

# EWU Employee Travel Guide

The EWU [Travel Accounting Office](#) is pleased to provide this overview of travel procedures for employees of Eastern Washington University. Briefly, the process for employee travel is as follows. Details are provided below. Follow the links within this document to provide additional information.

1. [Familiarize Yourself with State Travel Policy](#)
2. [Same Day Travel](#)
3. [Obtain Travel Authorization](#)
4. [Make Your Reservations](#)
5. [Submit Your Approved TA Form to EWU Travel Accounting](#)
6. [Prepare bottom half of Travel Authorization form \(upon completion of trip\)](#)

EWU is currently transitioning from paper-based forms to an online travel and expense management system (TEMS). Refer to the [TEMS User Guide](#) for more information about the online electronic processing procedures.

Please follow this link to learn about [same day travel](#) and how it may affect you.

For [group travel](#), see additional procedures on this site. For non-employee travel on behalf of the university, contact the EWU Purchasing Department at 359-2253.

## 1. Familiarize Yourself with State Travel Policy

The Office of Financial Management sets [state travel policy](#); it applies to all state employees including those in higher education. In particular, be aware of:

- [Per Diem rates](#) (see per diem links on the EWU Travel Accounting website) for meals, incidental expenses and lodging.
- Transportation is limited to the most economical mode. Travelers and departments must exercise the same care in incurring expenses and accomplishing the purposes of the travel that a prudent person would exercise if traveling on personal business. [SAAM 10.10.15](#)
- State-owned or leased motor vehicles are to be used only for official state business. Transportation of unauthorized passengers is expressly prohibited. [SAAM 10.50.35.c](#)

## 2. Same Day Travel

Travel that occurs and is completed in the same day does not meet the "traveling away from home" requirement of the IRS to be designated tax deductible. Therefore, per diem allowances for same day travel are considered wages and taxable as such. Please see the [same day travel](#) page to familiarize yourself with the details.

- Reimbursements or allowances provided to employees for meals in the course of business may be excludable as wages if the expenses are ordinary and necessary, and meet a Directly-Related Test. [SAAM 70.15.10](#)
- Directly-Related Test – Meal reimbursements may be excludable from wages if:
  - the main purpose of the combined business and meal is the active conduct of business;
  - business is actually conducted during the meal period; and
  - there is more than a general expectation of deriving a specific business benefit at some future time.

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- If there will be a meal with a meeting that qualifies as excludable from wages, prior written approval must be obtained. [SAAM 70.15.30](#)
  - Fill out a [Meals & Light Refreshments](#) form, following the instructions within the form. Obtain signature of Approving Dean, Director, or Vice President prior to the trip.
  - When completing and submitting your travel voucher to Travel Accounting, include the pre-approved Meals & Light Refreshments form and the original meal receipt. The original receipt must be included for the meal to be excludable from wages. [SAAM 70.15.10](#)

## 3. Obtain Travel Authorization

Complete a Travel Authorization using Banner TEMS. Refer to the TEMS User Guide. Otherwise, complete the top portion of the paper Travel Authorization (TA) form, which is available on the EWU Travel Accounting web page. Instructions for completing the TA form are included in the TA file.

- Your supervisor must sign the TA form. The appropriate budget authority must also sign for each index to be charged.
  - **Travel cash advances** – If requesting an advance, sign the TA before forwarding it on to the supervisor and EWU Travel Accounting.
- Prior authorization is required for all forms of out-of-state travel. [SAAM 10.10.50](#)
  - **Out-of-state travel** – Your supervisor and budget authority must sign and date prior to trip departure.
  - **Over-seas international travel** – After your supervisor and budget authority have signed, route through EWU President's Office or designee.

## 4. Make Your Reservations

As provided in RCW 28B.10.029, institutions of higher education may use all appropriate means for making and paying for travel arrangements to support student, faculty, staff and other participants travel in the most cost effective and efficient manner possible. Methods used must be based on standard industry practices and be compliant with federal accountable plan requirements. [SAAM 10.10.05](#)

### Airline Tickets

Airline reservations may be made and fares can be paid through the methods outlined below.

- **State-qualified travel agency.** See the [contracts section](#) on the EWU Travel Accounting site for a list of state-qualified travel agencies. This method offers several advantages for a small service fee. For example, these agencies are aware of state travel policies and are trained to obtain fully refundable state-contract fares at discounted prices for specified destinations.
- **Direct purchase from the airline.** Tickets may be purchased directly from the airline either by phone or via their online website. State-contract fares are not available through the commercial websites, so contact the airline directly when these discount fares are available for the destination. A list of destinations with discounted state contract fares is available on the EWU Travel Accounting Website.
- **Other online travel service providers.** Airline tickets may be purchased through an online travel service provider (e.g., Travelocity, Expedia, etc.).

