NSULA TRAVEL POLICY:

Internal Travel Policy & PPM49

Effective July 1, 2026

Contents

I. INTRODUCTION

I.1 Purpose:

This Travel Policy is to provide guidelines for individuals incurring business travel expenses on the State's behalf.

I.2 Objective:

Ensure all travelers have a clear and consistent understanding of policies and procedures for business travel.
Provide State Travelers with a reasonable level of service, comfort, and safety at the lowest possible cost.
Maximize the organization's ability to negotiate discounted rates with preferred suppliers and reduce travel expenses.

I.3 Goal:

To provide necessary travel training for state agencies to ensure compliance with the travel policy.

I.4 References

General Travel Policy – Revised Policy and Procedure Memorandum No. 49 (PPM49), Travel Rules and Regulations, Statutes, Executive Orders, Mandates, and NSU Internal Procedures.

- State of Louisiana Division of Administration Travel Website https://www.doa.la.gov/doa/ost/
- State of Louisiana Division of Administration Travel Policy https://www.doa.la.gov/doa/ost/ppm-49-travel-guide/

I.5 Responsible Area

All Budget Unit Heads

The University has delegated the authority to approve travel to the traveler's Budget Unit Head, Approving Agent, Vice President and President.

All official University travel should be authorized before travel commences, regardless of the amount requested. Therefore, each employee/traveler will complete a Request for Authorized Travel, which is reviewed and approved by Budget Unit Head, Approving Agent and Vice President/President (if applicable). The Request for Authorized Travel can be signed electronically.

The employee's supervisor is responsible for ensuring that adequate funds are available prior to signing and approving travel.

If the employee does not intend to seek reimbursement, this document should be processed for insurance purposes only, so the employee and Budget Unit Head/Supervisor will have proof they are on official University business.

During official visits by prospective students or prospective employees, a RAT is only necessary if an existing employee is traveling outside of their official domicile. The mileage rate for students nor prospective employees' reimbursement shall not exceed the IRS standard mileage rate.

II. DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

Accountholder/Cardholder – terminology used to reference the employee that has been issued a Travel Card or account holder/authorized user of the CBA.

Allowance – Maximum amount allowed for travel expenses while traveling on official state business.

Approver – The cardholder's supervisor or the most logical supervisor that is at least one level higher which would be most familiar with the business case and appropriate business needs for the cardholder's transaction and is responsible for approving transactions on-line and signs both the cardholder's billing cycle log and monthly statement.

Authorized Persons

a) Advisors, consultants, contractors, and other persons who are called upon to contribute time and service to the state who are not otherwise required to be reimbursed through a contract for professional, personal, or consulting services. (Contractors are not exempted from paying state sales taxes; therefore, if a contractor is working on behalf of an agency, the agency may reimburse them for the state sales taxes.)
b) Members of boards, commissions, and advisory councils required by federal or state legislation or regulation.
c) Persons authorized to travel for official state business as deemed by the department head or his/her designee.
d) College/University students must be deemed authorized travelers by the higher education entity head or his/her designee to be reimbursed for state business purposes.

Billing Cycle - The period of time between billings. For example, the State of Louisiana Travel Card closing period ends at midnight on the 8th of each month.

Booking – The final payment of a flight or hotel. It is confirmation that the T-Card has been charged the agreed amount. Note: "Reservation of a Flight or hotel room differs from booking. Reservation indicates no charge is made to your T-Card. The charge/payment is only made when "booked".

Card Abuse – Use of the card for non-approved State business purchases such as for personal purchases.

Card Misuse – Use of the card for legitimate purchases but for goods or services that are prohibited by State or internal policy (e.g., purchases for fuel for a State Vehicle when NSU participates in the Statewide Fuel Card Program)

Cardholder – A State of Louisiana employee whose name appears on the Travel Card or the person who has been assigned by NSU as the accountholder/authorizer for the CBA and is given authority to make purchases within preset limits on behalf of NSU.

Common Carrier - a business or agency that is available to the public for transportation of persons, goods, or messages.

Conference/Convention - A non-routine event for a specific purpose or objective such as a seminar, conference, convention, or training.

Controlled Billed Account (CBA) – Credit account issued in NSUs name (no plastic card issued). These accounts are direct liabilities of the State and are paid by NSU. CBA accounts are controlled through an authorized approver to provide a means to purchase airfare and lodging.

Controlled Billed Account (CBA) Accountholder/Authorizer – Person responsible for the CBA account. The accountholder/authorizer is a specific person assigned to a CBA account with the same responsibilities as that of a cardholder. Each CBA account is required to have only one accountholder/authorizer.

Department Head – President of the University.

Disputed Item – Any transaction that was double charged; charged an inaccurate amount or charged without corresponding goods or services by the individual cardholder.

Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) – An electronic exchange or transfer of money from one account to another, either within the same financial institution or across multiple institutions.

Extended Stays - Any assignment made for a period of 30 or more consecutive days at a place other than the traveler's official domicile.

Fraud – Any transaction, intentionally made that was not authorized by the cardholder or not for Official State Business.

Grant Funds – Any grant funds paid directly to an agency/university/board must follow PPM49 rules and regulations.

GSA per diem rates – U.S. General Services Administration Per Diem Rates.

High Cost Travel – Airfare, lodging, vehicle rentals, and conference registrations.

Incidental Expense – Expenses incurred while traveling on official state business, which are not allowed on the State Liability Travel Card. Incidentals include but are not limited to meals; fees and tips (porters, baggage carriers, bellhops, hotel maids); transportation between places of lodging/airport such as taxi; phone calls and any other expense not allowed in the State Liability Travel Card and CBA Policy.

In-State Travel - All travel within the borders of Louisiana or travel through adjacent states between points within Louisiana when it is the most efficient route.

International Travel - All travel to destinations outside of the 50 United States, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the US Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam, and Saipan.

Lowest Logical Airfare – The lowest logical airfare is the cheapest available at the time of booking without causing undo inconvenience. These types of airfare are non-refundable.

