



# *Travel Guide*



*Midwestern State  
University*

*Wichita Falls, Texas*

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*For more information on the  
Travel Program at  
Midwestern State University,  
please call 397-4112.*

## ***Request for Travel Authorization***

The MSU Request for Travel Authorization form is to be completed and approved any time the duties and responsibilities of an employee require that he or she travel away from headquarters. Travel expenses may be reimbursed only when the purpose of the travel clearly involves official state business and is in accordance with the legal responsibilities of the university.

The Request for Travel Authorization serves as a written approval for being away from campus and expenditure of MSU funds. In case of an accident the Request for Travel Authorization verifies that the travel was MSU related and approved.

A Request for Travel Authorization must be completed prior to travel, and approval is delegated to the immediate supervisor. Travel requests must be routed through the department chair or director, and forwarded to the appropriate dean or other administrative office, with final approving authority by the appropriate vice president/provost/president. However, all foreign travel and travel to Washington D.C. will require final approval from the President's Office. The approved travel request will then be forwarded to the Controller's Office/Travel Coordinator for review to ensure the request is consistent with MSU travel policies and procedures.

The form can be found on the MSU Travel Management website.

## ***Reminders for Completing the Travel Voucher***

- A conference/meeting agenda **must** accompany the travel voucher.
- Always include dates and times of travel. Per Diem rates are determined by the departure and return times.

- Provide a brief description of the transportation and duties performed. More information is better than not enough!
- Taxes are reimbursed on the hotel amount eligible for reimbursement, which is not always the amount originally charged.
- Mileage or gasoline will be reimbursed, but not both.
- Lodging is to be claimed for each person traveling although one individual pays the receipt. The receipt should be copied and attached to each voucher. Each individual will claim his/her proportional amount of the charge.
- All university travel is to be reimbursed using local funds.
- Texas State Occupancy Tax is not a reimbursable expense. Present a Texas Hotel Occupancy Tax Exempt Certificate to your hotel clerk at time of check-in.

### ***Meals and Lodging Reimbursement***



Travel expenses are reimbursed on either a per diem or actual expense basis, not to exceed the locality based rates specified at the following website:  
[www.gsa.gov/perdiem](http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem)



Actual time of departure from designated headquarters and return to designated headquarters is to be shown on the back of the travel reimbursement request on each trip.

Between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. – only lunch is reimbursed.

Per Diem Rate:	\$62	\$73	\$76	\$7;	\$86	\$8;	\$96
Breakfast	9	34	35	16	16	17	18
Lunch	13	16	17	17	18	19	20
Dinner	24	25	28	28	30	33	36



An itemized lodging receipt is required. If the receipt is lost, a copy of the receipt will be accepted as proof of payment. A credit card or internet receipt that is not itemized is not sufficient documentation. An express checkout statement showing a balance due is not a receipt.

### ***Packaged Travel Arrangements***

If an employee purchases a package of at least two travel arrangements (i.e. lodging, transportation), each type is reimbursable only to the extent it would have been reimbursable had it not been included in the package. The travel voucher must separately state the cost of each type of travel arrangement.

### ***Hotel Directory***

[http://portal.cpa.state.tx.us/hotel/hotel\\_directory/index.cfm](http://portal.cpa.state.tx.us/hotel/hotel_directory/index.cfm)

### ***Texas Hotel Occupancy Tax Exemption***

Employees are exempt from paying state occupancy taxes when they are traveling on official state business within the state of Texas. Employees should **notify the hotel at check-in of the tax exemption by presenting a tax exemption form.**

Texas Hotel Occupancy Tax Exemption forms are available at the following website: <http://www.window.state.tx.us/taxinfo/taxforms/12-302.pdf>

## ***Partial Per Diem***

All requests for partial per diem (no overnight stay) reimbursement are to be put on a separate travel voucher. Typically meals are put on one voucher and other expenses such as mileage are put on a separate voucher. Partial per diem will be paid completely separate from all other travel costs. *The employee must be away from headquarters for at least six (6) consecutive hours.* Partial per diem payments will be entered into the employee's payroll calculation for withholding and social security in accordance with Internal Revenue Service regulations. The reimbursement is included in the employee's payroll check. Partial per diem requests submitted after the 10th of the month will be processed with the payroll in the following month, so there may be a time lag for disbursement of up to one month and 20 days.

