

West Liberty University
Travel Policy and Procedures Manual
Effective July 1, 2024

# **Revision History**

July 1, 2024 – This manual was re-organized to increase ease of use.

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#### Section 1 – Introduction

#### 1.1 Scope

This manual has been created to assist the West Liberty University (WLU) students, faculty, and staff in traveling on behalf of the university.

#### 1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this manual is to serve as a guide to assist the employees of WLU with making travel arrangements, paying for travel expenses, or seeing reimbursement for travel expenses.

#### 1.3 Authority

WLU Board of Governors Rule 4.2 (Travel) and Procedure 40 (Travel)

#### **1.4 Points of Contact**

The WLU Business Office is responsible for review and approval of travel requests and settlements. The WLU Fleet Management Office, located at Myers Maintenance is responsible for the allocation of fleet to be used for travel.

### Section 2 - Planning

#### 2.1 Before Travel

A "Travel Request" must be completed and approved prior to any University travel. The Travel Request form can be found on the Business Office webpage (https://westliberty.edu/business-office/purchasing-accounts-payable/travel/). All travel shall originate from and terminate at the University. Employees may request that travel originates from and ends at an employee's residence if doing so would result in cost savings to the University. All traveler information should accompany the request. A single form with an attached list of travelers is acceptable for group travel.

The WLU Business Office will review the form to ensure that there are funds available in the department budget to cover any expenses for the trip. If there are no funds available, the Travel Coordinator will discuss options with the requestor. After approval of the travel request, the Business Office will encumber funds to the appropriate budget.

Should travel be cancelled, please notify the Business Office so the encumbrance can be removed.

#### 2.2 Approval Authority

For local and out of state travel, the traveler's supervisor may approve. For international travel, the traveler's cabinet member must approve travel.

#### 2.3 Fleet Requests

If a fleet vehicle is requested, the approved travel request is sent to the Fleet Management Office for their review and assignment of vehicle (if available). Approval to travel is required to be approved for fleet use, however, having the approval to travel does not guarantee the use of a WLU fleet vehicle.

#### 2.4 Job Candidate Travel

Candidates for employment with WLU can only be reimbursed up to \$500. The candidate is responsible for making their own travel and lodging arrangements. Only candidates for full-time, exempt positions, typically director level and above and faculty are eligible for reimbursement.

## **Section 3 – Travel Arrangements**

#### 3.1 Paying for Travel Expenses

State issued P-Cards are the preferred method of payment for most travel expenses (excludes personal food expenses). For questions about P-Cards, please contact the WLU Business Office or review the P-Card Policy and Procedure Manual on the WLU Business Office website https://westliberty.edu/business-office/purchasing-accounts-payable/purchasing-card/.

#### 3.2 Allowable Expenses

#### **3.2.1 Ground Transportation**

Travelers must utilize the most cost-effective mode of transport as calculated by the Business Office Travel Coordinator. University vehicles will be utilized whenever possible. Enterprise rental arrangements will be secured through the Business Office upon approval.

Should a traveler forgo the University vehicle assignment no mileage reimbursement will be awarded.

The mileage reimbursement rate is 57.5 cents per mile for business use of an employee's personal vehicle. This rate is reviewed bi-annually by the state and is subject to change.

The operator of a vehicle must possess a valid operator's license and must have passed the required Driving test. The operator is personally liable for any fines and/or penalties resulting from citations, charges or warrants attributable to operator negligence. Such fines and/or penalties are not a reimbursable expense.

Vehicles shall be thoroughly cleaned prior to return to Maintenance. Only University personnel are permitted in State vehicles. No animals permitted, unless they are research animals or certified service animals

#### 3.2.2 Commercial Rental Vehicles

When rental vehicles are required for travel where the destination was reached by air travel, Travelers are able to source their own rental vehicle. Travelers must use the State contract for car rental services, unless the State contracts for car rental services do not have:

- a. A location in the specific area.
- b. The type of vehicle needed, or
- c. The vehicle for the duration needed

For travel of more than a few days in duration, weekly rental rates may be reimbursed if they result in a lower total cost than the daily rate.

