Basic Information about Travel Procedures

The Commonwealth of Virginia requires that travel be conducted in the most economical manner possible. For this reason, requests for reimbursements for travel by Mason students are closely reviewed for accuracy and appropriateness. If you do not follow the required procedures, it may be impossible for Mason to pay your travel reimbursement.

- All travel expenses are paid by the traveler and reimbursed after the trip.
- Reimbursements for travel expenses such as transportation, lodging, and meals are processed using forms created in the GMU Travel Request System (TRS).
- Reimbursements for conference registration fees may be included in the request for reimbursement of travel expenses on the Travel Expenses Reimbursement Voucher. However, if you are seeking reimbursement only for conference registration fees, you should submit an RSO Payment Request Form rather than the Travel Expenses Reimbursement Voucher.
- It makes no difference whether the reimbursement will be paid with funding (SFB) or with self-generated revenue. The required paperwork is the same.

Finances

- You must have either funding or self-generated revenue before you make any travel arrangements for which you expect to be reimbursed.
- If you are applying for funding from the Student Funding Board, be sure to apply well in advance of your travel date.
- If you expect your reimbursement to be paid from multiple organizations (for example, part from your RSO and part from the College of Science), you should bring this to the attention of the Student Involvement Business Manager well before the trip so that a plan can be made for processing the reimbursement.
For reimbursements that will be paid from multiple organizations, only one Request and Authorization to Travel Form and only one Travel Expenses Reimbursement Voucher should be prepared and submitted, listing all of the organizations from which the reimbursement will be paid. Reimbursements from multiple organizations will need to be approved and signed by all organizations that will pay portions of the reimbursement.

Creating your forms

- You must use the GMU Travel Request System (TRS) to create the forms needed for travel reimbursements.
- You can access the TRS at [https://travel.gmu.edu](https://travel.gmu.edu)
- Use your GMU user name and password to access the system.

Before the Trip

- At least 7 days before your trip, submit to Student Involvement a Request and Authorization to Travel Form and a Risk Assessment Form.
- Use the TRS to create the Request and Authorization to Travel Form with your personal information, organization number, and estimates of the expenses you expect to incur for your trip (transportation, hotel, conference fee, etc.)
- Print out the completed form, sign it, and have your RSO advisor sign it.
- Complete and sign the Risk Assessment Form.
- You will not be reimbursed for your travel expenses if you do not complete and submit these forms BEFORE your trip.

Calculating the Amount

The Commonwealth of Virginia has set limits on the amounts travelers can be reimbursed for travel expenses in any given location. These limits are embedded in the GMU Travel Request System (TRS). When completing the forms in the TRS, some areas will automatically populate with the limits.

For example, if you travel to Minneapolis, the maximum amount you will be reimbursed for lodging is $121 per day (excluding taxes and surcharges). For Manhattan, the rate varies from $204 to $295 per day, depending on the time of year. So, if you stay in a hotel that costs more than the established limit, you will be reimbursed for the set limit and not for the full cost.

As with lodging, the Commonwealth has established basic and city-specific maximum per diem rates for meals and incidental expenses. This means that you will be reimbursed for meals the amount specified by the Commonwealth, regardless of how much you spend for the meals. Current rates can be obtained from the Travel Office or from the Travel Office page on the Fiscal Services web site at [http://fiscal.gmu.edu](http://fiscal.gmu.edu).
**While Traveling**

Travelers must have original receipts for all expenses (except meals, which are reimbursed on a per diem basis). Be sure to save your receipts for parking fees, tolls, and transportation to and from the airport, if flying.

**After the Trip**

- Within a week after your trip, use the GMU Travel Request System (TRS) to create the Travel Expenses Reimbursement Voucher Form.
- Print out the completed form, sign it, and have your RSO advisor sign it.
- Attach your original receipts and submit to Student Involvement for approval.

**Traveling by Surface Transportation**

When driving, students may use their own cars or lease vehicles through Enterprise, within these guidelines:

- If the travel is less than 100 miles per day, a personal vehicle should be used. (For example, for a 3-day trip, 300 total miles.)
- If the travel exceeds 100 miles per day, an Enterprise rental should be used.

If you choose to drive your own car when your trip exceeds 100 miles per day, the amount of your reimbursement may be affected.

**Enterprise**

- Students must be 21 years old to rent from Enterprise.
- There is a link to Enterprise in the Fiscal Management section of the Student Involvement website and also on the GMU Fiscal Services website.
- RSOs may not use GMU Motor Pool vehicles.

Because the rules and procedures for surface transportation are complicated, we recommend that students check with the Travel Office when deciding whether to drive a personal vehicle or lease from Enterprise. Working with the Travel Office will help ensure that your reimbursement can be paid.

**Conference Registration Fees**

Travelers who wish to be reimbursed only for conference registration fees (and no travel expenses) do not have to use the Travel Request System to create their requests.
Submit an RSO Payment Request Form to seek reimbursement for conference fees.
Attach proof of your registration (this is usually an email confirmation from the conference) and proof of payment.
Proof of payment could be a copy of a cashed check (front and back sides) or a bank or credit card statement showing the transaction.

Travelers seeking reimbursement for conference fees and travel expenses must use the Travel request System to create a Request and Authorization to Travel Form and a Travel expenses Reimbursement Voucher that includes all expenses for which reimbursement is sought.

Questions?
For questions about the information presented in this handbook, contact the Business Manager of the Office of Student Involvement at 703-993-2894.

For questions about and problems with using the Travel Request System, contact the Travel Office at 703-993-2623.