

POLICY:	University Expenditure (Travel) Policy
Revision Date:	September 1, 2023
Sponsors/Contacts:	Vice-President (Finance & Administration) and Comptroller
Applies to:	Faculty and Staff of St. Thomas University

1.0 GENERAL

1.1 Application

This policy regulates the reimbursement of expenses from St. Thomas University to faculty and staff for reasonable expenses incurred while the employee is on approved University business. This policy also applies to business expenses incurred with respect to a guest at the request of the University.

Situations may occur where the University Policy is inconsistent with the guidelines of certain funding agencies. In the event of such inconsistencies, the guidelines of the agency will apply.

1.2 Responsibilities and Authorizations

- 1.2.1 The signing officers are normally teaching department chairs or administrative unit managers. During exceptional circumstances such as vacation leave, signing authority may be delegated to another member of the department or unit. The Financial Services Office should be notified in writing of the delegation of signing authority and the time period covered, by the department chair or unit manager.
- 1.2.2 All expenditures must be approved by the authorized signing officer for approved budget accounts. For significant expenses (e.g. travel out of Province), it is recommended that the nature and estimated expense be approved in advance by the authorized signing officer.
- 1.2.3 Individuals authorized to approve travel expense claims are responsible to ensure that the expenses are for University purposes and are in accordance with University policy.
- 1.2.4 The University reserves the right to audit travel claims, and the reimbursement of a claim does not constitute final approval. Underpayments and overpayments made to employees, once substantiated, will be reimbursed or recovered, as appropriate.
- 1.2.5 Authorization of expenditures can occur by approving one of the following:

Purchase Orders: The acquisition of goods and services from external suppliers should normally be made by a purchase order approved by the Director of Facilities Management. In order to initiate purchase orders, authorized signing officers submit a completed purchase order requisition to Facilities Management. Following the receipt of

the related goods and services in an acceptable condition, the Director of Facilities Management authorizes payment of the supplier's invoice by the Financial Services Office.

Employee Reimbursement Forms: Employees must receive the approval of required signing authorities before incurring expenditures for which they expect reimbursement from the University. Employees requesting reimbursement must submit a completed reimbursement form and supporting original receipts to the Financial Services Office. **Credit card slips, debit card slips and photocopies are not sufficient for reimbursement.** Reimbursement forms are intended to be used primarily for the payment of expenses incurred while travelling on University business and in such cases must contain a description of the purpose of the travel. Although the form may also be used for reimbursing employees for other types of expenses of a minor nature (less than \$150), goods and services should normally be acquired through the use of purchase orders. The form must be signed by the employee and approved by the department chair or unit manager. Completed forms must be submitted within 30 days of the expenditure being incurred. Payment will normally be made within 14 days of forms being submitted to the Financial Services Office. Employee reimbursement requests that are less than \$25 may be reimbursed from the petty cash fund.

Expense claims for Managers, Administrative Directors, Directors of Schools of Social Work and Education, Deans, Assistant Vice-President (Research) and Vice-Presidents require the approval of the person to whom they report. The President's expense claims require approval by the Board Chair on a quarterly basis.

Payroll Requisitions: Payroll requisitions are used to initiate payments for items such as student markers and assistants, casual wages, or honouraria. Completed payroll requisition forms should be submitted to the Payroll Officer or Financial Services for processing and payment. Forms should be submitted at least one week prior to the planned payroll date.

- 1.2.6 No expense can be claimed which will be reimbursed by a third party. In the event that expenses paid by the University are later reimbursed by a third party, the reimbursement must be refunded to the University by the claimant.
- 1.2.7 In the event that partial payment for expenses comes from an outside party, the source and amount shall be indicated on the reimbursement form.
- 1.2.8 Expenses must be listed in the currency in which they were incurred. If that is other than Canadian dollars, the equivalent in Canadian dollars is to be listed as well, using the exchange rate that applied when the claimant purchased the foreign currency. If this is not provided, a deemed foreign currency exchange will be determined by Financial Services.
- 1.2.9 Where possible, travel expense claims should be submitted once per month showing the details of each trip separately.

2.0 ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

All expenditures incurred by departments and units should be consistent with their approved budget categories and directly related to activities of the University. Policies for specific types of expenditures are covered below.

2.1 Materials and Supplies: The University has a centralized approach to budgeting for materials and supplies. However, those that are directly related to the operations of the department or unit are chargeable to its accounts. Capital expenditures e.g., equipment and computer software costing in excess of \$1,000 are not eligible expenditures from operating accounts. Such requirements are included in separate capital budget approvals.

2.2 Student Employees: See Student Employment Policy
[https://www.stu.ca/media/stu/site-content/documents/Student-Employment-Policy-with-Rubric-\(1\).pdf](https://www.stu.ca/media/stu/site-content/documents/Student-Employment-Policy-with-Rubric-(1).pdf)

2.3 Travel

The University will reimburse employees for the following costs incurred in travelling while on University business:

2.3.1 Transportation- the most efficient mode of travel will be used, taking into account time and cost considerations. Arrangements for car rentals can be made through the Office Coordinator for Facilities Management by submitting the completed purchase order requisition to Facilities Management. For current information regarding the University's preferred car rental vendor(s), please contact the Office Coordinator for Facilities Management. Car rental arrangements must include insurance coverage. Note: for best opportunity of confirming a rental vehicle, please submit the completed requisition to Facilities Management at least one week in advance of travel.

Employees using their own automobile for travel will be reimbursed at the rate of \$0.46 per kilometer. If a personal automobile is used for the sake of convenience when air transportation would have been more economical, reimbursement will be based on an allowance for airfare. Employees using their personal automobile for travelling on University business are responsible for having adequate insurance coverage (minimum \$1 million liability coverage), up-to-date vehicle registration and motor vehicle inspection.

