FAQ

***Q: Where do I start?***

A: TRAVEL APPROVALS

* When you are first made aware of your travel you will need to submit a travel pre-approval form. This ***must*** submitted and approved before any purchases can be made for your travels by the department. It is also a good measure to wait for approval even if you plan on making your own purchases and plan on getting reimbursed. If the trip is not approved before depart there is a possibility that any reimbursements you have will not be paid.
* Please make sure to read each question carefully, insufficient answers can delay approval of your trip; there are multiple channels the approval goes through before finally getting approved. Please be responsive to any correspondence about your travel being unresponsive could cost you valuable information before you go on travel, therefore costing you more money out of pocket than anticipated.
* The question “Purpose” and “Benefit to the University and Project being charged” on the **Travel Pre-Approval Form** is most always answered insufficiently. The University wants to know what you will be doing on the trip and how it will benefit the University. Just merely answering “research” will for sure get your travel request rejected. Since the support staff does not go to the conferences and meetings that you are traveling, it is hard for us to infer what type of interactions are taking place, so to expedite things please answer that question as precise and detailed as possible. Adding a link to the main conference page also helps.
* C-FOP, Also on the form it asks for a C-FOP. This is a University account code. This information needs to be filled out to know where the funds for the travel are coming from. Your advisor or sponsor for the trip should provide a C-FOP for you to use. The C-FOP should be a 19 digit number in the following format 1-xxxxxx-xxxxxx-xxxxxx.

Where can the travel pre approval from be found?

<https://apps.atlas.illinois.edu/FormBuilderSurvey/Survey/LAS/SESE_HR/SESE_Travel_Pre_Approval_Form/>

**Q: *Do I purchase and pay for my own travel costs, or will the Atmospheric Science help?***

A: PURCHASING AIRFARE/LODGING/CAR RENTALS/MEALS ETC.

* Airfare, Lodging, and Conference/Paper/Journal registration are significant costs and we do not expect all students to financially capable of those expenditures. We will do our best to make sure those expenses are paid. However, it is your responsibility to make sure your travel approval form is done in a timely manner, to strive for the most economical purchases in accordance with University policy.
  + Sometimes lodging can’t be paid prior to travel and a credit card authorization form will be needed to process payment on the hotel’s end. If you are notified a credit card authorization form is needed it is your responsibility to ensure that this is done by the support staff and that the hotel has received it before you travel.
  + Also specified in the credit card authorization form is that no charges other than lodging should be charged on the Universities Credit Card. **DO NOT** put any other charges, including but not limited to: parking, internet, and food or other room services on the University Credit Card. If these expenses are found, it is a violation, and you may lose the privilege of having lodging paid for by the University where credit card authorizations are needed. If you need any of these purchases made put it on separate receipt with your personal credit card.
* If you are meeting a time crunch because you did get your travel approval done in a timely manner, it will then be your responsibility to make your own airfare and lodging purchases and be reimbursed after the process.
  + Even when making purchases for yourself you will need to use the most economical purchase method.
    - Only ***Economy Airfare tickets*** can be reimbursed
    - If it is a conference or meeting with designated conference hotel and rates the designated lodging can be used. *Please also print or save the information that explains it is the conference hotel to file with reimbursements*. If there are only ***suggested hotels or no lodging specifications*** for your travel you must use make the most economical purchase. Take into consideration cost of traveling to the meeting space from your hotel when configuring most economical purchases. (These do not need to be exact figures but keep this in mind when choosing the least expensive hotel which is 20 minutes from your meeting space for a 3 day conference; these costs do add up and are usually unexpected cost not calculated when initially budgeting your travel expense estimates.)
* All other purchases will have to be made by the traveler and reimbursed after the trip. Including but not limited to: food, local transportation; and car rentals.
* We have contracted car rentals for business purposes with a few car rental providers. They can be found here. <https://www.obfs.uillinois.edu/travel/car-rental/>
  + If you do rent a car please read all the terms in the aforementioned link.
    - Optional Damage Waivers, Toll Passes, or other premiums ***will not*** be reimbursed.
    - Please keep all gas receipts for car rentals and turn those in with your reimbursements at the end of the travel.
* Food purchases will be reimbursed on the per diem rates.
  + Per Diem is a daily travel meal allowance and includes taxes and tips. Per IRS guidelines, per diem is not provided for intra-day (same day) travel.
  + The cost of actual meals purchased while in travel status is not reimbursable and receipts for such meals should not be submitted with the expense report. Per Diem amounts may not exceed maximum allowances established for domestic travel by the Illinois Higher Education Travel Control Board. The current daily allowance is $28.00 for travel within the State of Illinois and $32.00 for travel outside of Illinois.
  + The Travel & Expense Management system (TEM) automatically calculates the per diem reimbursement amount based on number of travel days, the time that travel status starts, and the time that travel status ends.
  + University employees must deduct the following amounts from the per diem allowance when a meal is provided during travel status. Even if you did not use the provided meal if it is included in any of the registration or lodging expenses it will be deducted.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | In-State | Out-of-State |
| Breakfast | $5.50 | $6.50 |
| Lunch | $5.50 | $6.50 |
| Dinner | $17.00 | $19.00 |