Official Domicile - Every state officer, employee, and authorized person, except those on temporary assignment, shall be assigned an official domicile.

a) Except where fixed by law, the official domicile of a state officer or employee assigned to an office shall be the parish in which the office is located. The Department Head or his/her designee should determine the extent of any surrounding area to be included, such as a region. As a guideline, a radius of at least 30 miles is recommended. The official domicile of an authorized person shall be the parish in which the person resides, except when the Department Head has designated another location (such as the person's workplace).
b) A traveler whose residence is other than the official domicile of his/her office shall not receive travel and subsistence while at his/her official domicile nor shall he/she receive reimbursement for travel to and from his/her residence.
c) The official domicile of a person located in the field shall be the parish where the majority of work is performed, or such area or region as may be designated by the department head, provided that in all cases such designation must be in the best interest of the agency and not for the convenience of the person.
d) The Department Head or his/her designee may authorize approval for an employee lodging expenses to be placed on agency CBA or State LaCarte or Travel Card within an employee's domicile with proper justification as to why this is necessary and in the best interest of the state.

Out-of-State Travel - Travel to any other 49 states plus District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the US Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam, and Saipan.

Passport - an official document issued by a government, certifying the holder's identity and citizenship and entitling them to travel under its protection to and from foreign countries.

Per Diem – daily allowance to cover meals and incidentals while on official state business.

Policy and Procedure Memorandum 49 (PPM49) – The state's general travel regulations. These regulations apply to all state departments, boards and commissions created by the legislature or executive order and operating from funds appropriated, dedicated, or self-sustaining; federal funds, or funds generated from other source.

Receipt – A merchant-produced original document that records the relevant details for each item purchased including quantities, amounts, a description of what was purchased, the total charge amount and the merchant's name and address (e.g. sales receipt, original invoice, packing slip, credit receipt, etc.) This must match the online transaction amount and be matched to any other related documentation regarding the transaction.

Routine Travel - Travel required in the course of performing his/her regular job duties. This does not include non-routine meetings, conferences, and out-of-state travel.

Sponsored Travel - as related to Act 200, revised August 2019, requires completion of Ethics Disclosure Form 413. It is the traveler's responsibility to properly complete and submit to the Board of Ethics in the time required. The form can be found at http://ethics.la.gov/pub/CampFinan/Forms/Form413f.pdf?20180813.

Suburb - An immediate or adjacent location (overflow of the city) to the higher cost areas, which would be within approximately 30 miles of the highest cost area.

Temporary Assignment - Any assignment made for a period of less than 30 consecutive days at a place other than the official domicile.

Transaction - A single purchase of goods or services. A credit also constitutes a transaction.

Transaction Documentation – All documents pertaining to a transaction, either paper or electronic. The documentation is also used for reconciliation at the end of the billing cycle and is to be retained with the monthly reconciliation documentation for review and audit purposes. Examples of transaction documentation include but are not limited to: original itemized purchase receipts/invoices (with complete item descriptions, not generic such as "general merchandise), receiving documents, credits, disputes, and written approvals. If travel has been approved, documentation should also contain airline exceptions, justifications, approvals, travel authorization, travel expense, etc.

Travel Period - The period between the time of departure and the time of return. Works – Bank of America's web-based system used for program maintenance, card/CBA issuing/suspension/cancellation and reporting.

Visa - An endorsement on a passport indicating that the holder is allowed to enter, leave, or stay for a specified period in a country.

III. GENERAL SPECIFICIATIONS

III.1 General Travel Policies

Business Affairs/Travel has established travel regulations within Northwestern State University, but agency regulations shall not exceed the maximum limitations set by the Commissioner of Administration. A final draft and a draft highlighting any deviations from PPM49 must be submitted via email to StateTravel@LA.Gov for prior review and approval by the Commissioner of Administration.

Department heads will take actions necessary to minimize all travel in order to carry on the department's mission.

All high-cost expenditures must be placed on the Travel Card, or agency CBA account unless prior approval is granted by the Commissioner of Administration.

Fiscal year exemption requests are submitted annually. No exemption requests are granted on a permanent basis.

Grant Funds - Any agency that receives grant funds must follow PPM49 rules and regulations and any travel regulations contained in the grant.

Travel Scholarships – If any scholarship for travel is received by a state traveler, it is the agency's and employee's responsibility to comply with all ethics laws and requirements.

Contracted Travel Services - The state has a mandatory travel agency contract to book airfare unless prior exemptions have been granted by the Office of State Travel before the airfare purchase. The contracted travel agency has an online booking system which should be used by all travelers to book airfare. Use of the online booking systems can drastically reduce the State's agent fee paid per transaction for airfare purchases.

Contracted Hotel Services - The state has a contract for hotel booking services with HotelPlanner, the use of which is *not* mandatory. HotelPlanner is provided as a convenience to state travelers when arranging official business travel accommodations. Travelers are responsible for adhering to the hotel's cancellation policy when booking through HotelPlanner. If a traveler does not cancel a hotel stay within the cancellation period set by the hotel, the traveler will be responsible for payment or reimbursing the agency. Any exceptions for hotel rates must be approved by the Commissioner of Administration. Any cancellation fees must be approved by department head or his/her designee. Hotel cancellation fees may be approved when supported by a valid business justification and appropriate documentation demonstrating the cancellation was unavoidable. Use of HotelPlanner does not exempt a traveler from adhering to U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) lodging rates, U.S. Department of State rates, or rates stated within PPM49 for the applicable travel location.

Contracted Vehicles Rentals - The state has mandatory contracts for all in-state and out-of-state business travel through Enterprise, National, and Hertz. These contracts are applicable to all authorized travelers and contractors.

A department head or his/her designee may approve a traveler's reimbursement request for a communicable disease test if the employee will be traveling on official state business. Receipts are required to be reimbursed. Hotel, meals, and internet expenses are allowed to be reimbursed per the published rates when quarantine is required for a certain period.

III.2 Request for Authorized Travel

All travel, whether routine or non-routine, must have an approved Travel Authorization prior to travel date.

All non-routine travel must be authorized with prior approvals, in writing, by the department head or his/her designee, from whose funds the traveler is paid. Agencies must maintain a file on all approved travel authorizations. Electronic files and approvals are acceptable using certified electronic signatures.

Annual travel authorizations for routine travel are allowed if determined to be in your agency's best interest. If annual travel authorizations are used, prior approved travel authorizations are still required for non-routine meetings, conferences, and out-of-state travel. Annual travel authorizations cannot be used for non-routine meetings, conferences, and out-of-state travel.