Reimbursement may be made for a full size vehicle if more than three (3) people are traveling together on business and for larger vehicles if a group of five (5) or more is traveling together.

Larger vehicles may be rented when situation warrant (i.e. negotiating rough terrain, transporting large groups of people or equipment or other extenuating circumstances) these must be approved in advance by the Travel Coordinator.

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Travelers are not permitted to rent trucks, campers, off road vehicles, trailers, motorized bikes, motorcycles and motorized scooters, antique cars, high value, special interest and exotic cars, or vans that seat more than eight (8) occupants.

Reimbursement may be made for actual fuel costs, supported by valid, itemized receipts.

Vehicles should be returned to the rental agency with a full tank of fuel. Unless rental location provides gas at a lower rate, documentation required.

Local car rentals (Wheeling Enterprise) will be arranged through the Business Office. They can be delivered to campus from the vendor and are all put on the Fleet P-Card.

#### **3.2.3 Air Transportation**

University travelers must use National Travel Service to book all air transportation, or the Traveler must provide a quote showing that the airfare quoted was more than a comparable flight from another source. National Travel may be contacted at 1-800-262-4054 and requesting a State Agent. Conversion of airline tickets for personal benefit, such as down-grading tickets or returning unused tickets for cash, credit or personal airline travel, is prohibited.

Airfare should be paid by a Purchasing Card.

Where a traveler chooses to drive rather than fly while on business, reimbursement will be based on actual in-transit expenses (mileage, hotel, meals, etc.), not to exceed the lowest available commercial airfare plus local transportation to and from the airport.

#### 3.2.4 Lodging

Reimbursement shall include actual expenses for overnight lodging, use of a room during daytime and for all applicable taxes and surcharges. Single room occupancy shall be reimbursed at the least expensive rate provided by the facility. Where multiple occupancies occur, reimbursement may be claimed fully by one traveler with no claim filed by the other(s).

All out-of-state lodging reservations can be made through National Travel Service. If the NTS is not used hotel accommodations should be made directly with the hotel instead of an online service such as Orbitz, Expedia, etc.

The hotel/motel statement, invoice or folio shall be the official document submitted for reimbursement.

Business phone calls will be reimbursed at the actual cost as listed on the hotel folio.

#### 3.2.5 **Meals**

Meal expense reimbursement is limited to actual expenses for food service and gratuities up to the maximum daily rate determined by the University. Alcoholic beverages and entertainment expenses are not reimbursable. Meal receipts are required to be turned in with the travel settlement.

Daily meal allowance for in-state travel is \$39 per day, and out-of-state allowance is \$50 per day including the tip for the server. The tip for the server should not exceed 20%.

Meal reimbursement is not permitted for single day travel unless the workday begins and/or extends two (2) hours more than the normal work day. If you leave 2 hours before your normal

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work day, then you can be reimbursed for breakfast at 20% of the daily rate. If you return 2 hours after your normal work day, then you can be reimbursed for dinner at 60% of the daily rate.

#### 3.2.6 Registration Fees

Fees charged for attendance at conferences, meetings, seminars, etc. as well as event-related materials are reimbursable expenses. Advance payment is permitted if required by the sponsor.

Charges incurred due to failure of the traveler or the traveler's representative to notify the event sponsor in a timely manner of a change in travel plans will be considered a personal expense to the traveler and will not be reimbursed by the University.

#### 3.2.7 Other Expenses

Reimbursement may be requested for tolls, garage and parking fees, and gratuities. These items may be reconciled without a receipt by documenting the itemized expenses and endorsing the document with signature and title.

Business phone calls will be reimbursed at the actual cost as listed on the hotel folio.

Expenses for travel in foreign countries are to be reported in United States dollars. Expenditures in foreign currencies must be converted into United States dollars at the rate or rates at which the foreign currency was obtained. The rates of conversion and commissions must be shown on an attachment to the Travel Expense Report.

