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|  |  | |  | | --- | |  | | Stratus Travel Checklist | |  | |

# Travel planning and Resources

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|  | Check with your department regarding the total dollar amount and cost center (s) which have been approved to fund your trip for the current Fiscal Year. |
|  | Once you have secured the total dollar amount of travel funding for your trip, it is time to research and plan your trip. There are several key points to consider.   * Does my event require pre-registration? * What type of transportation would be the best option? * Do I need to reserve a hotel room and if so, does the hotel charge for parking? * If flying, how will I get to the airport? Personal vehicle, Uber, or rental? * Does my event include meals, or will I need to claim per diem? * Consider every related travel expense. Will my funding be enough to cover all expenses or will I be responsible for some out-of-pocket costs. * Early preparation will assist with specials or discounts offered. * All travelers should make advance bookings which are most reasonable and economical. No upgrades or purchases of travel, car, or airfare insurance will be allowed. * If a traveler (faculty or staff) requires any modifications to travel plans that are outside of The University System of Maryland (USM) and State policy pre-approval is required. |
|  | Consult with your department and the Business Travel Office before paying for any travel related expenses to discuss ways to reduce out of pocket travel expenses.   * Your department may have a Visa procurement card which can pay for registration fees. * The Business Travel office can pay for hotel accommodations and major transportation with an approved travel authorization and appropriate funding for those expenses. * Travelers may have a situation in which a vendor will agree to invoice the University for Travel related expenses such as registration, training fees, lodging, or transportation expenses. * Travelers should use personal funds to pay for nominal travel costs such as per diem, parking, tolls, and gas associated with trips and university event meal expenses. All travelers may seek reimbursement for personal expenses after the trip or event has occurred. |
|  | USM has contracted travel agencies to assist with travel arrangements. Please view the [Business Travel Website](https://www.towson.edu/financialservices/travel/) for more information. |
|  | Gather Required Support Documentation   * All travelers (faculty and staff) must provide support regarding the nature of their travel such as support brochure/agenda, invitation, website, presentation, or an itinerary of planned research. * Support documentation must include the purpose, dates, and location of the event. * Travelers should consult with their specific department or college level for requirements of any additional support for your trip. * The support documentation is the only required document that the traveler will attach to the authorization form. |
|  | Create your travel authorization in Stratus.   * Authorizations should be submitted as early as possible. * See [Stratus Travel Resource page](https://www.towson.edu/financialservices/travel/stratus.html) for instructions on creating and submitting a Stratus Travel Authorization. * For additional assistance on creating your travel authorization reach out to [travel@towson.edu](mailto:travel@towson.edu) |
|  | Prior to making any International Travel arrangements, please refer to both the [Business Travel Office Website](https://www.towson.edu/financialservices/travel) and visit the published policy regarding International Travel.  [Policy on Travel Advisories for International Travel](https://www.towson.edu/about/administration/policies/03-13-00-policy-travel-advisories-international-travel.html)  [International Travel Resources for Faculty and Staff](https://www.towson.edu/academics/international/facultystaff.html) |
|  | If you have any questions regarding travel policies and procedures, please refer to the [Business Travel website](https://www.towson.edu/financialservices/travel/) to review our manual and travel resources. For any uncertainty or questionable travel situations please reach out to the Business Travel Office to speak with a travel representative. |

# Travel authorization has been approved- Next Steps

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|  | Keep all travel arrangements handy by organizing on your phone, email or maintaining a travel folder. |
|  | Prior to your departure date make sure you confirm hotel, airline, car rental or any travel related reservations for your trip in case of any cancelations, delays, or changes to the original travel plan. |
|  | If flying, make sure you allow enough time prior to departure so that you are on time for your flight. |
|  | Travelers parking at the airport must use the most economical parking option. |

# helpful reminders while on your business trip

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|  | Obtain itemized receipts from all purchases.   * Keep all itemized receipts in a secure location. * Itemized receipts are required for all travel expenses including airfare, rail ticket, car rental, ground transportation, lodging, conference/event registration, rental vehicle fuel, parking, tolls, and any meal reimbursed more than the USM per diem amount allowed for that meal. * A signed credit card receipt or bank statement alone does not satisfy the receipt requirement. |
|  | Upon check out of your hotel please stop at the front desk to obtain an itemized receipt showing paid or balance due of $0.00. |
|  | Check the approved [Meal Allowance/Per Diem Rates](https://www.towson.edu/financialservices/travel/) for breakfast, lunch, and Dinner on the Business Travel Website which includes both the standard and High-Cost rates. Itemized meal receipts are only required if you need to claim reimbursement above the allowable per diem amount. |
|  | Tips for parking, Ubers, Lyft’s, and food are not to exceed 20%. |
|  | Tips for housekeeping or maid service are allowable at $1.00 per day. |
|  | Tips for baggage handling are allowable at $1.00 per bag on the day of arrival (checking in) and $1.00 per bag on the day of departure (checking out). |

# Return from trip – Create expense report to seek reimbursement

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|  | Before creating a Stratus expense report, all travelers should make sure they have all itemized receipts saved as an electronic document.   * PDF is the preferred file type. Please avoid attaching .msg files (Saved Outlook emails) when possible. File formats such as JPEG, JPG, GIF, PNG, and full color receipts can affect the size of the document which can create transmitting issues to the State of Maryland. |
|  | Reimbursement requests are for payments made by personal funds only. |
|  | Travelers should request reimbursement in a timely manner, preferably five business days following the conclusion of the trip. |
|  | Create Stratus Expense Report to receive reimbursement for any incurred expenses.   * See [Stratus Travel Resource page](https://www.towson.edu/financialservices/travel/stratus.html) for instructions on creating and submitting a Stratus Expense Report. For additional assistance on creating your expense report, reach out to [travel@towson.edu](mailto:travel@towson.edu) |