Financial Services Manual (FIN)

FIN 501: ASU Travel Policy

Effective: 6/3/2016 **Revised**: 11/1/2026

Purpose

To provide the framework (ASU Travel Policy) for faculty, staff, and others to travel on authorized university business and receive timely reimbursement for all necessary and reasonable business expenses resulting from ASU business travel.

Sources

Internal Revenue Service: Publication 463, Publication 15 (Circular E)

Arizona Revised Statutes §§ 38–621 to –627, §§ 35–181.01, 181.02, 182, 192.02

State of Arizona Travel Policy, State of Arizona Accounting Manual, Topic 50

ABOR Policy 3–603

University policy

Applicability

University travelers seeking reimbursement for expenses incurred during approved university travel must comply with ASU Travel Policy. University travelers include faculty, staff, or students traveling for ASU business. Other individuals such as visiting scholars, consultants, and job candidates whose travel is paid by the university either directly or through reimbursement follow reimbursement policies, but not the use of My ASU TRIP/Concur. ASU Travel Policy governs all university travel, unless a sponsoring agency has more restrictive rules that cannot be waived.

Also refer to RSP 504–01: Sponsored Projects Travel for ASU Employees if travel expenses will be paid on a sponsored project account.

Background

ASU Travel Policy is based on State of Arizona Travel Policy, which contains the allowed reimbursement rates for mileage, lodging, and meal/incidental expenses.

ASU's travel reimbursement policies are designed to conform to Accountable Plan rules published by the Internal Revenue Service so that reimbursements are not considered taxable to the traveler. These policies include a written benefit to ASU for the travel expenses (valid business purpose) and the timely submission of the travel expense report and return of any unused cash advance.

All university travel, including travel expenses reimbursed by an outside organization, grant-funded, or paid by a third party must follow ASU Travel Policy including a fully approved trip request in My ASU TRIP/Concur before travel begins and the booking of airfare, lodging, and rental car in My ASU TRIP/Concur, when possible.

Policy

All travel on official university business will be properly authorized, reported, and reimbursed according to applicable ASU Travel Policy standards. The traveler is responsible for reporting his or her actual travel expenses in a responsible, timely and ethical manner in accordance with ASU Travel Policy. The travel should be fair and reasonable for the traveler, but planned for the benefit of the university, using the most economical means to accomplish the purpose of the travel.

The university shall authorize employee travel in accordance with the following principles.

- ASU Travel Policy Standard 1: Roles and Responsibilities
- ASU Travel Policy Standard 2: Preauthorization of Travel
- ASU Travel Policy Standard 3: Safety and Compliance
- ASU Travel Policy Standard 4: Arranging for Travel
- ASU Travel Policy Standard 5: Air Travel
- ASU Travel Policy Standard 6: Ground Transportation
- ASU Travel Policy Standard 7: Lodging
- ASU Travel Policy Standard 8: Meal Allowances
- ASU Travel Policy Standard 9: Conference Registration
- ASU Travel Policy Standard 10: Travel Cash Advances
- ASU Travel Policy Standard 11: Unallowable Travel Expenses
- ASU Travel Policy Standard 12: Personal Component of Official ASU Travel
- ASU Travel Policy Standard 13: Reimbursements

ASU Travel Policy Standard 1: Roles and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of every university department to help ensure that the university's financial information is accurate and complete, which includes ensuring that all travel related costs are appropriate and comply with ASU Travel Policy. Each department is responsible for providing direction and information about approved travel to its personnel. For information related to fiscal/fiduciary responsibility of university employees, see FIN 119: Public Purpose Served, FIN 124: Misuse of Public Monies, and FIN 129: Ensuring Financial Integrity.

Accordingly, all travel

- is to be authorized before expenses are incurred or the travel begins
- expenses are to be supported by a public purpose that indicates the benefit to the university resulting from the travel and expense
- arrangements are to reflect an understanding of ASU Travel Policy
- is to use the most efficient and economical method of transportation and the traveler's time consistent with conducting university business

  and

- to a convention or meeting outside of the state should typically be held to a minimum number of ASU attendees within the department.

