



**TRAVEL AND BUSINESS-EXPENSE POLICY**

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## **I. Introduction**

This policy is designed to provide guidance about the required procedures and standards applied in approving travel and business expenses for reimbursement by Stetson University College of Law. Because a written policy cannot cover every possible circumstance, we urge you to consult your supervisor in advance if you are uncertain about whether an item will be reimbursable. In certain cases, exceptions to this policy may be specifically stated in an employee's employment agreement or hire letter. In these instances, the hire letter or employment contract will supersede this policy to the extent the two may conflict.

The College of Law will reimburse employees and others as described below for reasonable and necessary travel and business expenses, provided advance approval is obtained in accordance with this procedure. Individuals will be reimbursed only for expenses deemed to be in the best interest of the College of Law.

## **II. Approval Procedures for Travel**

### **A. Prior Approval**

To be eligible for reimbursement, all travel must be requested and approved in advance on an official College of Law Travel Request Form. Because of rising travel costs, and because the best rates are generally available one month or more in advance, when possible, reservations should be made at least thirty days before a trip. *Accordingly, the College of Law Travel Request Form should be filed at least five weeks before any trip.* Travel requests submitted less than five weeks in advance will be considered for approval based on the necessity of the trip, the reason for the late application, and the College of Law's budgetary constraints. A Travel and Expense Report should be filed as soon as possible after the travel is completed. *Unless a special waiver is granted by the Dean, no Travel and Expense Report will be honored if filed more than thirty days after the individual returns from the trip.* It is the responsibility of the individual filing the Travel and Expense Report to ensure the accuracy of the report, the appropriateness of the expenses, and compliance with all aspects of this policy.

### **B. Approval Authorities**

Employees should file the completed travel forms with the following person as appropriate:

1. Faculty travel, student travel for advocacy competitions and law review conferences and meetings, and faculty candidate travel must be approved by the Associate Dean of Academics or the Associate Dean's designee. Typically, faculty advisors will submit approval for students involved in this type of approved travel.

2. Non-faculty employee travel and applicant travel during staff recruitment must be approved by the supervisor or department head and forwarded to the Associate Dean of Academics, or the Associate Dean's designee, for final approval.
3. Student travel for events other than advocacy competitions and law review conferences and meetings must be approved by the Assistant Dean of Student Life and forwarded to the Associate Dean of Academics for final approval.

### **III. Guidelines for Reimbursable Travel Expenses**

#### **A. Student Travel**

Expenses incurred by students must relate directly to the educational purpose of the travel. If approved in advance, this travel is reimbursable in accordance with these guidelines.

#### **B. Employee Travel**

To qualify for approval, travel must bear a reasonable relationship to the employee's job responsibilities at the College. Examples of appropriate travel for employees include, but are not limited to:

1. Participating in bar association activities, professional conferences, seminars, or other educational programs relevant to the employee's assignment.
2. Official representation of the College at meetings or events. The College will not pay for travel expenses incurred in performing any legal representation, whether compensated or uncompensated, for any other institution, organization, firm, agency, or individual.

#### **C. Eligibility of Employees on Leave**

Normally, employees are not eligible for expense reimbursement while on unpaid leave of absence from the College, unless the employee is requested to represent the College at a professional meeting, event, or other activity. A sabbatical is considered a paid leave; therefore, faculty on sabbatical typically will be eligible to receive reimbursement for pre-approved, College-related travel expenses.

#### **D. Pay for Travel Time**

In accordance with U.S. Department of Labor guidelines for the payment of travel time by non-exempt employees, employees should record compensable travel time on their biweekly time sheet. The paragraphs below describe common instances when travel time will and will not be compensated.

