658 Travel

Approved by President

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Sidney A. McPhee, President

Effective Date: ______________, 2021
Responsible Division: Business and Finance
Responsible Office: Business and Finance
Responsible Officer: Associate Vice President, Business and Finance

I. Purpose

This policy applies to the travel of all employees of Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU or University) in the performance of their official duties. Provisions of this policy may also apply to individuals, other than employees, who are authorized to travel at University expense. Authorization for travel will not be granted, and expenses will not be reimbursed, unless the travel is made, and reimbursement claimed, in accordance with this policy and any approved exceptions hereto. University purchasing cards (P-Cards) may be used for the payment of advance registration fees and advance airline payments when prior approvals have been obtained as outlined in the following sections. University P-Cards may not be used for expenses incurred during actual travel time, except in instances of team/group travel.

This policy shall be consistent with the Comprehensive Travel Regulations of the State of Tennessee. Current reimbursement rates shall be issued in Section XIII of this policy.

All travel must be consistent with the educational, research, and professional needs of MTSU. Employees must conduct all travel with integrity, in compliance with applicable laws, policies, and procedures, and in a manner that excludes considerations of personal advantage. Employees must exercise good judgment and conduct all aspects of travel in a cost-efficient manner.

II. General Provisions

A. No authorization for travel, by any employee, shall be granted, and no reimbursement for travel expenses shall be made, except in accordance with the provisions of this policy. Reimbursement for travel expenses shall be limited to expenses incurred upon travel, authorized in advance, in accordance with Section II.
B. Travel, which may be authorized, and pursuant to which expenses may be reimbursed, shall be limited to the following:

1. Travel which is necessary for the proper execution of official University business, or in justifiable pursuit of the University's educational and research objectives; or

2. Travel to meetings and conferences of a professional nature, which will increase the attending employee's usefulness to the University.

C. Travel shall not include, and no reimbursement for expenses shall be made for, transportation in connection with an employee's official station of employment. The employee's official station is his/her regular area of employment activity (i.e., official headquarters, campus, or designated location of an employee established in the field).

1. The official station of an employee shall be designated by the appropriate approving authority.

2. It is normally expected that the official station is MTSU or that location at which the employee spends greater than fifty percent (50%) of his/her working time.

3. For an employee required to be on call (as determined by his/her job description), either overnight or on weekends, the official station of the employee, while on call, becomes his/her residence, or the location at which the employee receives the call.

4. Reimbursable mileage begins at the location at which the employee receives the call.

D. When traveling on University business, the employee is considered to be on official travel status and eligible for reimbursement of travel expenses at the time of departure from the employee’s official station or residence, whichever is applicable.

1. Expenses for meals will be allowed only when overnight travel is required outside the county of the employee’s official station or residence.

2. En route lodging will be allowed for only one (1) day, each way, on trips of long duration.

3. Expenses for lodging will only be allowed in cases where the approved, and most direct or expeditious, mode of travel will require more than ten (10) hours of continuous travel for trips of long duration.

4. The lodging expense will not be considered en route if it does not add an additional day of lodging expense.
E. The limitations on travel expenses contained herein are maximum amounts above which reimbursement shall not be made. Employees are expected to be as conservative as possible in incurring travel expenses.

F. Reimbursement for travel expenses shall only be allowed for actual expenses incurred, subject to the maximum limitations shown in Section XIII. Travel Rates.

1. Original legible receipts must accompany claims for reimbursement for all expenses exceeding the amount cited in Section XIII. Travel Rates.

2. Receipts are not required for meals, taxi fares, tolls, and ferry fees.

3. Lodging receipts are required and must itemize room charges and taxes.

4. No expenses shall be reimbursed until after travel has been completed.

G. Internet travel sites such as Expedia, Travelocity, or Kayak can be utilized to purchase single travel services, such as an airline ticket. Internet travel sites cannot be used to purchase a package of one (1) or more travel services. Purchases of travel packages that combine services such as lodging, airline, or vehicle rentals are not allowed. These package deals do not usually provide sufficient itemized pricing for each service purchased and therefore do not allow for proper comparison to the U.S. General Services Administration for federal employees within the continental U.S. (CONUS) or conference rates, as required by this policy.

H. Travel reimbursement of University personnel whose expenses are to be paid from special grant or contract funds will be in accordance with this policy except when the grant or contract instrument specifies and requires a different method of reimbursement.

I. Travel reimbursement will be made in accordance with the laws of the U.S. Immigration Service. Reimbursements for non-U.S. citizens will not be made until all immigration papers are reviewed by Accounting Services and a determination made as to whether the individual can lawfully be reimbursed for travel expenses.

