Mason Travel Q&A

Please review this list of commonly asked questions and answers prior to contacting the Travel Office.

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How do I Access the Travel Request System (TRS)

Q: How do I log in to the TRS from on-campus?
   
   A. Go to [https://travel.gmu.edu/](https://travel.gmu.edu/). Select “Traveler Login” and then enter your Mason NetID and password. In order to access the [Travel Request System (TRS)](https://travel.gmu.edu/), you are required to use the two-factor authentication process mandated by IT Services. Information regarding the 2FA may be found at [https://itsecurity.gmu.edu/2FA/](https://itsecurity.gmu.edu/2FA/)

Q: How do I log in from off-campus?
   
   A. When accessing the [Travel Request System (TRS)](https://travel.gmu.edu/) from a non-network computer or laptop, users must first initiate and sign in to VPN access. VPN may be required when connected via wireless on-campus locations. For more information on connecting to the Mason VPN click here. Once VPN is active, go to [https://travel.gmu.edu/](https://travel.gmu.edu/). Select “Traveler Login” and enter your Mason NetID and password. In order to access the [Travel Request System (TRS)](https://travel.gmu.edu/) you are required to use the two factor authentication process mandated by IT Services

Q: How do I set up a profile for myself in the TRS?
   
   A. Open a browser (Firefox recommended) and enter [https://travel.gmu.edu/](https://travel.gmu.edu/). Note: Off-campus users must use the Mason Virtual Private Network (VPN) in order to access the TRS. Select the gray Login box. Enter your Mason NETID and password, the same used to log-in to Mason email and Patriot Web. Select first time user, then complete personal, department and Authorized Approver/Supervisor information and select Submit.

Q: How do I set up a profile for a Non-Mason affiliate in the TRS (such as a Candidate)?
   
   A. Ask the Non-Mason affiliate to complete and return a [Substitute W-9](https://travel.gmu.edu/) form. The Substitute W-9 may be submitted to papadmin@gmu.edu or faxed to 703-993-2589. Once received, a G number will be created for the Non-Mason affiliate. For non-U.S. citizens please follow instructions for [International Travelers](https://travel.gmu.edu/). B. Once a G number has been assigned, a Delegate may use the “Delegate Login” function of the Travel Request System to create a Travel Authorization/Reimbursement on behalf of the Non-Mason affiliate with an estimate of expenses. **A G number must be assigned before an Authorization/Reimbursement can be created.**
Q: Can a student use the TRS directly?
   A. Yes, current students can use their Net ID and password to login and submit Authorizations/Reimbursements.

Q: Can a vendor use the TRS system directly?
   A. Travel expenses for a vendor must be paid through an approved Purchase order. The vendor must send an invoice to Accounts Payable at acctpay@gmu.edu, referencing the EP#.

How do I Process Travel as a Delegate?

Q: What is a department delegate?
   A. A department delegate is a user who is given the ability to enter Authorizations and Reimbursements for ALL travelers in their department. The Travel Office assigns this access, so it is not necessary for each traveler in the department to select the delegate individually. A department can have as many department delegates as they require.

Q: How do I become a department delegate?
   A. The department head must send an email to travel@gmu.edu indicating the staff member(s) who will become the department delegate.

Q: How do I become a delegate for another Mason employee/student?
   A. The Mason employee/student may designate a delegate for themselves by selecting “Delegate Info” and then choosing a name from the selection box or entering the G number of the delegate. Then clicking “Save Changes.”

Q: How do I login as a delegate?
   A. Go to https://travel.gmu.edu. Enter the email address of the individual for whom you are processing travel document. Select their classification from the drop down and then click the “Delegate Login” box. Enter YOUR Mason Net ID and password. Once logged in, select “Enter Travel” to begin an Authorization or Reimbursement.

