

Travel Policy

All travel expenses are paid by the traveler and reimbursed after the trip. The Commonwealth of Virginia requires that travel be conducted in the most economical manner possible. For this reason, travel reimbursement requests submitted by GMU employees and students are closely reviewed for accuracy and appropriateness. If you do not follow proper procedures, it may be impossible for you to receive your travel reimbursement.

Reimbursements for travel expenses, such as transportation, lodging, and meals, are processed using forms created in the GMU Travel Request System (TRS): <https://travel.gmu.edu>. (Note: Travelers, seeking reimbursements for only their conference registration fees, do not have to use the TRS. They can request reimbursement via the *RSO Payment Request Form*.)

The travel reimbursement process is the same for both SFB (Student Funding Board) and SGR (Self-Generated Revenue) funding.

SFB Funding:

- The maximum amount of funding the Student Funding Board will award is \$1,000 per organization per academic year.
- The \$1,000 available for travel is included in the maximum amount of \$5,000 funding that Tier 3 RSOs can receive.
- The maximum reimbursement that can be paid using funding from the SFB is \$250 per person per year.
- Funding awarded for travel between June 1st and August 30th counts toward the next academic year's funding allotment.

SGR Funding:

- There is no limit on the amount of reimbursement that can be paid per person using self-generated revenue (SGR).
- Students may receive reimbursements that combine SFB funding and SGR if their travel expenses exceed \$250. Be sure to let the Business Manager know if you expect a reimbursement to include a combination of SGR and SFB funding.

The Commonwealth of Virginia has set limits on the amount travelers can be reimbursed for travel to and daily expenses in any given location. These limits are embedded in the TRS. When completing forms in the TRS, some areas of the forms will automatically populate with these limits.

Example: If you travel to Minneapolis, the current maximum amount you will be reimbursed for lodging is \$149 per day (excluding taxes and surcharges). For the Bronx in New York City, the rate varies from \$164 to \$291 per day, depending upon the time of year. So, if you choose to stay in the most expensive hotel at your destination, you will not be reimbursed for the full cost if it exceeds the limit set by the Commonwealth of Virginia.

A. Ground Transportation

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

- If the travel is under 280 miles per day, a personal vehicle should be used (e.g., for a 3-day trip, 840 total miles would be the limit).
- If the travel is over 280 miles per day, an Enterprise rental car should be used.
- If you choose to drive your own car when your trip is over 280 miles per day, your reimbursement may be affected.
- Students must be 21 years old to rent from Enterprise.
- There is a link to the Enterprise site on the Student Involvement Fiscal Management webpage and also on the GMU Fiscal Services website.
- RSOs may not use Mason Motorpool vehicles.
- Because the travel rules and procedures, surrounding ground transportation, are complicated, we recommend that students check with the Travel Office (<travel@gmu.edu>, 703-993-2580) when deciding whether to drive a personal vehicle or lease from Enterprise. Working with the Travel Office will help ensure that everything is done correctly so that your reimbursement can be processed.

B. Conference Registration Fee

Travelers, who need to be reimbursed for only the conference registration fee (no travel expenses), do not have to use the Travel Request System. Instead, submit an *RSO Payment Request Form* along with proof of your registration (usually an e-mail confirmation) and proof of payment (i.e., credit card/bank statement or front/back side of cashed check) to Student Involvement.

C. Meal & Incidental Expenses (M&IE)

The M&IE per diem rates cover expenses such as: meals (including taxes and tips), transportation to where meals are taken, personal telephone calls, laundry expenses, and tips to baggage handlers.

On travel departure and return days, travelers automatically receive 75% of the per diem meal allowance plus the \$5 incidental allowance, regardless of the time of departure or return. The return day allowance is based on the rate at the location where the traveler spent the night prior to returning home.

Example: If you travel to Minneapolis, the M&IE rate is \$64 per day. Regardless of how much you actually spend, you will be reimbursed \$64 as long as your stay qualifies for reimbursement for all three meals in one day in Minneapolis.

Travel Procedure

- A. **Funding:** Before you make any travel arrangements, you should contact your RSO president or treasurer to ensure your RSO has enough SFB or SGR money in its account to reimburse your expenses. If applying for funding from the Student Funding Board, your RSO president or treasurer should apply well in advance (at least a month prior to the departure date).
- B. **Create a Profile in the Travel Request System (TRS):**
1. Open an internet browser. (VPN required for remote use:
<https://itservices.gmu.edu/downloads/index.cfm>)
 2. Go to <https://travel.gmu.edu>.
 3. Select *Login* and enter your Mason NetID and password. You will then be prompted to set up your user profile.
 4. Enter Personal Information and Supervisor Information. (List your RSO's faculty advisor as your supervisor.)
 5. Select *Submit*.
- C. **Travel Authorization:** The traveler should submit this document for approval (via the TRS) at least one week prior to his/her departure date.
1. Log in to <https://travel.gmu.edu> (VPN required for remote use.)
 2. Select *Enter Travel* and then *Initiate Authorization*.
 3. Click *Continue*.
 4. Select Trip Type.
 5. Continue to enter Trip Information.
 6. Under Fund/Org Information*, check <=\$ to list your SFB or SGR allocation amount & then select the following:
 - Department = *Student Involvement, Office*
 - Approver = *mthores2 (Margo Thoresen)*
 - Primary fund/org = your RSO org code
 7. Upload a copy of the *Risk Assessment and Release Form*.
 8. Select *Submit for Approval* to begin the Workflow approval process.
 9. **Approval Process:** Your supervisor (faculty advisor) will receive an email from travel.gmu.edu when a travel document is submitted and needs his/her approval. He/she will click on the Workflow link in the body of the email, which will open the Banner Workflow application and prompt the user to enter his/her Mason NetID and password. The supervisor (faculty advisor) will select the document and review the travel information and related expenses. Once reviewed, he/she will select one of the two options located in the Action box: *Approve* or *Return to submitter with comments*. If approved, he/she will select *Complete* to move the Travel Authorization to the Student Involvement Business Manager for fund/org approval. Once completed or returned, the traveler receives an email notification of the document status.
- D. **Travel Expenses Reimbursement Voucher:** The traveler should submit this document for approval (via the TRS) within three weeks of his/her return date.
1. Go to <https://travel.gmu.edu> and login. (VPN required for remote use.)
 2. Select *Enter Travel*.
 3. Select *View/Edit Trip* (all trips will be displayed).
 4. Select *Initiate Reimbursement*.

5. Edit section(s) based on actual travel costs by selecting blue Edit Info links. Enter new and/or revised information and select *Continue*.
6. Upload electronic copies of your receipts and proof of payment (i.e., credit card statement showing the charge for each expense).
7. Scroll down and select *Submit for Approval*.
8. Print a copy of the *Travel Expenses Reimbursement Voucher*.
9. Select *Continue* and then select *Yes*.

*Students, who expect to receive funding from more than one source (for example, part from the RSO and part from the College of Science), should complete and submit only one *Request and Authorization to Travel* and only one *Travel Expenses Reimbursement Voucher*, listing all of the accounts from which the reimbursement will be paid. These forms will need to be approved by each organization/office that funds your travel; therefore, coordination is needed from the outset.