



Grant-Funded Travel Policy

Responsible Office: Office of Grants and Sponsored Projects

Creation: 11/10/2025

Effective Date: 12/04/2025

This policy establishes the standards and procedures governing travel supported by external grant or contract funds administered by Fairleigh Dickinson University (FDU). Its purpose is to ensure that all travel costs are **reasonable, allowable, allocable, and consistent** with sponsor terms and federal cost principles under **2 CFR 200 (Uniform Guidance)**. The policy applies to all faculty, staff, students, and other travelers whose expenses are charged to sponsored projects.

2. Compliance Framework

This policy supplements FDU's institutional Travel and Business Expense Procedures and is specific to **grant-funded travel**. All grant-funded travel must comply with:

- [**2 CFR 200.475 – Travel Costs**](#) and applicable sponsor terms and conditions.
- [**Fly America Act \(49 U.S.C. 40118\)**](#) and permitted [**Open Skies Agreements**](#) (41 CFR 301-10.135–138).
- [**Federal Travel Regulation \(41 CFR 301\)**](#).
- [**GSA Per Diem Rates**](#) for lodging, meals, and incidental expenses (M&IE).
- [**IRS Standard Mileage Rate**](#) for use of privately owned vehicles.

These resources provide authoritative federal guidance for allowable travel expenses and compliance expectations under sponsored awards.

3. Pre-Travel Authorization and Contact

- **Mandatory Pre-Approval:** All conference travel on grant funds requires pre-approval. Please initiate the process by using this [link](#).

- **Approval Authority:** All grant-funded travel must be reviewed and approved by the Office of Grants and Sponsored Projects (GSP) prior to any travel arrangements being made. GSP's review ensures allowability, budget availability, and compliance with sponsor requirements, including Fly America and Open Skies for international travel.
- **Note:** If you do not travel as planned after drawing on project funds (e.g., prepayments, advances), you are responsible for resolving those charges immediately with GSP and Finance.

4. Local Travel – Faculty, Staff, and Students

- **Use of Personal Vehicles:** Reimbursed at the IRS standard mileage rate in effect on the travel date. Submit a Google Maps printout (or equivalent) showing the business route and distance. Commuting between home and regular work location is not reimbursable.
- **Rideshare/Taxi/Transit:** Lyft, Uber, taxi, rail, and bus are allowable when reasonable. Receipts are required showing date, origin/destination, and business purpose.
- **Tolls:** Allowable with original receipts or an E-Z Pass or other electronic toll statement documenting the business trip.

5. Conference Travel — Faculty/Staff

All airfare, conference registration, and hotel bookings should be made through University-approved vendors or online booking portal. Travelers should consult GSP or University Finance before booking to ensure compliance and use of approved channels.

Travel Advance

- **Advance Approval Required** through the Travel Authorization process.
- **Advances:** Allowed per University Finance procedures when preapproved.

Air and Rail

- **Airfare:** Economy class only. Upgrades or higher fare classes are not allowable on grant funds. Airfare must reflect the most direct and cost-effective route.
- **Baggage Fees:** Reasonable first checked bag is allowable when supported by business need.
- **Train Travel:** Allowed when cost-effective and consistent with business needs.

- **Insurance:** Purchase trip insurance for airfare and rail at booking when required by sponsor or University risk guidance. Otherwise, this is a nonreimbursable expense.
- **International Travel:** Must comply with the [Fly America Act](#) and [Open Skies Agreements](#) where applicable. Travelers must use U.S.-flag carriers unless an approved exception applies under an existing agreement. Any exception requires a Fly America Exception Certification and supporting documentation.

Lodging

- **Conference Hotels Required:** Stay at the official conference hotel. If unavailable, use a nearby business-class hotel at a comparable rate.
- **Non-Conference Hotels:** If not staying at the official conference hotel, lodging costs must not exceed the applicable [GSA rate](#) for the location.
- **Distance Rule:** Lodging is allowable when the destination is 50 miles or more from the traveler's residence and designated work location.
- **Coverage Window:** Hotel charges are covered only for the official conference period and essential travel days.
- **Short-Term Rentals Prohibited:** No Airbnb, Vrbo, or other home rentals.

Meals & Incidentals (M&IE)

- Follow [GSA M&IE per diem limits](#) for the destination and do not exceed these limits. The first and last day of travel are reimbursed at no more than 75% of the daily rate. Meals included in registration cannot be claimed separately.
- Alcohol is unallowable.
- Itemized receipts are **required** for all meals.

Ground Transportation

- **Use of Personal Vehicles:** Reimbursed at the [IRS mileage rate](#) with a **Google Maps printout** showing business mileage. Tolls and parking reimbursable with receipts.
- **Rideshare/Taxi:** Allowable with receipts.
- **Car Rental:** Allowed when necessary and cost-effective; use economy or mid-size class only unless justified. Follow University insurance guidance.

Other Guidance

- **Family/Companion Costs:** No reimbursements will be made for expenses incurred by a spouse or family member, with the single exception of

documented, sponsor-allowed dependent-care costs as specifically budgeted/approved.