1. **Normal Commuting and Travel During Work Day:** Before the scheduled workday commenced, and when an employee commutes from home to work and, at the end of the day, from work to home, the time spent in ordinary transit normally is not compensable time. But as a general rule, once the regularly scheduled workday begins, time spent by an employee in travel as part of his or her activities on behalf of the College of Law, travel, including travel between the two campuses, is compensable. For employees who are dual statused at both the Gulfport and Tampa campuses, normal commute time to either campus is not compensable. Faculty who are assigned to teach at the Tampa Law Center will be provided a stipend to cover travel at the end of the semester.
2. **Special One-Day Assignments:** In limited circumstances, the time spent traveling from home to work, or vice-versa, may be compensable. For example, time spent traveling on a special one-day assignment to another city, performed at the College's request, is generally compensable time, except for that time that would constitute the employee's usual travel to and from his or her work location. Example: Employee's ordinary commute time to and from his or her usual worksite is 30 minutes at the start and end of each day, for which the employee is not compensated. On one occasion, Employee travels to Clearwater, Florida on business for an 8:00 a.m. meeting and returns home that evening at 7:00 p.m. The time between 8:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. is compensable, except for one hour that constitutes employee's usual non-compensable travel time. Using this example, an employee statused only to the Tampa campus but who is required to be at the Gulfport campus for an 8:00 a.m. meeting will be paid the difference between the employee's normal commute time and the additional travel time spent driving to the Gulfport campus before the start of the employee's normal work day.
3. **Overnight Travel to Other Locations:** For overnight trips out of town (e.g., attending a conference), including hours on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays, all time spent is compensable work time when it corresponds with the employee's regular working hours. Hours spent in travel outside of regular working hours as a passenger in a car, train, or airplane, etc., are not counted as compensable time.
4. **Questions:** Please direct questions about applying travel pay to non-exempt employees to Human Resources.

#### **E. Transportation**

Reimbursement of travel expenses will be based on the following general considerations:

1. The mode of travel should be the most economical means reasonably possible. Reimbursement normally will be made at this rate only.

However, if time and convenience of the traveler and time away from the College of Law cause a traveler to select a mode of travel other than the most economical, those factors will be considered in the computation of reimbursement.

2. Travel, including the mode of travel, should be approved before purchases are made.
3. Reimbursement for air, rail, rental vehicles, and taxicabs must be evidenced by original receipts issued by the carrier.
4. Travelers who choose to use their own automobiles on a trip for which air travel is more appropriate will be reimbursed for an amount not to exceed the least expensive, logical airfare to the destination.

### **1. Automobile**

- For approved business travel, use of the traveler's automobile will be reimbursed at the lower of .445 cents per mile for ordinary business travel or the standard mileage rate established by the IRS and in effect at the time the travel occurred. For approved travel related to relocation, use of the traveler's automobile will be reimbursed at the lower of .24 cents per mile or the standard relocation mileage rate established by the IRS and in effect at the time the travel occurred.
- In addition, travelers will be reimbursed for reasonable parking costs, bridge tolls, and turnpike tolls, if properly substantiated by receipts.
- The College will not reimburse employees for parking tickets, fines for moving violations, or vehicle towing charges. The College will not provide reimbursement for vehicle repair or servicing costs, regardless of cause.
- Expenses associated with normal commuting between an employee's home and primary place of business are not reimbursable. An employee's hire letter, employment agreement, or job description may state that he or she is assigned a status to perform regular College business on both the Gulfport and Tampa campuses. In such cases, both campuses will be considered as a primary campus, and mileage normally will not be reimbursed for travel between the two campuses or between the campuses and the employee's residence.
- If an employee travels to a location other than his or her primary place of employment and back, the College will reimburse the employee for those miles.
- If an employee drives to a location other than his or her primary place of employment for a meeting, conference, etc. and then drives to his or her primary campus, the College will reimburse that person for the difference between the

total miles driven before arriving at the primary campus, less his or her normal commuting mileage.

- It is the responsibility of the vehicle owner to provide adequate primary liability insurance for bodily injury and property damage. The College does not provide this insurance coverage on non-College owned vehicles.
- If an employee is reimbursed for mileage, he or she will not be reimbursed for the cost of fuel.

## **2. Using College Vehicles**

Travel in a College-owned vehicle may be arranged in advance, subject to availability, but is not mandatory. Employees must be on the approved driver list maintained by Human Resources before they are permitted to check out and drive a College vehicle. To be placed on the approved driver list, the employee must submit to a check of his or her driving record; the College must then submit that information to its insurance carrier, which must issue an approval before the individual drives a College-owned vehicle.