If the employee does not intend to seek reimbursement, this document should be processed for insurance purposes only, so the employee and Budget Unit Head/Supervisor will have proof the traveler is on official University business.

The employee's supervisor is responsible for ensuring that adequate funds are available prior to signing and approving travel.

For employees utilizing NSU funds for their travel, this form also serves as authorization to use the funds. When completing the ***Request for Authorized Travel*** the availability of funds should be reviewed before it is approved. Go to FGIBAVL in Banner to check your budget. If funds are not available, a Budget Revision should be processed and forwarded to Business Affairs

The President must approve international travel and travel to U.S. Territories prior to the departure date.

III.3 Funds for Travel Expenses

State Issued Credit Cards and CBA Accounts - All high cost travel expenditures must be placed on the Travel Card, or agency CBA account unless prior approval is granted from the Commissioner of Administration. The State Travel Office maintains the contract for the State's corporate card program to establish one source of payment for travel expenditures. If a supervisor recommends an employee be issued a state travel card, the employee should make the request through their agency travel program administrator.

a) The employee's corporate travel card is for official state business travel only. Personal use on the travel card shall result in disciplinary action.
b) If a vendor does not accept credit card payment for registration or lodging expenses, the department head may approve for payment(s) to be made by other means. Travelers must submit supporting documentation from the vendor stating they do not accept credit card payments. The supporting documentation must be kept with the travel reimbursement.

Persons traveling on official state business will provide themselves with sufficient funds for all travel expenses that are not covered by the Corporate Travel Card, LaCarte Purchasing Card, and/or agency's CBA account.

Group/athletic travel must be placed on the T-Card or CBA. This does not eliminate any approvals that must be granted from the Commissioner of Administration and/or the Office of State Travel.

Advance of funds for travel shall only be made in extraordinary circumstances and any excess funds should be promptly repaid upon return. Cash advances meeting the exception requirement(s) listed below must have an original and itemized receipt to support all expenditures in which a cash advance was given, including meals. Cash advances may be allowed for:

- State travelers who accompany and/or are responsible for students or athletes for group travel. For group travel advancements, a roster with signatures of each group member along with the amount of funds received by each group member may be substituted for individual receipts.
- Employees traveling to remote destinations in foreign countries.
- Registration for seminars, conferences, and conventions.

Sponsored or Scholarship Travel – travel expenses paid by a sponsor or scholarship are considered a gift per R.S. 42:1115 and requires completion of Ethics Disclosure Form 413. It is the traveler's responsibility to properly complete and submit to the Louisiana Board of Ethics in the time required.

a) Reimbursements are not allowed when the traveler does not incur any expense. This includes, but is not limited to, reimbursements for any lodging or meals provided at a state institution or agency or provided by any other party at no cost to the traveler.
b) An approved Travel Authorization must be approved prior to travel date.

Travel expenses shall be limited to the necessary expenses incurred by a traveler and must be within the limitations set by PPM49.

III.4 Requests for Reimbursement

1. Official Domicile/Temporary Assignment - Travelers are eligible to receive reimbursement for travel only when they are away from their "official domicile" or on a temporary assignment unless exemption is granted in accordance with these regulations. Temporary assignments will end after a period of thirty consecutive calendar days. After thirty days, the place of assignment shall be deemed his/her official domicile. The traveler shall not be allowed travel and subsistence reimbursement unless permission to extend the thirty-day period has been previously approved by the Commissioner of Administration.
    a. Travelers cannot be reimbursed while traveling within their official domicile.
    b. Travelers cannot be reimbursed when traveling to/from their residence when their residence location is different from their official domicile.
    c. At the discretion of the department head or his/her designee, an exception may be allowed for mileage to/from airports as stated in §1504(E)(3).
    d. The department head or his/her designee may approve an authorization for routine travel for an employee who must travel to perform his/her regular job duties. This may include traveling within the employee's official domicile if it is a regular and necessary part of the employee's

duties. Attending infrequent/irregular meetings and conferences within their official domicile are not reimbursable.

2. All claims for travel reimbursement shall be submitted on the Travel Expense Forms. Travel Expense Account Forms must be completed to include all travel details and be signed by the person claiming reimbursement and approved by his/her immediate supervisor, budget unit head, and next level approver is necessary.
3. High cost expenses such as air transportation, registration, lodging, rental vehicles, shuttle services must be placed on the state card program. The traveler must provide receipts for all items charged or billed directly to the agency.
4. Membership fees that are a part of a conference registration fee are considered allowable expenses under both the CBA and Travel Card Program. The membership must be tied to the conference registration.
5. Cost of meals, incidentals, baggage fees, taxi fares, and other travel-related expenses shall be paid by the traveler and claimed on the travel expense form for reimbursement.
6. Travelers should submit claims within 30 days of the travelers' return date. If a travel reimbursement is less than $25, it is recommended that the traveler wait until a minimum of $25 is reimbursable to submit the request unless there is no travel scheduled for the traveler in the future. Department heads may make the 30-day submittal mandatory on a department wide basis.
7. Any person who submits a claim pursuant to these regulations and who willfully makes any claim which he/she does not believe to be true and correct or who willfully aids, procures, counsels, or advises the preparation of a false or fraudulent claim, shall be guilty of official misconduct. If a traveler receives an allowance or reimbursement by means of a false or fraudulent claim, the traveler(s) involved shall be subject to disciplinary actions as well as being criminally and civilly liable within the provisions of state law.
8. Agencies shall review travel reimbursements to verify the documentation and complete processing within thirty (30) days of receiving the final reimbursement submission

IV. METHODS OF TRANSPORTATION

The most cost-effective method of transportation that will accomplish the purpose of the travel shall be selected. Official state travelers must use the most direct travel route. Among the factors to be considered are the length of travel time, vehicle operation cost, and cost/availability of common carrier services. Common carriers shall be used for out-of-state travel unless it is documented that utilization of another method of travel is more cost efficient or practical and approved in accordance with these regulations.

