

Travel And Expenses Reimbursement Policy FN.007

LU Policy Number: FN.007

Effective Date: 07/01/2019

Approval Date:08/30/19

Revised Date: See Notes

Purpose: This policy ensures that travel by individuals on Life University business is consistent with the Institution's Mission, Goals and Objectives. It also ensures fair and equitable treatment of individuals traveling for the University by defining procedures for authorized University travel and guidelines for expense reimbursement.

Additional Authority: N/A

Scope: Life University Personnel (Faculty and Staff)

Approval Authority: President

Responsible Authority: Finance Recipients: All Life University Personnel

Publications: Faculty Handbook, Employee Handbook, Policy Repository

Definitions: N/A

Policy Title

Travel and Expense Reimbursement Policy

Policy Statement

Overview

A critical balance must be sought when requesting travel. This is the University's need for cost effectiveness and the employee's need for quality education, services and support. Employee travel should be via the lowest cost alternative, consistent with good business practices. Neither luxury, nor sub-standard modes of transportation and accommodations should be used.

Employee travel and the expenses associated with it will be authorized only in circumstances which are clearly consistent with the Mission of the University. It is the responsibility of each University manager to ensure that all employee travel meets this objective and that reimbursement is made only for actual, reasonable business expenses in connection with authorized travel as defined in this document. Any expense submitted which does not comply with the guidelines of this procedure will not be reimbursed, unless accompanied by a valid exception from management. Expense reports must be submitted in a timely manner and in no case later than 14 business days after the employee returns from travel during which the expense(s) was (were) incurred.

Travel advances must be requested using the official University “Travel Advance Form”, signed by the appropriate level(s) in accordance with the signature approval process.

Approved travel advance requests must be submitted to Accounts Payable the Monday prior to the Friday that funds are needed by the employee to facilitate travel.

Those employees who receive a Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) travel grant should refer to the CETL e-center BlackBoard page for specific guideline utilization of professional development funds.

Note: For the purposes of this policy, “employee” shall mean anyone traveling on behalf of the University who is getting reimbursed for travel expenses.

Implementation & Responsibility

Manager’s Responsibility:

1. Know current travel policy and inform departmental staff of University policy and procedures.
2. Determine if travel is necessary to achieve a University related goal
3. Approve expenses in accordance with policy.

Employee’s Responsibility:

1. Notify support staff, if applicable, as early as possible of necessary travel arrangements. If travel reservations and bookings are made seven (7) days or more in advance, trips will, in most cases, cost considerably less.
2. If travel is requested less than seven days prior to departure, employees should consider a low-fare airline such as Southwest, Frontier, American Airlines/ US Airways, or Spirit.
3. Incur only expenses that are consistent with the business needs, and exercise care in determining appropriate expenditures.
4. Submit expense reports as outlined in the expense section on this policy, on a timely basis, and in no case later than 14 business days after return from a trip in which the expense(s) has (have) been incurred.

Personal Vacation in Addition to Work-Related Travel

If an employee extends a Life University-related trip for any reason other than business i.e. sightseeing or visiting with family or friends, the University will not reimburse for any additional expenses incurred and will consider the employee as taking vacation or personal days during the extended period.

If the addition of extra dates changes the airfare, the employee will reimburse the University for any increase in fare. Any savings due to the extended dates will not be reimbursed to the employee.

If selecting alternative means of travel, the employee must supply a printout of the lowest available airfare, dated prior to the trip.

If the employee is renting a car and continues to rent it while on non-work-related travel, he/she will only be reimbursed to the extent that relates to University business.

Air Travel

1. Air travel will be via the most direct and economical means, accommodating the comfort and needs of the employee. Deviations from the lowest fare must have Director approval.
2. The employee should make travel arrangements as soon as possible. If arrangements for travel are made seven (7) days or more in advance, the trip will in most cases cost considerably less.
3. Use of “Non-Refundable” airfares is recommended. These fares are usually considerably less expensive than refundable un-restricted fares. In most cases, if the travel must change or the trip canceled all together, the funds can be used as a credit toward future travel, less a service charge imposed by the airline.
4. Business or first-class travel is not permitted without approval by the Executive Vice President/Provost or President. All employees will fly least expensive economy class for both domestic and international flights.
5. Employees may retain all benefits from frequent flyer club memberships. All dues for such clubs must be paid by the employee.

6. Employee choosing to use personal modes of travel between cities serviced by regularly scheduled airlines will be reimbursed based on the least expensive airfare (or other means of travel where available, including mileage, car rental, fares, etc.) or actual expenses, whichever is less.

Auto Rental

1. The University insurance package covers employees while traveling. Therefore, employees should decline the optional insurance coverage unless in a country that is not a US domicile. In the event of an accident while traveling, the employee must notify Human Resources immediately.
2. Employees may rent either subcompact, compact or intermediate size cars. Rentals for other types of cars are not permitted except with manager approval. Luxury, premium and specialty car rentals will be reimbursed only at the intermediate car rate.
3. Employees should refill gasoline prior to returning rental car for drop off. Gas charges at the rental locations are significantly higher than independent filling stations. Any exceptions require manager approval.
4. Employees may retain all benefits from auto rental rewards club memberships. All dues for such clubs must be paid by the employee.