- **Unallowable Personal Expenses:** Laundry service (except extended travel per sponsor rules), valet parking (when alternatives exist), entertainment, and transportation to/from personal meals not tied to business are not reimbursable.
Additional unallowable costs include, but is not limited to: airfare upgrades, alcohol, personal entertainment or sightseeing, family/companion travel (except sponsor-approved dependent-care), commuting costs, and private home rentals such as Airbnb or Vrbo.
- **Documentation:** Travelers must retain proof of attendance (badge or program) and include the conference agenda, itemized receipts, and any Fly America certification. If charges were paid with personal credit/debit card, provide redacted bank/credit statements highlighting the expense upon request if receipts alone are insufficient.

6. Conference Travel — Students

Students are strongly encouraged to confirm all travel details, including flight, lodging, and conference registration, with their Principal Investigator (PI) and GSP before booking or departing to ensure compliance and full reimbursement.

Before initiating any travel, the Principal Investigator (PI) must begin the Travel Authorization process on behalf of the student traveler. The student is responsible for providing required supporting documentation, such as conference invitations or agendas, to the PI. The PI and GSP coordinate payment for directly billed items like registration, airfare, and lodging to ensure compliance and reduce out-of-pocket expenses for students.

Approvals & Funding

- **PI Approval Required.** Student travel must directly support project aims (fieldwork, data collection, presentation).
- **No Advances:** Students are not eligible for travel advances.
- **Direct Payment Preferred:** Airfare, registration, and lodging should be paid directly by the University when feasible.

Air and Rail

- **Airfare:** Economy class only. Upgrades or higher fare classes are not allowable on grant funds. Airfare must reflect the most direct and cost-effective route.
- **Baggage Fees:** Reasonable first checked bag allowable when justified.

- **Train Travel:** Allowed when cost-effective.
- **Insurance:** Purchase trip insurance for airfare and rail at booking when required. Otherwise, this is a non-reimbursable expense.
- **International Travel:** Must comply with the [Fly America Act](#) and [Open Skies Agreements](#) where applicable. Travelers must use U.S.-flag carriers unless an approved exception applies under an existing agreement. Any exception requires a Fly America Exception Certification and supporting documentation.

Lodging

- **Conference Hotels Required:** Use official conference hotel or a comparable nearby business-class hotel if the block is sold out.
- **Non-Conference Hotels:** If not staying at the conference hotel, lodging costs must not exceed the applicable [GSA rate](#) for the location.
- **Distance Rule:** Lodging allowable when destination is 50+ miles from residence and campus location.
- **Coverage Window:** Lodging reimbursable only for the conference period and essential travel days.
- **Short-Term Rentals Prohibited:** No Airbnb, Vrbo, or other home rentals.

Meals & Incidentals (M&IE)

- Follow [GSA M&IE per diem limits](#) for the destination and do not exceed these limits. The first and last day of travel are reimbursed at no more than 75% of the daily rate. Meals included in registration cannot be claimed separately.
- Alcohol is unallowable.
- Itemized receipts are required for all meals.

Ground Transportation

- **Use of Personal Vehicles:** Reimbursed at the [IRS mileage rate](#) with a **Google Maps printout** showing business mileage. Tolls and parking reimbursable with receipts.
- **Rideshare/Taxi:** Allowable with receipts.
- **Car Rental:** Not allowed under normal circumstances. May only be permitted in exceptional cases when essential to the project, and only with prior written approval from both the Principal Investigator (PI) and the Office of Grants and Sponsored Projects (GSP).
In such cases, the rental must be for an economy-class vehicle only, and the University's insurance requirements must be followed.

Other Guidance

- **Family/Companion Costs:** No reimbursements will be made for expenses incurred by a spouse or family member, with the single exception of documented, sponsor-allowed dependent-care costs as specifically budgeted/approved.
- **Unallowable Personal Expenses:** Laundry service (except extended travel per sponsor rules), valet parking (when alternatives exist), entertainment, and transportation to/from personal meals not tied to business are not reimbursable.
Additional unallowable costs include, but is not limited to: airfare upgrades, alcohol, personal entertainment or sightseeing, family/companion travel (except sponsor-approved dependent-care), commuting costs, and private home rentals such as Airbnb or Vrbo.
- **Documentation:** Students must retain proof of attendance (badge or program) and attach the conference agenda and all itemized receipts.

7. Post-Trip Reconciliation and Submission

This section contains information required to complete your grant-funded travel reimbursement.

- **Deadline:** Submit complete expense reports within 15 days of trip end.
- **Where to Submit:**
 - **Faculty/Staff:** Submit in Chrome River.
 - **Students:** Submit via the Excel Expense Report to the Office of Grants and Sponsored Projects (GSP) after review and approval by the Principal Investigator (PI).
- **What to Include:** Travel Authorization approval, itemized receipts, conference agenda/program, proof of attendance, Fly America documentation (if applicable), GSA confirmation for M&IE, IRS mileage support with Google Maps, and required bank/credit statements (redacted and highlighted).
- **Typical Supporting Documentation:**
 - Travel Authorization Form
 - Conference registration receipt and agenda
 - Airfare or rail ticket and baggage fee receipts
 - Hotel folio and proof of payment
 - Ground transportation receipts (Uber, Lyft, taxi, parking, tolls)
 - Itemized meal receipts
 - Proof of attendance (conference badge, certificate, presentation schedule)
 - Credit card or bank statements highlighted for the applicable expenses.

- **Reference:** A downloadable **Grant-Funded Travel Reconciliation Checklist** is available on the Office of Grants and Sponsored Projects website to guide both faculty/staff and student travelers through required documentation and submission steps.