Changes to the UW System Travel Program

Effective **October 5, 2015**, the UW System will be implementing a new travel program rate structure and policies.

In 2011, the UW System Board of Regents received authority to manage a travel program, independent of the State of Wisconsin’s program. The new policies and protocols for meals and incidental expenses, lodging, vehicle usage, miscellaneous travel-related expenses, and general travel provisions apply to all University-funded or University-sponsored travel, regardless of funding source or traveler affiliation (e.g., employees, guests, consultants, students). Following is a summary of the changes.

**Per diems**

Meals and incidental expenses (M&IE) will be paid or reimbursed on a per diem allowance basis, as defined by the federal government. The daily M&IE per diem allowance is additionally based on the location where the traveler spends the night. The rate for the last day of travel is based on the traveler’s location the night before his/her travel ended. Leave and return times are no longer required.

- Travelers are allowed 75 percent of the daily allowance on the first and last days of travel.
- Provided meals **at a conference or meeting** will be deducted from the per diem as a percentage (i.e., 20 percent of the per diem will be deducted for a provided breakfast, 30 percent for lunch, 50 percent for dinner).
- Hotel complimentary breakfast and airline meals **are not** required to be deducted from the per diem amount.
- Travelers who are traveling during the day but have no overnight stay may claim a meal allowance of $15 per day when no meals are provided during the course of their business. In accordance with IRS regulations and current practice, these allowances are tax reportable.
- Travelers who incur no expense (for example, all transport, lodging and/or meals provided) will not receive a per diem.

**University-sponsored or hosted events**

Meal rates for University-sponsored or hosted events, such as receptions, business meetings, and hosting of job candidates, will also be changing. Please work with your institutional travel office for specific receipt requirements and maximum meal rates for locations within Wisconsin and those out of state.

**Lodging**

Rates for single/standard lodging in Wisconsin and for international locations, Alaska, Hawaii, and US territories are not to exceed the federal rate maximum for the location and dates of stay.
Lodging costs elsewhere in the contiguous United States will be allowed up to 125 percent of the federal rates.

- Lodging booking methods will include Concur, Fox World Travel agents, and the hotel property directly. The purchase of lodging using online brokers (e.g., Expedia, Hotels.com) continues to be disallowed because these sites often include costly change/cancel penalties, and they do not provide the receipt requirements in accordance with IRS regulations.
- Lodging rate limits do not apply to externally arranged conference lodging if staying at the conference location or any conference recommended hotel. (The State’s current policy only allows the maximum rate to be exceeded if it’s at the conference location, not recommended hotels). Rate limits do apply for UW-sponsored conferences or events.

**Mileage**

- The US General Services Administration (GSA) mileage rates of $0.575 for cars/trucks and $0.545 for motorcycles will be used.
- UW Colleges and UW-Extension will no longer use a lower reimbursement rate in cases where a traveler has turned down the option of using a fleet car. However, travelers should be aware of liability risks when driving a personal car for work duty.

**Filing timely expense reports**

Per UW System policy, all travel expense reports must be submitted within 90 days from the end date of a trip or reimbursement will not be provided. (Note: IRS rules require that all business travel be accounted for in a timely manner, and provides 60 days as a reasonable definition of timely).

**Booking air travel**

The requirement to book air travel through the Concur booking tool or through Fox World Travel agents remains unchanged by this policy. Air travel not booked through these methods may not be reimbursed, per UW System policy.