#### 3.3 Included or Courtesy Services

When courtesy transportation is provided by a hotel, motel or other service facility, the traveler is expected to use the service. Travelers cannot request reimbursed for meals or lodging included in registration fees regardless of participation.

In accordance with **West Virginia Code §6B-2-5(2)**, employees may use bonus points acquired through frequent traveler programs while traveling on official government business, as long as the employee's participation in the program does not result in an additional cost to the state.

#### **Section 4 – Travel Settlements**

#### **4.1 Completion of Travel Settlements**

It is the responsibility of the traveler to complete their own travel settlement. The WLU Business Office will answer questions and advise travelers about the best way to complete a settlement, however, no Business Office employee will complete the settlement for the traveler. If a traveler has their department administrative assistant complete the settlement form, it is their responsibility to review and ensure accuracy of the form before it is turned into the Business Office.

#### 4.2 Timeline

A "Travel Settlement Form" is required for any travel that results in expenses to the University. Settlements are required no more than 15 calendar days after the travel end date for all charges secured on a State P-Card. Settlements including out-of-pocket expenses submitted more than 15 days from the travel end date may be rejected.

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Travel settlements are reviewed daily and if there are errors requiring corrections, a Business Office employee will reach out to the traveler to make corrections or provide additional documentation.

If it is a non-employee traveling (students, job candidate, etc.) they must submit a W-9 in addition to the settlement form to be entered into the wvOasis accounting system.

It can take as long as 4 weeks to get a new vendor (traveler) into the wvOaisis system, this process is done at the State Auditor's Office (SAO), not WLU. Once a vendor is in the wvOasis system, and the travel settlement is accepted and approved, travelers can expect a check from the SAO in 2-4 weeks. WLU has no ability to expedite travel settlement review at the SAO or to cut a check for travel reimbursement.

All employee travelers are encouraged to enroll in Travel Direct Deposit. This reimbursement is separate from Payroll Direct Deposit. The Travel Direct Deposit Form is located on the Business Office website (https://westliberty.edu/business-office/purchasing-accounts-payable/travel).

#### 4.3 Receipts

Receipts must accompany the travel settlement form for any charges being submitted for reimbursement. Receipts must be clear and itemized. In the event the traveler has non-reimbursable items (alcohol, personal item, prescription drugs, et cetera.) on the receipt with reimbursable items, the non-reimbursable items are to be crossed out and the amount of reimbursement to be clearly shown on the receipt. If alcohol is purchased, that amount must be removed as well as the value of tips on the alcohol from the receipt. Receipts from international travel should indicate clearly what is being purchased and the converted value to USD for the date of travel. Travelers should keep a copy of all receipts submitted.

#### 4.4 Mileage

When a personal vehicle is being driven for official travel, mileage reimbursement is permitted. Mileage will be reimbursed at the GSA rate on the date of travel. When reimbursement for mileage is requested, the traveler must submit directions of the route taken to verify miles driven. Additionally, the traveler cannot submit for both mileage and fuel reimbursement when driving their personal vehicle.

#### 4.5 The Settlement Form

The Travel Settlement Form can be found at https://westliberty.edu/business-office/purchasing-accounts-payable/travel/. Instructions for completing the form can be found on the same page, as well as exhibit 5.b of this document.

# Section 5 – Exhibits Exhibit 5.a Travel Request Form

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#### Exhibit 5b - Instructions for Filling Out a Travel Settlement Voucher

#### Filling out a Travel Settlement Voucher

The State of West Virginia requires travelers to fill out a travel settlement upon return from a trip. It is West Liberty University's (WLU) policy that all travelers must turn in a settlement to the WLU Business Office within 15 calendar days from their date of return. Failure to do so may result in the settlement being rejected and future travel being denied.

It is the responsibility of the traveler to fill out the form, the WLU Business Office will not fill out forms for travelers. The Business Office will provide training and guidance only.