IV.1 Air Travel

1. All state travelers are to purchase commercial airline tickets through the state contracted travel agency, Christopherson Business Travel using the T-Card or CBA. Personal payment of flights no matter the agency/vendor will not be reimbursed by Business Affairs/Travel.
2. The State supports purchasing the lowest logical ticket. Once all rates are received, the traveler must compare costs and options to determine which fare will be the "best value ticket" for their trip. To make this determination, the traveler must consider whether or not there is a likelihood the itinerary will change or be cancelled. Depending on this assessment, the traveler must determine if the additional costs associated with changing a non-refundable ticket alters the determination of the lowest logical ticket.
3. Travelers are to seek airfare allowing enough lead-time prior to departure date when possible. The lead-time should be no less than ten (10) to fourteen (14) days in advance of travel dates to ensure the lowest fares are available.
4. The state will pay for the airfare and/or penalty incurred for a change in plans or cancellation when the change or cancellation is required by the State or there are unavoidable circumstances approved by the agency's department head. Justification for the change or cancellation by the traveler's department head is required on the travel expense form.

Unused Tickets

1. Unused tickets should always be monitored by the traveler and the agency. Travelers should ensure that any unused ticket is considered when planning future travel arrangements. Some airlines have a policy that will allow for a name change to another traveler within the agency.
2. It is the traveler's responsibility to determine if the ticket will be used in the future. Unused tickets are to be monitored every thirty (30) days.
3. If it is determined that the ticket will not be used prior to expiration and there is a possibility to transfer the ticket, the traveler must immediately advise the agency's travel administrator that the ticket is available for use by another traveler, section, or agency. The travel administrator should attempt to use the ticket for another traveler within the agency.
4. Department heads must review all unused airfare and the traveler's justification to determine if reimbursement from the traveler must be made to the agency for the cost of the unused ticket. All files must be properly documented.
5. Monitoring unused tickets can be accomplished with the unused ticket report sent to the agency's program administrator each month from the contracted travel agency. This report, in conjunction with traveler notifications while booking other flights and traveler email notifications every 120, 90, 60, 30 and 14 days prior to ticket expiration should be sufficient to reduce the loss of unused airfare.

IV.2 Motor Vehicle

1. No vehicle may be operated in violation of state or local laws. No traveler may operate a vehicle without having a valid U.S. driver's license in his/her possession. All occupants must use safety restraints. Accidents, major or minor, shall be reported first to the local police department or appropriate law enforcement agency. An accident report form is available from the Division of Administration's Office of Risk Management (ORM), should be completed as soon as possible and must be returned to ORM with names, addresses, and phone numbers of principals and witnesses. Contact ORM with questions regarding this report.
2. Operating a state-owned, non-state owned, state-rented, or state leased vehicle for business while intoxicated, as set forth in R.S. 14:98 and 14:98.1, is strictly prohibited, unauthorized, and expressly violates the terms and conditions of use. In the event such operation results in the traveler being convicted of, pleading nolo contendere to, or pleading guilty to driving while intoxicated under R.S. 14:98 or 14:98.1, would constitute evidence of the traveler:
    a. Violating the terms and conditions of use of the vehicle
    b. Violating the direction of his/her employer, and
    c. Acting beyond the course and scope of his/her employment with the State of Louisiana.
3. Personal use of a state-owned, state-rented or state-leased vehicle is not permitted.
4. A person should not be authorized to operate or travel in a state-owned or state-rented vehicle unless the person is an employee of the State of Louisiana or deemed an authorized traveler. All authorized traveler approvals must be kept on file at the agency.
5. Students and non-state employees are not authorized to drive state-owned or state-rented vehicle unless deemed an "authorized traveler" on behalf of the State by the department head or his/her designee. Authorized travelers can be reimbursed for their travel expenses. Anyone who is not an employee of the State of Louisiana must sign the Acknowledgement of Non-State Employees Utilizing State Vehicles Form prior to riding in or driving a state- owned or state-rented vehicle. This form is available on Office of Risk Management's website. Each agency is responsible for ensuring that this form and any other necessary requirements are completed and made part of the travel file prior to travel dates.
6. Persons operating a state-owned, state-rented, or personal vehicle on official state business are responsible for all traffic, driving, and parking violations. This does not include vehicle violations for registration or inspection sticker for state-owned or state rented-vehicles, as the State and/or rental company would be liable for any cost associated with these types of violations.

7. For official in-state business, travelers must use the options below in sequential order:
    a. First: A traveler should utilize a state vehicle when available.
    b. Second: A traveler should rent a vehicle from the State's in-state contracts with Enterprise, National, or Hertz for travel over 99 miles.
    c. Third: A traveler must receive prior approval from their department head to use his/her personal vehicle and be reimbursed up to 200 miles. Reimbursements must be based on the GSA rate for mileage.
8. Motorcycles/bicycles/mopeds/motorized scooters (including e-scooters) shall not be used for official State travel. No passengers may be transported, at any time on official State Travel, on motorcycles/bicycles/mopeds/motorized scooters (including e-scooters).

State Owned Vehicles

1. Travelers in state-owned automobiles who purchase needed fuel, repairs and equipment while on travel status shall make use of all fleet discount allowances and state bulk purchasing contracts where applicable. Reimbursements require a receipt and only regular unleaded gasoline, or diesel when applicable, must be used. If traveler utilizes anything other than regular unleaded gasoline unless vehicle requires diesel, or any other manufactory mandated grade, without justification and prior approval from the NSU appropriate Vice President, traveler must reimburse NSU the difference between what was paid and the state average gasoline rate. Each agency/department shall familiarize itself with the existence of the fuel/repair contract(s), terms and conditions as well as locations of vendors.
2. State-owned vehicles may be used for out-of-state travel only if permission of the appropriate Vice President has been given prior to departure. If a state-owned vehicle is to be used to travel to a destination more than 500 miles from its usual location, documentation that this is the most cost-effective means of travel should be readily available in the department's travel reimbursement files. When the use of a state-owned vehicle has been approved by the appropriate Vice President for out-of-state travel for the traveler's convenience.
3. If a state vehicle is needed or requested to be kept at the home of a state traveler overnight, the agency and traveler should ensure it is in accordance with requirements outlined in R.S. 39:361-364.

