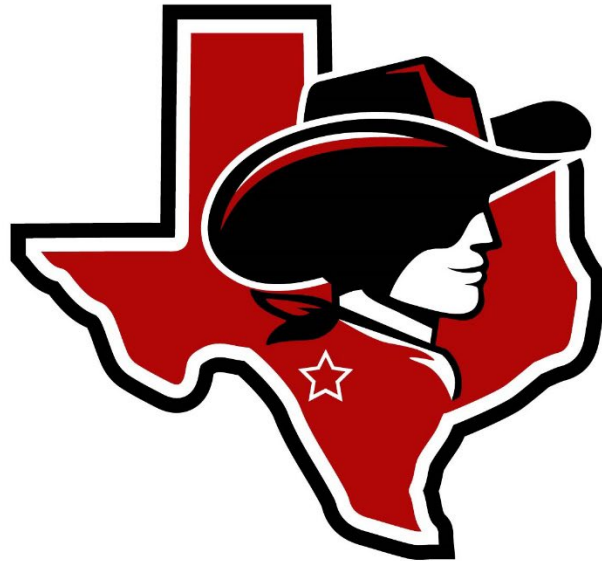


# Policies and Procedures for Travel



**SOUTHWEST**  
TEXAS ★ COLLEGE

(While Southwest Texas College's policies are maintained online by the Texas Association of School Boards and include both LEGAL and LOCAL policies, <https://pol.tasb.org/PolicyOnline?key=1174> the following reflect internal policies for the Business Office.)

# Travel

It is Southwest Texas College's policy to support travel expenses incurred on behalf of the College. Employees are expected to use prudent judgement when incurring these expenses.

Travel for attendance at local seminars, to meetings, recruiting sites, etc. do require formal pre-authorization, However, each departmental unit may have specific policies authorizing off-campus work time and, as such, employees should discuss this with their direct supervisor. Reimbursement for expenses related to local travel should be entered in Self Service, Request a Payment in the Financial Information section.

If needed, there is a Local Travel Reimbursement Worksheet that includes local mileage amounts and links to mileage reimbursement rates, and maps:  
[https://SWTXC.edu/documents/business\\_office/SWTX-local-travel-reimbursement-form.pdf](https://SWTXC.edu/documents/business_office/SWTX-local-travel-reimbursement-form.pdf).

Instructions for the worksheet may be found here:  
[https://SWTXC.edu/documents/business\\_office/SWTX-instructions-local-travel-reimbursement-form.pdf](https://SWTXC.edu/documents/business_office/SWTX-instructions-local-travel-reimbursement-form.pdf)

See also Local Travel below.

Overnight or non-local travel expenditures require employees to provide an estimate and obtain approval prior to incurring any liability for the College related to overnight travel. The College will also assist employees in prepaying or provide a travel P-card (credit card) when requested. These expenditures are reported on an Overnight Travel Request/Reimbursement Request Form: [https://SWTXC.edu/documents/business\\_office/SWTX-overnight-travel-request-reimbursement-form.pdf](https://SWTXC.edu/documents/business_office/SWTX-overnight-travel-request-reimbursement-form.pdf)

Instructions for the form may be found here:  
[https://SWTXC.edu/documents/business\\_office/SWTX-instructions-overnight-travel-form.pdf](https://SWTXC.edu/documents/business_office/SWTX-instructions-overnight-travel-form.pdf)

See Non-local/Overnight Travel below.

## LOCAL TRAVEL Definition

Local travel is defined as travel that does not require an overnight stay. Local travel does not qualify for reimbursement for overnight or meal expenses. Occasionally exceptions may be made under this policy for special circumstances as determined by the appropriate VP.

Examples include events requiring evening or early morning activities.