The traveler is responsible for activity related to his or her travel and should be familiar with ASU Travel Policy. The traveler should consult with the ASU Travel Service Center, their department or college business officers if they have questions or concerns.

Travelers are responsible for the following:

- Obtain appropriate authorizations in a My ASU TRIP/Concur request prior to the start of travel.
- Book airfare in My ASU TRIP/Concur when possible, if request is approved

- Book travel arrangements in My ASU TRIP/Concur when possible, as specified in Travel Standards 5, 6, and 7.
- Understand and comply with ASU Travel Policy and guidelines (https://cfo.asu.edu/myasutrip), including RSP 504–01: Sponsored Projects Travel for ASU Employees if traveling on a grant.
- Obtain any required passports, visas, immunizations, and additional international medical insurance.
- Review requirements for travel to a High Risk Area, if applicable.
- Submit and certify an accurate and complete expense report with receipts and proofs of payment within 30 days of the trip end date.
- Cancel all reservations if a trip is canceled and promptly return any travel advance and/or account for ASU Travel Card expenses associated with the trip.

The trip approver should be a cost center manager or grant manager for the cost center or grant to which the travel will be charged. It is the trip approver's responsibility to do the following:

- Ensure that the funding source listed is appropriate.
- Approve travel requests and expense reports before the documents are routed to the Authorizing Travel Official (ATO).
- Verify that the approvals, expenses, and documentation are appropriate and comply with ASU policies and guidelines.

The Authorizing Travel Official (ATO) authorizes, before the trip begins or expenses are incurred, all travel with an overnight stay and all group travel, attesting that the trip is appropriate, is for the university's benefit, and is using the mode of transportation that is the most suitable and economical for the trip. The ATO's approval indicates authorization of proposed trip expenses that follow policy. If the expense report exceeds the original authorization by the greater of $200 and 20%, it will be routed to the ATO for review and approval.

Dean/VP approval is necessary for any trip greater than $5,000, travel to a High Risk Area, and for any exception to ASU Travel Policy.

The Travel Service Center will assist travelers, trip approvers, and ATOs with any policy or procedure question, but it is the responsibility of each department to know and enforce travel policy and guidelines.

ASU Travel Policy Standard 2: Preauthorization of Travel

All travel for university business with an overnight stay is to be authorized prior to the trip start date with a My ASU TRIP/Concur request. An approver cannot approve his or her own trip. Any travel exceeding $5,000 or travel to a High Risk Area requires approval from the appropriate Dean/VP. Travel may also require additional high level approvals and approval from University Risk Management. Review https://cfo.asu.edu/myasutrip for the latest travel guidelines. In cases where a higher level of approval is needed, such as Provost/Executive Vice President, an email attached to the My ASU TRIP/Concur request is sufficient. Please review ASU Travel Policy Standard 3 for travel outside of the United States by students or that includes students.
Travelers on university business whose travel expenses are paid by outside sources or where there is no reimbursement are to have an approved zero dollar travel request prior to the trip start date.

ASU may not reimburse travel expenses incurred without the required pre-authorization. Any expenses on a university payment card may be considered a personal expense.

ASU Travel Policy Standard 3: Safety and Compliance

For travel to countries or regions designated as a High Risk Area, as defined by this policy, the following provisions apply:

1. The President/Provost/Executive Vice President/Risk Management may authorize or restrict ASU travel to specific regions within a High Risk Area.
2. ASU students and employees shall not be required to travel to a High Risk Area.

3. In addition to the travel request, employees, students, and volunteers may need to submit supplemental information regarding the travel risks, the necessity of travel, and departmental approval. The supplemental information shall include a recognition of the travel risks.

A country or region is designated as a High Risk Area by the university if any of these conditions exist:

1. The U.S. Department of State has issued a current Level 3 Travel Advisory (travel.state.gov);
2. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has issued a Level 3 current Travel Health Warning (CDC.gov);
3. My ASU TRIP/Concur has a current Security Rating of 4 or 5;
   and/or
4. The university has designated any country or region as restricted for ASU travel.