The Travel Expense Account Settlement form is an Excel spreadsheet form, do not alter the form, its formulas. **Do not** attempt to open the form in Google Sheets, it causes some formulas to work incorrectly.

The WLU Business Office processes these forms daily and generally if approved with no issue will have them submitted to the Sate Auditor's Office within two business days. It can take up to 4 weeks following submittal before the traveler is reimbursed. WLU cannot cut checks, all travel reimbursements are paid by the State Auditor's Office in Charleston, and the WLU Business Office has no ability to expedite the processing of settlements.

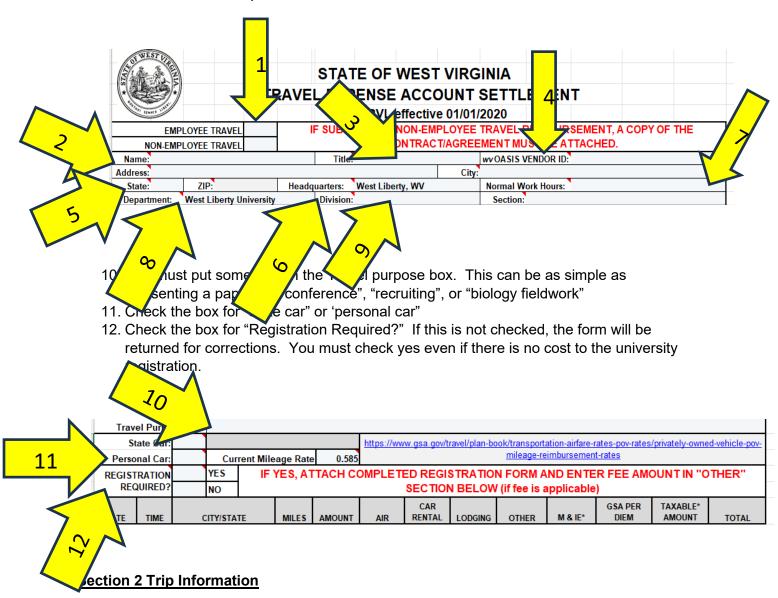
If you have any questions about this form, please contact the WLU Business Office.

#### **Section 1 Traveler Information**

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DATE TIME	(	CITY/STAT	TE	MILES	AMOUNT	AIR	CAR RENTAL	LODGING	OTHER	M & IE*	GSA PER DIEM	TAXABLE* AMOUNT	TOTAL	

- 1. Check if the traveler is an employee or non-employee.
- 2. Fill out the name of the traveler, the name must match the name in the HR system for an employee or the W-9 for non employee. For example, if the HR system has the employee name as John Quentin Employee, this form cannot say John Q Employee or John Employee; it must be John Quentin Employee.
- 3. Put the title for the employee, if the traveler is a student, you can put student for a title, if the traveler is a job candidate that is being reimbursed, job candidate is the appropriate title.
- 4. If you know your WV Oasis Vendor ID, put it in the box, if you do not know your number, you can reach out to the WLU Business Office for guidance. If you have never traveled before, you may not have a number yet. If this is the case, the Business Office may ask

- for additional information, it can take 2-4 weeks to add a vendor to the WV Oasis system. This is done at the State Auditor's office, and the WLU Business Office has no control over the timing.
- 5. Fill in the address of the traveler, this must match the HR/Oasis record and will be the address where the check will be sent. If the employee has moved since starting at WLU and needs the check to go to their new address, they will have to submit a change of address to HR to have this updated.
- 6. Headquarters for WLU settlements is always West Liberty, WV.
- 7. Normal working hours must be filled out by the traveler, for most employees the hours are 8:00 AM 4:00 PM
- 8. The department for WLU is always West Liberty University, do not put your internal department name in this box or the form will be returned for corrections.
- 9. You can put your internal department name in the Division box; e.g. Athletics, Business Office, Football, Dept. of Political Science, etc. The section box should be left blank



