



Travel Expense Policy

Category: Financial;

Jurisdiction: Vice President, Administration and Finance; Board Finance & Operations Committee;

Approval Authority: Board of Governors;

Established on: July 1, 2005;

Amendments: November 1, 2005; August 15, 2007; March 31, 2012; January 30, 2015; March 2, 2017 (effective May 1, 2017); February 5, 2021.

A. Policy:

Recognizing that individuals may be required to travel from time to time on University-related business, it is the policy of Lakehead University to reimburse faculty, staff, and other individuals for reasonable travel expenses associated with the various operations of the University.

This policy applies to travel expenses chargeable to operating budgets, ancillary operations, research, trust funds and any other accounts or projects administered by the University.

It is the responsibility of individuals with budget signing authority to ensure that Travellers, whose expenses are to be charged to one of their accounts, are familiar with the University's Travel Expense Policy prior to taking a trip. Pre-trip authorization will ensure health and safety and other insurance coverages are maintained while the Traveller is travelling.

Note: Individuals and organizations eligible for reimbursement under this policy will be referred throughout by the word "Travellers".

B. General:

1. Personal Expenses

Only expenses related to University business are covered by this policy and expenses of a personal nature will not be reimbursed. Some examples of the most common ineligible expenses include personal entertainment, sight-seeing and side trips. Expenses for a spouse or other individual accompanying the Traveller will not be reimbursed.

2. Sponsors or Funding Agencies' Policies

Where sponsors or funding agencies have their own travel expense policies, the policies of these bodies will have precedence providing the University agrees to this arrangement in advance. If sponsors or funding agencies do not have travel expense policies or if certain matters are not included in their policies, the Lakehead University Travel Expense Policy will prevail.

When contemplating travel funded by external agencies, it is important to understand the guidelines that must be followed. A review of the agency policy guidebook or terms of contract will usually indicate the guidelines. If it is unclear which travel procedure should be adhered to, contact Financial Services for clarification.

If extensive travelling is anticipated (for example, a three-month field trip), the Traveller should contact Financial Services in advance of departure to avoid any delays in obtaining an advance and to establish the appropriate method of reporting expenses.

3. Billing to Outside Agencies

Where all or a portion of travel expenses are to be paid by a third party, the employee or their supervisor should provide appropriate details to Accounts Receivable in Financial Services who will prepare and forward a University invoice to the funding organization.

[\(http://finance.lakeheadu.ca/forms/\)](http://finance.lakeheadu.ca/forms/)

4. Currency

All Travellers will be reimbursed in Canadian funds equivalent to the actual expenses incurred. Expenses must be listed on the Travel Expense Statement in the currency that was used for the actual expenditures.

Because exchange rates can change daily, Financial Services asks that the Travellers provide proof acceptable to Financial Services of the exchange rate they have incurred on individual expenses during their travel. If proof cannot be provided, Financial Services will use the rate provided by the Bank of Canada (BOC) or, in the case of USD, the weekly rate provided to Lakehead University from RBC. Financial Services will use the weekly rate closest to the transaction date of purchase. It is to the advantage of the Traveller to provide the actual exchange paid on expenses because the BOC and Lakehead University rates are normally lower.

Travellers who reside in the U.S.A. and are not employees of the University may accumulate expenses in U.S. dollars on the Travel Expense Statement. A U.S. cheque for the total amount claimed may be requested.

Travellers who reside outside of Canada and the U.S.A. and are not employees of the University can request a bank draft.

In all cases, the University accounts will be charged in equivalent Canadian dollars.

C. Procedures and Guidelines:

1. Summary

Since all travel is paid on a "reimbursement basis" and travel agencies are not able to bill the University directly for airline tickets, Travellers will be required to provide some means of payment at the time of booking (or ticketing). In this regard, a US Bank Corporate Card is available for University employees. Details on the University's US Bank Corporate Card program are available from [Financial Services](#). While University employees are personally responsible for all charges made against their card, the University guarantees that Travellers will be promptly reimbursed for all monies owing upon the timely submission of the approved Travel Expense Statement.