Insurance coverage is not provided to university employees traveling in sanctioned countries unless the State of Arizona Department of Administration, Risk Management Section, purchases the insurance for the trip separately. Individuals should consult with both the ASU Office of Research Compliance as well as ASU Insurance/Risk Management to determine authorization requirements.

Export control regulations and their applicability should be evaluated during the planning process for international travel. This includes reviewing what technology items are being taken (such as laptops, encryption software, cell phones, tablet, flash drives, cameras, and GPS units), whether the travel involves a sanctioned country or if the traveler will be providing access to the traveler's technology to a citizen of a sanctioned country. ASU travelers should review ASU's Export Control website for guidance related to international travel well in advance of committing to a trip abroad. In addition, if the travel will be paid by external grants or contacts, departments are urged to check with appropriate agencies such as the National Science Foundation, Department of Energy, or the university's Office for Research and Sponsored Projects Administration (ORSPA) to determine whether special requirements apply. For more information, see RSP 214: Export Control.

Air travel to and from an international location under sponsored project awards must be on a U.S. flagship carrier. If a carrier other than a U.S. flagship is used, the airfare may be disallowed on the grant and the traveler or department may be responsible for the cost. Travelers may contact ORSPA to determine an airline's flagship status. For more information on air travel to and from an international location under sponsored project awards, see RSP 504–01: Sponsored Projects Travel for ASU Employees.

Student travel outside of the United States as part of an activity sponsored by or affiliated with ASU is subject to the Student International Travel Registration Policy. An activity is "sponsored by or affiliated with ASU" if an ASU unit, student organization, or university employee is involved in creating, funding or approving the experience, or coordinating the applications and selection of participants.

Depending on the type of student international travel, the following provisions apply:

a. Participation in study abroad programs for ASU academic credit requires registration through the Global Education Office.
b. In accordance with the Student International Travel Registration Policy, any other international travel by/with students that is sponsored by or affiliated with ASU, whether credit bearing or not, must be registered in the Student International Travel Registration System.
c. Students who take a leave of absence from ASU enrollment to travel on their own, or through non-ASU study abroad programs, are not subject to this policy.

NOTE: Travel for personal reasons to countries under CDC Travel Health Warning (Level 3) is strongly discouraged. ASU requests that all students who travel to any such location notify ASU Health Services (https://eoss.asu.edu/health) both prior to travel and upon return to the university. ASU Health Services or Employee Health will provide recommendations and current guidance.

ASU Travel Policy Standard 4: Arranging for Travel

Travel arrangements are to be booked in My ASU TRIP/Concur or through Anthony Travel, when possible, as specified in Standards 5, 6 and 7.

Travel arrangements are to utilize the most economical method of transportation in terms of expense to the university and the traveler's time away from the office.

ASU Travel Policy Standard 3 is to be reviewed prior to committing to a trip. The traveler is responsible for obtaining the proper passports or visas and following specific requirements for travel on grant accounts (RSP 504-01: Sponsored Projects Travel for ASU Employees). If a passport is required for authorized university business travel and the traveler does not already have a passport, the expense is an authorized reimbursable travel expense. The cost of a visa and associated fees are authorized reimbursable university business travel expenses.

The traveler is responsible for obtaining any required immunizations or international medical insurance, and the fees for these are reimbursable business travel expenses.

When faced with conflicting federal, sponsoring agency, or ASU travel policies, the more restrictive policy is to be followed. However, to ensure the consistent and equitable treatment of all ASU travelers, if the restriction results in a lesser reimbursement from a sponsored account, the department should consider covering the difference from a non-sponsored account.

ASU may not reimburse travel expenses incurred without the required pre-authorization. Any expenses incurred on a university payment card may be considered a personal expense.

ASU Travel Policy Standard 5: Air Travel

The traveler should select the lowest coach airfare using the most direct route that meets the traveler's scheduling needs and the business purpose of the trip. The flight is to be booked in My ASU Trip/Concur or with Anthony Travel when possible. Contact Anthony Travel if the arrangements are complex or if a credit from an unused flight is being utilized.