Reservations for a school vehicle should be made through the Public Safety Department. Reservations are typically made on a first-come, first-served basis, but priority may be based on institutional needs and special circumstances. Consequently, in some instances, a reservation may be changed or cancelled.

When an employee checks out a College-owned vehicle, Public Safety will also issue College of Law gasoline credit cards. Attach receipts or stubs for charges to these cards to the mileage report, which should be submitted to Public Safety at the end of the trip. Record the vehicle license number on each receipt or stub. Expenses charged to the College credit card should be included on the travel expense voucher, but are not reimbursable to the traveler. College credit cards may not be used for any personal expenses.

## **3. Vehicle Rental**

Renting a vehicle is permitted under limited circumstances. Rental vehicles should be used only if less expensive than the cost taking taxis, or if taxis are not available.

If you request a rental car, please provide a short written justification when you submit your travel request for approval. Also, before arranging for a rental, check with the Business Office for any negotiated corporate or business discounts available to the College of Law. When an arrangement is available but not used, reimbursement may be limited to the lower of the discounted rate or the actual cost, unless an adequate reason for not using the corporate program is given.

Rental arrangements are also subject to the following restrictions and considerations:

- A traveler is expected to rent a mid-size or smaller vehicle unless a larger car is necessitated by the number of bags and/or travelers in the College group.
- Gasoline charges on a rental car will be reimbursed with submission of an original receipt and the rental agreement.
- Reimbursement for rental cars will be made promptly upon submission of a Travel Expense Report for the trip, documented by an original rental agreement. Credit card receipts are not sufficient for reimbursement.
- Rental Car Insurance: Eligible College employees traveling domestically are covered under the University's automobile policy (for collision damage/loss and liability insurance) and should check "decline" when renting a vehicle. To be eligible, the employee must be on the College approved driver list. (See Section E(2) above.) Employees traveling internationally must obtain "Collision Damage/Loss" and "Liability" insurance by checking off the "accept" indicator for insurance with the car rental agency.

#### 4. Airlines

Traveling by air is limited to coach class unless approved in advance by the Dean for good cause. Good cause typically will be limited to a documented significant health or medical reason that reasonably necessitates travel at a higher class. However, good cause also would include a situation in which the College requires the employee to make an unscheduled trip on an emergency basis and no coach tickets are available.

Only the original airline ticket or electronic ticket receipt can serve as a receipt for air travel; the itinerary alone is not sufficient.

Airline reimbursement is also subject to the following restrictions and considerations:

- **Checked baggage:** Unless a waiver is granted in advance by the Dean or Associate Dean of Academics, for travel of three or fewer days in duration, the College of Law will pay the cost of one checked, but not overweight, bag — if a checked bag cost is assessed by the airline. For travel between four and seven days, the College of Law will pay the cost of two checked, but not overweight, bags — if assessed by the airline. With approval from the Dean or Associate Dean of Academics, the College of Law will pay for checked baggage that contains equipment or other materials related to the purpose of the travel. However, the traveler should assess whether these materials can be sent via mail or overnight delivery at a more economical rate.
- **Other airline fees:** Airlines have been adding a variety of new fees. Generally, the College of Law will reimburse a traveler for food or other

items purchased during the flight if and to the extent those expenses would be reimbursed under other circumstances. The College will not reimburse a traveler for alcohol consumed on a flight.

- **Lowest possible fare/travel time:** Reservations should be made using the lowest possible fare, regardless of airline. Travelers are cautioned that airfares may vary very significantly during the course of a single day, with the highest fares charged during peak travel hours. Travelers are urged to conserve College of Law funds by traveling during off-peak hours whenever reasonably possible. Some discount airlines, including Southwest, do not sell tickets through the major travel reservation websites such as Orbitz, Expedia, and Travelocity. Travelers are therefore urged to check Southwest or other available airline websites before purchasing plane tickets. Travelers may use travel websites such as Orbitz, Expedia, or Travelocity to find the lowest airfare. But unless good cause exists to purchase from such a site, travelers must purchase their tickets directly on the airline website to avoid unnecessary service charges. Alternatively, for faculty, Faculty Support Services will make reservations upon request. Faculty may travel at a higher class without approval, so long as they request reimbursement only at the coach rate.
- **Airport parking:** When parking at airports, travelers should use the least expensive parking appropriate and available. For example, an employee traveling without luggage should use economy parking; those traveling with luggage may use long-term parking, but are encouraged to park in economy parking. Short-term parking should be used when picking up a traveler, or when a traveler has a physical condition that necessitates it.

