Individual Travel Policy

Policy

The following policy applies to Colorado Mesa University employees and students traveling on University business - regardless of funding source, including external entities.

All University employees who travel on business outside of Colorado once a year or within the state twice a year must apply for the State Travel Card (US Bank VISA) and must use it for all travel-related expenses, wherever it is accepted. Applications for the card are available from the Purchasing Department. The individual State Travel card (US Bank VISA) does not come with cash advance ATM access because of the wide acceptance of VISA. Request for ATM access will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Travelers must always obtain prior approval for travel except for travel within a single day that does not include airfare.

Colorado Mesa University employees and students are required to obtain a Travel Authorization number from the Travel Compliance Designee or delegate prior to any overnight travel and/or any travel involving airfare.

Colorado Mesa University travelers follow the rules and regulations of the Colorado Statewide Travel Management Program (STMP), State of Colorado Fiscal Rules and the Governor’s Executive Order D 005 03 as well as those of the University itself. Approved travel and approved travel expenses must be for the benefit of the University and in furtherance of its mission.

Non-employees

Non-employees representing Colorado Mesa University on official business are subject to the same policies, procedures and fiscal rules as employees.

Definitions

In-State Trip: A University traveler in travel status within the State of Colorado and in the immediate area outside of Colorado that is a necessary part of an otherwise in-state trip.

Out-of-State Trip: A University traveler in travel status outside of Colorado and within CONUS (the Continental U.S., including the District of Columbia), Alaska and Hawaii.

International Trip: A University traveler in travel status to any destination that is not considered in-state or out-of-state.

Required Approvals

Required approvals for Travel Authorization, and the responsibilities carried by the signatories and approvers, are as follows:
1. **Employee's signature.** By signing the Travel Authorization form, the employee is certifying that the travel is necessary to the business of the University; the estimated expenditures are reasonable, proper, and in compliance with travel policies; and no personal expenditures are included. The employee is also recognizing that the actual reimbursement paid may be less than the estimate shown on the Travel Authorization depending on the actual expenditures as verified by supporting documentation or on the amount of funding approved.

2. **Travel Approver.** A travel approver must be the traveler's supervisor or higher authority. *All international travel must be pre-approved by the immediate supervisor and the President.* Travel for faculty and staff must be approved by the department head; travel for department heads must be approved by the VP; travel for VPs must be approved by the President of the University, travel for the President must be approved by the Vice President.

3. **Supervisor's signature.** By signing the Travel Authorization form, the supervisor is certifying that he/she is aware of the employee's travel and that the travel is necessary to the business of the University, the estimated expenditures listed are reasonable and necessary, and that arrangements have been made to cover position requirements in the employee's absence.

4. **ORGN (Cost Center) Manager's signature.** By signing the Travel Authorization form, the orgn/cost center manager is certifying that funds are available in the amount of the Travel Authorization. The orgn/cost center manager has the authority and option of declining all or a portion of the submitted trip.

5. **Travel Office authorization.** It is the travel office's responsibility to verify that all proper supporting documents are attached to the Travel Authorization, and that all requests are in compliance with travel policies. The travel office has the authority to decline the submitted trip based on non-compliance with established travel procedures.

6. **Blanket Authorization.** Blanket authorization for specific individuals in a department, for in-state travel, can be requested in the form of a memo to the Travel Compliance Designee. This blanket authorization does not cover airfare; pre-approval is required for all airfare.

**Elements of Travel**

**Air travel (or travel by other common carrier)**

Once a TA number has been obtained, the traveler calls an approved travel agency and buys the ticket. The travel agency bills the ticket to the State Travel Card Central Travel System account (formerly known as the Ghost Card). Accounts Payable staff reconciles and pays the bill, charging each ticket plus any agency service fees to the departmental Banner Orgn and Account identified in the Travel Authorization.

**Internet Airfares**

Travelers may wish to take advantage of favorable Internet airfares. The use of Internet airfares is permissible if the Internet fare will achieve a cost savings as compared to purchase through an approved state travel agent. This cost savings must be documented.