Personally Owned Vehicles

Reimbursement from official domicile to area of travel based on most direct route while in a personally owned vehicle. Mileage shall be reimbursable at the published GSA rate for mileage of $0.725 per the following:

1. NSU Employees shall be limited to a maximum of 200 miles of reimbursement per trip.
2. When trips exceed 200 miles, the employee shall utilize the university motor pool and / or rent a vehicle from Enterprise (State Contract). Employees can voluntarily elect to accept the 200-mile limit on personal vehicle reimbursement if they desire to take their personal vehicle on a trip that exceeds 200 miles.
3. Employees using a personal vehicle on official state business should ensure they are in compliance with the mandatory financial responsibility laws for auto liability insurance in the State of Louisiana or the State in which the vehicle is registered. The vehicle's policy will be primary for any accidents/incidents that occur while driving the personal vehicle on state business. Coverage provided through the Office of Risk Management would apply on an excess basis for accidents/ incidents that occur while on official state business.
4. Mileage shall be based on odometer readings from point of origin to point of return or by using a website mileage calculator or a published software package for calculating mileage such as Tripmaker, How Far Is It, MapQuest, etc. Employee is to print the page indicating a physical address, mileage and attach it with his/her Travel Expense Account.

5. When two or more persons travel in the same personally owned vehicle, only one person will receive reimbursement for the trip. The person claiming reimbursement shall report the names of the other passengers.
6. At the discretion of the Appropriate Vice President, mileage to and from airport(s) may be allowed while on official state business. This approval may include reimbursement for an employee who is being dropped off and/or picked up from airports. Personal vehicle mileage reimbursements require an odometer reading or website mileage calculator.
7. Mileage reimbursements must not exceed the cost of the lowest logical airfare for the same trip. Travelers are personally responsible for any other expenses enroute to and from the destination, which includes meals and lodging.
8. An employee shall never receive any benefits from not living in his/her official domicile. In computing reimbursable mileage, while the employee is on official state travel status, to an authorized travel destination from an employee's residence outside the official domicile, the employee is always to claim the lesser of the miles from their official domicile or from their residence. If an employee is leaving on a non-work day or leaving significantly before or after work hours, the appropriate Vice President may determine to pay the actual mileage from the employee's residence.
9. The Approving Agent may approve an authorization for routine travel for an employee who must travel in the course of performing his/her duties; this may include domicile travel if such is a regular and necessary part of the employee's duties, but not for attendance to infrequent or irregular meetings, etc. within the city limits where his/her office is located, the employee may be reimbursed for mileage at $0.725 per mile.
10. When the use of a private-owned vehicle has been approved by the appropriate Vice President for out-of-state travel for the traveler's convenience, the traveler will be reimbursed for mileage on the basis of $0.725 per mile only for a maximum of 200 miles.
11. In all cases, the traveler shall be required to pay all operating expenses for his/her personal vehicle including fuel, repairs, and insurance.
12. EXEMPTIONS:
    a. The only exemptions which would not require the Vice President's prior approval for actual mileage exceeding 200 miles is for students where the student's use of the personal vehicle is the best and/or only method of transportation available.
    b. The Chief Financial Officer's approval is required for mileage reimbursements for faculty/staff in excess of 200 miles. Prior justification as to why the use of a personal vehicle is the most cost effective should be submitted via email before the departure date.

State Rented Vehicles

All rentals through the State's vehicle rental contracts shall be made using the T-Card. Personal reimbursement of a rental vehicle is not allowed.

1. The state has mandatory contracts for in-state and out-of-state vehicle rentals for business travel with Enterprise, National, and Hertz. These contracts also apply to all authorized travelers and contractors. The state does not have international vehicle rental contracts.
2. In-State and Out-of-State Vehicle Rentals
    a. A rental vehicle should be used if a state owned vehicle is not available for all travel over 99 miles.
    b. In-state rental vehicle reservations shall not be made at an airport location for daily routine travel unless prior approval is granted by the department head. Airport rental locations charge extra fees that will add unnecessary costs to your rental charges.
    c. Charges added to the vehicle rental price must be in accordance with the mandatory rental vehicle contracts.
3. Approvals - Travel authorization forms must be approved by the department head or his/her designee prior to renting a vehicle.

4. Only the cost of an economy, compact, intermediate, or standard car us allowable unless:
   a. Non-availability is documented at the time of the reservation
   b. When a third person is traveling, a full-size sedan may be utilized; when 4 or more persons are traveling a mini-van or small SUV may be utilized.
   c. If a larger vehicle is necessary to transport oversized equipment, justification should be included on the Vehicle Rental form. The approved Vehicle Rental Form should be submitted with the Travel Expense Account form and attached to the transaction in Works.
   d. Cardholders will be responsible for the difference between the charged amount and the largest allowable size if prior approval is not given.
5. **Personal use of a state-rented vehicle is not allowed.**
6. Box trucks are available under Enterprise/National and Hertz contracts as an added value service. Please contact Business Affairs/Travel for additional information.
7. Reservations should be made a minimum of 3 days in advance. If the rental company is not able to fulfill the reservation at the requested compact or intermediate size, an upgrade free of charge to the next smallest size and lowest price necessary to accommodate the number of persons traveling.
8. If staying at a designated conference hotel or the overflow hotel(s) you may not rent a rental vehicle unless prior approval is granted from the appropriate Vice President. Rental must be for official state business needs with supporting documentation maintained in the file.
9. EXCEPTION: Employees requesting approval to drive rather than fly for official university travel must demonstrate that driving is more cost-effective than air travel. A cost comparison and supporting documentation must be submitted with the travel request for review and approval. The following documentation is required:
   a. Air Travel Comparison
      i. Flight estimate obtained through Christopherson Business Travel
      ii. Estimated taxi/Uber transportation costs from the destination airport to the conference hotel
   b. Driving Comparison
      i. Rental vehicle estimate from Enterprise
      ii. Estimated fuel costs
      iii. Hotel estimate(s) for any overnight lodging required while en route
      iv. Estimated parking costs at the conference hotel
      v. Estimated additional meal expenses incurred due to extended travel time

   Supporting documentation (screenshots, printouts, or estimates) must be provided for all flight, taxi/Uber, and rental vehicle costs to substantiate that driving is more cost-effective than flying.

   Requests to drive in lieu of flying require approval from both the appropriate Vice President and the Travel Office prior to travel authorization.

Rental Fuel

A traveler must purchase fuel with the T-Card that was used to rent the vehicle unless other arrangements have been documented and approved or with personal funds at reasonable cost from a fuel station prior to returning the rental. Original receipts and proof of rental are required for personal reimbursement of fuel expenses.