## 5. Rail

Rail travel should be by coach class, unless overnight travel is involved. Only the original rail ticket serves as receipt. Travel using the autotrain must be approved in advance by the Dean.

## 6. Taxicabs/Limousine

Taxi or limousine travel, when appropriate, will be reimbursed if properly substantiated by the original receipt. Airport limousines, hotel shuttles, or buses should be used whenever reasonably possible, if less expensive than taxis.

## F. Lodging

Travelers are expected to use economical accommodations. In addition, the following specific guidelines apply:

- Reimbursement for lodging may not exceed the normal rate for a standard room.
- If an individual is attending a convention or conference, using the convention or conference hotel is appropriate, but not required. However, if the individual elects not to stay at the convention or conference hotel, reimbursement is limited to the lower of the actual or conference/convention rate.
- Under all circumstances, travelers should request the lower corporate or educational institution rate when available.
- Reimbursement requests must be documented by an original itemized hotel bill and receipt, and is limited to room and tax (if required), business phone calls and one personal phone call home (of reasonable duration, not to exceed \$10.00/day), per day if away overnight, and fixed-rate Internet service if necessary to complete College business. For travel within Florida, the sales tax exemption should be requested (see Section L below).
- Unless approved in advance by the Dean or Associate Dean of Academics, expenses for alcoholic beverages at hotels will not be reimbursed.
- Normally, the College of Law will not reimburse items and services such as dry cleaning and replacement clothing. If the individual is away for more than five days, reasonable laundry costs may be reimbursed if approved in advance by the Dean or Associate Dean of Academics.

## **G. Meals**

To subsidize the cost of food while traveling on approved Stetson business (not including faculty members teaching in Stetson study-abroad programs), travelers may receive reimbursement in accordance with the following policy, and the information published by the U.S. Government General Services Administration (“GSA”), found at [http://www.gsa.gov/Portal/gsa/ep/contentView.do?contentId=17943&contentType=GSA\\_BASIC](http://www.gsa.gov/Portal/gsa/ep/contentView.do?contentId=17943&contentType=GSA_BASIC):

1. With itemized receipts, travelers may be reimbursed up to \$39 per day, the current standard meals and incidental expense allowance set by the GSA; *or* for travel to more expensive cities, faculty or staff with itemized receipts may be reimbursed up to the meals and incidental expenses per diem set for the relevant city by the GSA.
2. Reimbursement will not be granted on any day in which the faculty or staff member does not pay for any meal.

3. Reimbursement will not be provided when meals are covered by conference or registration fees.
4. Meal expenses above and beyond the per diem will not be reimbursed without good cause and advance approval.
5. Unless approved in advance by the Dean or Associate Dean of Academics, the cost of alcoholic beverages will not be reimbursed.

## **H. Entertainment**

Entertainment is defined as meals, beverages, and event admission costs for non-employees deemed to be in the best interest of the College of Law, e.g., local visit by an external candidate for a position within the College.

Entertainment expenses may either occur while on travel or locally. Authority to incur entertainment expense must be properly approved in advance by the Dean or Associate Dean of Academics and documented by receipts and records indicating name(s) of guest(s) and justification for the expenditure.

Expenses incurred primarily for the benefit of College faculty or staff members are considered personal expenses and are not reimbursable. Business meals are allowable if the individual establishes that the meal is directly related to the active conduct of College business. If the meal expense is incurred in connection with a substantial and bona fide business discussion, then it must be established that the expense is associated with the active conduct of College business. The individual must substantiate the expense by including where the activity took place, who attended, and what was discussed. Expenses for business meals will not be allowed for food or beverages to the extent that such expense is lavish or extravagant under the circumstances.

## **I. Receipts**

All claims for reimbursement of the expense items listed below must be documented by the original receipted bill or by a vendor-certified copy of the receipted bill. Photo copies, credit card receipts, or facsimile copies are acceptable only in unusual circumstances.