A Traveller shall adhere to the following general procedures for travelling on University business:

- a) Prior to making travel arrangements, acquire approval for the trip from the appropriate signing authority using an electronic request available on the Concur Expense system (please see Section D: Reporting Procedures & Approvals), or the Travel Authorization Form (paper-based process) available on the Lakehead University website. The immediate supervisor must ensure that regular duties will be maintained during the absence, that the travel is appropriate, and that the necessary travel funds are available. Approval will ensure that health and safety and other insurance coverages are maintained while the employee is travelling.
- b) Make travel arrangements (airline bookings, hotel accommodation, etc.) as early as possible in order to take advantage of any available discounts.
- c) Acquire appropriate receipts during the trip to support expenditures.
- d) Prepare travel expense statement. Electronic claims will be processed through the Concur Expense system. For paper-based claims, attach appropriate receipts and ensure the statement is approved by the appropriate signing authority, within 10 working days of completing the trip. Completed paper-based claims are to be forwarded to Accounts Payable in Financial Services.
- e) The use of electronic travel expense claims will require the Traveller to retain all the original receipts and documents supporting their expense claims for seven (7) years. Paper-based travel claims with all original receipts will be housed within Financial Services.

2. Air Transportation

- a) University employees travelling on University business must make their own travel arrangements.
- b) Air travel should be via the most economical and direct route.
- c) The original stub of the airline ticket or some other form of proof of travel must be attached to the travel expense statement. When using an e-ticket, the invoice and the boarding passes, if available, must be submitted.
- d) Economy (coach) class will be considered the standard option. Pre-approval from the President, Provost or the responsible Vice-President of the University will be required for any other type of fare (e.g. business class). Considerations for making

decisions will be based on circumstances such as accommodation, length of travel, and health and safety.

3. Ground Transportation

a) Use of Personal Automobile

When it is necessary to travel out of town by personal car, refer to Lakehead University's Use of Personal Vehicle for Business policy.

b) Automobile Rental

- i. Generally, University employees should make their own arrangements for automobile rentals. A listing of car rental rates in major centres is available from the [Financial Services Procurement website](#). The original receipt from the rental agency must be attached to the travel expense statement for reimbursement.
- ii. Employees of the University should charge the rental to their US Bank Corporate Card. One of the benefits of charging the rental to the US Bank Corporate Card is that the daily Collision Damage Insurance (excluding liability and bodily injury) charge may be waived. Insurance coverage provided by the US Bank Corporate C Card covers small to mid-size vehicles (up to seven seats, no trucks) for periods up to 48 consecutive days and the rented vehicle cannot be towing or pulling. Lakehead requires drivers to be at least 21 years of age but drivers may be subject to a higher age requirement depending on the rental provider. The insurance provided by the US Bank Corporate card requires that the cardholder pick up and return the rental vehicle. Other driver restrictions may be in place depending on the rental agency being used.
- iii. Lakehead University will not reimburse Travellers for insurance coverages available through the University's credit card program.
- iv. Rental terms greater than 31 days should be contracted through an electronic purchase order in compliance with Lakehead University's Purchasing Policy.

c) Taxi, Limousine, Bus

Receipts for these services are required unless the cost is less than the amount shown on Appendix A, under Incidental Expenses.

4. Accommodations

- a) University Employees are responsible for making their own accommodation arrangements.

The University enjoys preferred rates with hotels in most major centres and therefore, their employees are encouraged to use such facilities. A listing of hotel rates in major centres is available on the [Financial Services Procurement website](#).

- b) Reimbursement for hotels, motels and other lodging will be limited to reasonable amounts in the particular circumstances and should not exceed the single occupancy rate. Itemized receipts are required. Travellers should give due consideration to location and economy prior to making arrangements for accommodations.
- c) Claims for private accommodations with friends or relatives in lieu of hotels, motels or other lodging will be reimbursed at the rate set out in Appendix A.

5. Meals

Expenses for meals excluding alcoholic beverages will be reimbursed. A meal per diem up to a maximum of the ceiling amount as outlined in Appendix A may be claimed.

Meals included in a conference fee or registration fee should be shown as a conference or registration expense. The respective meal allowance will be adjusted accordingly.

The cost of meals associated with hospitality is not to be included with travel-related expenses. A separate hospitality expense claim will have to be completed in accordance with the Hospitality (Entertainment) and Working Expense Policy.

6. Travel Insurance

Flight cancellation insurance is an allowable expense for international travel and should be obtained when there is a possibility that the Traveller may be unable to travel or when the ticket purchased is "non-refundable". A receipt is required. Expenditures for air travel accident insurance will not be reimbursed.

Health care insurance (e.g. Blue Cross) for travel outside Canada is allowable for Travellers who are not regular full-time employees of the University. While full-time University employees are covered under existing insurance coverage, additional supplemental coverage may be

claimed. If a private vehicle is used on approved University business, refer to Lakehead University's Use of Personal Vehicle for Business policy.

7. Incidentals

Reasonable small expenditures where it is either impractical or impossible to acquire receipts may be claimed. Such expenditures would include such items as meter parking, coin telephone, subway tokens, reasonable gratuities for baggage assistance, etc. (See Appendix A for maximum amount).