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- 1. You will have one location per line per day (i.e., if you started at West Liberty, WV, drove to Pittsburgh to go to the airport and flew to Chicago, each of those locations would have a separate line with the same date.
- 2. If the trip is multi-day, you do not need to put a time down, if the trip is single-day, you must put a time down or you cannot be reimbursed.
- 3. For regular employees, all trips must begin at West Liberty, WV regardless of actual starting location (i.e. Washington, PA); if you are a remote employee or are starting from a different location, contact the Business Office for guidance.
- 4. You generally do not have to put stops on the form (i.e. if you stop in Zanesville, OH on the way to Columbus, OH get gas or a snack, but conducted no university business you would not need to put that on the form, this would include layovers for air travel. If you stopped in Canton, OH to visit a high school for recruiting purposes, on your way to Cleveland, OH, this would need to be put on the form.
- 5. If you are driving a state car, or are not being reimbursed mileage, you do not need to put miles on the form. If you are being reimbursed, make sure you are using the correct reimbursement rate as this amount is automatically calculated.
- 6. In the "Air" column put only the cost of airfare as shown on the vendor receipt. Charges for baggage or other charges should not go in this column.
- 7. In the "Car Rental" column put only charges for a rental car, do not put Lyft, Uber, or taxi charges in this column.
- 8. In the "Lodging" column put charges for your hotel room, including taxes. This must be done by night, not as a lump sum. Do not put room service, valet, or other charges in this column. Those charges should be put in the appropriate columns even if they appear on the lodging bill.
- 9. Travelers should put charges that do not explicitly fit in the other columns on this form into the "Other" column. This may include taxis, baggage fees, parking fees, registration

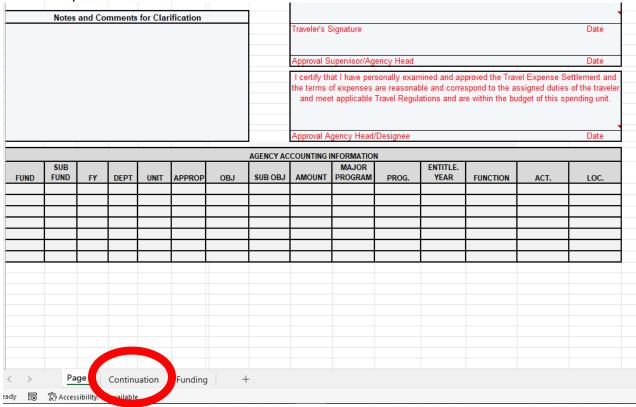
- fees, or other allowable expenses incurred while traveling. All expenses incurred must be itemized in the "Other Expenses" box and the continuation sheet if necessary. The total for the "Other" column and "Other Expenses" box must match, or the form will be returned for corrections.
- 10. Travelers should put expenses for meals in the "M & IE" column. WLU limits reimbursement to \$50 per day for travel outside of West Virginia and \$39 per day inside West Virginia regardless of the GSA per diem. Travelers must provide itemized receipts for meals. Alcohol purchases will not be reimbursed. Travelers cannot be reimbursed for more than a 20% gratuity. Credit card slips with no information about what was ordered will not be accepted.
- 11. Travelers will put the GSA per diem rate for the location that is their destination in the "GSA Per Diem" column. For example, if a traveler is flying to Las Vegas and has a layover in Dallas and they eat at the airport in Dallas, they will put the cost of their meal and the GSA rate on the line for Las Vegas.
- 12. If an expense is paid by P-Card, the WLU Foundation, or some other source, that expense must be put in the appropriate column **AND** be put in the "Expenses Paid by Other Sources/Advances" box. If they are not in both, it could result in the traveler owing the state money, or a rejection of the travel settlement form. Please use the PMT codes as shown in the box on the left in the "PMT Code" column in the "Expenses Paid by..." box.
- 13. Check the "Total Reimbursable Amount" box, this is the amount to be refunded by the state. If this is a negative number, indicated by being in parenthesis, it means the traveler owes the state money. This would generally only be the case if the traveler received an advance from the state (see below) or there is an error somewhere on the form.
- 14. Due to reconciliation issues, the State of West Virginia generally does not do travel advances except in exceptional circumstances. Generally, this would be long-term travel, usually to a foreign country where the ability to use a P-Card for appropriate expenses is not possible. If you believe your travel falls into this category, please reach out to the WLU Business Office for further instructions.

