

SOUTHWESTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

Business and Financial Affairs

Travel FAQs

Scope

This document is intended to supplement the BFA-Operating Procedure on Travel. As the BFA Division receives questions, we will periodically update this document to codify responses and clarifications on travel as they may be helpful to others.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q Do I need to do a Travel Authorization Form if there will be no costs to the District?

Yes, employees need to complete a Travel Authorization and get approval prior to any travel. This includes trips with no costs, expenses paid by a third party, or all costs paid with a District credit card.

The Authorization, once approved by your supervisor, authorizes you to be off campus and is a record for workers' compensation and insurance purposes.

The Travel Authorization, once completed and approved, should be maintained in your supervisor's office records.

Q If I have two conferences as part of one trip, can I use one authorization form?

Yes, if two conferences are funded by the same budget account number, you can use one form and note both conferences on the paperwork. Often two events will be related to the same hotel and air costs, so it is easier for the employee and the processing for the traveler to use one form. If the trips are charged to different budget account numbers, you can use two forms to keep the documentation clear for the expenditures.

Q What if I can't find my travel location on the GSA site?

USA locations - GSA rates are established for the contiguous states. Most large cities are listed or you can use a ZIP code. <https://www.gsa.gov/>

Locations outside the Continental US - Using the GSA.gov link on the BFA webpage, scroll to the bottom of the page below the map. Click on ***Department of Defense rates for Alaska, Hawaii, etc.*** Then click on Per Diem and use the right side to look up rates for OCONUS (Outside Continental United States) locations such as Alaska, Hawaii, or US Territories. Enter your location and use the rate noted as "local meals" as your per diem amount.

International locations - Using the GSA.gov link on the BFA webpage, scroll to the bottom of the page below the map. On the right side, click on ***State Department Foreign rates.*** Enter your country of travel, then city if listed. Use the M&IE rate for your per diem.

Q Can I use my District credit card for meals while on District funded travel?

Individuals with a District credit card now have two choices. Note: It is recommended that you either request a per diem or charge all meals on your card.

1 – Continue to use the District credit card for meals

- Pay for actual meals while traveling.
- Keep detailed receipts to submit with the travel documentation and credit card ESM requisition to pay the cc bill.
- Must have a separate receipt for each charge.
- If a District credit card is used for more than one person, list each person’s name on the receipt.
- Your meal and related receipt can’t include alcohol.
- Receipts are maintained in District disbursement records.

Or

2 – Use the Federal Meals & Incidental Expense (M&IE) per diem while traveling

- Receive a flat per diem for each day of travel regardless of meals purchased.
 - Pay for meals personally and not use the District credit card for meals.
 - No receipts required.
 - All specifics of your meal expenditures are no longer part of District records.
- M&IE is adjusted for first & last day of travel and for any meals provided at your conference or workshop.

Q How do we pay costs for students traveling on District business?

When students are traveling to a District funded event (meeting or conference), sponsored by a District department, the department should:

- Complete a Travel Authorization Form prior to travel to document & approve the travel, funding and estimated total.
- Use the per diem rate for the Meals & Incidentals (M&IE).
- Estimate mileage using the Travel Form.
- Enter a requisition in ESM to request an advance to the student for the estimated mileage and M&IE.
 - Check to see if the student is in ESM. Enter their name as supplier. If they aren’t listed, email Purchasing at Purchasing@swccd.edu. “*Subject line – New Supplier Detail message – I am processing a travel request for student XXXXXXXX, ID # XXXXXXXX. I would like to submit a requisition in ESM. Please add this student as a supplier.*”
 - The travel advance will be sent to the administrator or faculty sponsor to be given to the student on the day of travel.
- Other travel costs, such as hotels & airfare, should be arranged by administrator or faculty sponsor.
- This applies to students traveling with an administrator or faculty sponsor. It does not apply to student travel for athletics, field trips or other student activities such as competitions.

Q How do I request an advance or payments for travel costs?

Follow the procedure on the ESM process located on the VP BFA webpage. Be sure your total requested amount is reflected on the travel form in the lower lefthand section. Please add notes if it's not clear which pieces of the claim are added together to reach the total.

Q What are the rules regarding adding travel days before or after the District approved event?

The District's Administrative Procedure AP 7400, section H. c. notes the following:

Normally, lodging expenses are reimbursed for the actual dates of the approved conference. The night before or the night the conference ends may be reimbursed if supported by a written statement explaining the necessity. Special circumstances which result in significant monetary savings, such as a Saturday night stay, may be reimbursed if supported by a written statement.

Please include a statement with your Travel Authorization and any reimbursement requests explaining the necessity of the additional travel days and related costs. This statement should be approved by your supervisor prior to attaching to your claim.

Q When is it appropriate to get reimbursed for gasoline purchase?

Gas is reimbursable if purchased for a rental car. The rental car receipt will reflect that the car was received with a full tank and returned with a full tank.

The District has a mileage reimbursement rate for the use of a personal car, which includes the cost of gas, so we do not reimburse for gas put into the employee's car.

Q What do I need to do if I am traveling to a workshop or meeting in San Diego?

A Travel Authorization Form should be completed if the travel is outside of the traveler's regular duties. This is to document and authorize the employee leaving their workplace and approve any expenses.

Local mileage is reimbursable using the mileage claim process.

A meal per diem is provided only for travel greater than 40 miles from the traveler's home or primary workplace. If the travel is less than or equal to 40 miles, meal reimbursements or per diem are not available.

SWC Policy & Administrative Procedures References:

BP/AP 7400 Travel

BP/AP 6250 Budget Management

BFA OP – Mileage

BFA OP – Travel & Mileage ESM Process