

ATTENTION! If you are travelling internationally and you have not registered your travel with the Office of Study Abroad and International Exchange, please do so before beginning this process. [See the section on International Travel for more details.](#)

I've been granted funds for a trip - what now?

Whenever you travel on behalf of the U of A, a **Travel Authorization** (commonly referred to as a TA) must be entered on your behalf *prior* to the start of the trip. This authorizes University funds to be spent on your behalf or reimbursed to you at the conclusion of your trip, and creates the paperwork necessary to do so. It also grants you certain privileges, like eligibility for certain purchases to be made on your behalf by the U of A directly.

This is also the stage in the travel process where a **Travel Advance** is requested.

How do I request a Travel Authorization?

Fill out a **MEST Travel Request form** and send it to your travel arranger. This worksheet will help you anticipate your costs for a trip, and give your travel arranger the necessary information required to submit the Travel Authorization paperwork on your behalf.

Please submit the worksheet at least four weeks from your departure date to allow for processing and arrangement of travel.

What happens if I don't request a Travel Authorization prior to my trip?

Travel Authorizations must be approved before any reimbursement for a trip can take place. Failing to request a TA before the trip can be grounds for denying a reimbursement claim altogether. If a claim is denied, there is no other way to seek reimbursement.

What's a Travel Advance and how do I request one?

A Travel Advance is a direct loan to the traveler and must be repaid in full, either through justifying the way the funds were spent with receipts during the **Travel Claim** process, or by repayment of any travel advance amount still owed after reimbursement.

A traveler may request an advance to cover anticipated expenses anticipated to be incurred while traveling on behalf of the University of Arkansas (a **Travel Advance**) by checking the **Travel Advance Requested** box on the MEST Travel Request form. Travel Advances are automatically calculated based on your estimated expenses, so amounts may vary. Your travel arranger can let you know what funds are available to be requested.

Travel Advances are to be justified or repaid within 30 days after return of the trip.

I may need to seek special permissions for an aspect of this trip - how do I go about doing this?

The Travel Office is the only entity that can grant exceptions to U of A Travel Policies, and permissions must be granted and documented prior to the trip taking place. Please notify your travel arranger as soon as possible for assistance.

Examples of exceptions include: using an outside travel agency or booking agent, sharing travel expenses with another employee, travelling as a group with students, planning a trip where you return to a different destination than you started, etc.

Planning, Booking, and Paying for Your Travel

Once a Travel Authorization (TA) has been approved by the Travel Office, you are ready to begin making purchases related to your travel.

NOTE: No purchases should be made prior to Travel Authorization approval, **especially in the case of international travel**, because these purchases **will not be reimbursed** without an approved Travel Authorization in the system.

Are there any expenses that MEST can pay for on my behalf?

Yes! A limited number of expenses can be purchased on your behalf by your travel arranger:

- Airfare (using the Anthony Travel agency and/or the Concur Booking Tool* is required)
- Rental car (the U of A has required contracts with both Enterprise and Hertz)
- Conference Registration (where credit card payments are accepted; does not include membership costs)

When these expenses are purchased on your behalf by MEST, you do not incur any personal costs related to these items and do not have to wait for a reimbursement. These costs will be deducted directly from your MEST-awarded funds.

Can I make my own arrangements and pay for everything myself?

Yes, you can. However, please be mindful that the U of A has standing contracts and policies in place that will still apply to reimbursing your expenses. The Travel Office is the only entity that can grant exceptions to U of A Travel Policies, and permissions must be granted and documented prior to the trip taking place.

Travel expenses that you incur personally may only be reimbursed at the end of the trip.

I'd like to include some personal days on this trip - is that allowable?

Personal days are defined as any days that the traveler is gone and is not engaged in the business activity for which the authorization was approved. You may not use University funds to pay for expenses incurred on personal days (lodging, taxi, meals, etc.)

If you are planning to take personal days during your trip, please notify your travel arranger *prior* to setting up a Travel Authorization.

If your travel involves airfare, you will be required to provide a quote showing the cost of your flight with just the business dates included. The comparison must be done at the time of the reservation. If the inclusion of personal days results in a higher fare, the traveler will only be reimbursed up to the quote.

If transportation costs are higher with personal time added in, your travel arranger will not be able to purchase airfare on your behalf.

While Traveling

Collect receipts for all of the expenses you incur. The Travel Office requires original and itemized receipts be turned in at the end of your trip. Credit card statements will not be accepted except in approved circumstances.

What kinds of expenses are allowable?

Please turn **original hard copies** of all receipts of expenses relating to your trip. Itemized receipts are required for all expenses.

MEST funds may be used for the following types of expenses, in accordance with Travel Office guidelines (<https://travel.uark.edu/travel-policy.php>). If you have any questions, please consult with your travel arranger **prior** to purchase.

- Airfare
- Train, bus, shuttle, or other ground transportation
- Mileage (at established rate)
- Rental car
- Meals (tips not to exceed 15%; subject to Federal-per-Diem rates: <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>)
- Lodging (single room rate only; subject to Federal-per-Diem rates)
- Baggage fees
- Parking fees and toll charges
- Registration

What isn't allowed?

No reimbursement will be allowed to any traveler for:

- Personal entertainment
- Valet services (unless that is the only parking available at the hotel)
- Flowers
- Alcoholic beverages
- Personal telephone calls
- Traveler's check service charges
- Laundry or cleaning
- Printing items

This list is not exhaustive, and any other items not considered to be official business expenses may be denied reimbursement unless specifically authorized by the Travel Office and documented. If you have any questions, please consult with your travel arranger **prior** to purchase.