- The traveler obtains a fare quote with travel dates, flight times, carrier, flight #s, and all ticketing cost. To obtain this quote, the traveler would reserve – but not purchase – the transaction on the Internet.
- The traveler must provide the quote to an approved travel agency and afford the opportunity to meet or beat the price. If the travel agency meets or beats the price the airfare must be purchased from the travel agency.
• The traveler purchases the Internet ticket using his or her individual US Bank VISA State Travel Card. The traveler accepts full responsibility for changes or cancellations to the Internet ticket in accordance with the restrictions for that specific ticket and Internet site.
• The traveler will not be reimbursed for the internet ticket charge until after he or she has returned from the trip.

International Airfares

All international travelers using grant and contract funds must comply with the following:

Use of U.S.-Flag Air Carriers

2. Any air transportation to, from, between, or within a country other than the U.S. of persons or property, the expense of which will be assisted by NSF funding, must be performed by or under a code-sharing arrangement with a U.S.-flag air carrier if service provided by such a carrier is available (see Comp Gen. Decision B-240956, dated September 25, 1991). Tickets (or documentation for electronic tickets) must identify the U.S.-flag air carrier’s designator code and flight number.
3. For the purposes of this requirement, U.S.-flag air carrier service is considered available even though:
   a. Comparable or a different kind of service can be provided at less cost by a foreign-flag air carrier;
   b. Foreign-flag air carrier service is preferred by, or is more convenient for, NSF or traveler; or
   c. Service by a foreign-flag carrier can be paid for in excess foreign currency.
4. The following rules apply unless their application would result in the first or last leg of travel from or to the U.S. being performed by a foreign-flag air carrier:
   a. A U.S.-flag carrier shall be used to destination or, in the absence of direct or through service, to the farthest interchange point on a usually traveled route.
   b. If a U.S.-flag air carrier does not serve an origin or interchange point, a foreign-flag air carrier shall be used only to the nearest interchange point of a usually traveled route to connect with a U.S.-flag air carrier.
   c. A U.S.-flag air carrier involuntarily reroutes the traveler via a foreign-flag air carrier, the foreign-flag air carrier may be used notwithstanding the availability of alternative U.S.-flag air carrier service.

Use of Foreign-Flag Air Carriers.

1. Travel To and From the U.S.

Use of a foreign-flag air carrier is permissible if:

a. the airport abroad is the traveler’s origin or destination airport, and use of U.S.-flag air carrier service would extend the time in a travel status by at least 24 hours more than travel by a foreign-flag air carrier; or
b. the airport abroad is an interchange point, and use of U.S.-flag air carrier service would increase the number of aircraft changes the traveler must make outside of the US by 2 or more, would require the traveler to wait four hours or more to make connections at that point, or would extend the time in a travel status by at least six hours more than travel by a foreign-flag air carrier.
2. Travel Between Points Outside the U.S.

Use of a foreign-flag air carrier is permissible if:

a. travel by a foreign-flag air carrier would eliminate two or more aircraft changes enroute;

b. travel by a U.S.-flag air carrier would require a connecting time of four hours or more at an overseas interchange point; or

c. the travel is not part of the trip to or from the U.S., and use of a U.S.-flag air carrier would extend the time in a travel status by a least six hours more that travel by a foreign-flag air carrier.

3. Short Distance Travel. For all short distance travel, regardless of origin and destination, use of a foreign-flag air carrier is permissible if the elapsed travel time on a scheduled flight from origin to destination airport by a foreign-flag air carrier is three hours or less and service by a U.S.-flag air carrier would double the travel time.

Special notes on International travel

Prior to beginning any international trip, travelers should look up information about the destination country, including passport and visa requirements, health issues, vaccination requirements, etc. The U.S. government maintains a web site with information of interest to international travelers; it includes travel warnings currently in effect. See http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html. Furthermore, the World Health Organization has a web site with information on health-related issues, including disease warnings. See http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/notes/2007/en/index.html. Travelers may need to obtain a visa, and/or vaccinations in order to enter a foreign country. Upon trip completion, these costs are generally reimbursable.

If currency exchange is required as part of an international business trip, the traveler must document the cost of exchanging money, e.g., by using www.oanda.com/convert/classic and backdating the calculation to the actual date on which money was exchanged. If using the State Travel VISA card this is not necessary.

Conference/event registration fees and lodging deposits

The traveler should use the Procurement Card (the University MasterCard) or a Travel Authorization to pay any registration fees directly to the vendor. The traveler should use his or her individual State Travel Card (US Bank VISA) to reserve the hotel room. If the traveler covers these or other trip-related costs personally, in advance of the trip, he or she cannot be reimbursed until trip completion.

