



# LETOURNEAU UNIVERSITY

## Travel Policy

Responsible Department: Accounting Services

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## General Overview

The LeTourneau University Travel Expense Policy provides guidelines and procedures for all faculty, staff, students, and others who are traveling on behalf of the University. Independent contractors and other non-LETU employees must also comply with this policy. Reimbursement will be made for *\*reasonable and necessary* expenses incurred while traveling on authorized business. Travel costs are to be allocated and expended within established budgetary limitations and travelers are not to make commitments to travel or to incur travel expenses without first obtaining the appropriate approvals. All travel requests, booking, and expense reporting should be processed in the Concur Travel and Expense Management System if possible

These policies and procedures are intended for University-wide use. However, if a department elects to institute a more restrictive policy for purposes of budgetary control, Financial Operations will support that policy and will work with the department to enforce it.

All travelers are to comply with the following travel expense reimbursement policies and procedural guidelines.

*\*University policy does not define specific dollar guidelines in some areas for what constitutes **reasonable** travel expense, because the reasonableness of an expense depends upon many relevant factors including the business purpose of the event and its attendees.*

*“**Reasonable**” means the amount that normally would be spent in that specific situation. The amount will vary depending upon circumstances, however lavish or extravagant expenses will **not** be paid for by LETU.*

*In the course of spending University funds, consider these questions to ensure that resources are being used appropriately and that we are being good stewards of the funds entrusted to us:*

- *Is the expenditure in line with the guidance provided in the LETU Travel Policy and as approved in travel request?*
  - o *If not, is there a good explanation as to why the expenditure is appropriate?*
  - o *Has it been adequately documented?*

## JP Morgan Travel Card

The University has contracted with JP Morgan to provide employees with a University Travel Card. If it is determined that a travel card is needed, applicants will fill out the online Travel Card Application at least six weeks prior to travel and complete the Travel Card training. The card will be distributed to the traveler when received by LeTourneau’s Business Office.

Once received, the travel cardholder is responsible for activating their travel card by calling the toll free number provided on the card. Each travel card is issued to a named individual.

All cardholders are responsible for the secure use of their travel card and for reporting immediately to JP Morgan if it is lost or stolen. Each cardholder should ensure that sufficient budget funds exist before making purchases.

Before using your LETU Travel card, please know and follow the travel card policy.

## Online Travel and Expense System

Concur is the Travel and Expense Management system to be utilized by all LETU employees for requesting approval, booking travel and reporting expenses related to LETU approved business travel. All employee reimbursements and travel card charges must be processed through Concur. Consideration should be given to minimizing travel costs by maximizing flexibility in travel plans to allow for alternate airlines, schedules, and times, which can lessen travel costs. The purpose of the system is to eliminate routing paper throughout the University for these Activities, to provide a database for trips and expense reports, and to provide automated tracking of unprocessed items.

All air, lodging and car rental reservations should be booked through Concur.

International and complex travel reservations may be booked with the LETU approved travel management company agent. Complex is defined as having more than one destination or more than one airline involved.

If emergency or en route changes to travel plans are necessary, the traveler should contact the LETU approved travel management company agent. Making reservations or changes to travel plans through the appropriate channels maximizes the safety and security of LETU's travelers.

When a trip is cancelled after the reservation has been made, it is the employee's responsibility to cancel the flight, hotel and rental car through Concur or by contacting the LETU approved travel Management Company.

Concur can be accessed through Faculty & Staff webpage via the [letu.edu](http://letu.edu) website.

## Expense Reimbursement Limitations and Receipt Requirements

Itemized receipts for lodging, car rental, air transportation, meals, and other travel expenses must accompany the expense report. Expense reports are to be submitted via Concur within 30 days of completion of travel with all required documentation. Employee is responsible for ensuring that all charges are being applied to the appropriate budget account.

Out of pocket expenses (including airfare and other pre-trip expenses) should not be reimbursed until the conclusion of the trip.

## Responsibility of Approvers

Approvers perform a critical control function for the University. Collectively, approvers ensure that expense reports processed for payment are authorized, documented, appropriately funded, and compliant with policy and are associated with activities that have a valid and necessary business purpose. Designated approvers should assist individuals, as necessary, with understanding applicable policies and compliance requirements.

The Concur system routes approval based on the employee supervisor and the designated budget approver. It is the supervisor and the designated budget approver's responsibility to ensure funds are available for the requested travel and when approving expense reports approvers must validate that transactions are coded correctly and all necessary documentation is provided.

## Air Travel

All reservations for University business travel should be made using Concur and it is the responsibility of LETU travelers to book the lowest and most reasonable airfare through LETU's preferred carriers (when applicable) consistent with their itinerary, the business purpose of their trip and the requirements of the funding source. Tickets should be purchased using the employee's LETU Travel Card.

Employees must fly coach class on all flights. Upgrades in coach class such as Economy Plus seating are considered a personal expense.

Every attempt should be made to make reservations early, since the lowest fares are usually available with 21 and 14-day advance purchases and ensures the most convenient and cost-effective fares are obtained. Exceptions of up to \$100 above the lowest logical fare require management approval.

