

OU INSTITUTE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL GENOMICS – TRAVEL GUIDELINE REFERENCE
FOR THE MOST COMMON TYPES OF TRAVEL EXPENSES

AIR FARE: The OU travel card can be used to purchase air fare to attend a meeting or conference. There are four ways to do this:

1. If you are traveling to **ONLY ONE MEETING** *within the United States mainland*, you can choose Option 1 to “book within Concur” using your OU travel card. Generally, there are strong cautions advised when booking within Concur and Option 1 is not recommended:
 - If your flight reservations are not approved by Mesia Miller or Dr. Anne Dunn in the Dept of Microbiology and Plant Biology within 24 hours after they have been entered, the Concur system will cancel your reservations and you will have to rebook the tickets. The flights you originally chose may or may not be available and/or the ticket price may have gone up when you rebook the tickets. Usually flights are approved within 24 hours, but you need to be aware what may happen if they are not approved within 24 hours.
 - If there is a malfunction/problem in the Concur system that prevents you from booking flights you have chosen with a particular airline carrier(s), the flight reservations will then have to be booked by an FcM travel agent. *If the airline tickets have to be booked by the travel agent, you will have to go back and change your original Travel Request so that Option 2 or 4 is selected to show that your tickets were booked outside of Concur and then resubmit your Travel Request for approval by Mesia Miller or Dr. Anne Dunn. If you don't resubmit the Travel Request with Option 2 or 4, the “Book” button will continue to show as active on the far right hand side of the Travel Request and will prevent the “Expense” button from being activated. Until the “Expense” button is activated, you will not be able to attach any travel expenses (OU travel card, charges to your personal credit card, per diem, etc.) to the Expense Report that must be filed for all of the travel expenses associated with the trip.*
 - The FcM travel component for booking flights from within Concur will automatically display the least expensive flights with a green “Select” button in the far right column—flights which may or may not fit your travel schedule. (Flights leave too early, too late, may have 2 stops each way, etc.). If you choose Option 2 to book your flights from within the Concur system, go to another travel web site FIRST to determine exactly which flights you want to book for the trip so that you can enter those travel times in the Concur system. By doing this, you will be able to enter the correct travel times that will narrow down the number of available flight choices so that there will be a much higher probability that the flights you actually want will be displayed with a Green or Yellow “Select” button. Unless you limit the time parameters for your trip, there is a greater likelihood that the flights you want will be displayed with a Red “Select” button that will prevent you from booking the flights you really need.
2. Send an email to Missy Lee that contains a detailed flight itinerary, including the ticket price(s), for the flights you want. As always, be mindful of the cost when choosing your flights. Be sure to include the name of the conference you will be attending in the email. She will then contact a local university-approved travel agency to book the tickets for you and send you the email confirmation with your flight details. If it is the **first** time your OU travel card has been used to book airline tickets, Missy will also need the following information from you:
 - OU travel credit card number, expiration date (month/year), and 3-digit security code from the back of the card
 - Full date of birth (month/day/year)
 - Cell phone number
 - Passport number, expiration date, country of issuance for travel outside the U.S.

The travel agency will save the above information in their system and it should not be necessary to provide the above information to Missy for any future flight reservations.

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AIR FARE: (continued from previous page)

3. The OU travel card can be used to book airline tickets through another online travel agency such as Orbitz, Kayak, Priceline, etc.
 - Flights purchased online *must cost the same or less than what the tickets cost to purchase through a university-approved travel agency. Email the detailed flight itinerary and cost of the tickets you would like to purchase online to Missy Lee can contact the university-approved travel agency to see what their price is for the tickets is.* If the online tickets cost less than the university-approved travel agency's price, then you can purchase the tickets online.
4. You can use your own personal credit card to purchase airline tickets.
 - Charging tickets to a personal credit card should *only* be used if:
 - a. Part of the air travel is for personal reasons. For example, you need to fly to your cousin's wedding in another city before or after OU-related meeting/conference you are attending. **Please be aware that you cannot be reimbursed for more than what airline tickets would have cost to fly directly to and from the meeting. Send an email to Missy Lee to find out what the ticket price limit is for airline tickets directly to/from the meeting.**
 - b. You have applied for an OU travel card but have not received it at the time the flights need to be booked to attend the meeting.
 - *Be sure you have added your personal credit card number to your personal profile in Concur to avoid having a system error generated if no personal card number is found.*

REGISTRATION FEES: The OU travel card can be used to pay conference registration fees in advance only if the conference sponsor provides written verification that states their registration fee policy meets the following three criteria:

1. They do not accept purchase orders for registration fees, and
2. If for some reason the entire conference is cancelled, the conference sponsor will provide a 100% refund of the registration fee, and
3. If for some reason the original registrant is unable to attend the meeting, another University of Oklahoma employee can be substituted to attend in your place at no additional charge.

Sometimes the above registration information can be found on the conference web site. If so, please print that information out or save the web page that contains their registration fee policies; it will have to be downloaded as part of the "Event Information" pdf file that must be added as an attachment to the Expense Report that is submitted to reimburse your travel expenses after the conference is over.

