

Travel Meal Reimbursement

Purpose

To provide guidance on obtaining reimbursement for meals while on official UTEP travel/business.

Policy

This procedure is issued in accordance with The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) [Travel Policy](#) (Handbook of Operating Procedures, Section VII, Chapter 6).

University faculty, staff and student travelers may be reimbursed for meal expenses incurred on a day that the traveler conducts UTEP official travel outside of his or her designated headquarters and requires an overnight stay. Meal reimbursements are not provided to other University travelers such as prospective employees, guests, and contractors.

The University will not reimburse an employee for meal expenses incurred on a calendar day that did not involve an overnight stay away from the employee's designated headquarters, regardless of the funding source. Travelers may only be reimbursed for his or her meal expense not to exceed the maximum meal reimbursement rate for that location.

Procedures

Meal Reimbursements

Travelers may be reimbursed for meal expenditures on a PeopleSoft Expense Report document with all supporting documentation attached and upon the completion of travel. Official UTEP travelers must provide proof that the expense was incurred to request reimbursement. An approved travel authorization document in accordance with the Travel Authorizations Business Process Guideline and travel itinerary serves this purpose. Meal receipts are not required for meal expenses incurred while traveling since reimbursement will be processed as the applicable per diem amounts.

As required by the Texas Comptroller, the University adheres to the GSA per diem reimbursement rates as the method for determining maximum meal and lodging rates for all UTEP official travel.

- Contiguous US travel must not exceed the General Services Administration ([GSA](#)) federal per diem rates for the destination location unless lodging is in conjunction with a conference or meeting.
- Alaska, Hawaii, US Territories and Possessions (outside contiguous US) travel must not exceed the Department of Defense ([DOD](#)) per diem rates, which are referenced within the General Services Administration ([GSA](#)) unless lodging is in conjunction with a conference or meeting.
- International travel must not exceed the US Department of State ([STATE](#)) per-diem meal rates, which are also referenced within the General Services Administration ([GSA](#)) unless lodging is in conjunction with a conference or meeting.

The meal per diem allowance for the first and last days of a trip as indicated on the travel authorization is calculated on a fractional day's basis. The University will reimburse 75% of the total meal rate regardless of the departure or arrival time for the first and last day of travel.

The traveler will submit all supporting documentation to the department travel planner for reimbursement. The travel planner will create an expense report in PeopleSoft and attach all supporting documentation. The document will be sent electronically to the Disbursement and Travel Services Department for final review and approval.

Itemized meal receipts will only be required if the department/traveler agrees to reimburse actual meals incurred. The amount of itemized meal receipts may not exceed the allowable per diem amount per the General Services Administration ([GSA](#)).

Prohibited Meal Reimbursements

Tips or gratuities paid in conjunction with meal expenses are not reimbursable from state funded accounts. Local accounts may be used to reimburse reasonable tips and gratuities at the University's discretion.

Meal expenses incurred within the employee's designated headquarters are prohibited unless it is mandatory and connected with training, a seminar or a conference.

Alcoholic beverages are not permitted or reimbursable to employees and students.

Excess meal expenses for one day may not be carried forward or backward to another day.

Applicability

This applies to all University faculty, staff, and students traveling on official UTEP travel/business.

Responsible Party

Comptroller
Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP) [Section 7 Chapter 6: Travel Policy](#)

Last updated: November 2025