Only regular unleaded fuel should be purchased.

Pre-paid fuel options or replacement of gasoline from the rental company is not allowed. If a traveler purchases any fuel options or programs allowing the rental vehicle company to replace gasoline the cardholder is responsible for reimbursing the university.

Insurance for Vehicle Rentals within the United States

1. State rental contracts include Collision and Damage Waiver (CDW) insurance and $1 Million Liability Protection Coverage. Additional insurance billed by car rental companies is not reimbursable and must not be billed to an agency.
2. Should a collision occur while on official state business, the accident should immediately be reported to the Business Affairs/Travel and the rental company. Any damage involving a third party must be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency to obtain a police report.
3. Lost keys and unlocking services for rental vehicles are not covered under the damage waiver policy and are the responsibility of the renter.

Ground Transportation

1. Airport shuttles, taxis, and all other public transportation are not allowable T-Card/CBA transactions and are personally reimbursed with original receipts.
2. The cost of public ground transportation such as buses, subways, airport shuttles/limousines, ferries, tolls, and taxis are reimbursable when the expenses are incurred as part of approved State travel. Credit card fees charged by these services are reimbursable.
3. When staying at a designated conference hotel, only transportation between the hotel and airport are reimbursable.
4. Public transportation to and from the airport may be reimbursed with a receipt while on official state business.
5. Uber or Lyft services are reimbursable with an itemized receipt. Premium vehicles are not reimbursable. Agencies may reimburse tolls, surcharges, and fees (excluding wait time fees) when it is determined that these services are the most cost effective option. Wait time fees are not a reimbursable expense. Travelers should try to utilize the most economic ground transportation without incurring additional fees or surge pricing.
    a. Uber Black, Uber Black XL, Uber Premier, and Uber Priority are not reimbursable
    b. Lyft Lux, Lyft Lux Black, and Lyft Lux Black XL are not reimbursable
    c. UberXL and Lyft XL are reimbursable with two or more passengers
6. When travelers utilize a free shuttle service, a $5.00 tip may be allowed (no receipt is required).
7. Airport shuttles, taxis, and all other public transportation require a receipt for reimbursement. A driver's tip may be given and the tip must not exceed 20% of the total charge. The tip amount must be included on the receipt received from the driver/company.

Parking and Related Parking Expenses

1. Baton Rouge Airport - the State has contracted rates for parking in the indoor parking garage and the outside fenced parking lot at the Baton Rouge Airport. The airport parking certificate and State Employee ID must be presented to receive the contract price. If the agency does not issue a State ID, the traveler will need a business card and a driver's license along with the certificate to be eligible for the state contracted rate. Receipts are required for reimbursement of the contracted rates listed in the resource section. The airport certificate can be found on the Office of State Travel's website.
2. New Orleans Airport Parking – Travelers have the option to park at New Orleans Airport in the Surface Lot or the Airline Economy Garage. Receipts are required for reimbursement for the allowable rates listed in the resource section.
3. Travelers using motor vehicles on official state business may be reimbursed for all other parking, including airport parking except as listed above, ferry fares, and road/bridge tolls. For each transaction over $5, a receipt is required.
4. Parking charges may be paid using the Travel Card, or the CBA when such charges are included as part of an itemized hotel lodging invoice. All other parking is personally reimbursed to the traveler with original receipts.

V. LODGING

V.1 General Lodging Information

- Lodging expenses should be charged to a T-Card or CBA. Personal reimbursement of lodging expenses will be authorized by the appropriate VP on a case-by-case basis.
- Lodging rates for the 48 contiguous states are based on the GSA lodging rates for the applicable location.
- Alaska, Hawaii, and U.S. Territories shall follow the Lodging Rate of $225 per night.
- The State has contracted with HotelPlanner for hotel booking (use is not mandatory). Lodging rate, plus tax (other than Louisiana Sales Tax) and any mandatory surcharges are allowed.
- When traveling in-state on official state business and expenses are being charged to an employee's State Corporate Travel Card, or the agency's CBA account, it is the employee's responsibility to ensure state sales taxes are not charged. Traveler will be responsible for getting a credit from the vendor or reimbursing NSU T-Card account for any Louisiana State sales taxes when tax exemption form is not presented at time of check-in at hotel.
- When two or more employees, on official state business, share a lodging room, the State will allow the actual cost of the room; subject to a maximum amount allowed for an individual traveler multiplied by the number of employees per room.
- Lodging with relatives or friends may not be reimbursed.
- Tax Recovery Charges, Service fees and/or Booking fees are not allowed when booking through third party companies and will be required to be reimbursed by the employee/traveler.

Note: Hotels should always be booked one of the following ways:

- State of Louisiana Hotel Planner (Use is not mandatory)
- Conference hotel through the conference; or
- Directly with the hotel.

Note: Travelers may retain hotel reward points earned during official travel provided there is no additional cost to the University

V.2 Routine Lodging

For lodging rates, the inclusion of suburbs (see definition of suburb), shall be determined by GSA pricing for that area utilizing the zip code to determine the allowable rate.

Routine Lodging Overage Allowances: Vice President or President has the authority to give approval for actual costs for routine lodging provision on a case-by-case basis, not to exceed fifty percent over current listed GSA rates. (Note: The approval for overage of 50% by the Vice President is only allowed for routine lodging ONLY) Justification and approval must be maintained in the file to show that attempts were made with hotels in the area to receive the state/best rate. Any expense over this amount is the responsibility of the traveler.

V.3 Conference Lodging

Employees may be allowed conference lodging rate, plus tax (other than State of Louisiana tax) and any mandatory surcharge. The actual cost of conference lodging, for a single occupancy, standard room, when the traveler is staying at the designated conference hotel is allowed. (Receipts are required along with proof/documentation showing the actual conference rate)

If there are multiple designated conference hotels, the lower cost designated conference hotel should be utilized, if available. In the event the designated conference hotel(s) have no room availability, the appropriate Vice President may approve to pay actual hotel cost not to exceed the conference lodging rates for other hotels in the immediate vicinity of the conference hotel. In the event a traveler chooses to stay at a hotel, which is not associated with the conference, then the traveler is subject to making a reservation and being reimbursed within the hotel rates that will be allowed in routine lodging only per GSA pricing.