III. Authorization of Travel

A. Approving Authorities. Travel Authorization Requests will be prepared by the traveler and approved by the next higher level of authority. For in-state travel, where the expected expenses will not be substantial, or when there is no advance notice of the circumstances necessitating the travel, such approval may be given orally. Authorization for travel by a student, regardless of the destination, shall be approved by the appropriate activity or Department Head.
B. In-State Travel. All employees should obtain written authorization for in-state travel by the employee's appropriate approving authority. However, written authorization may not be necessary when there is no advance notice of the circumstances necessitating the travel, and such travel is approved orally by the appropriate approving authority. Employees, whose employment requires frequent in-state travel, may obtain blanket authorization in writing for such travel.

C. Out-of-State Travel. All employees must obtain prior written authorization for out-of-state travel, which must be approved by the appropriate approving authority and filed with Accounting Services prior to the travel return date. The Travel Authorization Request must show the name of the person traveling, purpose of the trip, destination, date of departure and return, mode of transportation, estimated expenses, and availability of funds. If, in the normal course of official business, the employee must routinely travel into another state and back in the same day, such travel will be considered in-state travel and shall be subject to the in-state travel provisions. This exception applies for trips that do not exceed fifty (50) miles into another state. Employees whose employment requires frequent out-of-state travel may obtain blanket authorization in writing for such travel.

D. Travel Outside the Continental United States. Authorization for travel by an employee to Alaska, Hawaii, and destinations outside of the continental United States shall, in addition to the requirements in Section III.C., be subject to approval by the President or designee. Approval is requested by way of a memorandum to the President that includes the proposed international itinerary and University purposes of the travel for signature by the traveler's supervisor, Dean or AVP, VP, and President. Travel outside the United States, i.e., international travel, also requires the inclusion of the Export Control Compliance Verification. Authorization for travel to Alaska, Hawaii, and outside the United States by the President shall be by notification to the Board Chair or Vice Chair, with the Vice President for Business and Finance signing the travel authorization form.

E. Group Travel. For team or group travel (athletics, band, debate, etc.), a list of those persons expected to travel in the group must be attached to the travel authorization and a signed list of actual participants must be attached to the claim. Refer to Section X. Athletic and Other Group Travel for further guidance.

F. P-Card Travel Purchases. Prior written authorization from the appropriate approving authority must be obtained before purchasing airline tickets or paying advance registration fees by P-Card. The authorization may be in the form of an email or a completed Travel Authorization Request. Purchase receipts and documentation of the approvals should be maintained by the department, in accordance with University P-Card policy, and a copy attached to the individual's travel claim.
IV. Transportation

A. General. All travel must be by the most direct or expeditious route possible, and any employee who travels by an indirect route must bear any extra expense occasioned thereby. When work is performed by an employee in route to or from the official station, reimbursable mileage is computed by deducting the employee's normal commuting mileage from the actual mileage driven in performing the work in route to or from the official station.

For example, if an employee normally commutes ten (10) miles (twenty [20]-miles round trip), and performs work on the way home from the official station, which results in twelve (12) miles driven, the mileage reimbursement will be for two (2) miles only, as that is the amount of mileage in excess of the employee's normal commute. In no instance shall mileage claimed for reimbursement exceed actual miles traveled.

B. Mode of Transportation. Transportation for employees traveling singly should be by common carrier (air, train, or bus) whenever practical. The use of air travel is recommended when time is an important factor or when the trip is so long that other methods of travel would increase the subsistence expense. Automobile transportation may be used to save time when common carrier transportation cannot be satisfactorily scheduled, or to reduce expenses when two (2) or more employees are making the trip. Reimbursement for personal vehicle use may be claimed at the lesser of the standard mileage rate or comparable cost of commercial transportation, including taxi fares and/or limousine charges. The employee is responsible for documenting the comparison of the standard mileage rate cost to airfare, or other common carrier modes, for the dates of travel and submitting with the claim for reimbursement.

C. Common Carrier Travel. When travel is by common carrier, the fare must not exceed the standard coach fare charged the general public, and advantage must be taken of round trip rates when available. The employee is responsible for making appropriate travel arrangements. The employee's copy of the ticket, or an acceptable receipt, must be submitted for reimbursement of common carrier expenses.

When flying, if the airline offers different fare options based on services and benefits, only the lowest fare option will be reimbursed. A list of available flight options on the day the flight is booked should be attached to the travel authorization or travel claim. Personal preference add-on fees including, but not limited to, priority seating and early check-in, are not reimbursable and should not be charged on the University P-Card when in group travel status.