Personal Auto Reimbursement

1. An employee is only authorized to use his/her automobile for University business use if he/she has both a valid driver's license and current comprehensive auto insurance, including liability. If not, the employee is not authorized to travel for the University.
2. When an employee uses his/her personal automobile on approved University business, the University will reimburse based on the current IRS mileage rate per mile. The University will also reimburse all actual auto tolls and parking fees; a receipt is required for these whenever available.
3. Mileage from the employee's home to regular assigned work location is not a reimbursable expense. However, if the employee goes directly from home to another work assignment other than the regular work location during regular office hours, and the distance to the work assignment is greater than the distance to the regular work location, the employee can expense the difference. If this travel takes place outside of regular work hours, the employee may expense the actual miles traveled from home.
4. In order to receive reimbursement for mileage, the employee must complete an expense report specifying purpose of trip, printout of Map Quest or equivalent showing distance, point of origin and destination.
5. The employee is required to pay for any parking and traffic fines incurred while traveling on University business.

Lodging

1. It is Life University's policy that actual, reasonable costs will be reimbursable for lodging expenses.
2. Hotels of moderate and reasonable comfort should be sought, rather than deluxe or luxury hotels. Each traveler should use his/her best judgment in selecting a location and hotel to stay, recognizing that his/her health and safety are of paramount importance. Courtyard, Springhill Inn & Suites, Fairfield Inn, Holiday Inn, Holiday Inn Express, and Hampton Inn, are suitable accommodations in most cases for University employees.
 - In most cases, employees should seek accommodations with a base rate less than
 - \$200 per night or less (not including taxes and required fees).
 - The maximum hotel rate accepted for University travel is \$249 per night (not including taxes and required fees); any room rate in excess of \$249 must be approved by the employee's director.
 - Individual departments may provide their own limits lower than the \$249 (not including taxes and required fees) maximum.
3. The employee is responsible for confirming that the rate being charged is also the rate listed on the travel itinerary. Any discrepancies should be addressed with hotel staff immediately. Any unresolved discrepancies need to be reported to the University manager.
4. All hotel reservations will be guaranteed to the employee's personal credit card, or to the University's credit card, if one is issued.
5. It is the employee's responsibility to cancel hotel reservations within the hotel cancellation policy time frame. This can be done by contacting the travel agency or the hotel directly. The employee must obtain a cancellation number when canceling a hotel reservation. The University will not reimburse hotel "no-show" fees, unless approved by a director.
6. An itemized receipt of hotel expenses (i.e. room charge and tax, internet charges, food charged to the room) must be included with the reimbursement request or credit card report.
7. Employees may retain all benefits from hotel rewards club memberships. All dues for such clubs must be paid by the employee.

Meals & Entertainment

1. A meal per diem will be available to those employees traveling on university business.
 - Detailed receipts are not required.
 - Maximum meal per diem allowances are as follows:
 - \$65 per day
 - \$32.50 per half day
2. Entertainment expenses require manager approval, and must meet the following conditions:
 - The employee's specific assignment requires the entertainment of the University's customers or potential customers, or others as appropriate.
 - The entertainment expense is fully receipted (original, itemized receipts required)
 - The persons entertained, the place and the purpose of the entertainment must be clearly specified on the receipt.
 - Gratuities should not exceed 20% of the cost of the services provided, and should be calculated before taxes are added.
3. Non-reimbursable expenses include, but are not limited to: Alcoholic beverages, airline club dues, rental car club membership fees, spa fees, airline preferred seat fees, airline headset rental, in-room movies, mini-bar, insurance on life or personal property while traveling, purchase of clothing and/or other personal items, expenses for family, child, pet, home and property care while on a trip.
 - Any exceptions require Director level approval.

Laundry Service

In general, laundry services while traveling should be avoided. Actual and reasonable laundry expenses will be reimbursed only after the employee has been away from home for five (5) consecutive days, or if the trip has been unexpectedly extended, and only for expenses incurred while traveling. Detailed receipts must be provided.

Traveling Companions

Any additional costs associated with an employee's traveling companion cannot be charged to Life University and are the responsibility of the employee.

Expense Reporting

The following conditions apply when submitting expense reports:

1. Actual and reasonable expenses are reimbursed in accordance with the provisions of this policy and procedure.
2. Employees traveling on University business should submit travel reimbursement paperwork upon return to the campus, and in no case later than 14 business days from the last day of travel.
3. Travel expenses on a Life University credit card must be submitted to the Department of Finance by the deadline when the appropriate monthly electronic credit card reconciliation is completed. Failure to submit expense reports within a timely manner will disqualify the employee from receiving reimbursement for expenses.
4. Include the following items in, or attached to, the expense report when submitting it for payment:
 - Copies of receipts for lodging, air or auto transportation, tolls, gasoline, and any other business expenses.
 - Explanation of any deviation from policy, unauthorized vendors, lodging or transportation, and/or charges submitted in lieu of normal expenses, along with initials of authorizing University official.
 - Check made payable to Life University, if repayment of travel advance or personal expenses is due.

International Travel Expenses

Expense reports should be reported in U.S. currency. Credit cards are generally the preferred mode of payment, as conversions take place automatically on the credit card statement. Note that differences resulting from delays in processing of personal credit cards need to be resolved using the procedure in Section 3 below.

When preparing expense reports, convert foreign expenditures to U.S. dollars using a reputable website that shows the conversion to U.S. dollars.

Credit card charges will show actual exchange rates on the monthly bill. Upon receiving the bill for a foreign trip (this actually takes one to three months), add up the foreign charges in U.S. Dollars and compare this to the amount submitted on your expense report. Submit a new expense report, with credit card billing documents attached, showing the total difference as either "due employee" or "due University".

Procedure(s)

N/A

Other Notes

Replaces Employee Travel Policy FN.002
