

Policy Title: Travel Guidelines**Policy ID:** TBD**Status:** FINAL**Original Policy Date:** March 21, 2022**Last Revised:** N/A**Oversight Executive:** Associate Dean for Academic and Faculty Affairs and Associate Dean for Administration**Applies To:** All UVA School of Data Science faculty and staff**Publicize Policy:** Yes**Reason for Guidelines**

The School of Data Science (SDS) recognizes travel as an integral part of doing the business of the school including professional development and the dissemination of knowledge and collaboration. As members of the SDS community, employees are expected to use University funds responsibly. All decisions regarding travel expenses should reflect good stewardship of SDS funds to enable the community to grow together.

The purpose of this document is to establish a set of guidelines for use by all SDS employees for gaining approval, booking, traveling, and processing reimbursement for individuals who are traveling on behalf of the SDS.

- Comply with University Policies [FIN-004: Travel, Meals, and Entertainment Expenses Incurred on Behalf of the University](#) and [FIN-055: Faculty and Staff International Travel](#) that outline University Policy on faculty and staff travel for University business.
- Align with the [Domestic Per Diem Rate Guide](#) and [International Per Diem Rate Guide](#) for rates.

Statement of Guidelines

The below guidelines offer information on gaining approval when necessary, booking, traveling, and processing reimbursement for individuals traveling on behalf of the SDS. Employees must follow these guidelines in addition to University policy, which takes precedent in the case of any changes. These guidelines also apply to bookings made for guests of the University who are traveling to the University for business related to the mission of the school. These guidelines may also apply to travel for students that are traveling as a part of a program for business purposes. The following guidelines apply to all travel regardless of funding source unless sponsored research funds specify otherwise.

Lodging

Travel booking support is available through the University and is encouraged in booking lodging for travel. Hotel blocks for conferences and events are not found in UVA systems and require booking directly with the hotel. University Travel & Expense (T&E) cards and direct reimbursement are the preferred method of booking travel. Reimbursement is not available until the trip is complete, so use of the T&E card is an option to avoid up front personal charges. Lodging for those traveling more than 100 miles each way for a day trip may be eligible for lodging reimbursement, pending approval by the supervisor. UVA has a standard nightly lodging rate regardless of location outlined [here](#). Lodging that exceeds two times the daily rate will be automatically routed for additional approval at the time of submittal.

Meal Reimbursements and Incidentals

SDS will reimburse for meals using the University rate per diem or through reimbursements of actual expenses up to the allowable amount as outlined on the [UVA Finance Domestic Per Diem guide](#). When using the per diem method, the business purpose, and dates as well as excluded meals must be provided, but receipts are not required. Travelers will not be reimbursed for meals or incidentals by per diem if the date of departure and the date of return are the same. Day trip meals may be reimbursed as actuals with itemized receipts if there is a justified business need. Reimbursement for actual meals require submission of itemized receipts. On the day of departure and return travel days should be indicated for per diem, and all meals that were not a part of the actual time of travel should be eliminated. Daily incidentals are included in the per diem. Meals provided as part of a function or Business Meal should be deducted from the per diem amount.

Business meals

Business meals can be travel or non-travel and require the submission of itemized receipts and names of attendees for reimbursement. Due to state fund restrictions, tips should not exceed 15% before taxes. Meals above a 50% overage to the provided rate for the area require justification and approval.

Alcohol

The purchase of or reimbursement for alcohol is prohibited with state funds. Any requests for the purchase or reimbursement of alcohol must be pre-approved and an account not using state funds must be provided.

Means of Travel

Air and Rail Travel

Travelers should work with the University travel management contractor to secure the best airfare rate. Booking through the platform will automatically apply University travel policy. Travelers are expected to purchase the lowest fare economy airfare ticket available that meets their travel needs except in the following instances:

- For flights with scheduled in-air flying time in excess of three (3) continuous hours, upgrades to “premium economy” or the like such as exit row seats, additional leg space, etc. are permitted without the requirement for additional approval.
- Premium economy for flights less than three hours and business class airfare is allowed under unusual circumstances and must be pre-approved at least six weeks in advance by Associate Dean for Faculty and Academic Affairs (for faculty) or Associate Dean for Administration (for staff). Examples of justification for upgrades include:
 - The difference between economy airfare and business class is paid by the traveler’s personal or discretionary funds.
 - Unusual schedule requirements (i.e. immediate presentation upon arrival, immediate return, length of flight including non-overnight stopovers exceeds 12 hours).
 - Accommodation for a disability or other special needs. A written statement from a medical authority may be requested.
- All upgrades are subject to the availability of funds.
- Upgrades to first class are not covered under any circumstances.
- For tickets in excess of \$750, purchase of a fully refundable ticket is necessary in case of modification or cancellation.

Basic economy fares are discouraged for University travel because the benefits and protections offered with standard economy outweigh the small difference in fare.

Rental Car

The University has contracts for car rental that should be used to book rental cars when necessary. The traveler should make the reservation directly on the [TravelUVA platform](#) or contact the Office Manager to make arrangements at least 24 hours in advance. As state employees and authorized agents, employees should decline the rental car insurance offered by the rental car company. The traveler must return vehicles with the same amount of fuel as when picked up. It is most cost-effective to refuel before returning. Justification is required when expensing if refueling occurs at the rental agency.

Mileage Reimbursement

The University follows the [standard mileage rates](#) set forth annually by the IRS. The mileage from the traveler's home to their at-work parking location must be deducted from the total miles travelled when submitting for reimbursement. The university only reimburses for fuel if a rental car or state vehicle is used. If it's a personal vehicle, then only mileage is reimbursed, as gas and wear and tear is figured into the per mile amount.

Mass Transit, Parking and Tolls

All mass transit, parking and toll fee expenses will be reimbursed provided it is cost effective and appropriate receipts and/or documentation is provided if over the daily limit.

Parking Fees and Tolls

All parking fees and turnpike tolls will be reimbursed based on actual expenditures with proper documentation regardless of the number of miles traveled.

Cancelled Trips

If you must cancel University travel, it is your responsibility to cancel reservations through the manner that they were originally booked. For those that booked through TravelUVA, funds for cancelled flights are automatically credited for future travel use. For those that booked flights directly, waivers and refunds should be sought directly from the airline first. Hotel cancellations depend on hotel policy and the traveler should contact the hotel as soon as possible for waivers or refunds. If airlines and/or hotels will not issue waivers or refunds, employees can submit expense reimbursement requests after the planned date of travel. Brief explanation of reasonable efforts to resolve cancellation fees should be included when submitting for reimbursement.

Non-conformance with policy

Employees encountering non-conformance with this policy should report this to the Dean's Office.

Next Scheduled Review: Summer 2024

Approved by, Date: Approved by SDS Dean, March 2022

Supersedes (previous policy date): N/A