

Business Operations Forum
December 13, 2023

Q&A Responses & FAQs

1. Are we required to pay for all travel costs if we don't have enough budget?

Departments may indicate a maximum budget for travel during the RAT pre-approval process. The employee must be notified ahead of time and be given the *option* to still attend if the anticipated costs exceed the pre-approved amount.

If actual costs exceed the pre-approved budgeted amount the department may reduce or eliminate entirely some costs, however reimbursement for meals & incidentals must follow the Travel and Business Expense Payments policy (i.e., departments may *not* reduce or eliminate the meals & incidentals amounts; rather, other cost components should be adjusted or eliminated to adhere to the pre-approved budgeted amount).

2. Setting per diem limits:

Question: Can we determine our own per diem based on our budget situation?

Answer: No. Per the Chancellor's Office directive, if the travel is approved, the full applicable per diem rates must be honored. Partial per diem payments are not permissible due to insufficient funding.

Refer to section M2 of the [Travel and Business Expense Payments policy](#)

3. Per Diem for Non-employees:

Question: What per diem rate will apply to non-employee travel?

Answer: Location-based meals & incidentals will apply to non-employees (i.e., same as CSUMB employees).

4. Parking expenses:

Question: Should parking expenses be included in the Hospitality Expense Justification form?

Answer: No; parking is not required to be included on the hospitality justification form.

Refer to [Hospitality policy](#)

5. Alcohol at events:

Question: What is the alcohol rule/policy for events held off campus?

Answer: Per the [Campus Alcohol Policy](#) section 9.2.1:

When alcohol is to be served as part of a University Event of a Recognized Group (whether on or off campus), such group is responsible for ensuring that all provisions of this policy and all applicable state laws are enforced.

Refer to [Guidelines to Request Alcohol Service](#); further questions should be directed to Safety, Risk and Sustainability at risk@csumb.edu.

6. Other Travel FAQs:

Question: Are tips for meals separate from the daily per diem?

Answer: Tips for meals are included in the Meals & Incidental Expense (M&IE) per diem. Other tips, such as for ground transportation, are included with ground transportation reimbursement.

Refer to [Tips and Gratuities](#)

Question: Is domestic lodging part of per diem?

Answer: No. The nightly lodging rate for domestic travel is based on actual expense incurred, not to exceed the maximum rate of \$275/night (not including taxes). If the nightly rate exceeds \$275 pre-approval is required; email university_accounting@csumb.edu.

Refer to [Lodging](#)

Question: How do you determine which rate to use when on a multi-state trip?

Answer: The location where the traveler spends the night determines which rate to use.

Refer to [Appendix H-M&IE Per Diem Rate for Travel Involving Multiple Locations](#)

Question: Is lunch and dinner reimbursable for a one-day trip?

Answer: Meals are only reimbursable if they have met the sleep or rest rule.

Refer to [Travel of Less Than 24 Hours](#)

Question: Do group subsistence expenses apply with less than 24 hour travel?

Answer: Meals & incidental expenses are only covered if the "sleep or rest rule" has been met, unless they are covered by another policy such as Hospitality or Athletic Group Travel Policy.

Refer to [Travel of Less Than 24 Hours](#) and [Payment of Group Subsistence Expenses](#)

Question: Is there an exception to the "less than 24 hours" rule for student group travel (field trip)?

Answer: If the students pay a fee for the class specified for purchase of food, then it is allowable. If the student has not paid a fee and neither the Hospitality or Athletics Group Travel Policy is applicable, then no per diem may be applied.

Refer to [Students and Non-Degree Candidates](#)

Question: Any implications for student assistants - do we simply follow the same travel rules?

Answer: Yes, student assistants are subject to the same travel rules outlined in our travel policy. This ensures consistency and fairness across all members of our organization. However, exceptions may apply if they are part of the athletic group travel or another sponsored group.

Refer to [Non-employee Travelers](#) and [Student Travel Policy](#)

Question: Will the per diem rates for group travel calculated based on the total number of individuals in the group at the destination?

Answer: Yes, If the meal has not already been provided by the conference/meeting. Group leaders who pay for the groups' expenses may be reimbursed by submitting a travel expense claim for the actual expenses incurred with the maximum group per diem allowance. The claim must be accompanied by the vendor's invoice/receipt showing payment in full. For example, if there are 10 travelers and the lunch per diem rate is \$15, the maximum group per diem allowance will be \$150.00.

Refer to [Payment of Group Subsistence Expenses](#)

7. CSUMB Food & Safety Links

[CSUMB Food Policy Statement and FAQs](#)

[Safety Guidelines for Temporary Sale or Service of Food](#)

[Food Safety and Service](#)