Baggage fees will be allowed when necessary. A receipt is required for reimbursement.
Charges for trip insurance are not reimbursable. The State of Tennessee is self-insured, and does not purchase separate insurance, and therefore will not reimburse for insurance purchases made for trips.

D. Chartered Aircraft. Generally, faculty and staff (including group travel and athletics) whose duties require travel will use commercial ground and air carriers or a University automobile. However, a chartered aircraft may be used if time and/or distance preclude ground travel or if a commercial air service is either unavailable or does not meet the needs of the traveler(s). The following guidelines apply:

1. The President shall assign the following duties to a responsible official:
   a. Reviewing and approving requests for charter air services;
   b. Scheduling charter flights; and
   c. Informing those who request charter flights of the charter company’s policy on canceling scheduled flights.

2. Charter services will be obtained only when it can be shown that the charter does not exceed the sum of all traveling costs by commercial carrier (i.e., transportation, meals, and lodging) or that circumstances necessitate travel when no other means is available.

3. The charter company must provide the University with an original, itemized invoice, showing the beginning and ending dates of the charter, the origin and destination of each flight, and the names of passengers on each flight.

E. Donated Aircraft and Flight Services

When an aircraft and flight services are donated for official university business, employees must ensure that the plane and flight crew meet current FAA regulations, circulars, and guidance documents, as well as maintain blanket liability insurance. Such donated aircraft and flight services by the donor shall not be in exchange for any compensation. For purposes of FAA regulatory compliance, compensation can be anything from monetary compensation to free tickets to games, free parking, or any other item of value.

For additional information regarding the acceptance, and use, of donor aircrafts, please refer to Policy 180 Operation and Use of University Aircraft or contact the University’s Office of Compliance and Enterprise Risk Management.
F. Automobile Travel. When travel by automobile is appropriate, employees should use University-owned automobiles whenever available and feasible. However, University-owned vehicles should be used only on official business. All automobile travel should be in accordance with Policy 687 Motor Pool Services.

1. University Owned Automobiles. When transportation is by University-owned automobile, all necessary repair bills, tolls, parking, gasoline, and storage expenses are allowable. When using motor pool automobiles, employees will be furnished with courtesy cards for purchase of gasoline. Emergency out-of-pocket expenses, such as towing or emergency repairs, will be reimbursed, but must be accompanied by proper receipt identifying the automobile and itemizing the services. Such expenditures must be of an emergency nature when immediate service is required. Major repairs should be approved by University officials prior to work being performed. Such expenditures are allowed, but should be filed for reimbursement separately. Parking, tolls, and ferry fees should be claimed for reimbursement on the standard Travel Expenses Claim when using a University-owned automobile.

2. Personally Owned Automobiles. Use of a personally owned automobile must be authorized. The authorized mileage allowance rate, approved by the Department of Finance and Administration, includes all operating expenses such as gas, oil, and repairs, precluding any separate claim for such items. Employees may use reputable websites to determine point-to-point and/or vicinity mileage. Printed support of the mileage from the website must be included with the travel claim.

Commuter Mileage. Procedures for calculating mileage are based on the fact that the University is prohibited from reimbursing employees for normal commuting mileage.

a. If an employee begins or ends a trip at his/her official station, reimbursable mileage will be the mileage from the official station to the destination.

b. If work is performed by an employee in route to or from his/her official station, reimbursable mileage is computed by deducting the employee’s normal commuting mileage from the actual mileage driven.

c. If an employee begins or ends his/her trip at his/her residence, without stopping at his/her official station, reimbursable mileage will be the lesser of the mileage from the employee’s residence to his/her destination or his/her official station to the destination. On weekends and holidays, the employee may typically be reimbursed for actual mileage from his/her residence to the destination.

d. If an employee travels between destinations, without returning to his/her official station or his/her residence, reimbursable mileage is the actual mileage between those destinations.
3. The travel claim must indicate the employee's itinerary and must show the official business mileage with attached support. Business mileage, as indicated by the official state map, and that published by reputable websites will be regarded as official. Vicinity mileage must be reported on a separate line and not included with point-to-point mileage. Only mileage on official business may be claimed.

4. Necessary charges for hotel and airport parking will be allowed.

G. Limousine and Taxi Service. When travel is by common carrier, reasonable limousine and taxi fares will be allowed for necessary transportation. Bus or limousine service to and from airports will be used when available and practical. After arrival at destination, necessary taxi fares for traveling between hotel/lodging and meeting/conference will be allowed. No receipt is required for reimbursement of reasonable taxi fares.

H. Car Rentals at Destination. Charges for automobile rental shall be allowed whenever it is more economical than alternative methods of transportation, or it is the only practical means of transportation. Charges for insurance for rented automobiles are not reimbursable. The State of Tennessee is self-insured and does not purchase separate insurance, and therefore will not reimburse for insurance purchases made for rental vehicles. Whenever possible, employees should refuel before returning vehicles.