Federally funded travel may be subject to additional restrictions which are included in the "Federally Grant Funded Travel" section below. Upgrades in coach class such as Economy Plus seating are considered a personal expense.

**Group** travel arrangements should be made through the LETU approved Travel Management Company.

All American Airline, Delta, Southwest and United flights booked through Concur using the LETU preferred Travel Company will allow travelers to earn their own personal reward points. In addition, points will be earned for our LETU Business Accounts and can be allocated to departments to redeem for free flights.

Traveler participation in frequent flyer programs must not influence flight selection, which would result in additional costs to the University from the lowest airfare. The University will **not** reimburse travelers for tickets purchased with frequent flyer miles.

When a trip has been cancelled after a non-refundable ticket has been issued, the ticket can be applied to a trip in the future by that traveler on that airline, less a change or cancellation fee. Travelers must apply any unused ticket value toward a business trip in the future, to mitigate any financial loss to the funding source. In most cases the traveler has a year in which that ticket can be applied.

## Lodging

University travelers should use Concur to book lodging accommodations in order to take advantage of negotiated rates and corporate discounts. Exceptions will be made for conference bookings that are booked with registration. If the conference you are attending offers a discounted rate, please work with LETU's approved Travel Management Company to ensure the hotel is booked at the discounted rate. This can be done in Concur using the Conference Rate Form.

When making reservations, single room accommodations and corporate rates should be requested

(making sure the lowest rate available is obtained upon check-in). Employees should use LETU's Sales Tax Exemption form and Hotel Occupancy Tax Exemption form to request exemptions from applicable taxes whenever possible. When hotel accommodations are booked through Concur, the LETU Travel Management Company will attach a link to the traveler's itinerary with the Tax Exempt Form needed for check-in.

Incidentals such as magazines, newspapers, laundry, toiletries, in-room snacks and beverages, housekeeping and in-room movies will be considered personal expenses and, therefore, **not** reimbursable.

## Ground Transportation

**Note: All activities in this section are subject to the University Driver Policy.**

Travelers should use discretion when choosing ground transportation and ensure they use the most practical and economical option available.

### Rental Cars

Travelers should rent cars from LETU's preferred rental car companies and book through Concur to ensure that they obtain the University's negotiated rates. The university's insurance covers all rental cars so no additional coverage is needed and should be declined. Travelers are authorized to use rental cars based on the cost efficiency and availability of other means of transportation.

The size of the rental car should be the least expensive model consistent with the number of travelers and the business purpose of the trip. Employees should rent a small or medium class vehicle unless a larger vehicle can be rented at no additional cost or more than two (2) people share the same vehicle.

Due to the exorbitant refueling rates charged by rental agencies, employees should refuel the vehicle prior to returning it to the agency. Fuel purchased at the rental agency will be considered a personal expense and will **not** be reimbursed. Normal fuel expenses may be submitted for reimbursement.

### Personal Vehicle

The current LETU approved mileage rate will be used as reimbursement for the use of an individual's personal vehicle while on LETU business. The rate is designed to include all related expenses of operating the vehicle including fuel but does not include parking fees and toll charges which will be reimbursed separately. However, the total reimbursement for mileage, tolls, and parking is limited to the total cost of economy air fare plus estimated local transportation expenses for the same trip or the cost of a car rental and fuel for the trip's duration.

Travelers can use the Rental vs Employee Reimbursement Calculator to determine the most cost efficient method for the trip: [https://legacy.enterprise.com/car\\_rental/mileageCalculator.do](https://legacy.enterprise.com/car_rental/mileageCalculator.do)

All individuals who desire to use their personal vehicles for LETU business must maintain a current driver's license and follow all policies and procedures outlined in the LETU Driver Policy.

### Other Ground Transportation

Car Services (i.e. Uber, Lyft), Shuttles, taxicab, and bus fares utilized for transportation purposes while traveling are reimbursable expenses. If bus or rail travel is used, the traveler must select coach class.

## Parking & Tolls

Reasonable and necessary parking charges and tolls associated with business travel will be reimbursed.

## Meals & Entertainment

### Meals

All meal expenditures are subject to University policies and this guidance regardless of funding source or intended recipient unless more restrictive guidance applies. Employees are expected to exercise good judgment regarding the amount spent for personal meals while on university business.

An itemized receipt for meal expenses must be attached to the appropriate expense report. When more than one person is included in the meal expense, the names of each person in attendance and their employment or business affiliation must also be included in the expense report.

While traveling on University business, expenses for meals are based on actual, reasonable expenses incurred. Travelers should use their University issued travel card to pay for meals while traveling. Meals purchased within a 25-mile radius of the employee's main work location will be considered a personal expense and will not be reimbursed.

When traveling overnight on LETU business, employee meals will be reimbursed for up to a maximum of \$50.00 per day which will cover 3 meals each day. Groceries or snacks can replace a meal, but additional meals and/or snacks to Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner should be paid out of pocket with no reimbursement by LETU. On travel days, meals will be covered during the travel time only and may be less than 3 meals per day which should be less than \$50.00.

