PROCEDURE LIT.4.03.01
LODGING AND MEAL EXPENSES

SCOPE: Faculty and Staff

1. Reimbursement for lodging and meal and incidental expenses (M&IE) will be paid at the amount of the applicable per diem for meals and at actual costs limited to the maximum applicable per diem for lodging.

   1.1. For domestic travel, lodging and meal reimbursement rates are established by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) at https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates.

      1.1.1. The GSA sets rates based on the city or the county in which the duty station is located. The rate for the city is used when listed, or the rate for the county is used when the city is not listed. If neither the city nor county are listed, the continental United States (CONUS) rate is used.

      1.1.2. The GSA lodging per diems apply only to the stated room rate for domestic travel For domestic travel, allowed taxes and fees are separate incidental expenses not subject to the per diem cap.

   1.2. For foreign travel, lodging and meal reimbursement rates are established by the U.S. Department of State at https://allowances.state.gov/web920/per_diem.asp.

      1.2.1. Department of State per diems apply to the entire lodging charge inclusive of both the stated room rate and allowed taxes and fees.

   1.3. In all cases, both the M&IE per diem and the lodging per diem for each day are based upon the location where the overnight stay occurs.

2. Exceptions to Maximum Lodging and M&IE Rates

   2.1. If a traveler is attending a conference, reimbursement may exceed the maximum lodging rate for lodging at the hotel that hosts the conference or at a nearby hotel if the conference hotel is not available.

   2.2. In any other case in which lodging cannot be secured within the limits of the maximum lodging rate allowed for the duty station, written approval to secure lodging at a higher rate must be received and documented through completion of a “Request to Increase Maximum Lodging Rate” form.

   2.3. Any exception to the maximum lodging rate will not exceed 300 percent of the standard maximum lodging rate.

3. Receipts for meals are not required and should not be submitted with the travel reimbursement request.

4. Where a meal is furnished in another way (such as through a conference registration fee), the daily M&IE per diem should be reduced for each furnished meal.

    4.1. No adjustment is required to the daily M&IE when:

        4.1.1. A meal is provided by a common carrier (i.e. airline, rail); or
        4.1.2. A meal is provided at no extra cost by the hotel/motel at which the overnight stay occurred (i.e. complimentary breakfast); or
        4.1.3. The traveler is unable to consume the furnished meal(s) because of medical requirements or religious beliefs and received specific approval to claim the full M&IE allowance prior to travel; or
        4.1.4. The traveler is unable to take part in a furnished meal due to the conduct of official business.

5. Travelers are entitled to claim the incidental portion of the M&IE per diem even if all meals are furnished for the day.

6. The maximum M&IE rate for the first and last day of travel is calculated at 75 percent of the daily maximum per diem rate.

    6.1. The 75 percent calculation is applied after any adjustments for furnished meals are made.

    6.2. The M&IE per diem is not otherwise adjusted to account for departure and arrival times.

7. M&IE per diems will not be paid when an overnight stay does not occur.

    7.1. Exception: Meal reimbursement may be permitted for travel that does not involve an overnight stay when the approved business travel extends substantially beyond the employee's normal work schedule and reasonably necessitates the purchase of a meal. Reimbursement shall not exceed applicable reimbursement limits.

8. Travelers are entitled to reimbursement for lodging and M&IE expenses incurred no more than one day before and one day after official state business begins.

    8.1. Exceptions are allowed when extra days are required to qualify for discount airfares that reduces the overall cost or when travel to the duty point reasonably requires more than one day. Such exceptions must be documented on the travel reimbursement request.

9. The reimbursement limit for lodging and M&IE applies without a carryover from one day to another.

10. A commercial lodging receipt must be included with the travel voucher. The receipt must include the traveler’s name, the single room rate, and a daily itemization of the lodging charges (e.g., city and county taxes, internet charges, etc.). If the original receipt is not available, the traveler should make efforts to obtain a detailed copy from the lodging provider.

11. For travel within the state of Texas, employees are exempt from paying the state hotel occupancy tax, but are not exempt from paying any county or municipal hotel taxes.

    11.1. An employee will not be reimbursed for state hotel occupancy tax if the employee fails to present a properly completed Hotel Occupancy Tax Exemption Certificate to the establishment.

12. Lamar Institute of Technology will not reimburse gratuities, in-room movies or games, room service, laundry, dry cleaning, personal phone calls, or other personal expenses.

Related Policies: LIT.4.03 Travel

Relevant Forms/Documents: Request to Travel, Travel Voucher, Request to Increase Maximum Lodging Rate, Hotel Occupancy Tax Exemption Certificate

Relevant TSUS Policies/Forms/Documents: TSUS Rules & Regulations Chapter 3, Section 6.(10)

Relevant Statutes: Texas Government Code Chapter 660; Texas Education Code 51.009

Relevant SACSOC Standards:

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