I. Tolls and Ferry Fees. Reasonable tolls and ferry fees will be allowed when necessary. No receipt is required for reimbursement of tolls and ferry fees.

J. Daily Parking Fees. Those employees required to utilize commercial parking facilities in the daily performance of duties, or while on travel status, will be allowed reimbursement for actual costs. A receipt is required if the fee exceeds the maximum indicated per day, as shown in Section XIII. Travel Rates.

K. Unnecessary meals and lodging expenses, which are occasioned by the use of an automobile for reasons of the employee’s personal convenience, or which are due to travel by an indirect route, will not be allowed.

L. If travel is by common carrier, the employee will be reimbursed for expenses in traveling to and from the common carrier, including related parking expenses.

Receipts must be furnished on airport and hotel parking exceeding maximum parking allowance shown in Section XIII. Travel Rates.

V. Lodging

A. In-State Lodging. Lodging expenses incurred within the state, while on authorized travel, will be reimbursable to the maximum shown in Section XIII. Travel Rates, provided the lodging receipt clearly documents the room rate and applicable room taxes. Lodging
expenses for in-state travel incurred within fifty (50) miles of employee’s official station will only be allowed if employee is a conference coordinator and must remain on-site. Conference brochure/documentation must be provided showing employee is a conference coordinator.

For example: Nashville, being within the University’s fifty (50)-mile radius, would not be considered reimbursable, except for conference participation as a coordinator. If Nashville lodging reimbursement is requested by an employee for any other reason than previously stated, it would be considered a travel policy exception requiring prior written approval from the President.

B. Out-of-State Lodging. Lodging expenses incurred out of the state, while on authorized travel, will be reimbursable to the maximum shown in Section XIII. Travel Rates, provided the lodging receipt clearly documents the room rate and applicable room taxes. The maximum reimbursement rates for out-of-state travel are the same as those maintained by CONUS.

The CONUS list contains a standard reimbursement rate for lodging and meals and incidentals, and several pages of exceptions. Most destinations for out-of-state travel fall within the list of exceptions.

En route lodging will be allowed for only one day each way on trips of long duration. En route lodging will only be allowed in cases when the approved and most expeditious mode of travel will require more than ten (10) hours of continuous travel. Refer to Section I.D.4. for explanation of en route lodging expenses.

Lodging receipts obtained from reservations obtained through internet providers, where the receipt is not directly from the hotel, should clearly state the room rate and applicable taxes per night and the lodging dates. Receipts that do not provide room rate breakdowns are not adequate.

C. Out-of-Country Lodging. Lodging expenses incurred while out of the country will be reimbursed at actual expenses with receipts.

D. Additional Lodging Expenses. Sales taxes on lodging costs will be reimbursable.

Higher rates for lodging at the location of a convention or conference will be allowed, without special approval, up to the amount indicated in the convention or conference brochure or conference website. The convention or conference brochure, which indicates the lodging rates, must be included with the travel claim. Otherwise, reimbursement will be limited to the applicable lodging rate, as provided in these regulations.
Additional lodging expenses for the President will be approved on the same basis as approval is granted for other employees. Any exceptions must be approved by the Board.

E. Shared Lodging. When a room is shared with other than a University employee on authorized travel, the total cost of the room will be allowed, subject to the maximums set forth in Section XIII. Travel Rates. The receipt for the entire amount should be submitted with the expense account.

When employees share a hotel room, both employees should attach an explanation to his/her travel claim, detailing dates and other employees with whom the room was shared. The lodging cost may be claimed by the employee who incurred the cost, or one-half (1/2) the double occupancy charges may be allowable for each employee.

VI. Meals Included with Registration Fees and Official Banquets

A. In-State and Out-of-State Meals. Meals, while on authorized travel, will be reimbursed, subject to the meal allowance provided in Section XIII. Travel Rates. The maximum per diem rates include a fixed allowance for meals and for incidental expenses (M&I). The M&I rate, or fraction thereof, is payable to the traveler without itemization of expenses or receipts. Incidental costs are intended to include miscellaneous costs associated with travel, such as tips for baggage handling, phone calls home, etc.

The M&I rates for both in-state and out-of-state travel are the same as those for federal employees, and are available on the General Services Administration web site. As with lodging, there is a standard rate for the CONUS, and a list of exceptions.

Reimbursement for meals and incidentals, for the day of departure, shall be three-fourths (3/4) of the appropriate M&I CONUS rate prescribed for the lodging location. Reimbursement for M&I for the day of return shall be three-fourths (3/4) of the M&I rate applicable to the preceding calendar day.