Q: How do I process travel for a Non-Mason affiliate?
   A. Once a G number has been assigned (see instruction under Access the Travel Request System above), a Delegate may use the “Delegate Login” function of the Travel Request System to create a Travel Authorization/Reimbursement on behalf of the Non-Mason affiliate with an estimate of expenses. **A G number must be assigned before an Authorization/Reimbursement can be created**

   B. Once the Authorization has been fully approved, the department delegate should work with the Non-Mason affiliate to reserve travel arrangements. The department may pay items such as airfare and local lodging directly to the vendor (See How Can I Pay for Travel). The department may use a contracted travel service provider or other web based travel services (Travelocity, Kayak, etc.).

   C. After the interview/trip is completed, the Delegate must initiate a Reimbursement in the TRS and update any estimated costs to actual expenses. Receipts must be obtained from the Non-Mason affiliate (for reimbursable items, according to the Travel Policy) and uploaded to the Reimbursement request. Once the Travel Reimbursement is fully approved, the Travel Office will review the request and then issue payment to the Non-Mason affiliate.

Q: How do I process travel as a Delegate for a Mason employee/student?
   A. Go to https://travel.gmu.edu. Enter the email address of the individual for whom you are processing travel document. Select their classification from the drop down and then click the “Delegate Login” box. Enter YOUR Mason Net ID and password. Once logged in, select “Enter Travel” to begin an Authorization or Reimbursement.
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B. Select the trip type to initiate an Authorization and enter the estimated costs. Once you submit the Authorization an email will be sent to the Traveler. The Traveler must utilize the Workflow system to approve the Authorization. Then, the Authorization will be sent to the remaining approvers. Once all approvals have been received the Delegate will receive an email notification.

C. After the trip is completed, the Delegate must initiate a Reimbursement in the TRS and update any estimated costs to actual expenses. Receipts must be obtained from the travelers (for reimbursable items, according to the Travel Policy) and uploaded to the Reimbursement request. Once the Travel Reimbursement is fully approved, the Travel Office will review the request and then issue payment to the Mason traveler.

**Q: How do I check the status of a Travel Reimbursement/Authorization that I completed as a Delegate?**

A. Login to the TRS, as yourself, using the “Traveler Login” option *(do not login as the Delegate)*. Click on “Enter Travel” and then select “Delegate Overview.” This will display all the trips you created as a Delegate. Click on “View Document/History” to see the status of the desired document.

**How can I Pay for Travel?**

**Q: What travel expenses may be paid by Mason directly (P-Card or eVA Order)?**

A. Airfare or train transportation may be paid on the P-Card. Generally, airline and rail travel cannot exceed the rates charged for tourist or coach class accommodations. Acela service on Amtrak, higher-level coach class services (examples: Delta Comfort, United Economy Plus, etc.), preferable seats, priority boarding, advance seat selection and/or other amenities are prohibited. Baggage fees may not be paid on the P-Card but can be reimbursed to the traveler when reasonable.

B. Registration fees may be paid on the P-Card directly to the vendor or through the Vendor’s website. If a check payment is required for registration, the department may submit a Payment Request form.

C. Local Lodging for candidates, guest speakers or other Non-Mason visitors may be paid by eVA Purchase Order when utilizing a Local Lodging contract. Mason travelers are prohibited from lodging within 25 miles of their work or home location.

**Q: What expenses will be paid by the traveler and then submitted for reimbursement?**

A. In order for business travel to be reimbursable, it must be performed in the most economical manner and may not exceed the limitations imposed by the Commonwealth and Mason. Only actual expenses, supported by a receipt, may be reimbursed (except for meal and incidental expense per diem). ALL travel reimbursements must be approved by the department and may depend on available budget.

- Transportation (rental car and gasoline, taxi, shuttle, personal vehicle mileage)
- Airfare and rail tickets (if not paid on P-Card)
- Airline checked baggage fees (when necessary)
- Overnight lodging
- Non-Mason Parking and toll charges
- Business telephone/internet charges
- Registration fees (if not paid on P-Card)
- Passport and visa expenses, immunization fees
- Meals (based on overnight lodging location per diem)

**Q: Can I request a Travel Advance?**

A. Mason does not issue travel advances for individual travel. Travel Advances may only be request for group travel – when a faculty or staff member is supervising a group of students on a university-sponsored activity OR for international travel – where credit cards may not be accepted. For more information, see the **Travel Advance Instructions**.
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Q: What travel expenses are NOT allowable?
A. The following expenses are not reimbursable. Please note that this list is not all-inclusive. If you have a question about an expense please consult the Travel Manual and if needed contact travel@gmu.edu.