If staying at a designated conference hotel or an overflow hotel(s), you may not rent a vehicle unless prior approval is granted from the department head. Rental vehicles must be for official state business needs and supporting documentation must be maintained in the file.

V.4 Lodging Fees

Non-conference related fees - Many hotels charge mandatory fees variously termed “resort fees,” “amenity fees,” “urban destination fees,” “facilities fees” and “daily destination fees,” among others. Agencies should review these fees and see what they include before authorizing reimbursement, as they can vary from simply covering internet access to including items that may be considered gifts, like tours or tickets. If the fees do not include an item that can be considered a gift, these fees are reimbursable.

Added value charges which include, but are not limited to, early check-in fees, additional person fees, mini-bar/snack fees, gym fees, and spa fees are not reimbursable.

Tax recovery charges and/or booking fees are not allowed when booking through third party companies other than the State of Louisiana’s travel agency or its affiliated company.

Third Party Booking sites – Expedia/Travelocity/Kayak etc. charge unidentifiable taxes and fees in excess of the standard rates charged by hotels. These sites are not to be used. Any payment requests for lodging booked through a third party will be processed at the nightly rate up to the GSA rate. All other expenses will be the responsibility of the traveler.

V.5 Louisiana Sales Tax

Travelers are responsible for reimbursing the agency for any Louisiana sales taxes when the agency’s tax exemption form is not presented at time of check-in at hotel. Contractors are subject to Louisiana sales tax and can be reimbursed for this expense.

Travelers should use the tax-exempt form, Governmental Employees Hotel Lodging Sales Use/Tax Exemption Certificate (R-1376), located on the NSULA Travel website for all in-state lodging.

VI. MEALS AND INCIDENTALS (M&IE)

VI.1 Meals and Incidentals While In Travel Status

1. Meal and incidental rates are based on the GSA meal rates for the 48 contiguous states.
2. Alaska, Hawaii, and U.S. Territories shall follow the rates below:
   a. Meals – Breakfast $20, Lunch $34, Dinner $51
   b. Incidentals - $5 per day
   c. First and Last day meal and incidental reimbursements shall not exceed $82.50
3. Meal rates include taxes and tips, travelers cannot be reimbursed separately for those items. Receipts are not required for meals within these rates unless a cash advance was received.
4. Meal and Incidental Reimbursement for Single Day Travel - Meals are not eligible for reimbursement on single day travel. When an authorized traveler of the State is in travel status where no overnight stay is required, meals are not eligible for reimbursement
   a. To receive meal reimbursements on single day travel, a traveler must be in travel status for more than 12 but less than 24 hours. Reimbursements for single day travel must not exceed 75 percent of the total M&IE rate for the applicable travel location meal rates. This rate is listed as the first and last day of travel on the M&IE rates page of the applicable location.

5. Meal and Incidental Reimbursement for Travel with Over Night Stay
   a. On the first and last travel day, employees are only eligible for 75 percent of the total M&IE rate for the applicable travel location. The Meals & Incidental Expense breakdown page has a table showing the calculated amount for the "First and Last Day of Travel."
   b. Student group trips including employees required to travel with student groups (including athletic travel) are eligible for the full M&IE rate on the first and last day of travel for the applicable travel location when travel begins prior to 8:00am and ends beyond 8:00pm.
   c. Incidental expenses are limited to $5 per day for domestic travel. Domestic incidental expenses include tips for valet, porters, baggage carriers, and hotel staff.
6. **Reimbursement for alcohol is prohibited.**
7. If meals are included in a conference schedule, including continental breakfast, and/or are part of the registration fee, the traveler cannot request/receive additional reimbursement for that meal. If a traveler has dietary restrictions, agencies may allow the traveler to claim reimbursements for any meals provided at a conference, meeting, or other work function that may pose a health risk to the traveler if consumed.

VII. REGISTRATION

Registration fees for travel should be paid by one of the following processes:

- Employee's T-Card;
- If an employee doesn't have a T-Card or if the T-Card is declined due to an MCC Code, request payment directly to the vendor by attaching the registration form to a Travel Expense Account

Note: If the card is declined, do not make multiple attempts. Call Business Affairs Travel Office for assistance.

- Employee reimbursement which the employee would pay for the registration with their personal funds and request reimbursement by submitting their receipt attached to a Travel Expense Account.

VIII. PERSONAL REIMBURSEMENT FOR OTHER EXPENSES

VIII.1 Communication and Internet Expenses

1. Travelers with a state issued phone or receiving a monthly stipend are not allowed communication reimbursements for domestic travel.
2. State business communication costs may be reimbursed with receipts.
3. For international travel - up to $10 for personal calls upon arrival at each destination and up to $10 for personal calls every second night after the first night, if the travel extends several days. International charges by mobile service providers may be reimbursed with receipts and justification of the business need. If travelers are reimbursed for international charges, the traveler is not allowed to receive an allowance for personal calls.
4. Internet access charges for official state business from hotels or other travel locations are reimbursable with receipts.

VIII.2 Luggage Allowances

1. Budget Unit Head may approve reimbursement to a traveler for airline charges for one checked bag for a business trip of 5 days or less and for two checked bags for business trips exceeding 5 days. Additional luggage or equipment required for the business travel may be reimbursed with justification and receipts.
2. Travelers will be reimbursed for excess baggage charges (overweight baggage) only in the following circumstances:
   a. When traveling with heavy or bulky materials or equipment necessary for business.
   b. The excess baggage contains agency records or property.

3. The traveler should always consider shipping material to the final destination or splitting material into additional pieces of luggage to determine the most cost-effective method for the State.
4. Laundry services (Domestic Travel Only) – If traveling for more than seven days, laundry services may be reimbursed with the department head or his/her designee's prior approval. Receipts are required and may be reimbursed up to the actual cost.

IX. ADVANCES

A Travel Advance may be allowed for: meals, baggage, registration if needed. Advance of funds for travel may be approved for the employee/traveler who accompanies and/or is responsible for students or athletes.

Team/Group travel advances must be approved by:

- Athletics' Business Manager for Intercollegiate Athletics
- The appropriate Vice President for other teams/groups

If any employee/traveler refuses to complete the repayment they are subject to Recoupment of Overpayments to Employees found in the Personnel Section of the Business Affairs Policy and Procedure User Guides.