### Business Meals

Business meals will be reimbursed when they can reasonably be expected to accomplish a business goal/initiative. The employee must use sound business judgment (cost/benefit) when incurring this expense. The purpose of the business meal and those in attendance should be included on the expense report along with the receipt. The most senior member of the party should pay the bill.

### Entertainment Expense

Entertainment expenses (sporting events, golf, concert or movie tickets, etc.) will only be reimbursed when pre-approved by a cabinet member and when the expense can reasonably be expected to accomplish a business goal/initiative. The purpose of the entertainment and those in attendance must be included on the expense report along with the receipt.

## Standard Tipping Guideline

The University will reimburse employees for tipping waiters, taxi drivers and baggage handlers.

Standard tipping guideline is 15% of the total at a restaurant, \$1-\$2 for each bag handled by a baggage handler, and a 10% tip for a taxi driver.

## Spousal or Family Accompaniment

If an employee wishes to include his or her spouse or family on a business trip, the employee is responsible for any extra expenses, including the difference between meals, transportation, and all other incidentals. Spousal accompaniment on a business trip or entertainment event with a bona fide business purpose must be approved by the supervisor in advance and submitted with the appropriate expense report.

## Travel Cash Advances

Employees may obtain travel advances for expected business expenses through Concur. These advances are loans and are the responsibility of the employee. Travel Advance Requests should be submitted at least 7 days prior to the specific date the advance is needed and should not exceed the amount of expected expenses. Cash advances should only be used if the employee will be unable to use their travel card at some point during their trip. Every attempt should be made to pay for all travel costs utilizing the LETU issued Travel Card.

Travelers are responsible for documenting the use of the advance and providing itemized receipts to be submitted in Concur and included with the trip's expense report. Any balance remaining from the advance must be returned by personal check or cash to the Cashier's office, and the cashier's receipt must be attached to the Expense Report within Concur. The advance must be paid back within 30 days after the trip. No further advances will be issued and travel card privileges may also be removed if advances are delinquent. All advances not paid back will be collected on the final check if employee is separated from employment for any reason.

Travel Cash Advances that are issued for Student Per Diem will require signature from the recipient documenting they received the issued amount and should be submitted as documentation with employee's Concur expense report.

## International Travel

In addition to meeting all travel policies outlined in the LETU Travel Policy, any student, faculty or staff member proposing to undertake University-supported or University-related international travel must follow the appropriate approval, insurance, and travel security requirements set forth in Policy 4.16 Group and International Travel.

## Federally Funded Travel

Travel costs charged to grants and contracts must follow the regulations of the sponsoring entity and the terms and conditions of the individual awards. Restrictions may include the need for prior approval from the sponsor, use of U.S. flag carriers, limits on the total amount that can be charged for travel, and compliance with the LETU policy on allowances for lodging and/or meals. The traveler should check the



specific agreement well in advance of departure to determine if any additional restrictions are applicable. Travel policies of federal and non-federal sponsors vary.

In addition to meeting all other University policy requirements, the following conditions apply to travel charged to sponsored projects:

### Business Purpose

The business purpose section of Concur should clearly identify the relationship of the travel to the purpose of the award. When a trip involves multiple purposes, the basis for allocating the charges to the sponsored project must be stated.

### Fly America Act and Open Skies Agreements

Use of the U.S. flag carriers is required for all international travel charged to a federal award unless certain exceptions are met. This requirement shall not be influenced by factors of cost, convenience, or personal travel preference.

### Advance Approval Required

Grants from some federal agencies and most federal contracts require that all international travel, even if included in the award, be approved from 45 to 90 days in advance by the sponsor's administrative officer. Some non-federal entities require approval in advance of all travel whether domestic or international.

### Penalties and Fees

Penalties or cancellation fees for airline, hotel, and car rentals are generally not allowable and one should always receive pre-approval from the sponsor before charging such costs to an award.

## Other Reimbursable Expenses

The following incidental expenses, when directly related to business travel, are reimbursable:

- Gratuities – maximum of 15%
- Bag portage – \$1 per bag to a maximum of \$10 for each service
- Parking
- Currency conversion
- Travelers Check fees
- Passport/visa fees
- Immunizations

## Non-Reimbursable Expenses

Employees will not be reimbursed for unauthorized expenses. Unauthorized expenses include, but are not limited to:

- Alcoholic beverages
- Hotel room movies
- Internet service (Hotel, in-flight, or conference)
- In-flight movies
- Car washes

- Charge card delinquency fees associated with the employee not filing expense reports and/or paying their bills on a timely basis
- Premium rental of luxury cars
- Personal items, including papers, books, candy, etc.
- Higher cost airlines used to accrue frequent flier miles
- Barber/hairstylist
- Shoe shine
- Luggage, briefcase
- Traffic violation tickets and other fines and penalties

## Risk of Non-Compliance

Violation of this policy, including misuse of a University issued Travel Card, may result in the loss of University travel card privileges, taxation or loss of reimbursement, disciplinary action including termination or legal action.