Travel Advance

OVERVIEW

WSU may provide a travel advance to a traveler to help defray some reimbursable travel expenses which may be incurred while on official business.

In accordance with state policy, reimbursement for expenses incurred prior to the trip is not allowed, as such payment is considered an advance. Any traveler using personal resources while making travel arrangements must either meet the eligibility requirements for an advance, or wait until after the trip to be reimbursed.

Tips to avoid financial hardship when making travel arrangements:

- Book directly with vendors for lodging and rental cars to reduce the amount paid prior to the trip. (See also BPPM 95.06 and 95.12.)
- Use the following University charge card accounts for conference registration and airfare purchases to eliminate the need to use personal resources:
  - For conference registration, use the department purchasing card (see BPPM 70.08 and 95.01).
  - For business airfare, use either the department's Central Travel Account (CTA) (see BPPM 95.03) or a University travel card account issued to an individual (see BPPM 95.04).

NOTE: University travelers are to charge WSU business airfare to the department's CTA, whenever possible.

Requirements

In order to be eligible for an advance the traveler must:

- Be a WSU employee;
- Be in travel status for no less than 15 days, and
- Have no outstanding advances in accounting.

Limitations

A travel advance may not be considered as a loan to an employee. Also, a travel advance must not be:

- Issued for periods of more than 90 days;
- Issued more than 30 days prior to the trip start date;
- Used for expenses related to privately-owned vehicles (see BPPM 95.11); and/or
- Used for the purchase of commercial airfare (see BPPM 95.03 and 95.04).
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Amount of Advance

Best practice is to avoid advancing the traveler more than they will spend. It is recommended that the advance amount be no more than the total per diem allowance for the number of days in travel status.

Example

Travel to Phoenix, AZ from 3/1/18 through 3/17/18

![Figure 1](https://example.com/figure1.png)

- Daily per diem allowance: $174 (lodging) + $59 (meals and incidentals) = $233 (Fig. 1)
- Number of days in travel status: 16
- Total advance: ($233 x 16) = $3,728

ISSUING AN ADVANCE

Department Responsibilities

The department is responsible for:

- Determining the allowable amount to advance. (See Amount of Advance.)
- Contacting Travel Services to request any exceptions to the travel advance policies (see Exceptions in BPPM 95.01).

Travel Services has the authority to deny any exception requests.

If the exception is approved, the department must use 17A funds for the advance.

- Preparing a Travel Authority form or a department's substitute form with the Advance Requested section completed.
- Gathering the signatures of the:
  - University official, or their designee(s);
  - Expenditure authority for the budget(s) under which the advance will be issued; and
  - Traveler.
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Department Responsibilities (cont.)

NOTE: The signature must be the traveler's own signature. Substitute signatures or signature stamps are not acceptable.

• Routing the form to Travel Services at least 10 business days prior to the trip start date to allow for processing time.

Guarantee for Advance of Funds to Nonemployee Student

University policy limits cash or travel advances to faculty and staff employees only. The responsible dean or director may request an exception to the Travel Advance policy in order to advance funds to a nonemployee student.

The dean or director must inform the recipient of University policies and procedures regarding travel advances.

In order to ensure payment to the University in the event the recipient defaults in accounting for and/or returning the funds, the dean or director signs the Guarantee for Advance of Funds to Nonemployee Student certification. The dean or director enters the budget and project of the 17A account that is to support any outstanding balance of funds.