- Transportation by airline, railroad, rental vehicle, taxi or limousine;
- Parking and tolls (if more than \$5.00);
- Accommodations for lodging;
- Registrations (attach official printed receipt, or canceled check and copy of literature itemizing fees);

- Supplies and miscellaneous expenses (e.g., a long-distance telephone charge that did not originate from a College of Law telephone);
- Meal receipts, which must include an itemization of food and drink consumed and the number of persons served (a summary credit card receipt is not sufficient documentation); and
- Any other item of tip or service expense that exceeds \$25.00. (All expenditures of this type should be fully explained on the Travel Expense Report.)

#### **J. Submitting Travel and Expense Reports**

Travelers must sign and submit their Travel Expense Report to the appropriate person no later than 30 days after the end of the individual's trip. Reimbursement may be denied if the report is submitted late, especially if the report is submitted after the fiscal year has ended (June 30).

#### **K. Cash Advance**

Cash to meet a portion of the expected travel expenses for employees can be requested by submitting a check requisition supported by a copy of the approved travel form. The request must be approved by the employee's supervisor and the Associate Dean of Academics or the Associate Dean's Designee. Allow at least one week for processing. The cash advance must be reported on the Travel and Expense Report and documented by appropriate receipts.

Cash advances are to be reconciled via submission of the Travel Expense Report no later than 30 days after the end of the individual's trip. If the cash advance exceeded the actual expense incurred, the return of excess funds must accompany the Travel Expense Report. Expense advances not accounted for by cash within 30 days after the end of the trip will be treated as compensation to the individual via the payroll process. The individual may also be disqualified from receiving future advances.

To comply with audit standards, a cash advance normally should not exceed \$500, and cannot exceed \$1,000 without the signatures of both the Dean (or the Dean's designee) and the Executive Director of Business Operations. A cash advance normally will not be appropriate for items that can be covered with a College of Law check or credit card.

#### **L. Sales Tax Exemption**

Travelers are expected to claim exemption from payment of state sales tax when possible. Tax exemption certificates are available in the Business Office and should be presented upon registration for lodging.

## **IV. Other Reimbursable Business Expenses**

### **A. In General**

In addition to travel, the College of Law reimburses employees for other business-related expenses. To be reimbursable, the business expense must be approved in advance and must bear a direct relationship to the employee's position and responsibilities. In addition, in the case of any meal or entertainment expense, the person attending with the most senior title normally must put the expense on his/her expense report to facilitate review by a more senior person not attending.. Examples of expenses eligible for reimbursement include the following:

- Reasonable professional dues and membership fees for professional associations directly related to an employee's job (e.g., ABA and Florida Bar dues, NALP, SHRM, and other similar organizations);
- Cellular phones and electronic devices, as detailed in the College of Law policy on this subject;
- Reasonable office services while traveling (i.e., faxes, copies, overnight delivery/postage);
- Currency conversion fees;
- Business gifts of reasonable value with advance approval;
- Seminar fees/training classes with prior approval;
- Subscriptions with prior approval; and
- Reasonable expenses for condolence or recognition to the extent permitted by College guidelines on this subject, or otherwise approved by the Dean.

### **B. Approval for Other Business Expenses**

All check requests, credit card statements, or other forms related to payment or reimbursement must be approved by an authorized reviewer in the Business Office. The authorized reviewer is responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy and must verify that expenses are reasonable and meet the terms of this policy.

In the case of grants, the Business Office will also verify the appropriateness of any expense based on grant terms and restrictions.

Authorized reviewers may not authorize reimbursement of their own expenses.

## **V. Use of College Credit Cards**

Credit cards issued in the name of the College of Law, which include but are not limited to Visa, MasterCard, American Express, gasoline cards, and telephone cards, will be provided to those employees whose jobs require a sufficient amount of travel, entertainment or other expense activity. Employees who believe they need a credit card

must submit a written request to the Dean explaining their need. Credit cards represent an extension of credit to the College and, accordingly, may only be issued with the approval of Dean. Cards issued in the name of the College are a privilege for convenience and must not be used for personal expenses.