If the registration policy is not available through the conference web site; it will be necessary to contact the conference sponsor via email and ask them to send an email to confirm that their registration fee policy meets all three criteria listed above. Be sure to save the written confirmation because it will have to be downloaded as part of the "Event Information" pdf file that must be added as an attachment to the Expense Report that is completed after the conference has ended.

It may happen that the conference accepts purchase orders, but there is not enough time before the early-bird advance registration deadline. In that case, only criteria (2) and (3) need to be met. Again, be sure to save the written confirmation because it will have to be downloaded as part of the "Event Information" pdf file that must be added as an attachment to the Expense Report that is completed after the conference has ended.

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MEMBERSHIP FEES: DO NOT USE YOUR OU TRAVEL CARD TO PAY FOR MEMBERSHIP FEES!! THIS IS THE POLICY OF OU'S FINANCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT.

- IEG's general policy regarding membership fees, based largely on University regulations, is:
 - a. *It is the OU employee's responsibility to pay for their personal membership fees from their own personal funds.* The membership belongs to the employee and goes with the employee if the employee leaves OU to go to another institution. IEG will pay for the conference registration, but the employee must pay their own membership fees.
 - b. In rare cases, the membership fee is quite substantial. Recognizing this, Dr. Zhou has in a few instances agreed to have IEG cover the cost of the membership and the registration fee. However, the combined cost of the membership plus the conference registration fee must always represent a substantial savings to the University compared to the cost of the Non-Member registration fee alone.
- Again, you must use your personal credit card to pay for membership fees, even if Dr. Zhou has agreed to have IEG cover the cost of the membership.
- Be sure to save your membership payment as a pdf file to be attached to the Expense Report that must be filed when the conference has ended.
- The University has almost always agreed to pay the cost of membership plus registration fee if the cost represents a substantial savings compared to paying the Non-member registration rate. However, *please be aware that if the OU's Financial Services department does not consider the difference in cost to be a substantial savings, you might not be reimbursed for the cost of the membership.*

HOTEL/LODGING: The OU travel card can be used to pay for hotel expenses related to OU business such as attending a meeting or conference. There are three types of lodging:

- **Designated Hotel.** A designated hotel is a hotel that has been specifically designated by the conference sponsor. In some cases, such as ASM Microbe or ESA, the conference has designated multiple hotels. YOU MUST USE YOUR OU TRAVEL CARD TO BOOK YOUR HOTEL RESERVATIONS DIRECTLY THROUGH THE CONFERENCE WEB SITE OR DIRECTLY THROUGH THE HOTEL IF RESERVATIONS CANNOT BE MADE THROUGH THE CONFERENCE WEB SITE. YOU CANNOT BOOK A DESIGNATED HOTEL FROM WITHIN CONCUR.
- **Agency-Sponsored Designated Lodging.** In some cases, the meeting sponsor has not made arrangements for a specific designated hotel for the meeting, but they will offer suggestions as to recommended hotels. If this is the case,
 - a. Go ahead and use your OU travel card to make a hotel reservation at one of the suggested hotels.
 - b. Contact Missy Lee for an Agency-Sponsored Designated Lodging Form. This form will need to be signed by Dr. Jizhong Zhou, Dr. Zhili He or Dr. Liyou Wu. *The signed form will also need to be included as part of the "Event Information" pdf file that is attached to the Expense Report that is entered in Concur when the trip has concluded.*
- **Hotels that fall within the US State Department's Federal Maximum Allowable Rate.** If no hotel has been designated by the meeting sponsor or suggested as a recommended hotel for the meeting, then you must:
 - a. Stay in a hotel that costs no more than the federal maximum allowable rate for the city the hotel is located in.
 - b. Go to <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104877> or <http://www.gsa.gov> to confirm the maximum allowable lodging rate for the city you will be staying in before you book your hotel.

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PER DIEM: Per Diem refers to expenses incurred for daily meals and incidental expenses during travel.

- Use of the OU travel card to pay for you meals is not recommended for the following reasons:
 - a. You will most likely receive less per diem reimbursement than you would if you claim the standard federal per diem rate.
 - b. Some restaurants can be very slow in sending transaction documentation to the credit card company. If there are any pending transactions on your OU travel card, the Expense Report filed after the trip is over can't be entered in Concur until the OU travel card company has received that information from the vendor, which will delay any reimbursement that may be due to the OU employee.
 - c. If the cost of meals charged to your OU travel card exceed the federal maximum allowable per diem rate on any single day, the cost overrun will be deducted from your OU pay check!
- Go to <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104877> or <http://www.gsa.gov> to confirm the per diem rate for the city you will be staying in.
- The OU travel card can never be used to pay for group meals or for meals for someone any other than yourself.
- If a situation arises where it is necessary to pay for a group meal, you must use a personal credit card or personal funds to pay for this. You must turn in the itemized receipt, a brief description as to the purpose of the group meal, and a complete list of the names those who attended the group meal to Missy Lee. She will process the OU Food & Beverage form to reimburse this expense as a separate expense. *This type of expense is never submitted for reimbursement via the Expense Report that is entered in Concur after the meeting has ended.*
- A note about group meals paid on your personal credit card: The current maximum allowable rates per person, per meal are:
 - a. Breakfast - \$15 per person
 - b. Lunch - \$25 per person
 - c. Dinner - \$50 per person
- You **MUST** keep record of and report any meals that were provided by the meeting sponsor or someone other than yourself. This means keeping track of the which meals were provided (breakfast, lunch and/or dinner) and the date the meal was provided. Please note that a light breakfast such as pastries, fruit, yogurt, etc., is considered a “continental breakfast” and is not considered as a provided meal. *ALSO note that if the meeting sponsor did provide a meal and you chose to eat elsewhere, the meal provided by the meeting sponsor must still be considered as a provided a meal.*
- Any meals provided by the meeting sponsor or paid for by someone other than yourself will be deducted from your daily per diem rate.