* + For further information regarding per diem go to <https://www.obfs.uillinois.edu/travel/reimbursement-rates/meal-per-diem-reimbursement-domestic-travel/>
* The reimbursement process usually takes 2-3 weeks but can take up to 6 weeks (or occasionally longer) during peak periods, so please keep that in mind when making financial decisions about your travel

For further details regarding having travel approved please see FAQ on TRAVEL APPROVALS

**Q: *What will I get reimbursed for*?**

A (1) Short list of typical allowable reimbursable expenses

|  |
| --- |
| * Airfare |
| * Car rental (Enterprise or National) |
| * Food |
| * Gas (Car Rental) |
| * Lodging |
| * Luggage |
| * Mileage(Personal Car) |
| * Public Transportation |
| * Taxi and Ride shares (premium ride share such as but not limited to UberXL, UberSelect, UberBLACK, Lyft Lux, Lux Black, Lux Black XL are NOT reimbursable) |
| * Tolls |

A (2) : PURCHASING AIRFARE/LODGING/CAR RENTALS/MEALS CONTINUED.

* All reimbursement request require receipts with the exception of food and gas for personal car travel.

* When making purchases if you want a reimbursement you will must turn in the **original receipts**. No photos of the receipts of receipts are acceptable, if receipts are originally digital that can be emailed or turned in physically. If you are traveling and cannot personally deliver any original paper receipts you can use a photo or pdf copies of the receipts but you must still turn in the original receipts once you return or mail the original receipts in. If you make purchases with a bank/credit card make sure the receipt shows the last 4 digits of the card. If this is missing from the receipt you will have to show proof of the transaction being withdrawn from your account via a bank statement or any other paper trail. If no receipt is available it is up to the discretion of the University if they will reimburse you.
* Also please be aware when making purchases to go with the most affordable option. For airfare, only economy class ticket prices will be reimbursed. Standard rooms will be reimbursed for hotels. Pick affordable price hotel rooms, deluxe rooms or resorts will not be reimbursed. Conference hotels are the only exception for the most reasonable hotel, but within the options for the conference you should still use your best judgement when picking the room and hotel. If you are staying at a conference hotel you **MUST** provide proof.
  + Air BNB’s are allowable.
* You **WILL NOT** be reimbursed for insurance on purchases including but not limited to the following; rental cars, hotels, and airfare. If you rent a car through Enterprise make sure they know you are employed by the University. There is a standard agreement for University of Illinois Employees traveling on business and insurance should not be shown as an additional fee on the receipt. The contract for employees on business travel does include insurance, but you should not be charged for it.
* Local transportation is reimbursable. This includes buses, train, taxis, and now rideshares. However be aware rideshares with premiums are not reimbursable, only UberX and Lyftstandard are reimbursable (Uber XL”, “UberSELECT”, “UberBLACK”, “UberSUV”, “UberLUX”, or “LyftPlus” are not permitted.)