If a non-coach fare is more economical or if the business purpose of the trip or the traveler's medical needs support a non-coach fare, the reason should be provided. An itemized receipt showing the passenger name, flights, flight dates, and class of service is required. ASU will only reimburse travelers for out-of-pocket expenses. The use of personal frequent flyer miles/points, credits for ASU business travel is not reimbursable.

If a traveler prefers a higher class of airfare, the excess cost will be considered a personal expense and is not reimbursable. To calculate the reimbursable portion, the traveler should submit documentation from the time of booking that shows the lowest coach airfare using the most direct route that would have met the traveler’s scheduling needs and the business purpose of the trip. The traveler should pay for a higher class airfare with personal funds and seek reimbursement for only the business portion/coach fare when filing an expense report after completion of the trip.

Restrictions apply to which air carriers can be used when the travel is paid for by a federal granting agency. Refer to RSP 504-01: Sponsored Projects Travel for ASU Employees for information on the U.S. Flag Air Carriers requirement for international air travel charged to sponsored projects.

Airline fees necessary for the business purpose of the travel are reimbursable.

Charter flight services must be authorized and licensed by the Arizona Department of Transportation. All arrangements for the rental or lease of charter aircraft must be pre-approved by University Risk Management and an invoice from the charter company is required for payment/reimbursement.

A traveler may not pilot personal or leased aircraft.

ASU Travel Policy Standard 6: Ground Transportation

ASU travelers should choose the most economical ground transportation suitable for the business purpose of their trip. The university will reimburse the traveler for the cost of renting a car when other means of transportation are not practical or an economical choice. The size of the car rented should be the most economical for the business purpose of the trip. Provide a reason if a car of a higher class than standard is necessary. The use of 12- and 15-passenger vans is prohibited and will not be reimbursed. Vehicles should be rented under ASU or State of Arizona rental contracts which include insurance. Under these contracts, for a domestic rental, the traveler should decline any provider offered insurance. Rentals booked under a preferred provider in My ASU TRIP/Concur are included under these contracts. For an international rental, the traveler should purchase insurance as directed by Risk Management. An itemized receipt is required for reimbursement of the car rental. Commercially rented vehicles for university approved business are to be only for transporting ASU employees, interns, students, volunteers and contractors. Refer to EHS 119: Motor Fleet Safety for more information on driving a rented or university-owned vehicle for university business.

An ATO may authorize travel by a privately owned vehicle if it is in the university's best interest due to cost, efficiency, or work requirements. The driver must have a valid driver's license and current insurance on the vehicle. The driver's privately owned vehicle liability coverage is the primary coverage should an accident occur while operating the vehicle while on university business. Regardless of fault, any comprehensive or collision damage will not be reimbursed. Refer to EHS 705–02: Vehicle Loss Insurance Recovery for more information on the use of private vehicles on university business.

Mileage reimbursement for a privately owned vehicle is made at the State of Arizona mileage rate (State of Arizona Mileage & Lodging Reimbursement Rates). If two or more authorized travelers are transported in the same vehicle, only one claim for mileage will be allowed for the lesser of actual mileage or the cost of total airfare for all authorized travelers. Travelers are paid for actual miles traveled from their home or campus duty post, whichever is less, to their travel destination. Miles driven in excess of the normal commute are reimbursable. Mileage claims need to specify the address of departure and destination locations. In addition to mileage reimbursement, the traveler may be reimbursed for reasonable parking expenses and tolls, but the university will not reimburse the traveler for fuel, vehicle repairs, parking fines, or moving violations.

Shuttle/taxi fares that are necessary for university business are reimbursable.

ASU Travel Policy Standard 7: Lodging

The university reimburses travelers for the cost of lodging and any applicable taxes and fees when the traveler is in overnight travel status. All lodging is to be booked in My ASU TRIP/Concur, when possible. To be in travel status, the traveler must be at least 50 miles from their duty post and residence.

When making lodging arrangements, the traveler should request the lowest available rate.

Lodging reimbursements are limited by maximums set by the State of Arizona. The city where the lodging is located dictates the applicable lodging rate. An exception to exceed the maximum lodging rate may be approved by the ATO. ATO approval indicates that the lodging rates are reasonable and appropriate for the business purpose of the trip.

