Travel Policy: Lodging

Introduction
The Lodging Travel Policy articulates those expenses that are reimbursable for lodging when an overnight stay is required.

The purpose of the Travel Policies are to provide clear policies and procedures that are compliant with state and federal regulations, promote safe travel, and allow for reasonable and manageable travel expenses while maintaining the necessary controls and accountability.

This policy is organized as follows:

- Lodging
- Travel Advances

Additional Travel Policies for the various components of travel can be found in the Related Policies section below.

Policy Statement
The Travel Policy on Lodging applies those who travel on behalf of the University. Travel Lodging expenses for overnight stays will be paid by the University if they are reasonable, appropriately documented, properly allocated and authorized, must be accommodated by the relevant operating budget or sponsored project funding, and within the guidelines of these policies.

Through this policy the University strives to promote safe and economical University travel while maintaining the necessary controls, accountability, compliance with applicable federal and state laws, and administrative efficiency. All University funds— including gifts, grants, and contracts, shall be used in a reasonable and prudent manner and only for activities related to Brown’s primary mission of education, research and public service.

Additionally:

- Departments may elect to impose stricter budgetary controls over travel expenditures than those required by this policy.
- Travel charged to a sponsored project should follow the guidelines set forth by this policy unless the funding agency imposes greater restrictions.
- Intentional disregard for the University's travel policy and procedures may be considered grounds for disciplinary action, and/or for prosecution in the case of fraudulent misrepresentation of travel expenses.
- The authority for determining which travel expenditures are reimbursable under a particular grant or contract lies with the Office of Sponsored Projects.

Lodging
Brown University reimburses employees for lodging while travelling on University business.

- Travelers should book standard room accommodations at non-luxury/moderately priced hotels using the University’s Annual Spending Guidelines as a guide.
- When traveling for a conference it is appropriate to stay at the hotel hosting the conference,
even if the rate exceeds the guidelines, however,
  - The room booked must be at the conference rate.
  - Travelers will not be reimbursed for “no show” charges except under extenuating circumstances, which must be documented in the expense report.
  - Travelers who stay in a private residence with friends or relatives while traveling on business will be reimbursed for reasonable actual expenses incurred to extend appreciation for their hospitality in accordance with the University’s Annual Spending Guidelines.
  - Foreign Lodging per diem.
    - The Federal lodging per diem rate is used only when visiting countries where receipts are difficult to obtain.
    - For foreign travel where lodging receipts are available, a per diem should not be used.
    - Use of a per diem in lieu of receipts should be for the purpose of administrative ease and the traveler should neither gain nor lose personal funds as a result of the travel.

Travel Advances

Travel advances are generally available to paid faculty, staff, and graduate students of Brown to assist in defraying out of pocket cash while travelling for an extended period of time. Travel advances are:

- Issued only for daily and per diem expenses. Prepaid items such as transportation and conference registration are processed using a travel expense report.
- Travel advances will not be issued more than two weeks prior to the scheduled departure date and must be cleared within two weeks of the completion of a trip.
  - Request for any additional payment, advance or reimbursement will not be processed for any traveler with an outstanding advance that is more than two weeks beyond the established trip return date.
  - Failure to account for a cash advance after repeated attempts to contact the traveler will result in reporting the advance to the IRS on the traveler’s W-2 and withholding taxes on the advance amount from the traveler’s paycheck.
    - Per IRS regulation, once an unsettled cash advance has be added to a W-2 it cannot be reversed – even if settled.
    - The University does not issue long-term operation advances.

Responsibilities

Controller’s Office: The Controller’s Office ensures compliance with federal and state statutes and process transactions.

Cost Center Managers: Cost Center Managers ensure compliance with this and other relevant University Policies. The Cost Center Manager approves air travel reimbursements.

Financial Coordinators: Financial Coordinators compile relevant supporting documentation and initiates travel reimbursement transactions, including travel advance request in Workday using the Create Expense business process.

Traveler: The Traveler is responsible to provide all receipts and travel information to the Financial Coordinator within two weeks of completion of the trip. Additionally:

- When a Travel Advance is used the travel advance can be cleared at the time receipts and travel information is provided to the Financial Coordinator.
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- The Traveler will return any unused travel advance to Brown.

The Traveler is responsible to know when they are travelling on a federally funded trip.

Procedures

Lodging: The detailed hotel bill (folio) is required for reimbursement of lodging expenses.

- Receipt needs to show a $0.00 balance due.
- Personal expenses should be labeled on the hotel bill and not claimed on the employee reimbursement request.

Some small hotel/motel and bed & breakfast lodging do not provide an itemized bill.

- The receipt from the establishment and record of payment will be accepted for reimbursement.

Travel Advance Request. Attach the Travel Advance Request form to the request initiated in Workday.

Forms/Instructions

Travel Advance Request Form

International Per Diem Website

Frequently Asked Questions

Can lodging per diem be used for domestic lodging? Since receipts are readily available per diems are not used for domestic travel. Rare exceptions may occur which require the advance approval of the Director of University Disbursements or the Assistant Vice President and University Controller.

Related Policies

Human Resources: Interview Expense Reimbursements
Travel Policy: Air Travel
Business Meals & Hospitality
Travel Policy: Ground Transportation
Travel Policy: Miscellaneous Expenses
Travel Policy: Senior Staff Travelling Together
Travel Policy: Travel and Business Meals
Travel Policy: Traveler and Approver Responsibilities
Visitor Travel Reimbursement

Policy Owner

Approved by Assistant Vice President and University Controller

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