To determine reimbursement for a single meal, when appropriate, refer to General Services Administration’s website. The University will not reimburse meals when overnight travel is not involved, unless the same-day travel exceeds twelve (12) hours. When travel exceeds this threshold, travelers may receive reimbursement for actual receipts up to three-fourths (3/4) of the applicable M&I per diem.

When registration fees for approved conferences, conventions, seminars, and/or meetings include meals, no separate claim or reimbursement will be allowed for meals included with paid registration fees.
B. Out-of-Country Meals. Out-of-country meals are reimbursed at actual expense with receipts. If no receipts are provided, the maximum rate will be the maximum CONUS rate for out-of-state travel.

C. Official Banquets. When the expense for an official banquet of a meeting or conference is a separate fee from the registration fee, and is in excess of the meal allowance, the excess will be allowed provided a receipt or proper explanation of the charge is submitted.

D. Business Meals. See Policy 661 Meals and Refreshments for both On and Off Campus for criteria on reimbursement for business meals.

VII. Miscellaneous Expenses

A. Personal Expenses. Expenses for entertainment (employee or others), laundry, tips, and gratuities in excess of per diem rate, etc., are personal expenses and will not be allowed for reimbursement purposes.

B. Telephone, Internet, and Fax Expenses. Charges for long distance telephone calls, internet, and/or fax on official business will be allowed. Charges for necessary local calls on official business will be allowed.

C. Registration Fees. Registration fees for approved conferences, conventions, seminars, meetings, etc., will be allowed, including cost of official banquets and/or luncheons, if authorized in advance by the appropriate approving authority, and provided receipts are submitted with the Travel Expenses Claim.

Registration fees may be prepaid by the University by sending the completed registration form to the accounts payable office with the Travel Authorization Request. Receipts are not required for registration fees paid directly by the University. No separate claim will be allowed for meals included in registration fees.

Also, the University P-Card may be used by faculty, staff, and on behalf of students for the payment of advance registration fees. Prior written authorization from the appropriate approving authority must be obtained for the registration purchase either through an email or a completed Travel Authorization Request. The types of registrations allowed on the University P-Card are conferences, workshops, and booth/exhibitor fees.

The following are not allowed on the P-Card as part of the registration payment: entertainment, tours, or charges for spouses. Registration receipts and documentation of approvals should be maintained by the department, in accordance with University P-Card policy, and a copy of the receipt attached to the individual’s travel claim.
D. Handling Fees. Fees for the handling of equipment or promotional materials will be allowed, up to the maximum indicated in Section XIII. Travel Rates.

E. Card Fees. Personal charge card fees and interest charges will not be reimbursed by the University.

VIII. Claims

A. Claim Form. The standard Travel Expense Claim shall be used for reimbursement of expenses. The form must show movement and detail of expenses on a daily basis, be signed by the employee/traveler, and be approved by the next approving authority prior to reimbursement.

The University reimburses travel claim expenses under an IRS defined accountable plan, which requires travelers to substantiate all expenses with original receipts, within a reasonable period of time. A claim for travel expenses should be submitted no later than thirty (30) days following the completion of any travel. Employees with blanket travel authorization should submit a Travel Expense Claim at least once for every thirty (30)-day period. A reimbursement request submitted beyond sixty (60) days from the last day of a trip will be made to the employee, on a taxable basis, and added to the employee’s Form W-2 compensation.

Signatures on the Travel Expense Claim must be original or electronic, in accordance with Policy 940 Use of Electronic Signatures. The approving official is responsible for the reasonableness of the claim. Original receipts for appropriate expenses must be submitted with the claim for reimbursement. Expenses for books, supplies, postage, and other items, that do not constitute actual traveling expenses, should not be included in the claim form.

Supporting documents for international travel should be translated in a manner that easily identifies the vendor/purchase and amount being claimed.

The Travel Expense Claim should include total expenses associated with the trip, with MTSU paid expenses and University P-Card charges being deducted to calculate balance due claimant.

B. Separate Claim for Each Claimant. A separate claim for reimbursement of expenses must be filed by each claimant. The University makes all payments for travel expenses on a reimbursement basis. No employee is authorized to have expenses billed to the University.

C. Foreign Nationals. Travel claims for non-U.S. citizens should include a copy of the VISA, passport, IAP-66 or I-20 papers, and a Foreign National Information Form. MTSU faculty
and staff should not agree to reimburse travel for non-U.S. citizens until all of the immigration paperwork has been completed and reviewed by Accounting Services.