For conference-designated lodging, a copy of the conference brochure is to be provided. The brochure normally includes opening and closing dates of the conference, the meals provided, and the lodging rate. If the conference brochure is not included, the approvers should adjust the traveler's expense report to the regular index rate for the location. Lodging at alternate hotels in the immediate vicinity of the conference may be considered conference-designated lodging if there are no vacancies at the conference hotel and the traveler has obtained comparable rates at an alternate hotel, or if the traveler stays at a hotel with a lower lodging rate than the recommended hotel.

A receipt for lodging is required for reimbursement. The receipt must include the following:

- The traveler's name

- The name and address of the lodging establishment
- Check–in and check–out dates
- Itemized expenses, i.e., room charges, applicable taxes and fees, room service, movie fees, telephone expenses, internet service fees, etc.
- Proof of payment

A traveler may only claim reimbursement for the room in which he or she stayed. If a room is shared with another authorized traveler, the traveler that paid for the room should claim the total lodging expense. The expense should include an explanation of the transaction and the name(s) of the other traveler(s). When lodging is shared with an individual not in authorized university travel status (such as a spouse or friend), reimbursement is not to exceed the single room rate.

With ATO approval, travelers may stay at non-commercial lodging, excluding property owned or rented by the traveler, their relative, or domestic partner, if it is in the best interest of the university and is the most economical choice and suited to the business purpose of the travel. If non-commercial lodging is used, the allowable lodging reimbursement is up to 50% of the allowable hotel lodging rate for that location and the use should be clearly documented. If the traveler is staying in a property he or she owns or rents, no lodging or related expenses will be reimbursed.

If a traveler is assigned to a location for more than 30 days outside the 50-mile radius of his or her designated duty post, the ATO on a case–by–case basis will establish the lodging allowance based on the location. This allowance is established when the trip is approved and should not exceed the regular maximum rates. The lodging allowance is inclusive of all related costs (i.e., rent, electricity, gas, water, telephone, etc.) and are reimbursable with itemized receipts up to the established allowance amount.

ASU Travel Policy Standard 8: Meal Allowances

When a traveler is in overnight travel status, meal and incidental expenses are reimbursed up to maximum rates based on lodging location. Receipts supporting the actual cost of meals and incidental expenses are not required. The amount expended for meals and incidentals is at the discretion of the traveler, but only the allowance will be reimbursed.

For days of departure and return, 75% of the full day rate is reimbursed, regardless of the times of travel.

A meal allowance reimbursement is not to be claimed for meals provided by others (at a conference, on a plane/train, at a hotel, reimbursement as a business meal). Travelers required to purchase a meal offered at the conference that is in excess of the meal allowance may be reimbursed for the actual expense with a receipt and explanation.

Meal reimbursements approved for employees who are not traveling overnight are processed through payroll and treated as taxable wages in accordance with federal tax rules. To request such meal reimbursements, the traveler's department should complete and submit a One-Time Payment Request in Workday. The meal reimbursement will be included in the employee's next regular paycheck, net of applicable tax withholding, and will be reported as additional compensation on the employee's annual W-2.

ASU Travel Policy Standard 9: Conferences/Meetings

Attendance at a conference or meeting outside the traveler's home state by more than two persons from a single academic or administrative unit or department is to be supported by a valid business purpose.

ASU Travel Policy Standard 10: Travel Cash Advances

If necessary, travel cash advances of at least $200 are available for expenses other than airfare or conference registration, which can be paid for directly by ASU. Advances may be issued for 75% of the remaining estimated reimbursable expenses for individual travel and 100% of the remaining estimated reimbursable expenses for group travel. Advances are issued to the traveler approximately one week before departure as a direct deposit or a university check.

