

UMCES Travel FAQs

The following information pertains to both travel expense statements and travel card log charges.

A. Travel Approval

1. Q. When do I have to complete a Travel Approval Request (TAR)?

A. A TAR is required when traveling out-of-state and to foreign countries. A TAR is also required whenever in-state traveling requires an overnight stay. The TAR should be submitted in advance of the trip allowing sufficient time for approval.

2. Q. Why do I have to complete a TAR?

A. A TAR is required so that employees are covered for insurance purposes while in a travel status. UMCES insurance coverage is automatic for travelers on preauthorized overnight in-state, out-of-state and foreign travel. The TAR is also necessary to meet Sponsored Program Management requirements and to meet audit compliance. Documentation of travel is required by both UMCES and BOR Policies.

B. Conference and Meeting Travel

1. Q. What documentation is required for travel expenses when attending conferences and meetings?

A. Agenda, conference registration forms and any other documentation which will provide the date(s) of the conference, the location of the conference (venue and city), the agenda/program/timetable for the conference (any any other activities included in the registration fee), and the cost of the conference (registration fee). If it is a meeting without a formal agenda, the purpose of the meeting should be included in the TAR comment section.

2. Q. Why is this documentation necessary?

A. The conference agenda, registration form, etc. generally list all of the meals included in the cost of registration. When a TES or a travel card log is submitted for approval, this documentation provides the necessary support for any meals outside of the conference, the length of the hotel stay, airfare, etc.

If a meal is included in the cost of registration, a request for reimbursement is not allowed unless the employee leaves the conference early for the convenience of UMCES. Explanation with reason for leaving early is required and should be clearly indicated on the TES to support the reimbursement request.

3. Q. If the conference registration is paid in advance with a purchasing or travel card and the hotel charges will be paid with a travel card, do I include these costs in the TAR and in the TES?

A. Any costs/charges associated with the travel should be shown on the TAR. When the trip is complete, the conference registration should not be included in the TES, but a copy of the receipt for the conference registration should be included with the hard copy of the TES. Hard copy receipts for the hotel and any meals charged to the travel card should be included with the travel card log. If you have questions regarding posting charges on the TAR or TES associated with your conference travel, contact the Travel Coordinator at CA.

C. Privately Owned Vehicle – Mileage Reimbursement

1. Q. When is an employee eligible for mileage reimbursement?

A. An employee is eligible for mileage reimbursement while traveling on UMCES business in their own personal vehicle.

2. Q. What is the reimbursement rate?

A. Full reimbursement rate as of January 1, 2014 is 56¢ per mile. This rate is set by the University and is meant to cover the employee's cost of insurance, gasoline, oil and repairs and maintenance. This rate is available to the employee when a state vehicle is not available or the use of one is not practical (for example, leaving a car at the airport while on a travel status) or when their assigned work location does not provide access to state vehicles. Current rates can be found at <http://www.umces.edu/about/travel>.

Commute miles should be subtracted from the request if traveling from your home to your destination. If traveling from your place of employment to the destination, commute mileage is not deducted.

Employees are reimbursed at half rate (27.75¢) when a state car is not used as a matter of preference or without specific approval. A POV authorization form should be completed and approved in advance of the travel. The link to the form is as follows:

<http://www.umces.edu/about/travel>

D. Meal Reimbursement

1. Q. When requesting reimbursement for meals, what documentation do I have to provide?

A. If requesting reimbursement, on a travel expense statement (TES), at, or below, the meal per diem rates, no receipts are required. The domestic per diem rates as of July 1, 2014 are currently \$9.00 for breakfast, \$11.00 for lunch and \$25.00 for dinner. The traveler must be starting their travel 2 hours before the start of their normal shift in order to claim breakfast and be in a travel mode at least 2 hours after the end of their normal shift in order to qualify for the dinner per diem.

If requesting reimbursement on a TES for amounts greater than the meal per diem rates or charging meals on the UMCES Diner's Club Travel Card, actual *itemized* (not just the total) receipts are required with a justification for meal expenses greater than the meal per diem rate.

E. Foreign Travel

1. Q. What process do I follow when traveling to foreign countries?

A. If the travel will be charged to a sponsored project, a TAR has to be completed and also forwarded to ORAA for approval: Ruth Tallman, Director and Phyllis Rhoades, Asst. Director. Specific sponsor written prior approval is often required (see the grant/contract agreement). If the sponsor funds are from federal sources, airline ticket purchases must comply with the Fly America Act (http://www.umces.edu/sites/default/files/pdfs/fly_america_act.pdf).

If the travel is charged to some other funding source, then a TAR has to be completed and forwarded to the respective travel coordinator within your department for approval.

2. Q. What per diem meal reimbursement rates should be used when traveling to foreign countries?

A. When traveling abroad on a sponsored project, UMCES uses the U. S. Department of State Foreign Lodging and M&IE (meals and incidental expenses) per diem rates for guidance unless other arrangements have been established by your office. The link to this website is listed below.

http://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=184&menu_id=78

This website provides links to [Foreign Per Diem Rates by Location, FTR Appendix B \(Breakdown of Meals/Incidentals\)](#), and [Excel Version of Foreign Per Diem Rates](#).

These links will not only provide guidance on what the per diem rates are for meals and lodging, but incidentals as well. If partial days of meals are requested, then the FTR Appendix B will give the breakdown of breakfast, lunch and dinner.

F. Group Travel

1. Q. What is “Group Travel”?

A. UMCES Group Travel is pre-approved travel organized by UMCES or other sponsors for a group of individuals to accomplish a specific common UMCES purpose. A TAR is required for this purpose.