**Non Travel** - For group meals that meet University requirements (only allowable when a visitor is present) you will need the following for reimbursement;

* An itemized receipt
* A list of each individual and their affiliation(Professor, Researcher, etc.) and institution (UIUC, UIC, MIT, MSCAR, etc.) up to 20 people
* We will need to know the purpose of the event
* Reimbursement Limits
  + Breakfast $25 per person
  + Lunch $40 per person
  + Dinner $60 per person
  + Refreshments and Reception $25 per person
  + Alcohol $20 per person for non-donor events

**Q: *How long will it take for me to receive reimbursement for my travel costs*?**

A:  REIMBURSEMENT TIMELINE

* Please allow 2-6 weeks for the completion of your reimbursement. The entire process includes creating the expense report (which generates your reimbursement) and the processing of the report through the University TEM system, <https://www.obfs.uillinois.edu/tem-resources/> . Once your expense report is completed, we will contact you and request that you review it. If no corrections are necessary, we will ask that you submit the report. Once you submit the report, the report goes through Department for approval after this channel the report is then goes through University Payables for further processing. We have limited information of the report once the Payables process begins. If you become concerned about the reimbursement timeline, please let us know.
* You only have a limited time (60 days) from return travel date or date of receipt to have it submitted in the TEM system. This means since 1 person is processing and creating all the expense reports for everyone in Atmospheric sciences it is pertinent that you turn in all your receipts as soon as possible after your travel so it can be submitted on time or else you may be penalized and taxed for your reimbursement. For more information on receipts please see FAQ on RECIEPTS & RETURN FROM TRAVEL.

**Q: *I received an email notifying me that my reimbursement expense report was rejected. What does this mean*?**

A: REJECTION OF AN EXPENSE REPORT

* It is extremely common for expense reports to be “rejected” by the department or Payables. You may receive an automated email from the Department or Payables stating that the expense report for your reimbursement has been rejected. This means that the report is missing information or documentation, or contains an administrative error of some kind. The person who creates the expense report as your proxy also receives the rejection notification, so you do not need to notify the proxy if you receive this email. Most often, we will be able to correct any errors without needing to contact you. Occasionally, we may reach out to you to get more information if needed. The report must be re-reviewed and re-submitted as many times as necessary for all errors to be corrected.  An expense report may be rejected multiple times. This doesn’t mean you will not receive your reimbursement; it just means adjustments need to be made to the report at various stages of the process.

**Q: *My advisor can’t reimburse me for all the costs associated with my travel. Is there any other financial assistance available*?**

A: TRAVEL GRANTS

* Travel grants may be available to help subsidize your travel costs.If you apply for and/or receive a travel grant, you MUST list this in the travel approval form and also list the amount (or approx. amount) of the grant on the form. This money will be applied toward the cost of your travel and will be deducted from your reimbursement. For more information on travel grants, contact the coordinator for the conference you plan to attend or research the website for the conference. The Graduate School provides some travel grants. Please see the following for more information. <http://www.grad.illinois.edu/general/travelaward>

**Q: *Will I be reimbursed for meals while I’m traveling? Do I need to save all my receipts if I buy meals while traveling*?**

A: PER DIEM Meals and Mileage

* Per Diem at UIUC is a pre-determined amount designed to reimburse the costs of meals while you travel. This prevents you from having to collect and save individual receipts from food vendors. The amount of per diem you receive depends on the length of travel and where you travel in the world. Per Diem is not automatically provided to students.
* If you are receiving per diem, please keep track of all meals provided by conference, airfare, or hotel that was not purchased separately. Be sure to mark it on the travel receipts log provided to you.
* If you travel in your own personal vehicle you will also be reimbursed PER DIEM for mileage. No receipts are necessary for gas if you travel with your own personal vehicle. If you rent a car you will need to keep gas receipts and be reimbursed in the usual form of reimbursement.

**Q: How long do I have to turn in my receipts and other documents?**

A: RECIEPTS & RETURN FROM TRAVEL

* You should turn all of your receipts in as soon as you return from your travel. The date to have your Expense Report in the TEM system is 60 days from your date of return. However, this does not mean wait until the very last week to turn in your receipts. The process of creating an Expense report is multifaceted and many times there will need to be multiple interactions between you and your proxy to make sure all items are accounted for.
* Reimbursement requests received by UPAY (Payables) more than 60 days after an expense is incurred, or after a trip is completed, will be reported as **taxable income. Therefore, it is your responsibility to notify me that your travel has ended and turn in all necessary documentation (receipts etc.) for reimbursement as soon as possible! If you fail to do this, your reimbursement will be taxed and you will also have to provide a justification for the delay in the submission of the reimbursement request.**