When a privately-owned vehicle is used and mileage is claimed, only one person is permitted to claim the kilometer rate. The traveler must provide details of the destination, purpose of the trip and number of kilometers.

2.3.2 Accommodations – employees will be reimbursed actual costs for hotels, motels and other lodging based on original receipts. An itemized statement of expenses must be provided for accommodations. Employees who lodge with friends or relatives while travelling on University business may claim \$25 per night without receipts.

In the event that reservations are guaranteed, it is the traveler's responsibility to cancel these reservations if they are no longer necessary. The University will not reimburse claims for unused reservations.

Preferred rates at certain hotels may be negotiated from time to time. The Canadian Association of University Business Officers (CAUBO) has negotiated special rates for accommodations within Canada. Travelers are encouraged to check the CAUBO website to obtain a listing of participating hotels/motels.

2.3.3 **Meals** – employees will be reimbursed for meals based on the following allowances (receipts not required):

- Canada: Breakfast \$11; Lunch \$14; Supper \$25 (in Canadian funds)
- U.S.: Breakfast \$11; Lunch \$14; Supper \$25 (in U.S. funds)
- International: Breakfast \$20; Lunch \$30; Supper \$50 (in Canadian funds)

In the event of partial day travel, the per-meal allowance should be applied accordingly.

If meals are included in transportation, accommodation or conference registration, the employee must not claim meal costs.

2.3.4 **Other** – an allowance of \$10.00 for each full-day of travel may be claimed to cover incidental costs such as tips and minor miscellaneous charges. Employees will be reimbursed for other reasonable costs directly associated with travel on University business (original receipts required).

2.3.5 **Advances** – When necessary, employees may request a travel advance to cover the costs of planned travel. Requests for advances should be approved by the department chair or supervisor and submitted for processing at least two weeks prior to the planned travel date and claims should be submitted within ten days following the related travel. Financial Services will expedite the processing of travel claims in order to avoid the need for advances and the resulting additional administrative requirements.

2.3.6 **Airfare** – Air travel shall be arranged so as to incur the lowest possible airfares.

Staff members who have booked fares at less than economy price (e.g. seat sale), which necessitate staying a longer period of time, may claim the additional accommodation and meal costs so long as the overall costs savings are still realized compared to flying on preferred dates at economy rates.

Where possible, a boarding pass must accompany the expense claim form in order to confirm that travel has taken place. In the event the boarding passes are electronic, other proof of travel during designated timeframe is required, ie. invoices for hotels, conferences, etc.

Flight cancellation insurance is an eligible business travel expense.

2.4 University Hospitality/Events

2.4.1 Approved budgets for departments and units normally do not include provision for hospitality expenses. However, it is recognized that there may be instances where it may be necessary to entertain University visitors. In such cases, the following guidelines apply.

2.4.1.1 Alcohol expenses will not be reimbursed except when approved by President/Vice-President as a legitimate and documented hospitality expense.

2.4.1.2 Departmental expenses relating to employee recognition or social events are not reimbursable except for University sponsored events approved in advance by the President or a Vice-President.

2.4.1.3 Prior approval by the signing officer for the budget account to be charged to is required.

2.4.1.4 For a single visitor, reasonable reimbursement for hospitality expenses will be provided for up to a total of 4 persons.

2.4.1.5 The approval of the appropriate Vice-President is required when the hospitality costs involve 10 or more persons.

2.4.1.6 The request for reimbursement will clearly identify the University visitors/guests.

2.5 Gifts and Honouraria

2.5.1 Gifts and honouraria are eligible expenses in cases where individuals from outside the University have provided services to the University without compensation. The amount expended for gifts or honouraria should be reasonable for the particular circumstances and must be pre-approved in advance by the President or the Vice-President responsible for the department. The University does not provide honouraria to members of its Board of Governors or members of any University Boards or Committees.

2.5.2 Gifts or honouraria to employees of the University are not eligible expenses with the exception of retirement gifts. The guideline used by Human Resources for retirement gifts is \$10.00 per year of service. The University has a central budget in the President's Office to cover such expenditures when warranted.

3.0 INELIGIBLE EXPENSES

3.1 The following expenses are deemed ineligible expenses under the University Expenditure Policy:

- Alcoholic beverages except when approved by President/Vice-President as a legitimate and documented hospitality expense;
- Interest charges on outstanding credit card balances;
- Personal expenses such as mini-bar charges or in-room movies;
- Parking, traffic or other motor vehicle related fines;
- Personal long-distance phone calls during travel of a short duration;
- Air ticket redeemed from a frequent flyer program;
- Additional costs of family members or others beyond the single room rate;
- Repair/replacement for damage or loss of luggage or personal effects; lost or stolen items;
- Passports, unless explicitly required by the employee's job description or when required by the Employer;
- Personal expenses that are not required in connection with travel on behalf of the University;
- Expenses considered ineligible by a sponsoring granting agency; and
- Expenses that will be reimbursed by another funding source.

History of Revisions:

Approved by Board of Governors on January 18, 2014.

Revision approved by Board of Governors on February 28, 2015.

Revision of December 2, 2019 to reflect changes due to the 2016-2019 staff collective agreement (which was ratified by the Board of Governors on December 8, 2018) and to reflect minor changes/clarifications. Approved by the Vice-President (Finance and Administration).

Revision of May 2021 to reflect changes due to the 2019-2022 staff collective agreement and the change in threshold for capital expenditures in Section 2.1.

Revision approved by Board of Governors on October 15, 2022 – increase of kilometric rate to .46.

Revision on September 2023 to reflect the university's practice in the Gifts and Honouraria section.