8. Entertainment

The cost of entertainment is normally considered a personal expense and is ineligible for reimbursement.

9. Prepaid Travel & Travel Advances

Costs will be reimbursed in advance of travel for expenses incurred in order to obtain discounts (e.g. airline tickets purchased in advance in order to obtain discounted pricing). Travel advances will not be given to Travellers unless the funds are required for goods or services that cannot be paid for by a credit card, or if extensive travelling is anticipated (for example, a three-month field trip). In both of these instances the request for funds must be made by an electronic Request using the Concur system or accompanied by a completed Travel Authorization Form for paper-based claims.

All advances must be cleared by submitting a Travel Expense Statement within 10 working days of completing the trip. If an amount is to be returned to the University, the Traveller shall do so via a payment method acceptable to the University within 20 working days of completing the trip. .

In the event that a trip for which a travel advance was provided is postponed or cancelled, a refund of the advance should be forwarded within 20 working days of the date of such cancellation or postponement to Accounts Payable in Financial Services.

Any payments by a Traveler to Lakehead University pursuant to this paragraph 9 shall be made via a payment method acceptable to the University.

D. Reporting Procedures & Approvals:

1. Travel Expense Statement

a) Electronic Based Reports (Concur System)

- i. The Traveller must submit an electronic Request using the Concur Expense System prior to any expenses being incurred. Using a pre-determined work flow, the electronic system will seek the appropriate approval and notify both the approver and the Traveller as to the progress of the Request and the resulting expense claim. Using electronically captured receipts, the expense claim is submitted using the Concur Expense system, giving the Traveller the option of entering expenses as they occur or after the travel has ended. The use of electronic travel expense claims will require the Traveller to retain all the original receipts and documents supporting their expense claims for seven (7) years.

b) Paper-Based Reports

- i. The University [Travel Expense Statement Form](#) AND [Travel Authorization Form](#) shall be submitted to Accounts Payable in Financial Services no later than 10 working days after returning from a trip. These expense statements must be properly itemized and appropriate original itemized receipts (photocopies are not acceptable) must be attached. They should also identify the University budget account to be charged and are to be approved by the appropriate budget signing authority. Separate expense statements should be submitted for each trip.
- ii. The University will not reimburse expenses for travel expenses that are older than 6 months.

Note: Reimbursement of expenses does not itself constitute final approval and all expense statements are subject to audit and subsequent adjustment if necessary.

2. Signing Authorities

- a. Normally the signing authority is the individual responsible for the budget account to be charged. The individual approving the expense statement is responsible for ensuring that the expenses are for University purposes and

comply with this policy. Signing approval limits are the same as those specified in the [Approval Authority Policy](#).

- b. Expenses incurred by the grantee or principal investigator of a research grant or contract shall be approved by their department Chair/Director. Such approval will provide the necessary audit verification that the expenses incurred conform to the policy guidelines but will not restrict the grantee or principal investigator from deciding whether a particular trip is appropriate.

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES MAY A TRAVELLER AUTHORIZE THEIR OWN TRAVEL EXPENSES.

Policy Interpretation

Associate Vice-President Financial Services is responsible for clarifying all aspects of this policy as required.

Vice-President (Administration & Finance) will review this policy within three years to determine whether amendments are necessary.

Appendix A

Effective Rates

Meal Per Diems (Maximum including taxes & gratuities; no detailed receipts required.)

Breakfast: \$ 20.00

Lunch: \$ 20.00

Dinner/Supper: \$ 50.00

TOTAL: \$ 90.00

Rates established for international travel by the National Joint Council (NJC) will be applied to all travel outside of Canada and the United States. Rate can be found at: http://www.njc-cnm.gc.ca/directive/app_d.php?lang=eng

Mileage Rates

Per Kilometre .55

Accommodation with Friends or Relatives

\$50.00 CAD per night for stays in Canada/ \$50 USD for stays in the United States

Incidental Expense

Actual individual expenditures of under \$17.00

Review Period: 3 years;

Date for Next Review: 2024;

Related Policies and Procedures: None;

Policy Superseded by this Policy: Travel & Hospitality Expense Policy – March 31, 2012.

The University Secretariat manages the development of policies through an impartial, fair governance process, and in accordance with the Policy Governance Framework. Please contact the University Secretariat for additional information on University policies and procedures and/or if you require this information in another format:

Open: Monday through Friday from 8:30am to 4:30pm;

Location: University Centre, Thunder Bay Campus, Room UC2002;

Phone: 807-346-7929 or Email: univsec@lakeheadu.ca.