronic confirmation (e-ticket), travel itinerary.
  - Local transportation (note the destination and arrival points).
  - Conference flyer (documentation, program or other literature describing the event).

**\*Travelers will not be reimbursed for airline tickets purchased, partially purchased or accommodations and upgrades obtained using frequent flyer miles.\***

### **Meals:**

Expenses for meals for an individual away on approved University business or among University personnel or peer groups (consisting of research collaboration or administrative meetings) should not exceed **\$25** for breakfast, **\$35** for lunch, and **\$50** for dinner, not including tips or tax.

Expenses for business meals involving external parties for fundraising, recruitment or speaking engagements (hosted and paid for by a University employee and attended by business colleagues, donors, students, or prospective employees, which result in a business benefit to the University) should not exceed **\$100 per person**, not including tips or tax.

For all meals involving two or more individuals, document the business purpose, names of the attendees (if over 10 people, the number of attendees), and the relationship (to the University) of the attendees.

Please note when any alcohol is purchased or included on a meal receipt to segregate this when reporting. Save all meal itemized receipts and submit them to your department.

### **When you get back:**

#### **Expense Reimbursement**

All requests for reimbursement including travel advance reconciliations should be submitted to your department within 10 days. Travel and Business Expense Reports must include supporting documentation and business reasons. You must submit all original receipts to your department for expenses.

#### **Late Expense Reimbursement Submissions**

Reimbursement requests must be submitted no later than 120 days after the date of the expense, or at the end of the fiscal year (whichever is sooner). Late submissions may only be reimbursed with the approval of your department. Please note that supporting documentation must be provided in order to describe the circumstances leading to the late submission in order to evaluate whether this is a taxable event. If the circumstances described would not have prevented you from submitting within the proper timeframe (120 days), they are considered taxable income. Expense reimbursements submitted after one year are always considered taxable income and will be reported on your annual Form W-2.

# Reimbursable and Non-Reimbursable Expenses

## **Travel - Reimbursable Expenses**

- Baggage handling
- Storage expenses
- Business office expenses
- Business-related calls and faxes
- Up to 3 personal calls per day of reasonable duration
- Currency conversion fees
- Gratuities to porters, bellhops and other service personnel
- Internet access
- Laundry or cleaning expenses on trips lasting over 5 days
- ATM fees and traveler check fees
- Ground transportation
- Parking and tolls
- Travel change/cancellation fees (if required for business needs)

## **Travel - Non-Reimbursable Expenses**

- Airline club membership dues or one-day admission fees
- Air-phone usage
- Baby-sitting
- Barbers & hairdressers
- Clothing (purchase or rental)
- Toiletry items
- More than 3 personal calls each day, unless emergency circumstances are documented
- Expenses related to vacation taken before, during, or after a business trip.
- Frequent flyer miles
- Helicopter services for local travel/entertainment
- Snacks
- Loss or theft of cash advance
- Loss of airline tickets
- Loss or theft of personal fund
- Lost baggage
- Luggage and briefcases
- Personal reading materials
- Medical expenses while traveling
- Mini-bar alcoholic expenses
- Movies
- Personal entertainment
- Pet care
- Recreational expenses
- Saunas, massages
- Shoe Shines
- Souvenirs, or personal

## **Employee Entertainment Expenses:**

### **Reimbursable Business Occasions**

- Dissertation defense
- Promotion
- Welcoming a new hire to the University
- Leaving the University
- Years of Service/Retirement
- Graduation of an employee/student
- Awarding of tenure
- Publication
- Event or performance opening
- Sabbatical
- Recognition of achievement, departmental goal, honor, or thank you

### **Other Reimbursable Employee Entertainment**

- Departmental celebration of a holiday
- Collective celebrations of birthdays
- Congratulations on business related individual achievement

### **Non-Reimbursable Employee Entertainment**

- Showers for birth or adoption of baby
- Engagements, weddings, anniversaries,
- Individual birthday celebrations
- Congratulations on personal related individual achievement