- Lost or stolen articles
- Alcoholic beverages
- Excessive meal and lodging charges
- Personal telephone calls
- Personal laundry expenses
- Towing charges
- Mason Parking fees
- Movies charged to hotel
- Luxury vehicle rental
- Services to gain entry to locked vehicle
- Travel and rental car insurance
- Damage to personal vehicles, clothing or other items
- Expenses related to personal negligence of the traveler, such as fines
- Excessive parking and gasoline charges
- Expenses for children, spouses and other non-business companions
- Local commuting expenses
- Service fees and tips (e.g., to baggage handlers)
- Travel between lodging and places where meals may be taken
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Q: Can I pay for travel insurance or rental car insurance?
A. Travel insurance (personal injury or loss, trip interruption/cancellation, etc.) is not reimbursable. Travel accident and emergency insurance coverage is available for employees (covered cost). Additional information is available at https://risk.gmu.edu/insurance/. Rental Car insurance is provided by the Commonwealth of Virginia. Additional rental insurance will not be reimbursed.

How Does Per Diem Work?

Q: Do I get per diem for day trips?
A. No, per diem is only provided when there is an overnight stay.

Q: What if a continental breakfast is provided but it doesn’t meet my needs?
A. The traveler must include a note or other documentation with the Travel Reimbursement Voucher documenting HOW the meal did not meet their needs. This note should be entered in the comments section in the Travel Request System (TRS).

Q: Do I get reimbursed if a meal is provided to me by the conference, hotel, etc.?
A. No. All “no-cost” meals, meals paid by others and meals included in the conference registration fee must be deducted from the Travel Reimbursement. If a continental breakfast or reception is offered as part of the travel event and the food/timing is sufficient to serve as a meal, the traveler must note this on the Travel Reimbursement and the TRS will deduct the appropriate per diem amount. Individual meal components are available on the Meals & Incidental Expense (M+IE) Breakdown to assist you in calculating the deduction for these free meals.

Q: Do I get per diem on my travel return and departure days?
A. On travel departure and return days, travelers automatically receive 75% of the per diem meal allowance, regardless of the time of departure or return. The return day allowance is based on the rate at the location where the traveler spent the night prior to returning to the home base.

Q: What is included in the per diem rate?
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A. The per diem rate includes: meals (including taxes/tips), transportation to where meals are taken, personal telephone calls, laundry expenses and tips to baggage handlers/concierge.

Do I need Approval from the Travel Office?

Q: Do I need approval from the Travel Office to share a room if I am not exceeding the basic or conference (2 x basic) rate?
   A. No. If the room cost (before splitting) does not exceed the conference rate, you do not need approval from the Travel Office. You should note the room share on your Travel Authorization and list the names of all those sharing rooms in the comments section.

Q: Do I need approval from the Travel Office when using alternative lodging (overnight lodging other than traditional hotel/motels, such as Air BnB)?
   A. Yes. When using lodging other than traditional hotel/motels you must get approval BEFORE the trip. Follow the instructions on the Alternative Lodging Guide.

Q: Do I need approval from the Travel Office to stay at a local hotel, within 25 miles of my workplace or home?
   A. Yes. Generally, employees are not reimbursed for lodging within 25 miles of his/her work place, office or home. If extenuating circumstances and budget permit, an employee may seek advanced approval for lodging in the local area. To request an exception please contact the Travel Office at least 30 days prior to the trip start. No approval will be given after the trip has taken place.

Q: Do I need approval from the Travel Office when more than three employees are traveling to a single location/conference?
   A. No. However, departments should be conscious of their budget and public perception and only send the required number of attendees.

Q: Do I need approval from the Travel Office when I am planning to take personal time before/after my business travel?
   A. You do not need approval. However, you must provide a cost comparison BEFORE the trip. Follow the instructions on the Personal Travel with Business Travel Guide.