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Payment methods for purchasing airline tickets are as follows:

- **Departmental CTA account**, if available. A list of departmental CTA holders is available from Travel Accounting or check with your departmental travel coordinator. This is the most efficient payment method for the university.
- **EWU corporate credit card** issued through EWU Travel Accounting. See the Corporate Travel Card section on our website for more information. Reimbursement can be obtained prior to travel when purchased well in advance of the trip.
- **Personal credit card** – reimbursement requests will be processed the same as the EWU corporate credit card.

## Commercial carriers other than airlines (rail, bus, etc.)

Tickets may be procured using the departmental CTA account, a corporate credit card issued through EWU Travel Accounting, or with personal resources.

## Lodging and Rental Cars

Hotel and rental car reservations may be made through a [state-qualified travel agency](#) or directly through the provider.

For rental cars and state motor pool vehicles,

- Transportation and insurance coverage is limited to an authorized driver and authorized passengers. Provide a list of passengers using the group roster form.
  - **Authorized Passengers** – Individuals authorized by the agency head or authorized designee to ride as passengers in a [state vehicle](#) driven by a [state driver](#) conducting official state business.
- Per state policy, the university will not provide excess liability protection to any unauthorized passengers in the event of an accident. [SAAM 10.50.35.c](#)
- [Enterprise Rental Car](#) is the recommended [state-contract provider](#). EWU employees may use other rental car agencies if Enterprise does not meet program needs, but insurance coverage must be purchased (reimbursable).
- When it is more economical, travelers have the option of obtaining a rental vehicle from the university motor pool.
- Obtain a separate contract with Enterprise or another provider if using the rental car for personal use while in travel status.

You may use your own vehicle for business transportation.

- Certain insurance requirements and coverage limits apply; see [SAAM 10.50.20, 25](#).
- The TA form shows the current mileage reimbursement rate (subject to change annually).
- Keep in mind that the amount of reimbursement for transportation is limited to the most economical mode. If planning a cross-country trip, be sure to compare airfare vs. mileage reimbursement. You may opt for a more expensive mode of transportation, but reimbursement is limited to the most economical mode when your schedule permits such mode.
- It is the originating department's responsibility to document these cost comparisons when the most economical mode is not selected.

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When purchasing airline tickets or other transportation, it is the department's responsibility to ensure the following requirements are met.

- An original receipt is provided with the TA form which shows payment method and amount paid.
- Unused tickets must be submitted to the departmental Budget Authority who approved the airfare expense.
- If a package deal is obtained, the receipt should separately detail the cost for each expense category: airfare, lodging, rental car, etc. If expenses are not itemized, contact Travel Accounting for instructions. If the package includes a rental car, be sure to request liability and collision insurance. Any package-related "perks" must be disclosed as part of the reimbursement claim. Examples of reportable perks include but are not limited to two-for-one fares or similar deals, event tickets, etc.

## Conference/Registration Fees

Generally, we encourage departments to use their procurement cards to pay for employee conference registration fees. If unavailable or not accepted by the vendor, payment should be made as follows:

**If you will be in travel status** – If conference registration or similar fees must be paid, indicate the registration fee on the TA form (Box 6) and attach a completed registration form and conference agenda.

- Alternatively, Travel Accounting can pay for the registration fee and charge your departmental budget.
- The itinerary/agenda should indicate whether meals are included in the conference/registration fee.
- Meal cost in excess of the meal allowance is borne by the traveler unless the cost is combined or included in the registration fee (not separately itemized); if included, no additional per diem (meal allowance) will be paid for that meal.
- For per diem calculation purposes, the conference agenda and registration form must be submitted with the TA form.

**If you will not be in travel status** – And no additional travel costs are anticipated at the time of registration, use the [Purchase Requisition Form](#) for payment.

- If attending a conference in Spokane County and no additional travel costs are anticipated at the time of registration, employees may use the Purchase Requisition form.
- If unanticipated travel-related expenses are subsequently incurred, an employee can claim reimbursement for allowable travel costs on a travel authorization form even if the registration is paid using a Purchase Requisition form.

You may use personal resources or your [EWU corporate travel card](#) for conference/registration fees when:

- You have obtained prior approval from your Budget Authority (the Budget Authority is the person who is responsible for approving expenses charged to a particular budget index), and
- You can submit an original receipt with a completed travel expense report (TEV) (if additional travel expenses are expected) or Purchase Requisition form (if no additional travel expenses are expected) to obtain reimbursement.

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When payment for a conference/registration is made with a Procurement Card, the expense will be distributed (charged) to one or more indexes (budgets) using PaymentNet. Please reference the TA number and traveler's last name in the "Additional Notes Section" on PaymentNet.