An expense report is due within 30 days of the trip end date through My ASU TRIP/Concur, and any unexpended travel advance is to be repaid with the expense report. For trips that are canceled, the traveler should return the advance at the time of the trip cancellation. Outstanding travel cash advances will be collected through payroll deduction, check or student accounts. Incomplete repayment of a travel advance, unallowable travel card, or air card expense prior to an employee leaving ASU employment, will result in being sent to collections. Repeated instances of failing to reimburse ASU in a timely manner may result in losing the privilege of receiving travel cash advances for future trips.

NOTE: The university offers an ASU Travel Card to be used by faculty and staff for travel expenses to limit out of pocket expenses, ease expense report preparation, and reduce receipt requirements. See the ASU Travel Card Standards of Use document.

ASU Travel Policy Standard 11: Unallowable Travel Expenses

The expenses listed below represent examples of items considered personal expenses and are unallowable for reimbursement.

- Airline or VIP club membership dues or one-day admission fees
- Child care
- Pet care
- Lawn, pool, or home care
- Over-the-counter medications and prescriptions
- Forgotten toiletries
- Barbers and hairdressers
- New clothing
- Shoe shines
- Excess luggage not related to ASU business
- Health club fees, saunas, massages, and spa visits
- Magazines, newspapers, and personal reading materials
- Snacks
- Medical expenses while traveling
- Expenses of a spouse, family member, or other person accompanying the university traveler
- Expenses related to personal days taken before, during, or after the business portion of the trip Entertainment
- "No show" charges for hotel, air or car
- Loss or theft of funds, airline tickets, property, or baggage

ASU Travel Policy Standard 12: Personal Component of Official ASU Travel

For trips that contain a personal travel component, ASU will reimburse the traveler for only those expenses that would have been incurred had no personal travel component existed. The traveler is to maintain documentation at the time of booking to support that the personal travel component did not add any incremental cost.

Examples of additional costs that may be incurred by the traveler because there is a personal component and that will not be paid by ASU are:

- double occupancy versus single occupancy lodging rates
- per passenger charges for taxis or airport shuttles
- additional car rental costs due to a larger vehicle need
- airfare increases because of a different travel day
- airfare increases for indirect routes
- excess baggage or overweight baggage due to additional travelers

and

- choice of lodging location for the convenience of the personal portion of the trip, as opposed to the convenience of the business purpose

Please note that university insurance coverage and liability does not apply to a vehicle used outside the scope and course of employment, such as during the personal portion of a trip taken in conjunction with authorized university travel. If insurance is needed for the personal portion of the trip, the traveler is solely responsible for the cost.

If any of the travel elements make a trip appear as if it was planned more for the personal components rather than the business component, the university will cover only reasonable and customary expenses for days when business was conducted.

ASU Travel Policy Standard 13: Reimbursements

An expense report is due within 30 days of the trip end date through My ASU TRIP/Concur. Valid receipts are required for airfare, lodging, business meals, and car rentals regardless of dollar amount. Other out-of-pocket (not on the ASU Travel Card) expenses require receipts if they are in excess of $50.

Travelers are to exclude from the expense report travel expenses paid by a third party. If a traveler receives reimbursement from a third party for travel expenses previously claimed on an expense report, the reimbursement must be repaid to ASU.

All ASU Travel Card transactions are to be accounted for on an expense report following completion of the trip. Any ASU Travel Card or ASU Airfare Card transactions not accounted for timely may be deemed as unallowable and considered a personal expense, subject to payroll deduction.

Travel expenses incurred without the required trip preauthorization or booking process may not be reimbursable.

Cross References

For information on travel expenses being paid on a sponsored or grant account for domestic or international travel, see RSP 504–01, "Sponsored Projects Travel for ASU Employees."

For information related to the fiscal/fiduciary responsibility of university employees, see FIN 119, "Public Purpose Served," FIN 124, "Misuse of Public Monies," and FIN 129, "Ensuring Financial Integrity."

For information on export control regulations, see RSP 214, "Export Control"

For more information on the use of private vehicles on university business, see EHS 705–02, "Vehicle Loss Insurance Recovery"

For more information on the use of university-owned vehicles, leased or rented vehicles being used for university business, see EHS 119, "Motor Fleet Safety"

For more information on Personnel Transaction Request procedures, see the Personnel Transaction Request webpage.