What Receipts and/or Documentation do I need to provide for Reimbursement?

A: Required receipts must be uploaded and attached to the travel Reimbursement before submitting for approval. Refer to the TRS Document Upload guide for assistance.

1. **Airfare** – A legitimate receipt which shows the class of seat purchased, fees, and total purchase price.
2. **Hotel** – An original itemized hotel bill must support lodging reimbursement requests. For hotel rooms obtained through internet providers, the traveler must attach the entire hardcopy receipt from the internet site showing total cost and confirmed services to the Travel Reimbursement.
3. **Car rental** – an itemized receipt showing the rental dates, type of car rented, taxes charged and total paid.
4. **Fuel** – an itemized receipt for actual purchase. *Refueling agreements are not allowed and will not be reimbursed.
5. **Taxi** – a receipt is required when the reimbursement claim exceeds $75 per instance.
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6. **Meals** – Per Diem should be claimed, receipts to document meal expense are only required for group travel and pre-approved business meals that will be reimbursed on the Food & Beverage form.

7. **Phone/Internet Use** - Business phone calls, facsimiles and data transmission charges must be supported by documentation that includes the date, points and parties involved, the business purpose of the call, and the charges incurred. Travelers are permitted to incur charges for use of the internet at hotels, airports or other locations provided that internet access is necessary for business activity. To be reimbursed for internet charges, travelers must provide an explanation of the internet usage, such as reading and responding to email. The explanation may be written on the itemized hotel bill or internet provider receipt.

8. **Visa/entry documentation** – itemized receipt or documentation

9. **Passport fees** – itemized receipt or documentation

10. **Conference Registration** – itemized receipt or documentation

11. **Referees/Officials/Judges** - Tour guides, translators, speakers or other individuals up to $600: A legitimate receipt including the recipients’ name, amount paid and recipient’s signature must be obtained and the Justification for Services performed outside of the United States Form must be completed at the time the service is rendered. If vendor cannot provide receipt, use Mason Receipt Certification form.

12. **Tour guides, translators, speakers** or other individuals in excess of $600: Cash payment may not be issued. Payment must be made via the Payment Request, Honorarium or Purchase Order process, as appropriate. Proper tax documentation must be obtained (W-9/W-8BEN) and submitted with the request for payment. The department should complete this process prior to trip departure and obtain a check payment for the payee whenever possible. Payments may be made via wire transfer to the payee upon trip return in extenuating situation.

13. **Business Meals provided to others while in travel status** - Reimbursement for business meals occurring during overnight travel will be limited to the cost of the guest’s meal only; the traveler/host will receive the normal per diem payment for the trip location Reimbursement for food and beverages purchased during business meals requires a “Food and Beverages Authorization” form and submitted to Accounts Payable.

14. **Entry Fees** – itemized receipt or documentation

**How Do I Check the Status of my Reimbursement?**

Q: **When will I get reimbursed for my business travel?**
   A. The Travel Office typically posts/processes reimbursements within 10 days of receipt. Payment occurs approximately 7 days after posting. Keep in mind that the Travel Office will not receive the reimbursement until ALL approvers have signed off.

Q: **It has been more than 10 days since my Travel Reimbursement was approved. How do I check the status of my payment?**
   A. Go to the Payment Inquiry portal to check the payment date/type: https://468002.invoiceinfo.com/menu_choice.php?banner=gmu&redir=123456

Q: **I submitted a Travel Authorization and now my trip is over. Why haven’t I been reimbursed?**
   A. The Travel Authorization is an estimate of costs. A Travel Reimbursement must be initiated and submitted through the TRS after returning from the trip to claim actual expense reimbursement. Follow the instructions of the **TRS Quick Guide** to initiate a reimbursement after the trip.

Q: **How do I know if my supervisor has approved my Travel Reimbursement?**
   A. The traveler and/or delegate will receive an email once ALL approvals have been received. To check the status in TRS follow the instructions on the **TRS Document Status Guide**.