3344-69-01 Travel Policy

I. **Purpose**. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that university travel is conducted in a cost effective, accountable, and compliant manner consistent with applicable laws, regulations, and university financial controls.

II. **Policy**. This policy applies to all university travel regardless of the source of funding.

   A. Allowable travel- With prior approval, the university will pay all or a prearranged portion of reimbursable travel expenses for one or more of the following purposes:

      1. To represent the university on official business;
      2. To present a professional paper or conduct pre-approved research;
      3. To chair a national or regional committee meeting; or
      4. To participate in professional development activities.

   B. **Travel guidelines**

      a. CSU P-cards are the preferred method of payment for all forms and aspects of university travel. Individuals without a p-card may work with their department designee (e.g. department administrator, supervisor, etc.) and make reservations utilizing the designee's p-card.

         i. If a p-card is not available, MagnusMart may be used for travel reimbursement.

         ii. Personal credit cards or funds may be used as a last resort and should follow the reimbursement guidelines of this policy.

         iii. Receipts shall be submitted for all travel expenses that exceed five dollars.

      b. All pre-travel expenses shall be submitted with their monthly p-card statements within the month transactions are posted. Signed pre-travel request form with supporting documentation including event registration, airline bookings, travel accommodations, and other related expenses to travel encompassed in this policy shall accompany the p-card statement or expense report.

      c. All travel shall be booked in the most economical way. Travelers should consider factors including cost, availability, safety, and efficiency when making travel plans. The university reserves the right to reimburse at a rate comparable to the more economical travel rate.

      d. Frequent flyer and hotel reward program credits earned by a university employee on travel for university business may be kept by the traveler for personal use, subject to Ohio Ethics laws.

      e. Reimbursement for use of personal monies. In instances where reimbursement is required, the following rules apply:

i. To obtain authorization for travel for which reimbursement is expected, the pre-travel request form must be completed indicating the purpose, date, and duration of the trip; estimated total expense to be paid by the university and bear the appropriate supervisory approval signature ahead of the travel date prior to incurring any travel expense.
ii. All reimbursement requests shall be submitted with appropriate, itemized documentation. Failure to provide documentation may result in an ineligibility for reimbursement.
iii. A credit card statement is not sufficient documentation by itself for reimbursement.
iv. Transportation costs, such as parking fees, tolls, taxi or ride share rides, and gratuities are reimbursable on an actual cost basis.
v. The university reserves the right to reimburse at the rate associated with the most economical form of transportation, if the traveler did not receive proper approval for the selected mode.
vi. Reimbursements for travel outside the USA will be made at the appropriate currency rate of exchange. Credit card statements should be provided to show the amount of USD paid by the traveler.
vii. Alcohol, entertainment, upgrades without approval, traffic violations, and personal insurance are not reimbursable.

C. **Allowable Transportation**. For any university travel, the travel itinerary issued with the ticket shall be submitted with the expense report. Travel by air, rail, bus, or other common carrier shall be at the most reasonable rate available for the chosen method and time of travel.

a. *Airfare*. All airline transportation should be reserved well in advance of travel. If a flight reservation is changed or cancelled, resulting in additional fees, confirmation of the change including the origin, destination, price, and method of payment shall be submitted.
i. Domestic travel- Only coach class tickets, or their equivalent, may be purchased. Exceptions must be approved by the division Vice President, Provost, or President, and attached to the p-card statement or individual reimbursement form.
ii. International travel- Coach class tickets, or their equivalent, are the standard; however, for flights eight consecutive hours or longer, a “less than first class” (e.g. business class) ticket may be purchased.
iii. Excess baggage expenses shall be covered by the university only in the following circumstances:
1. Traveler is transporting university materials.

        2. Traveler is on an approved, extended period of travel.
    iv. Travel via federal grants. In accordance with the Fly America First Act (49 U.S.C. §40118), individuals utilizing federal funds for travel must use U.S. flag air carriers to the maximum extent possible when traveling from the United State to a foreign country. Travelers not utilizing a US flag carrier must demonstrate compliance with the exception to this requirement by flying a foreign carrier that has been determined by agreement meets the act requirements. This requirement will not be influenced by cost, convenience, or personal travel preferences.

b. *Vehicular Travel*
    i. Privately owned vehicle travel. The use of privately owned vehicles shall be reimbursed following the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) standard mileage rate at the time of travel, excluding some grant-based travel that establishes travel expense coverage. The mileage rate includes all expenses incurred for using the privately owned vehicle, except for parking fees and tolls.
        1. An individual who uses a privately owned vehicle for university business must meet liability insurance requirements of the motor vehicle financial responsibility laws of the state of Ohio.
        2. Any accident that occurs while a traveler is on university business shall be reported immediately to the university risk manager.
        3. Mileage will not be reimbursed for the following: travel between work and home; travel from home to a point between a traveler’s home and work; and travel on the university campus.
        4. When requesting payment using the federal mileage rate, an airfare comparison must be included and the lower of the two rates will be reimbursed to the traveler.
    ii. Rental vehicle travel. All vehicle reservations shall be made via university p-card or directly through the Department of Parking and Transportation Services (PTS) for the Viking Rental Fleet. CSU has an exclusive agreement with Enterprise for rentals made in northeast Ohio that includes discounted rates and liability insurance.
        1. For an individual or group to obtain a rental vehicle, the traveler(s) shall receive prior approval. The approval shall be attached to the expense report.