### A. Meals

Generally, meals are not reimbursable when incurred in connection with local travel. However, if travel is in conjunction with a business meeting which includes a meal, this may be considered an allowable expense. Documentation should be included with the backup provided to Accounts Payable in the Business Office and should include the following: business purpose, names of attendees, and itemized receipt. It is the College's policy not to reimburse for alcohol consumption. In addition to this, an effort should be made by the employee to keep meal expenses at a reasonable level.

### B. Mileage Reimbursement

Whenever possible, the use of a college owned vehicle is preferred. Please check with the Transportation Department for availability. When multiple individuals are traveling to a common destination, an effort should be made to carpool. Mileage reimbursement should only be requested for additional miles above and beyond your normal commute.

The use of personal automobiles on college business will be reimbursed at the GSA (US General Service Administration Mileage Reimbursement Rates) approved rate per mile, [GSA Mileage Reimbursement Rates](#) plus, tolls and parking. Employees are required to have appropriate public liability and property damage coverage for their automobiles before it is used on college business.

### C. Registration

Registration is often prepaid for local travel using the College's P-card or may be done as a reimbursement after attendance.

## NON-LOCAL/OVERNIGHT TRAVEL Definition

Non-local or overnight travel is defined as travel that includes an overnight stay. **Pre-approval is required for overnight travel.** In addition, faculty must obtain approval and be advised of their professional development funds via the College's Professional Development Officer before traveling. Please utilize the College's Overnight Travel Request/Reimbursement Request Form: [https://SWTXC.edu/documents/business\\_office/SWTX-overnight-travel-request-reimbursement-form.pdf](https://SWTXC.edu/documents/business_office/SWTX-overnight-travel-request-reimbursement-form.pdf)

### A. Travel P-card/Credit card

Advances for overnight travel are available for employees in the form of a travel P-card/credit card (here is the link to the form to apply for the card:

[https://SWTXC.edu/documents/business\\_office/SWTX\\_travel\\_pcard\\_application.pdf](https://SWTXC.edu/documents/business_office/SWTX_travel_pcard_application.pdf)

**It is the responsibility of the traveler to track all expenses and obtain itemized receipts for all transactions. All payments to vendors/supplier are the responsibility of the traveler with the issued card.** In general, advances for additional trips will not be made until settlement of a previous trip occurs.

### B. Air Travel

Employees may make their own reservations using Department or travel card, provided the appropriate travel forms with supporting documents and pre-approval was obtained.

There can be substantial discounts for 14, 21, and 30-day advance purchase of airfare, therefore, employees are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity. Reservations should be made utilizing the lowest possible airfare. Upgrades are not allowable. Also, if there is a fee, the cost for only one piece of luggage will be covered.

Please be aware that booking online via a third party (such as 'Expedia' or 'Orbitz') will immediately place a charge on your credit card.

Upon return, an original receipt or ticket with the total price listed is required for the reconciliation process.

Assistance may be requested with these, and other travel matters via the Accounting Department ( [acctpayable@swtxc.edu](mailto:acctpayable@swtxc.edu) or 830-591-7339 or ext.7206).

### C. Mileage expense

The use of a personal automobile when used on college business will be reimbursed at the GSA (US General Service Administration Mileage Reimbursement Rates) approved rate per mile [GSA Mileage Reimbursement Rates](#) Plus, tolls and parking. Employees are required to have appropriate public liability and property damage coverage for their automobiles before it is used on college business.

If a personal automobile is used in lieu of less expensive transportation, only the cost of the less expensive transportation is reimbursable. An example of this would

be the choice to drive to a conference when there is a less expensive airfare available.

If a college vehicle is being used, the traveler should use the Voyager gas card provided by the Transportation Department and obtain itemized receipts.

#### D. Registration

Registration may be prepaid provided the appropriate pre-approval was obtained. The traveler may prepay using a College P-card, assigned Travel P-card, or may be done as a reimbursement after attendance. Receipt of payment must be obtained regardless. Registration may also be prepaid via the College's Self-Service platform, Request for Payment. Please include a brochure or printout of the conference agenda with your travel reimbursement/reconciliation.