Travel Advance

Travel advances must be repaid or cleared within 30 days of completing travel. If you are delinquent on repayment you cannot receive another advance until your account is cleared. Travel Advances in excess of the actual trip expense must be repaid within 30 days of completion of the trip. Failure to comply with the above terms will result in suspension of travel advance privileges.
Rental Vehicle & Insurance

If renting a vehicle the traveler must use one of the contract rental car agencies: Avis, Budget or Enterprise. For travel originating from Grand Junction travelers may use Thrifty, but only the Grand Junction Thrifty has met the state insurance requirements. Employees should avoid additional charges for picking up a rental vehicle too far in advance or returning it later than necessary.

The traveler must charge the vehicle to the State Travel Card and decline all insurance. When using the State travel Card with a contract rental agency all insurance is provided at no cost to the traveler or to the State. The State Travel Card provides collision and loss damage insurance (CDW/LDW) and the contract rental agency provides liability insurance per the State contract. Employees who accept unnecessary automobile rental insurance will not receive reimbursement for the purchase of this insurance.

Personal Vehicle Use

If the traveler chooses to use a personal vehicle while in travel status, mileage will be reimbursed at the state fiscal rule rate. Reimbursement for 4-WD rates is permitted between 11/1 - 4/1. Justification for use of 4-WD is required for travel occurring outside these dates.

Receipts

Original, itemized receipts are required for reimbursement of lodging, rental car and gasoline regardless of dollar amount. Receipts are not required for meals unless you will be purchasing your meal and meals for additional travelers. In the event you will be purchasing multiple meals, an itemized receipt is required.


Reimbursement

Per IRS regulations, the Business Office must receive the signed completed Travel Expense Voucher and all supporting documentation within 60 days of trip completion to avoid having reimbursement reported as income.

In all cases, the traveler cannot be reimbursed for eligible travel expenses, including any costs personally incurred in advance of the trip, until trip completion. Upon return, the traveler requests reimbursement of appropriate trip-related expenses via the Travel Expense form. The following documents must be attached to the signed and completed Travel Expense form:

- Original, itemized receipts, as required;
- Any other forms (e.g., Official Function Authorization) or documentation (e.g., backdated Currency calculation), as required.

The traveler cannot approve the Travel Expense Voucher form; the next level supervisor must approve it.
Travelers will be reimbursed for eligible expenses up to the actual trip expense or the department maximum, whichever is less.

In general, the Travel Expense Voucher form and related documentation as described above must be submitted to the Business Office within 30 days of the end of the trip. If, however, the traveler received an advance for this trip, then the deadline for Travel Expense form submission – and reimbursement to Colorado Mesa University, if necessary – is 30 days after the end of the trip. The department should keep a copy of the form.

The Business Office audits and processes the Travel Expense Voucher form to insure completeness, accuracy and compliance with state policies.

Business Office staff reimburses any payments due the traveler. Turnaround time for reimbursement to the employee is generally 10 working days IF proper documentation, authorization and receipts are in order. The reimbursements will be a direct deposit to the same location as payroll.

Note: Travelers expecting reimbursement by another entity should not submit expenses to the University. If reimbursement is received from another source for an expense already covered by Colorado Mesa University, the traveler must reimburse Colorado Mesa University. The University will reimburse the Banner orgn/account distribution that covered the original expense.

Lodging

Lodging costs may be reimbursed at the single room rate up to the actual amount incurred by the traveler. The traveler should make every effort to obtain the lowest-cost lodging possible. In the case of a conference, the University permits the employee to stay at the conference hotel instead of seeking the lowest rate available.

All claims for lodging, with or without meals, must be supported by:

- An original receipt or
- A receipt faxed directly from the hotel

Meals

You may claim up to the maximum per diem for the city to which you are traveling. The maximum per diem amount is a daily amount rather than an amount assigned to individual meals and under no circumstances shall an employee claim more the established maximum per diem rate. The only time individual meal rates are a factor is when travel is for a partial day. Reimbursement for meals will be made at the current per diem listed in the State of Colorado Fiscal Rules, Chapter 5. http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite?blobcol=urldata&blobheader=application/pdf&blobkey=id&blobtable=MungoBlobs&blobwhere=1251629886343&ssbinary=true