2. Reimbursement will be approved for the rental of an appropriately sized vehicle for the number of participants.

D. Lodging. When official business requires travel, more than fifty miles away from the traveler's home or work site, overnight lodging is allowable. If payment in a form different from university p-card is used, reimbursement will be made for the actual single room rate plus tax per night. If travel is within the state of Ohio, the traveler shall inquire as to the availability of a state tax exemption.

a. Lodging of the traveler's family is not covered by the university and is not a reimbursable expense.

b. Lodging closer than fifty miles will not be covered by the university, unless an unusual circumstance exists, prior approval is received, and a statement of explanation is provided.

c. Travelers extending official business trips beyond the necessary dates shall be covered by the university if the extension is for cost savings. Documentation showing the net savings shall be provided (e.g. airfare without a Saturday stay versus airfare with a Saturday stay and the additional lodging expenses). If approved, the university will cover the additional lodging and meal expenses.

d. Travelers extending trips for pleasure will not receive reimbursement of additional costs and will utilize vacation time if the extension covers normal operating business days. The itemized lodging costs for non-business travel days will be deducted from the traveler's reimbursement.

E. Meals and incidental expenses.

a. Travelers on official university business shall be reimbursed for meals and incidental expenses (M&IE), on a per diem basis, according to the federal standard meal allowance (F.S.M.A.) in effect at the time of travel. As a result, receipts are not required. When one or more meals are provided, the F.S.M.A. reimbursement shall be adjusted accordingly. Various rates by geographic location can be found on the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA.gov) website. Per diem rates are for full day travel. On days of departure and arrival, pro-rated per diem rates are utilized.

i. Generally, there will be no reimbursement for meals unless the traveler is away from home overnight. However, with supervisory approval, lunch may be reimbursed for travel engagements twelve hours in length or longer. Times of departure and return shall be noted on the expense report.

ii. If travel occurs in more than one location in a single day, the F.S.M.A. for the location where the overnight accommodation is located will be used.

iii. Tips and gratuities are included in the F.S.M.A.

iv. Reimbursement for the day of departure and return is equal to seventy-five percent of the M&IE rate.

b. Actual and reasonable expenses for a qualified business meal may be claimed for a university employee and non-university guest(s), meals in addition to the approved traveler need to include first and last names of the attendees and the business purpose for the meal. Documentation shall include an itemized receipt with an explanation of the business purpose for the meal.

c. Conference and event registrations. University travel may encompass conferences and events with a direct correlation to the traveler's work for the university. Upon submission of an expense report, the conference registration and agenda, inclusive of what meals and activities are included within the fee, shall be included. Additional charges for extraneous personal activities that are not business related are not covered by the university.

d. Miscellaneous expenses must be itemized separately on the pre-travel request and post-travel expense report. Original receipts must be submitted for all miscellaneous expenses.

F. Reporting and Documentation of Expenses.

a. All requests for reimbursement of travel shall be submitted on the standard university pre-travel request form and post-travel expense report. If additional space is required, a supplemental attachment may be added.

b. The pre-travel request form and post-travel expenses report must be submitted to the appropriate Department Administrator for processing within two weeks of the travel dates. The Department Administrator will obtain approval signatures before the trip and within a timely manner following the trip.

c. If the trip is canceled and there was prepayment of fees by the university, the department will be charged for the expenses. If Cleveland State University is due a refund, it is the responsibility of the department to ensure the credit is received.

d. If a receipt is lost, the traveler must provide a signed, written statement indicating that it was lost, if for reimbursement, must also include a copy of the credit card statement showing the expense.

e. If the traveler received a travel advance, original receipts must be submitted and remaining funds returned to the university within two weeks of the conclusion of the travel. If funds are not returned in a reasonable time, the full amount of travel advance will be treated as taxable income in accordance with IRS accountable plan rules. Accepting the advance does not relieve the traveler from the responsibility of accounting for the advance and returning any unused funds.

G. **Audits of Travel Expenses**. The department of Internal Audit will periodically audit a sample of travel approval and expense reports. Violation of travel policies may lead to suspension of reimbursement privileges and disciplinary action.

III. **Review Cycle**. The responsible official is responsible for keeping the assigned university policy current and for the performance of periodic reviews to ensure that the policy complies with and reflects current laws, regulations, accreditation standards, and higher education best practices. At a minimum, every five years, a policy is to be reviewed by the responsible official who will recommend whether the policy should be reaffirmed without revision, amended, or rescinded. Policies may be reviewed on an earlier timeline depending on necessity and change in law or practice.