#### E. Automobile Rental

Automobile rental expenses should be incurred only when suitable public transportation is not available. Most rental car companies require the individual renting the automobile to have a credit card in their name. With this in mind, travelers should utilize the College's Travel P-card or use his/her own credit card and request reimbursement once the trip is complete.

The College is privy to rental rates via various contracts. For information regarding these please contact the Transportation Department.

#### F. Meals

Employees must use the standard per diem meal rate found on the GSA website (US General Service Administration Per Diem Rates) <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates?topnav=travel>

Solicit a travel advance based on per diem. Receipts are NOT required for per diem allowances. It is the College's policy not to reimburse for alcohol consumption.

For the first and last days of travel, you will be allowed 75% of the daily per diem rate per the GSA website (General Services Administration Meals & I&E Breakdown) <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates?topnav=travel>.

If a meal is served on the plane, included in a conference registration fee, built into the standard single, hotel room rate or replaced by a legitimate business meal, the per diem allowance for that meal may not be claimed.

#### G. Hotel Accommodations

Hotel accommodations are made by the traveler. The traveler may choose to obtain a travel credit card with pre-approval or use a personal credit card to guarantee the reservation. Please be aware that booking hotels online via a third party (such as 'Expedia' or 'Orbitz') will immediately place a charge on your credit card. If you prefer, you may obtain a quote in advance for the hotel and submit a Request for

Payment via Self Service if you wish to take a check with you. Please allow for enough time in advance for a check to be cut.

Hotel expenses are allowable at the conference rate. An itemized receipt from the hotel is required for reconciliation. Note: Keep in mind that the College is tax exempt, and you must inform the hotel when you check in. The form may be found here:

[https://SWTXC.edu/documents/business\\_office/texas\\_hotel\\_occupancy\\_tax\\_exemption\\_certificate\\_form\\_12-302.pdf](https://SWTXC.edu/documents/business_office/texas_hotel_occupancy_tax_exemption_certificate_form_12-302.pdf)

#### H. Incidental expenses

Incidental expenses incurred in connection with travel such as cab or shuttle fares and wi-fi (not in-room movies) are reimbursable expenses. Original receipts for items are **required** for reimbursement. An effort should be made to keep incidental expenses at a reasonable level.

#### I. Submission requirements

The College's Overnight Travel Request/Reimbursement Request Form: [https://SWTXC.edu/documents/business\\_office/SWTX-overnight-travel-request-reimbursement-form.pdf](https://SWTXC.edu/documents/business_office/SWTX-overnight-travel-request-reimbursement-form.pdf) must be submitted to the employee's supervisor for review and approval prior to travel and again after returning from the trip within no more than 10 business days. Actual expenditures should be entered on the form on the appropriate lines of Section B, Actual Travel Expenses. Any amount due to the traveler will be reimbursed within 10 working days from receipt of completed, approved form in the Business Office.

#### J. Supporting Documentation

All receipts, as outlined on the College's Overnight Travel Authorization/Reimbursement Request Form [https://SWTXC.edu/documents/business\\_office/SWTX-overnight-travel-request-reimbursement-form.pdf](https://SWTXC.edu/documents/business_office/SWTX-overnight-travel-request-reimbursement-form.pdf) in section B, Actual Travel Expenses, are to be attached to the approved form when submitted for reimbursement. Documentary evidence in the form of an original receipt or a paid bill is required for expenses such as lodging, air transportation, car rental, etc.

#### K. Combination Business/Pleasure Trips

Only business-related expenses will be reimbursed with appropriate documentation.

### SUMMARY

The College acknowledges that every travel expense cannot be defined and quantified, therefore the College relies on the professional judgement of the employee. Employees who substantially deviate from the policy should be prepared to provide a reasonable explanation to the appropriate VP.

A Power Point Travel Training Video is also available on our main website [www.swtxc.edu](http://www.swtxc.edu) under Faculty Professional Development: Training Videos, Travel Training.