D. Team Travel/Student Abroad Travel:

1. In all cases, team transportation will be arranged through established University procedures, and travel itineraries are to be arranged in advance.

2. A team/group roster of all individuals participating on the trip must be included with the Travel Authorization Request. A team/group Travel Roster and Certification must be signed by all participating individuals and be included with the travel claim. For study abroad travel, a Travel Authorization Request must be filed for the faculty member, including the names of the students traveling abroad, even if the students are paying their own expenses.

3. Original receipts are required for all travel expenses and must be legible. Prepaid gas receipts are unacceptable; gas receipts must show actual amount paid and gallons pumped.

4. Individual meals associated with team travel will follow this policy.

5. Students must sign the team/group Travel Roster and Certification, which certifies participation on the trip, date, and the amount of the cash received, if any. This certification must accompany the travel claim.

6. Lodging expenses shall not exceed the rates established by this policy.

E. The employee is eligible for reimbursement of travel expenses, if the trip was entirely business related. If the trip was primarily for business and, while at the business destination, the employee extended his/her stay, made a personal side trip, or had other personal activities, the employee can obtain reimbursement for only business related travel expenses. These expenses include the travel costs of getting to and from the business destination, but do not include additional lodging, parking, and per diem for the days not required for the business travel. Additional days are not considered business related, unless they are necessary to provide rest or sleep required for the employee to properly perform his/her duties.

IX. Travel Advances

A. General. Normally, travel expenses should be paid when incurred by an employee, with reimbursement made to the employee for actual expenses upon proper submission of a Travel Expense Claim. Advances to employees for anticipated travel expenses may be made under the circumstances hereinafter described as permanent travel advances and
temporary travel advances. All travel advances must be approved by the approving authority on the Travel Authorization Request.

B. Permanent Travel Advances. When an employee has blanket travel authorization, and is expected to travel the major portion of each month, the employee may be placed on permanent travel status. Upon determination of the employee's estimated monthly expenses, if such expenses exceed one hundred dollars (\$100.00), the employee may be provided with a single advance, in an amount sufficient to cover such expenses for one (1) month, provided such amount may not exceed the semimonthly salary of the employee. Subsequent to the initial advance, the employee shall submit appropriate claims, and be reimbursed as heretofore provided, with any unused portion of the advance to be returned upon termination of the employee's permanent travel status.

C. Temporary Travel Advances. When temporary travel is authorized for an employee, the employee may receive an advance in the following circumstances:

1. When an employee is traveling with a group of students, and the employee is responsible for disbursement of all funds for the trip on behalf of the group.

2. When a trip involves international travel.

All temporary travel advances must be finalized and closed out with Accounting Services no later than thirty (30) calendar days from the travel return date or June 15, whichever is earlier. Unreconciled advances will be charged to the responsible department’s budget, and, as required by federal regulations, the amount will be reported to the IRS as taxable compensation to the employee.

Registration fees may be prepaid by the University by sending the completed registration form to Accounts Payable with the Travel Authorization Request. Airline tickets may be paid directly by the University when reservations are made through the contracted travel agencies. An amount equal to eighty percent (80%) of the estimated out of pocket expenditures will be allowed as an advance; however, no advance less than one hundred dollars ($100.00) will be made.

Students traveling under individual authorizations, or an employee who is responsible for disbursing all funds for student travel, may be advanced one hundred percent (100%) of the amount of the authorization. Students receiving cash must sign a certification statement indicating the date and the amount of cash received. This certification statement must accompany the travel claim.

D. Payroll Deduction Authorization. Each employee receiving a permanent or temporary travel advance agrees to allow the University to recover the advance from any salary owed the employee in the event of termination of employment or failure to submit a Travel Expense Claim. This authorization is included as part of the Travel Authorization Request.
Request. The deduction from payroll should be used as a last resort only in the event all other efforts to collect the advance have failed.

E. Expense Claim. Upon return, the employee should submit a Travel Expense Claim detailing his/her actual expenditures. This claim should show the total expenses incurred and show movement and detail of expenses on a daily basis. The advanced amount should be subtracted from this total.

No advance should exceed actual expenses. However, should this happen, the excess must be returned immediately by the employee to the Office of Business and Finance, for deposit as a credit against the original advance, with proper distribution being made of the actual expenses incurred. The claim form should be forwarded to the Office of Business and Finance along with a duplicate copy of the cash receipt.

F. Non-business Expenses. Employees are eligible for reimbursement of travel expenses, if the trip was entirely business related. If the trip was primarily for business and, while at the business destination, the employee extended the stay, made a personal side trip, or had other personal activities, the employee can obtain reimbursement for only business travel expenses. These expenses include the travel costs of getting to and from the business destination, but do not include additional lodging, parking, and per diem for the days not required for the business travel. Additional days are not considered business related, unless they are necessary to provide rest or sleep required for the employee to properly perform his/her duties.