## 5. Submit Your Approved TA Form

Submit the approved TA form to your departmental CTA representative or travel coordinator, if available. Your CTA representative will purchase the airfare and forward the TA to Travel Accounting for further processing. If a departmental CTA representative or a travel coordinator is not available, you may purchase your own transportation.

- You may [apply for the EWU Corporate Card](#) to facilitate your travel. A card is usually available within seven business days. If you do not have a corporate card, you may obtain a cash advance via the TA form. Corporate card holders are not eligible for an advance.
- A cash advance can be obtained for all estimated expenses except commercial fares (e.g., airfare) and mileage reimbursement if using a personal vehicle. Your cash advance can be mailed to the address on the TA form or picked up at Student Financial Services in 202 Sutton Hall (Cheney campus). When possible, cash advances should be requested at least 10 business days prior to departure to ensure cash on hand prior to your trip.
- Indicate type(s) of travel procurement (e.g., transportation) needed on Box 7 on the TA form. After travel services are procured and/or a cash advance is prepared, Travel Accounting will return the original TA form to you prior to your trip.
- The travel agency will deliver the airline itinerary and e-ticket information. You are now ready to take your trip. When you depart, be sure to take photo ID and your EWU campus ID to obtain state rates (e.g., government lodging and rental car rates).

## 6. Prepare a Travel Expense Voucher

Upon return from trip, gather your receipts and complete the travel expense voucher (bottom portion of TA form).

- All travel expenses paid by the university or paid by an employee and reimbursed by the university must be supported by a valid receipt, with the exception of miscellaneous travel expenses under \$50. EWU travel expense processing includes a review of all travel expenses by the traveler's supervisor or budget authority and the EWU Travel Accounting Office, ensuring the validity of all travel expenses.
  - Purchases of miscellaneous supplies exceeding \$50 plus applicable tax are not to be included in the travel expense report ([SAAM 10.80.50](#)). Submit a separate voucher to EWU Purchasing Department. The department must determine the validity of the non-travel miscellaneous expenses being claimed. Purchases of supplies become the property of the department.
- If your actual receipts are \$100 or more than the original estimate, submit the completed expense voucher to your budget authority for approval (see bottom of TA Form).
- The expense voucher is due to Travel Accounting by the 10th of the month following return from trip. For example, for travel completed in January, the expense voucher is due no later than February 10th.

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## Determining meal reimbursement eligibility

- Remember to claim meal allowances at the per diem rate for the city where lodging was obtained (use the prior night's lodging location for last day of trip).
- For the purpose of determining per diem rates, all EWU travelers are assigned a standard work schedule of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. when in travel status. This work schedule helps maintain consistency in treatment of travel expense approval and reimbursement.
  - In order to collect meal payments when on non-overnight assignments, the traveler must be in travel status for the assigned work schedule, plus an additional three hours.
  - Meal payments for non-overnight assignments are considered taxable wages as per the [same day travel](#) process described earlier.
- **In travel status during the entire meal period** – Travelers must be in travel status during the entire meal period(s) in order to qualify to collect meal payments for meal(s). [SAAM 10.40.50](#)
- For purposes of determining meal allowances, the designated meal periods are:
  - Breakfast 7 to 8 a.m.
  - Lunch 12 to 1 p.m.
  - Dinner 6 to 7 p.m.
- When it becomes necessary to determine the amount to reimburse for individual meals (from the daily meals rate), use the following calculations rounded to the nearest dollar:
  - The breakfast portion is 25% of the set daily meal entitlement.
  - The lunch portion is 30% of the set daily meal entitlement.
  - The dinner portion is 45% of the set daily meal entitlement. [SAAM 10.40.10.c](#)
- For Out-of-State Per Diem Rates, refer to the GSA website at: <http://www.gsa.gov>. To get the total meal and incidental expense rate breakdown of individual meal allowances, refer to the above.
- If you were provided with a meal as a part of your registration or similar fee, do not claim a meal allowance for that meal. If your fee for the meal exceeded the allowance, claim only up to the meal allowance rate.

If your lodging expense exceeds the allowance, you may request a lodging exception through your supervisor. The [lodging exception form](#) is available from our Travel Accounting web page. Do not include tax when determining the lodging allowance.

If you took a side trip, prepare the TA form as if you had not.

- Claim only actual lodging receipts while on business travel, and claim only meal allowances that would have been needed had you not taken the side trip.
- All personal travel expenses are the responsibility of the traveler.
- If air travel expenses were affected by a personal side trip, the traveler should provide documentation showing how much airfare would have been without the side trip and reimburse any extra costs.
- If you traveled with a non-employee (e.g., family member) be sure to claim only the single room rate for lodging and note the single room rate on your receipt.

Submit your completed and signed TA Form to Travel Accounting, SHW 319. Travel Accounting will review your claim and prepare reimbursement within 11 business days. If any portion of your claim cannot be paid or requires additional information, Travel Accounting will provide you with a written explanation.