The following link to the University of Maryland, College Park Travel Services’ website gives instructions on how to complete the TAR and why a group TAR is helpful.

<http://www.dbs.umd.edu/travel/policy/umtravel/grouptravel.php>

G. Hosting

1. Q. What is the process for hosting outside visitors at a business meal?

A. When hosting outside visitors at a business meal, the following items are required:

- a) List of people attending, preferably on a sign in sheet that includes signatures.

- b) Attendees' affiliation (i.e. UMCES, Board of Visitors, Visiting Faculty, etc.)
- c) The purpose/agenda
- d) Itemized receipt
- e) Additional justification if the cost significantly exceeds the per diem amount, per person, for the meal

2. Q. What is the process for hosting large groups of people at a dinner, conference, overnight lodging, etc?

- A. When hosting large groups of people at a conference, etc. the following items are required:
- a) If a contract has to be signed, regardless of dollar amount, UMCP Travel Services (they serve UMCES) must approve.
 - A minimum of 2 weeks lead time is required for this approval process.
 - b) If the amount to be spent with one vendor is \$5,000 or more, a purchase order situation occurs.
 - Either UMCES works with the UMCP travel agencies (Globetrotters, Omega and TravelOn) since they have delegated authority to do the contracting with the vendor
 - or UMCES follows the process required by UMCP's Procurement Office for purchase orders.
 - Under both of these situations, UMCP Travel Services is the final approver on the contract.
 - More than 2 weeks lead time is required for this approval process.

H. Travel Card Log Approvals

1. Q. Who can sign off on my travel card log as an approver?

A. When applying for a travel card, a Travel Card Approving Authority Record form is completed stating who is eligible as an approver on the Travel Card Log. No one, other than those designated on the form, can sign as an approver. A subordinate is not allowed to be an approver on the log. If an approver status changes and that person is no longer an approver for an individual's travel card log, please notify the UMCES Travel Coordinator at CA so the approver information can be updated.

2. Q. What documentation is required for travel card logs?

A. Itemized receipts are required for each charge on a travel card log. If a receipt is not provided, every effort should be made to obtain one at the time the charge is incurred. If one cannot be obtained, the cardholder must contact the CA Travel Coordinator to request an UMCES Travel Card Missing Receipt Affidavit. Upon completing the affidavit, which provides a written explanation for the expense and efforts made to obtain the receipt, it is signed by the card holder, their Director and returned to the Comptroller's Office for final approval.

3. Q. What charges are not allowed on the travel card?

- A. Personal, retail, alcoholic beverages, snacks, periodicals, communications or information technology equipment, gasoline for personally owned vehicles, and gifts, are some examples. *Remember: Always ask for a separate bill for alcohol at restaurants and use your personal card*

or cash for this item. If a separate check is not provided, the entire bill is to be paid with a personal credit card and then a request is submitted for reimbursement for the allowable charges.

- B. *Field trips, ticketed social events or any other entertainment or social networking event organized by the conference but requires additional fees over and above standard registration fee.*
- C. *Donations to offset carbon emissions related to conference attendance.*

4. Q. What charges are allowed on the travel card?

A. Hotels, meals, internet service while in a travel status, parking, shuttles/taxis, gasoline for a state or rental vehicle while in a travel status are just some examples. Any meals charged to the hotel room require an itemized receipt listing the food and beverage purchased. If one cannot be obtained at the time the meal is purchased, the restaurant bill should not be charged to the hotel room.

5. Q. What is the process followed when a travel cardholder has unauthorized or unsubstantiated purchases on his/her travel card transaction log for two or more statement periods within a twelve (12)month time frame?

A. As outlined in the travel card member agreement, a cardholder is responsible for complying with the State of Maryland statutes, COMAR, the Diner's Club, UMCP and UMCES travel policies, as well as the UMCP and UMCES procurement policies. If a cardholder uses the travel card for unauthorized and unsubstantiated purchases, the employee is required to reimburse the University within 30 days. If not, the card may be cancelled.

6. Q. What are considered unauthorized or unsubstantiated purchases on a travel card?

A. Authorized purchases include University-related transportation, lodging, vehicle rental, meals, and other authorized expenses related to pre-approved travel or hosting activity. Unauthorized purchases include those of a personal nature, charges not preapproved, retail purchases whether personal or University-related, and any other unauthorized purchases, such as alcohol. If any portion of an expenditure is personal in nature, none of the purchase may be charged on the travel card. The cardholder would submit a TES for the business-related portion of the charge.

Unsubstantiated purchases are charges that do not have itemized receipts, as well as conference or hosting purchases for which no agenda or list of meeting participants (including sign-in sheets with agency/organization affiliation) are unavailable.

7. Q. What amounts are allowable on the travel card for purchased meals?

A. The amounts charged should be reasonable and close in amount to the meal per diems. If the amount is unreasonable, additional justification is required for the additional costs. If hosting individuals, agendas, meal participants and the purpose of the meeting is required as supporting documentation.

I. Travel Documents Submitted To CA for Approval

1. Q. When do travel documents come to CA for approval?

A. Any travel documents for Laboratory Directors, any employees at the labs whose travel documents would not be approved within their own department (such as AD's/Business Managers whose travel is approved by CA and not by the lab director), employees from other departments whose travel will be paid by CA, and employees at CA should submit their travel documents to the Travel Coordinator at CA.

2. Q. What documentation should be submitted for TESs and Travel Card Logs?

A. For anyone other than CA employees, scanned documentation is allowed in support of TESs submitted for reimbursement. Original documents are maintained at the department level. CA employees are required to submit original documentation.

For travel card logs submitted to CA for approval, original documentation is required.