MILEAGE: OU will reimburse mileage for use of your personal vehicle for trips that are for OU-related business. The current mileage reimbursement rate as of January 2016 is \$.54 per mile.

- The mileage reimbursement rate is set by OU's Financial Services Department on a yearly basis. The rate often changes from year to year. For the current mileage reimbursement rate, go to the following web site: <https://ou.edu/controller/fss>
- The Concur travel system should automatically calculate your mileage reimbursement at the current rate when the Travel Request and/or Expense Report is prepared.
- ***When you are claiming mileage for the use of your personal vehicle, you must keep record of the full street address, city, town and, if known, the postal code for each place you departed from, each place you traveled to, and each place you returned to. You will need this information when you enter a Travel Request and/or Expense Report in Concur.***

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MILEAGE: (continued from previous page)

- If you are considering using a personal vehicle to travel outside the State of Oklahoma for OU-related business, please be aware that the cost of using your personal vehicle for travel **must cost less than what it would have cost to purchase coach air fare to the same location. It must be shown that it was less expensive to drive than to fly. If the mileage cost more than the airfare, you will only be reimbursed up to the amount of the airfare cost.** Send an email to Missy Lee with the departure/return dates and city/state of your planned travel and she will contact a university-approved travel agent to get a coach airfare quote (CAF) for cost comparison purposes.
- In certain cases where it is deemed necessary to travel outside of Oklahoma using a personal car—for example, if samples and/or equipment must be transported to and/or from Dr. Zhou's lab—the full mileage can be reimbursed regardless of how much it would have cost to fly.

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION: The OU travel card can be used to pay for local transportation costs related to OU business such as:

- Airport shuttle expense between Norman/OKC and between the airport and hotel of the meeting/conference site. Shuttle is recommended over taxi whenever possible due to cost.
- Taxi expenses to travel to/from the airport, hotel, off-site meeting locations and return to Norman. Again, taxi is least recommended due to cost, but is acceptable if it's truly the best option or other local travel options aren't available.
- Subway to hotel, airport or other meeting location.
- Train to/from hotel, airport or other off-site meeting locations.
- Bus to/from hotel, airport or other off-site meeting locations.

Please be aware that some forms of public transportation like subways don't always give you a return receipt. It is your responsibility to keep track of the date and how much each ticket cost when this happens! It will make it much easier to identify the expense on your Concur Expense page so that you can attach that expense to the Expense Report that must be filed when the trip has completed.

RENTAL CARS: The OU travel card can be used to pay for rental cars, but *with STRONG cautions:*

- OU's Financial Services does not allow the OU travel card to be used for local travel in and around Norman. This means within Norman and surrounding areas such as Oklahoma City, Purcell, or Washington, OK. You must use your personal vehicle or a vehicle rented through OU Fleet Services for this type of travel.
- If you do not want to use your personal vehicle for local travel, then **YOU MUST USE OU FLEET SERVICES.** The driver of the vehicle must be an employee that is paid directly through OU and the driver must be the one to arrange for the rental of the vehicle because it is an online process requesting information detailed information that only the driver can provide. Send an email to Missy Lee for complete procedures on how to rent a vehicle through OU Fleet Services and to request the department number that should be billed for the rental/fuel costs.
- The OU travel card to rent a car at a conference meeting site, but *you will be required to provide a written justification as to why the rental car was necessary when you complete the Travel Request and/or Expense Report that you submit in Concur.* Examples of justification could be for things such as a.) the nearest airport and the conference site are located many miles apart, 2.) distance between the hotel and the conference site is substantial, c.) your return flight was cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances and it was necessary to travel to another city to catch an outbound flight or 4.) it was less expensive to use a rental car to travel to/from the hotel and the meeting site than it would have been to take a taxi or other local form of transportation.

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IMPORTANT MISCELLANEOUS NOTE

*In addition to your OU travel card, it is **strongly** recommended that you take a personal credit card with you when you travel. For reasons unknown, certain travel charges—even those that seem perfectly allowable—will come back as “Declined” on your OU travel card. Be prepared and have another method of payment available to you when you travel!*