The College of Law's corporate Visa cards are paid automatically via deduction from the operating bank account by arrangement with Regions Bank. The corporate American Express account is paid in full by the Business Office each month. It is imperative that all cardholders submit original credit card receipts and FOAPL numbers for all charges to the Business Office within 15 days after the end of the calendar month. Failure to comply may result in the treatment of these charges as compensation to the employee and in a revocation of the privilege of using a school credit card.

As a not-for-profit organization, the College is exempt from certain sales taxes and it is the employee's responsibility to be familiar with this exemption. It is also the employee's responsibility to indicate to the vendor that the College is a tax-exempt organization. As noted above, copies of the College's tax-exempt certificate are available in the Business Office. Using the certificate to avoid sales tax on personal transactions is forbidden. Sales tax, from which the College is exempt, is not reimbursable under this policy, and if paid by the employee, remains the obligation of that employee.

## **VI. Travel and Business Expenses for Non-Employees**

Travel and business expense reimbursement for individuals other than College of Law employees, such as guest speakers, consultants, and prospective employees are subject to these same guidelines, including the requirement of advance approval. The College will not reimburse travel expenses for family, friends, or other guests of an employee on College business unless approved in advance in writing by the Dean or Associate Dean of Academics, or specifically provided for by a written contract of engagement.

## **VII. Non-Reimbursable Travel and Business Expenses**

### **A. In General**

The following expenses will not be reimbursed. The following list is not to be considered all-inclusive, and a rule of reasonableness will be applied by the Dean, Associate Dean of Academics, or the Executive Director of Business Operations.

- Entertainment expenses for faculty and staff members when only faculty and staff members are involved and not otherwise justified as necessary travel. Examples include but are not limited to one employee buying another lunch (even if College business is conducted during the lunch); a department head taking employees to lunch; office parties; coffee services, etc. Exceptions may be recognized if specific advance approval is requested and granted, e.g., for approved recognition events such as a retirement, or when committee meetings are scheduled during the lunch

hour and a meal is served on campus. These expenses typically should be built into a departmental budget and approved by the Associate Dean of Academics, Dean, or Executive Director of Business Operations.

- Repair or insurance of personal automobiles.
- Home internet service. (For approval of air cards at College expense for use on College-owned laptops, follow the same approval process for cellular phones and other electronic devices).
- Theft, loss or damage of personal luggage, property and effects or theft/loss of cash advance money.
- Membership dues in private or social clubs or organizations, health clubs, gyms, and the like.
- Political or charitable contributions.
- Passenger insurance (flight insurance) or other non-compulsory insurance coverage, unless the policy specifically requires the insurance to be elected.
- Alcohol, unless specifically approved in advance
- Personal credit card annual fees, interest charges or delinquency fees.
- Day-care or babysitting fees for children.
- Boarding or kennel charges for pets.
- Fees for upgrades of air, hotel, or automobile or other mode of travel.
- Golfing, green fees or golfing cart rental, unless part of approved development activity.
- Personal grooming or spa services, such as barbers, nail services, hairdressers, massages and shoe shines.
- Medicine or toiletries.
- Movies (either in-room, in-flight or at the theater) and movie expenses, such as headphones on airlines.
- Expenses for travel incurred by companions or family members, except as approved in advance, as noted above.

- Expenses related to vacation or personal days while on a business trip.
- Excess baggage charges, except as noted above.
- Avoidable "no-show" charges for hotel or car service.
- Tips exceeding 20%, and, in most instances, tips in addition to pre-applied gratuity.
- Parties and gifts for employees except, where provided for by recognition guidelines or otherwise approved by the Dean.

### **B. Exceptions**

The Dean and Associate Dean of Academics have the sole authority to approve exceptions to this policy, in compliance with audit standards. Approved exceptions must be explicitly justified as beneficial to both the College, must be justified in writing (and typically in advance), and generally require the recommendation of the individual's department head or supervisor.

### **C. Enforcement**

Failure to comply with the policies pertaining to documentation of expenses in this policy will result in non-payment of expenses to employees, in addition to other possible consequences, as appropriate.

*Adopted August 21, 2008 (replaces Travel Expenses Procedures and Guidelines dated June 22, 2004); updated August 27, 2009.*