Reimbursements and Travel Claims

At the conclusion of your trip, your travel arranger will help you to submit a **Travel Claim** (commonly called a **TC**). A Travel Claim is a request for reimbursement for travel costs.

Travel costs may only be reimbursed through a Travel Claim, and a Travel Claim may not be issued without an approved Travel Authorization. Please be sure to request a Travel Authorization **prior** to your travel! It will speed up the reimbursement process and ensure that your request for reimbursement is not denied.

Why is the Travel Claim worksheet important?

Travel plans are often subject to change once a trip is underway, and your travel arranger may not be aware of those details. The **MEST Travel Claim** worksheet supplies the information needed to file a Travel Claim on your behalf.

Please note: Supplying the legs of your travel is absolutely crucial. In order to receive reimbursement, the location where the expense occurred **MUST** be included as a travel leg. This is particularly important in the case of international or long-term travel.

When should I submit my receipts?

Please submit your receipts and a completed MEST Travel Claim worksheet to the MEST office within 5 working days after the return of a trip. If for some reason you are unable to furnish your receipts within that time frame, please let your travel arranger know so that exceptions may be requested from the Travel Office if necessary.

What kinds of receipts should I turn in, and what should they include?

Please turn **original hard copies** of all receipts of expenses relating to your trip. A list of allowable expenses may be found on the Travel Office website (<https://travel.uark.edu/travel-policy.php>), and any questions can be addressed by your travel arranger.

Itemized receipts are required for all expenses. Confirmation emails or statements (for airfare, lodging, etc.) are not able to be used as receipts. If you submit a confirmation email or statement, please also submit a document indicating proof of payment. Likewise, credit card or bank statements are not able to be used as receipts as they are not itemized.

Once receipts are received, a Travel Claim will be filed by your travel arranger, and original receipts sent to the Travel Office for approval and processing. Once approved, any funds eligible for reimbursement will be dispersed to you.

I'm travelling internationally - are there different rules for my receipts?

If you have travelled internationally and your receipts are not in English, please consult with your travel arranger to identify what each document pertains to.

If you know you will be travelling to an area where receipts are not habitually furnished, please consult with your travel arranger about how to best document your expenses prior to your trip.

I received a Travel Advance; how does this change the reimbursement process?

If you received a Travel Advance, you must still turn in all receipts for processing.

If a Travel Advance has been issued, a traveler is required to justify the use of advanced funds with receipts showing how these funds were spent. The full total of a Travel Advance must be accounted for before any additional reimbursements may be issued.

If the full amount of a Travel Advance cannot be justified, the remaining balance will be invoiced for repayment by the Treasurer's Office.

International Travel on University Funds

If you will be traveling internationally on university business, you are required to register your trip with the Office of Study Abroad and International Exchange before you begin the basic travel process. The Study Abroad Office is first in the travel approval chain, and no University funds can be used for a trip until they have approved the trip.

You can register your travel online here: <https://studyabroad.uark.edu/faculty-and-advisors/employee-travel-registration.php>

I've submitted my travel registration – what now?

In most cases, Study Abroad will send you an email indicating that your travel location and dates have been approved. Please be sure to forward this email to your MEST travel arranger when you request a Travel Authorization.

I've been notified that my travel registration is under review. What does this mean?

Not all travel destinations are automatically approved for travel by the University. Travel to destinations with State Department Travel Warnings Level 3 and above require a petition to be submitted and a travel waiver to be signed. This process is reviewed by the International Educational Advisory Council (IEAC) which meets only once monthly, so completing this step as early as possible in the travel process is recommended.

Study Abroad will notify you by email if this is the case; please follow all of the provided instructions. It is up to you, the traveler, to file a petition for travel.

No university funds may be authorized prior to approval for your intended travel, and no funds will be reimbursed to you without this approval should you complete the trip without registering your travel or filing a Travel Authorization.

Academic Policy 1835.00 "Adhering to the University of Arkansas Overseas Travel Warning Policy":
<https://provost.uark.edu/policies/183500.php>

Questions about this process may be addressed to intltrav@uark.edu

What if I don't know all of the details of my travel yet?

You can register your travel with Study Abroad using general dates. However, these dates will need to match the dates that your MEST travel arranger uses to create your Travel Authorization. You can update your submitted itinerary by sending an email to intltrav@uark.edu.

NOTE: Unfortunately there is not a way for your MEST travel arranger to view any information that you have submitted to Study Abroad. If you update your information with Study Abroad, please also CC your MEST travel arranger.

I will have multiple destinations as part of my travel – what do I do?

Indicate these destinations and your travel dates when you register with Study Abroad.

I found it necessary to travel to another city or country while I was already abroad – what do I do?

Send an email to intltrav@uark.edu and update them on your itinerary.

If your additional location has a State Department Travel Warning Level 3 or above, please consult with Study Abroad directly and notify your MEST travel arranger of their decision. Your MEST travel arranger is not able to approve these changes for you.

I travelled to destinations I didn't list on my original registration with Study Abroad and I need to file a Travel Claim – now what?

Send an email to intltrav@uark.edu and update them on your itinerary. Understand that if there are approval issues, it may delay reimbursement of your funds.