## ***Out of State Travel***

Employees who travel outside the state of Texas but within the continental U.S. shall be reimbursed for their meal and lodging expenses. Reimbursement may not exceed the locality-based rates specified at the following website: [www.gsa.gov/perdiem](http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem)

## ***Hotel Overage***

The university will allow the full cost of lodging under the following conditions:

- a. The employee attends a conference or mandatory training and the conference hotel rates exceed the state rates for that locality; or
- b. State rate hotels are unavailable and traveler documents quoted internet rates available for the locality; or
- c. The employee can justify that the excess is less than staying in a state rate hotel when other travel costs, i.e., taxi or rental car, to and from the hotel are considered; or

- d. The **president, vice president, or provost** determines that the additional cost is beneficial to the traveler and to the university and approves the overage.

Failure to obtain prior approval for excess lodging expenses may result in disallowance of the “excess” portion for reimbursement.

### *Traveling Outside of the United States*



The president must approve all foreign travel in advance. Foreign travel is defined as all countries outside the 50 United States, Mexico, Canada and U.S. possessions.

When properly approved, the university may reimburse an employee for actual meals and lodging expenses when traveling to foreign countries, not to exceed the maximum travel per diem allowances for foreign areas which can be found at the following website: [www.gsa.gov/perdiem](http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem). All travel expenses must be converted to U.S. dollars and each exchange rate used for the conversion specified on the voucher. Appropriate lodging and meal receipts must be attached to the reimbursement vouchers. Expenses eligible for authorized travel reimbursement for travel in foreign countries are transportation, lodging, and meal expenses.

In lieu of reimbursement of meals based on actual receipts, the university may reimburse an employee up to 100% of the maximum travel per diem allowances for foreign areas which can be found at the above website. The employee must still document lodging expenses based on actual receipts. When requesting reimbursement based on per diem rates, the employee may not also request reimbursement for actual meal expenses. If requesting reimbursement based on per diem rates in lieu of maintaining actual cash receipts, the entire trip will be based on per diem rates and the employee cannot alternate meals with actual receipts and per diem rates unless the actual meal cost is less than the per diem rate.

Employees who travel to Alaska, Hawaii, Canada, Mexico, Guam, Puerto Rico, or any U.S. possession, may also be reimbursed for actual expenses for meals and lodging in accordance with the above guidelines if prior written approval is received from the president or president's designee. The Request for Travel Authorization must state, "*Authorization for actual expense is requested.*" Lodging and meal receipts are required and may not exceed the maximum travel per diem allowances for these areas as defined at the following website: [www.gsa.gov/perdiem](http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem). In lieu of actual receipts, 100% of the maximum travel per diem allowance for meals may also be used for these areas in accordance with the above guidelines.

### ***Study Abroad Travel***

Any supporting staff member or faculty member participating as Professor of Record in a Midwestern State University approved study abroad program who is not otherwise paid by the university may be entitled to a minimum of 60% of published US State Department per diem reimbursement for meals and incidentals applicable to the location of the program.

### ***Mileage – Personal Automobiles***



Mileage in a personal (not rented or university-owned or leased) vehicle while on university travel may be reimbursed. The mileage reimbursement may not exceed the product of the actual number of miles traveled for business and the maximum mileage reimbursement rate. The number of miles traveled will be determined using the mapping service MapQuest at the following website: [www.mapquest.com](http://www.mapquest.com).

When requesting reimbursement for inter-city mileage, **odometer readings are required.**

An employee may be reimbursed for his mileage between his residence and his place of employment if the travel is necessitated by extraordinary circumstances and the travel occurs during non-working hours.

No additional expenses incidental to the operation of the employee's motor vehicle shall be reimbursed.

### ***Parking Expenses***

Employees may be reimbursed for parking expenses incurred when traveling by personal automobile, state car, or rental car.

### ***Out-of-State Travel by Personal Auto***

Employees who travel out of state by personal automobile receive mileage limited to the average coach airfare plus the reasonable expenses of transportation to the airport and the parking expense the employee would have incurred at the airport except where the cost of mileage is less.

### ***Public Transportation***



Commercial Air Transportation – The cost of air transportation must be equal to the lowest rate available. It is recommended that all employees compare airfare offered on State Contract at <http://www.window.state.tx.us/procurement/prog/stmp/stmp-airline-contract/> prior to making airline ticket purchases on the internet or with a travel agent at non-contract rates.

First class airfare may be paid if it is the only available airfare. A statement that airfare below first class was not available is required.

Advance Purchase of Airline Tickets – 30 days or more in advance – Ask travel agent to bill the university directly. A purchase requisition made out to the appropriate travel agency is required from the department. Attach a “note” on the purchase requisition that this payment is necessary due to 30-day advance ticketing.

After the trip, complete the travel voucher for travel related expenses, but do not include the airline ticket as part of reimbursable expense.