Travel advances that are not cleared (repaid) no later than the fifteenth day following the completion of travel are considered to be stale. It is your responsibility to clear your travel advances timely. If you do not clear your travel advances timely, you could be prohibited from being allowed to receive travel advances.

If a travel advance is obtained and the trip for which the advance is made is not taken, the advance must be repaid immediately. If the trip is postponed, the advance must be repaid, and a new advance must be processed. Employee/traveler must return check to Business Affairs/Travel to be voided.

If advance was more than the actual expenses, employee/traveler will be responsible for depositing the unused/non-approved balance at the Cashier's Office.

If the expenses were more than the advance the overage amount will be refunded to the Advance payee.

Tips for group meals should not exceed 20% and requires proof of payment. Proof of payment includes being machine-printed on the receipt or bank backup showing the actual charge. A handwritten tip on a receipt alone is not sufficient support.

X. AGENCY HOSTED CONFERENCES

A. Applies to both in-state and out-of-state. State Sponsored Conferences: agencies must solicit three (3) bona fide competitive quotes in accordance with the current Governor's Small Purchase Executive Order.

1. Attendee Verification: All state sponsored conferences must have a sign-in sheet or some type of attendee acknowledgment to justify the number of meals charged.
2. Conference Lunch Rate: Lunch directly billed to an agency in conjunction with a state sponsored conference shall not exceed the combined breakfast and lunch rates of the conference location. Any gratuity not required by the caterer must not exceed 20% of the total meal cost.
    1. For example – If the GSA meal rates for New Orleans are $17 for breakfast and $18 for lunch, the conference lunch rate will be $35.
3. Breakfast and dinner require approval from the Commissioner of Administration. Approvals for higher education entities can be made by the entity head or his/her designee.
4. Conference Refreshment Rate: Cost for break allowances for meetings, conferences, or conventions are not to exceed $5.50 per person. Refreshments are allowed twice per day, morning and afternoon. Gratuity may be added if refreshments are being catered.

5. Conference Lodging Allowances: Conference lodging rates should be within the published lodging rates for the conference location but cannot exceed 50% over the published rate without prior approval from the Commissioner of Administration.

XI. INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

XI.1 General International Travel Requirements

International travel and travel to U.S. Territories must be approved by the NSU President in writing prior to departure. Requests for approval must be accompanied by a detailed account of expected expenditures (such as room rate, date, meals, local transportation, etc.), and an assessment of the adequacy of this source to meet such expenditures without curtailing subsequent travel plans, regardless of type of reimbursement requested.

1. International travelers will be reimbursed based on the U.S. Department of State per diem rates for meals and lodging. On the first and last travel day, employees are only eligible for 75 percent of the total M&IE rate for the applicable travel location.
   a. U.S. Department of State Per Diem Rates -
   b. U.S. Department of State Meal Per Diem Breakdown
2. Agencies may decide to allow state travelers to be reimbursed for a Visa and/or immunizations when the traveler is traveling on behalf of the agency/university on official state business and must keep justification with the travel file. Passport reimbursements must be submitted to the department head for approval along with detailed justification as to why this reimbursement is being requested/approved.
3. Incidentals for international travel cannot exceed the listed allowance issued by the U.S. Department of State.
   a. Incidentals for international travel are reimbursable at $5 per day without receipts.
   b. Incidentals exceeding $5 require receipts and/or supporting documentation. (Not to exceed U.S. Department of State Allowance)
   c. Incidental expenses for international travel are fees for laundry services and tips given to valets, porters, baggage carriers, and hotel staff.

Insurance for Vehicle Rentals Outside of the United States

The Office of Risk Management (ORM) recommends the appropriate insurance (liability and physical damage) provided through the car rental companies be purchased when the traveler is renting a vehicle outside of the United States. With the approval of the department head or his/her designee, required insurance costs must have receipts and may be reimbursed for travel outside of the United States only.

The following insurance packages are available by rental vehicle companies which are reimbursable:

1. Collision Damage Waiver (CDW) - should a collision occur while on official state business, the cost of the deductible should be paid by the traveler and submit a reimbursement claim on a travel expense form. The accident must also be reported to the Office of Risk Management.
2. Loss Damage Waiver (LDW)
3. Auto Tow Protection (ATP)
4. Supplementary Liability Insurance (SLI)
5. Theft and/or Super Theft Protection (coverage of contents lost during a theft or fire)
6. Vehicle coverage for attempted theft or partial damage due to fire by the car rental company.

The following are examples of insurance packages available by rental vehicle companies that are not reimbursable.

1. Personal Accident Coverage Insurance (PAC)
2. Emergency Sickness Protection (ESP)

Insurance is only allowed to be charged or reimbursed when renting outside of the United States.

XI.2 International Group Travel with Students

The following addresses international travel procurement of all-inclusive group tour packages (air fare, hotel accommodations, meals and tours) for NSU students enrolled in courses for credit.

Per Division of Administration/State Travel, it is permissible to contract directly with an international travel vendor since the travel package is unique in that tours and meals are a part of the total price per person. The state's travel contractors do not provide tour packages for this type of group travel.

Posting of a bid package and advertisement on the State Purchasing web are not required. However, every attempt must be made to obtain the best bid responses when feasible.

A Sole Source Travel Worksheet should be submitted with supporting documents to Travel and Purchasing for review prior to any agreement being made between the traveler/coordinators and the vendor.

XII. PERSONAL EXCURSIONS

Personal excursions in State-owned and rental vehicles are prohibited. Personal excursions while in travel status are not recommended. In the event that it is approved by the appropriate authorities, the traveler is responsible for any additional expenses and appropriate leave time must be taken. If the trip includes a flight, the traveler should show the cost difference in the written approval request and will be responsible for any amounts in excess of the required flight for the trip.

POLICY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Northwestern State University's President and Agency Program Administrators, by signing this policy, acknowledge and accept the responsibilities in the administration of this program as outlined herein.

James T. Genovese	James T. Genovese
NSU President, Department Head Printed	Signature
Jennifer Breedlove	J. Breedlove
Agency Primary Program Administrator Printed	Signature
Stephanie Cormane	Stephanie Cormane
Agency Secondary Program Administrator Printed	Signature