#### **Section 3 Notes/Approvals/Continuation Sheets**

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Approval Supervisor/Agency Head													Date			
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FUND	SUB FUND	FY	DEPT	UNIT	APPROP	OBJ	SUB OBJ	AMOUNT	MAJOR PROGRAM	PROG.	ENTITLE. YEAR	FUNCTION	ACT.	LOC.		

- 1. If you are staying overnight with friends/family, put a note indicating this in the "Notes and Comments for Clarification" box. If there is no note, and no lodging cost/receipt, the state auditors will reject the settlement.
- 2. The traveler will sign on the "Traveler's Signature" line, their supervisor will sign on the "Approval/Supervisor/Agency Head" line. The "Approval Agency Head/Designee" line is for the Business Office only. If you or your supervisor sign the incorrect line, the form will be returned to you for re-signing.
- 3. If you have a long trip, or one that has more "other" expenses than fit in the "Other Expenses" box, you will need to use a continuation sheet. See the picture (below) which shows how to access the continuation sheet.

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- 4. The continuation sheet auto populates the traveler information.
- 5. Traveler should add relevant information as necessary. Expenses put in this sheet automatically carries over to the main sheet.
- 6. When turning in a settlement that utilizes the continuation sheet, please ensure you print and turn in that sheet as well. Failure to do so will result in a delay in processing your claim.

#### **Section 4 Settlement Tips**

- 1. If you are asking for mileage reimbursement, we need a printout of the route showing the mileage. Generally, WLU will not pay mileage if there is a university vehicle available. Talk to the Fleet Coordinator and/or Business Office before using a personal vehicle.
- 2. The GSA per diem rate is not what you are being reimbursed, that is the max rate that can be reimbursed in a particular city before the traveler is taxed. WLU will only reimburse \$50 per day out of state or \$39 per day for meals regardless of the local GSA rate.
- 3. Do not pay for meals with your P-Card. This is a violation of WLU P-Card policy except in very specific circumstances. If you are eating in a hotel restaurant and they require you to charge to your room, please make sure you have that bill split out before checking out.
- 4. Keep copies of everything submitted to the business office. We have no ability to recreate paperwork if it is misplaced.
- 5. If you have changed your name or address since starting with WLU, make sure that information is updated with HR before submitting your travel settlement, failure to do this will delay processing your settlement.

- 6. If you have a layover and eat at your layover location or make a stop during your travel, you can put that meal in your daily final destination ME&I column, your final destination of the day is the GSA rate that will be used for tax purposes and putting that information in another column will only cause confusion during processing.
- 7. If you make a stop and have no expenses, you do not need to put that location on the form, for example if you are travelling to Chicago and your flight stops in Cleveland but you just change planes and do not buy anything, you can skip putting Cleveland on your settlement. If you do purchase something that is being reimbursed, please put that city on your settlement.
- 8. There are some common problems we see with settlements, please check these before you submit.
  - a. Any REF# cells, this indicates there is an issue with a formula and cannot be accepted this way.
  - b. You have a negative number in the "Amount to be Reimbursed" box, this is almost always caused by a problem with the "Expenses Paid by Other Sources" box. If the negative number is correct, this means you owe the state.
  - c. The "Other" column and "Other Expenses" box totals do not match, this will automatically cause a rejection of your settlement. If you are charging to one of these, make sure it goes in the other.
- 9. Flights and hotel charges should be made by P-Card, if the traveler does not have a P-Card, this can usually be done with the College Administrative Assistant, or through the Business Office. Settlements can take several weeks to process, and if the traveler paid for these on their personal credit card, they will not be reimbursed interest.
- 10. If you have any questions, please contact the WLU Business Office, it is usually easier to get the question answered than to try to fix something after the fact.