

As leaders, each of us has the privilege and responsibility to be exceptional stewards of the financial resources entrusted to support the University's mission. The [list of focus areas](#) below provides travel related requirements and tips to ensure timely and accurate travel reimbursements. Please focus on these areas as you lead and support your department, including covering these areas with all travelers in your unit.

Why is this important?

Accurate expense reporting is crucial for the university's overall financial management and reporting, sponsored project invoicing and reporting, and annual travel reporting as required by the State of Georgia. By approving travel expenses, approvers attest that they have thoroughly reviewed each transaction and the supporting documentation, have verified that all transactions are allowable expenses, and that funding for reimbursement exists. By approving a traveler's expense submission, approvers are certifying:

- Appropriateness of the expenditure and reasonableness of the amount requested;
- Compliance with UGA travel policy and funding source requirements; and
- Completeness and accuracy of documentation.

Focus Areas:

- **Submit Travel Authorization prior to out-of-state travel.** Submission of travel authorizations is a requirement before traveling out of state. Without a travel authorization, Accounts Payable cannot verify the first and last day of travel to check per diem rates to ensure the traveler uses the correct expense types to reduce the rate for the day of departure and the day of return.
- **Associate Travel Authorization with all expense reports for out-of-state travel.** Travel authorizations must be associated with all expense reports for out-of-state travel. Please confirm the traveler or delegate associates the travel authorization with the reimbursement request before submitting it to Accounts Payable. Accounts Payable will return any out-of-state travel reimbursement request that does not include the associated travel authorization.
- **Verify expense types before submitting.** Be sure to verify expense types for accuracy before submitting them to Accounts Payable. Expense types drive account codes, and when incorrect types are assigned, this can lead to budget exceptions and inaccurate reporting.
- **Do not use "confirmations" for reimbursement.** Ensure documentation marked as "confirmation" is not submitted for reimbursement. Confirmations do not show proof of payment, which is a requirement when seeking reimbursement.
- **Do not use AirBnB, VRBO, or similar booking services.** When traveling domestically, do not use online booking services such as AirBnB, VRBO, Home Away, or other similar service providers. These charges are not allowed for reimbursement.
 - **Accounts Payable sought clarification from the State Accounting Office.** We asked if other types of lodging are allowed within the US other than hotels, such as local property management companies, corporate housing companies, leasing

agencies, or apartment rentals. The response from SAO was that, at this point, hotels are the only options for extended periods of lodging.

- **Verify budget status during your expense report review.** When reviewing expense reports, verify that the budget status is valid. If it is invalid, do not forward it to Accounts Payable until you resolve the funding issue. The budget checking process runs hourly throughout the business day. If you receive an expense report that does not show the budget check status, please hold the report until the next budget checking process runs to ensure funding exists.
- **Verify that all supporting documentation is attached.** Open each attachment and verify that the traveler's amount corresponds with their reimbursement amount.

We greatly appreciate your partnership and shared focus on the expense report reimbursement process. Your efforts in these areas not only improve stewardship but they reduce delays (eliminating rework) and help to ensure a smooth and streamlined process for the faculty and staff that we collectively support. Thank you for your time and efforts in these areas!