Car Rental – An employee may be reimbursed for the cost of a rental vehicle. When using the state contract for rental cars, the rental rate includes liability and LDW (Loss/Damage Waiver) insurance. If you rent a vehicle from a non-contract rental car vendor, insurance may or may not be included in the base rental rate and you will need to inquire about it at the time of rental. You will need an allowable exception for not using the state contract rental car agencies. If you rent a vehicle from a contract rental car vendor using a rate *other than* the State of Texas Contract Rate, the insurance may not be included. You **MUST** request the State of Texas Contract Rate and provide the proper rate identifier code in order to receive the insurance coverage and the services provided in the state’s contract. You will have to pay state sales tax. Internet booking services are available at the following websites:

Avis: [www.avis.com](http://www.avis.com)

Enterprise: [www.enterprise.com/car\\_rental/home.do](http://www.enterprise.com/car_rental/home.do)

The State of Texas rate identifier number must be used. The rate identifiers are as follows:

Avis – F999735

Enterprise – TX735

Rental Car contracts are found at the following website:  
<http://www.window.state.tx.us/procurement/prog/stmp/stmp-rental-car-contract/>

## *Incidental Expenses*

Incidental expenses are reimbursed when necessary for the employee to conduct state business while in travel status. Receipts are required when available. When not available, each expense should be itemized on the Travel Voucher.

### **Allowable:**

- ✓ Phone calls for official business, local and long distance.
- ✓ Money orders used for official business.
- ✓ Gasoline for rental or state-owned vehicles.
- ✓ Parking fees for personal vehicles, rental or state-owned vehicles.
- ✓ Toll charges for all vehicles.
- ✓ Repair parts and labor plus towing charges to repair state-owned vehicles.
- ✓ Required copies made by an employee for business purposes.
- ✓ Freight charges to ship state equipment or materials.
- ✓ Admittance fees to functions while accompanying clients of the state.
- ✓ Visas for foreign travel and airport boarding passes or departure taxes in foreign countries.
- ✓ Emergency purchases of postage not to exceed \$25.00.

## **Not Allowable:**

- Ø Repair costs for personally owned vehicles.
- Ø Tips or gratuities of any kind without a receipt.
- Ø Excess baggage charges for personal belongings.
- Ø Side trips or tours while attending conferences.
- Ø Passports or passport photos required for foreign travel.
- Ø Inoculations required for foreign travel.
- Ø Personal expense items such as dry cleaning or laundry.
- Ø Alcoholic beverages

## ***Travel Card***

Each university employee who travels on a regular basis (at least twice a year) should obtain a MasterCard credit card. There is no cost for the card. The card is in the name of the employee and the limit is based on the employee's credit rating. Employees may use the card for the purchase of all airline travel (other than 30 day in advance tickets). Employees can charge other commercial transportation costs, lodging and meals. The card is to be used for any university business related travel expense.

Obtain an application for the MasterCard from the Controller's Office, complete the form, and return it to the Controller's Office.

## ***Cash Advances***

Travel advances are not available unless the Travel Authorization form has been properly completed and submitted to the Travel Coordinator in the Controller's Office. Travel Advance forms are available in the Controller's Office and should be completed and submitted at least five (5) working days prior to travel.

Cash advances for travel are normally limited to those employees who do not have a travel card. Travel Vouchers will still need to be completed to substantiate the travel expenses paid for with a cash advance. Any excess money from an advance is due back to the Controller's Office as soon as the employee returns from the trip. If the extra advance money is not returned within 30 days, the employee's supervisor will be contacted.

## ***Student Travel***

If the student is also a student employee, the above policies apply.

If the student is not an employee, then the student must be "sponsored" by an employee of the university. The student's expenses will be on the employee's travel voucher and must be notated. The student cannot get an advance, but the employee can get an advance to cover the student.

## ***Travel Reimbursement***

Complete a travel voucher (green paper) upon completion of the trip. A check will be written payable to the employee less any travel advance outstanding. The employee is responsible for paying his/her monthly MasterCard bill.

## ***Reimbursing Travel for Non-Employees***

Non-employees who travel on behalf of the university should be reimbursed on a Direct Pay Voucher, not on a travel voucher. They can be reimbursed with actual, itemized receipts based on the department's approval.

## ***Prospective Employees***

When a prospective employee is requested to travel for an employment interview, he or she may be reimbursed for travel expenses in the same manner as a state employee. A travel advance may not be issued to a prospective employee. Prospective employees are not exempt from hotel occupancy taxes and may be reimbursed for those taxes.