X. Athletic Travel and all Other Group Travel

The University recognizes the unique characteristics associated with travel by athletic personnel, teams, and other groups. For purposes of this section, other group travel is defined as a group, traveling as a single unit, that does not consist entirely of University personnel. Generally, other groups are student groups participating in programs or activities of the University; however, on occasion, may include, or consist of, individuals that are not University students. This section addresses practical considerations for, and is applicable only to, travel related specifically to the performance of intercollegiate athletic recruiting, athletic team travel, and other group travel. MTSU shall comply with all pertinent regulations of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and the athletic conference of which the University is a member.

A. Athletic Recruiting

1. Travel Advances. A permanent travel advance may be made to staff members engaged in athletic recruitment travel. An advance request must be submitted in writing by the staff member for approval by the athletic director and President or designee. The total advance may not exceed one-half (1/2) of the staff member's monthly salary. The advance may be retained permanently by the staff member,
until the termination of employment or assignment to duties that do not involve recruiting travel, at which time the University shall be reimbursed for the advance. Any disallowed expenses will be absorbed by the staff member and will not change the amount of the outstanding advance.

2. Reimbursement Rates. If a staff member has a courtesy vehicle, or monthly automobile allowance, due to his/her association with the University, the maximum rate allowed will be one-half (1/2) of the rates under Section IV.E.2. of this policy. For staff members who do not have a courtesy vehicle, standard reimbursement rates apply as detailed in Section IV.E.2. of this policy.

3. Approval for Travel. The following are subject to prior approval by the President:
   
a. Blanket travel authorization for scouting or recruiting; and

b. The travel of visitors and guests at University expense for any occasion related to recruiting.

4. Guest Meals. The actual cost of guest meals may be claimed when incurred by a staff member for recruiting purposes. Such claims must be submitted in appropriate detail. Receipts are required.

5. Student Recruits
   
a. Staff members are responsible for compliance with pertinent NCAA and conference rules regarding student recruits.

b. Lodging in University facilities should be arranged, if space is available. If University space is not available, arrangements may be made for lodging in local motels/hotels, and, with the approval of the Athletic Director, may be charged to the Athletic Department.

c. If available, the use of University dining services should be arranged, and costs may be charged to the Athletic Department. If necessary, staff members will be reimbursed at cost for off-campus meals, with reasonable and customary gratuities allowed. Receipts must accompany claims.

d. Transportation may be arranged through a local travel service and charged to the Athletic Department, with the approval of the Athletic Director.

   Also, with the Athletic Director’s approval, a University P-Card may be used to purchase air fare for a student recruit, at the cheapest rate that allows a refund back to the card in the event the recruit cancels the visit.
Automobile mileage may be reimbursed to a student recruit at the maximum rate allowed under this policy for the use of a personal vehicle.

e. Entertainment expenses may be reimbursed at cost within NCAA and conference rules.

B. Travel

1. The President or designee must approve University officials, and guests of the University, who accompany the team or group on trips, in advance.

2. In all cases, transportation will be arranged through established University procedures, and travel itineraries are to be arranged in advance. Documentation must be maintained in the Athletic Department, or other appropriate University department or office, indicating that various cost alternatives have been explored before making all arrangements and reservations. However, if such arrangements are made by the University's Procurement Logistic Services Office, that office should maintain the appropriate documentation.

3. Travel Authorization. A roster of all individuals on a particular trip must be included with the Travel Authorization Request. For study abroad travel, a Travel Authorization Request must be submitted by the faculty member, which includes a roster of all individuals traveling abroad, even if the participants are paying their own expenses.

4. Travel Claim. A team/group roster, signed by all of the participating individuals, must be included with the travel claim for proper accounting and auditing purposes. Students must sign the team/group Travel Roster and Certification, which certifies participation on the trip, date, and the amount of the cash received, if any.

5. A travel advance for athletic team travel, or other group travel, in the amount of one hundred percent (100%) of the estimated trip expenses may be allowed. One (1) person from the Athletic Department, or other appropriate University department or office, who is familiar with the travel regulations will be responsible for the advance and all bills connected with team or group travel.

6. Receipts are required for all team or group travel expenses, consistent with this policy.

7. Actual lodging expenses (unless reduced by department) will be reimbursed. Documentation must be maintained in the Athletic Department, or other appropriate department or office, indicating that various cost alternatives have been explored before making all arrangements and reservations. However, if such
arrangements are made by the University’s Procurement Logistic Services office, that office should maintain the appropriate documentation.

8. Miscellaneous expenses, such as movies while on team trips, must be supported by receipts. Telephone calls by staff members for business purposes may be claimed consistent with this policy.

9. Individual meals associated with team or group travel will be reimbursed, consistent with this policy. All team or group meals, (including pre-game and after-game meals for athletic teams) will be reimbursed at actual cost. Gratuities, not to exceed reasonable and customary rates, are allowed. Appropriate documentation and receipts are required.

10. All travel claims and requisitions for team or group travel must be approved, in writing, by the appropriate approving authority.

11. P-Cards may be used for travel expenses incurred during actual travel time, in instances of team/group travel, only as approved by the University P-Card administrator.

12. Travel by student groups, or other groups of participants in programs or activities of the University, may be reimbursed under the same provisions as included in Section B. above. Sample waivers/releases are provided by the Office of the University Counsel. A waiver/release is not appropriate for travel that is required as part of an academic program.

13. Participants in group travel should complete an Agreement Regarding Participation in Event. However, such forms are not needed for travel that is required as part of an academic program.

XI. Visitor Travel

General. All terms and conditions of University travel regulations apply to official University visitors, except where specified below. Reimbursement rates apply to visitors. Lodging rates will be based on the in-state or out-of-state location where the lodging occurs. Meals will be presumed to be in-state if travel is to Murfreesboro, unless a satisfactory explanation is provided.

If the airline ticket will be billed directly to the University, the department’s travel coordinator will order the airline ticket from the University’s Authorized Travel Agencies and reserve the hotel room. The lodging cost (room and taxes) of the hotel will be billed directly to the University. Meals and other incidentals must be paid directly by the visitor.
Notification of Travel Regulations. Authorized visitors should be provided a copy of the current University travel regulations prior to the trip.

Claims for Expenses. Claims for reimbursement should be submitted on the standard Travel Expense Claim. A separate claim for expenses must be filed by each claimant and original receipts must be attached.

The travel claim should include the airline ticket and the lodging as expenses, even if paid by the University, but should be deducted from the total expenses, if paid directly by the University.

Visitors may pay their own airline tickets or lodging expenses and claim reimbursement.

XII. Exceptions

General. The President has the authority to grant exceptions to any part or all of the provisions of this policy, in individual instances when deemed appropriate and necessary; however, any exception directly affecting the President must be approved by the Board.

Two (2) areas of standing exceptions to the policy are provided below.

A. Exception No. 1

1. Provisions for travel contained in this Exception shall be applicable to the President, University employees traveling in the company of the President, or University employees representing the President.

2. All provisions of Sections I. through X. of this policy shall be applicable, unless superseded by the Dept. of Finance and Administration Special Travel Regulation Three.

B. Exception No. 2

1. Provisions for travel contained in this Exception shall be applicable to the Board of Trustees.

2. Members of the Board shall be reimbursed for travel in the performance of their official duties in accordance with applicable provisions of this policy unless superseded by the Dept. of Finance and Administration Special Travel Regulation Four.

XIII. MTSU Travel Rates
Employees are to utilize the CONUS rates provided by the federal government. Travelers may claim the applicable per diem rate or submit actual receipts up to the per diem rate for their specific lodging locations. For travel outside of the continental United States, the University will reimburse employees for actual receipts or per diem up to the maximum CONUS rate. The University will reimburse meals and incidentals up to three-fourths (3/4) of the appropriate M&I CONUS rate for the lodging location for day of departure and/or day of return.

The University uses the rates approved in the Dept. of Finance and Administration Policy 8-Comprehensive Travel Regulations for the standard mileage reimbursement, the maximum parking fee without a receipt, and for fees for handling equipment and promotional materials.

Special rates under standing exceptions are as follows:

A. Exception No. 1

Rate schedule corresponds with the Dept. of Finance and Administration Special Travel Regulation Three and the Department Head and Board Member – Travel Reimbursement Rate Schedule.

B. Exception No. 2

Rate schedule corresponds with Dept. of Finance and Administration Special Travel Regulation Four and the Department Head and Board Member – Travel Reimbursement Rate Schedule.

Forms:
Agreement Regarding Participation in Event
Travel Authorization Request
Travel Expenses Claim
Travel Roster and Certification

Revisions: June 5, 2017 (original); January 4, 2019; __________, 2021.

Last Reviewed: ________________ 2021.

References: Department of Finance and Administration Policy 8-Comprehensive Travel Regulations; Policies 180 Operation and Use of University Aircraft; 661 Meals and Refreshments for both On and Off Campus; 687 Motor Pool Services; 940 Use of Electronic Signatures.