ILR NYC TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS

As part of a LEAN: Continuous Process Improvement initiative, the New York City office of ILR has revised a series of travel procedures.
The Project

As an outcome of the NYC Administrative Review project, faculty and staff identified some areas to review for process improvement. One area identified was travel reimbursement processing.

To identify more efficient procedures, we used the Lean Process Improvement method, which has been adopted by many departments at Cornell and in other large organizations. This is a participative approach which allows a team of staff involved in the processing, as well as customers of the process, to review the existing methods and cooperatively identify potential improvements.

Although we started with a review of the travel reimbursement process, our goal was to test the Lean Process method, to develop a familiarity and competency with it, and then, hopefully, to apply it to other areas identified for potential improvement.

We believe the method has worked quite well for this project, that it can be effective in other areas, and look forward to using it in the future.
Why Lean?

Remove waste from the process

Focus on activity that adds value

Increase value for customers and CU
What is the Lean Process?


What needs to be done? Eliminate waste. Identify actions.

What’s wrong? Analyze root causes. Look at process efficiency.

What’s important? Identify the key issue, key problem, key process.

What are we doing? Measure key parameters. Map service flow / information flow.
How is it implemented at Cornell?

**Pre-Lean preparation**

- Orientation: Facilitators send out pre-meeting Q&As, a role-definition document, and this document to help the team understand the Lean process.
- Meeting: Facilitators meet with the team leader and team lead (1.5 hours), to offer an orientation to Lean, discuss the launch agenda, and to answer questions.
- Pre-work: The team leader and lead complete the attached pre-meeting launch scope, which defines the problem and the goals of the Lean launch.
- Scheduling: The lead schedules the Lean-launch time, date, location, and food and schedules the weekly meeting to occur on the Monday or Tuesday after the launch.
- Communication: The team lead sends the facilitator(s) the launch scope and metrics that show time, cost, or other measurable variables of the current process.

**Lean Launch**

- Orientation: Facilitators welcome the team and provide a Lean orientation.
- Mapping: The team maps the current process and generates ideas to improve that process.
- Brainstorming: The team defines an ideal future process and creates a future-state map.
- Mapping: The team identifies the areas to focus on so that it can make the future state into a reality.
- Measuring: The team determines what metrics to gather so that it can show the impact and success of their improvements.
- Communicating: Facilitators outline roles and discuss next steps.

**Post-launch activities**

- Daily check-in meeting (after V8 and metrics are in place): discuss metrics (how is the team doing), share ideas, implement “just-do-it” ideas.
- Weekly: team meets with its Lean advisor to discuss progress, look at metrics, re-evaluate kaizens, and plan for the coming week.
- Periodically: Kaizen (i.e., improvement) teams meet, as needed, to work toward the ideal future process.
- Periodically: team leads meet or communicate with Lean advisor to share challenges and learn how to manage their Kaizen groups.
- 30-60-90 days: meet to update all stakeholders on what progress the teams have made, what barriers they need to overcome, and what the impact of Lean is.
NYC LEAN Team Goals

1. Improve turnaround time of travel reimbursements
2. Improve compliance and consistent enforcement of travel policies
3. Simplify and consolidate travel reimbursement process
4. Reduce workload for program support staff
5. Empower staff to provide feedback to customers
6. Improve communication between process partners and customers
7. Develop familiarity with Lean Process Improvement
What has happened as a result of the Lean Process?

- Improved clarity for travel reimbursement requirements and general travel policies
- Updated travel reimbursement form that will now be used across NYC departments
- Created written procedures for reimbursement process that can be used for internal reference and new hire training
- Developed Quick Tips, FAQ’s and Traveler Checklists that can be used by Travelers and Administrators
- Uploaded all new forms and procedures onto ILR Finance Website
Where to Find the Results

Financial Operations and Budget Planning

Internal Policies or Procedures
- Assess A Fee Form (pdf form)
- Contract Class Billing Form (pdf form)
- Independent Contractor Policy and Process (pdf)
- Independent Contractor Agreement Template (pdf form)
- Petty Cash
- Payment and Collection Policies (pdf)
- Revenue and Expense Contract Procedure (pdf)
- Travel Information:
  - Travel Policy (pdf)
    - Travel Reimbursement Quick Tips (pdf)
    - Domestic Travel Reimbursement Procedure (pdf)
    - International Travel Reimbursement Procedure (pdf)
    - International Traveler Checklist (pdf)
    - Travel Expense Form (xls)

University Financial Policies/Procedures/Forms
- Corporate Cards
- Independent Contractor/Consulting Agreement Forms
- Procurement Cards
- Travel System
- University Financial Policies Website
Domestic Travel Reimbursement Procedure

The following information is provided to process requests for reimbursement of expenses incurred while traveling on official university business. Reimbursement will take place after the trip has occurred.

DEPARTMENT SUPPORT STAFF:
1. Collect original receipts (transportation, lodging, meals, etc.) for all travel-related expenses from the traveler. Cornell reimburses travel expenses using the per diem method or per diem per mile. One method must apply for the entire trip.
   a. The per diem method requires an overnight stay. For the day of departure and day of return, reduce the per diem amount to 75 percent of the daily rate. The meal per diem rate includes meals, beverages, tips, and taxes.
   b. If using the per diem method, an original ITEMIZED receipt that lists what was purchased, including beverages, must be included. Examples of acceptable meal receipts are a detailed credit card slip, a detailed cash register receipt, or for meals under $75.00, a non-itemized credit card slip or cash register receipt, or a room receipt to which a meal has been charged. Original receipts are required for all expenses including one day travel.
2. Organize and tape receipts by date on an 8 1/2 x 11 sheet of paper.
3. Complete the Travel Expense Reimbursement Form and include any other supporting documents. Enter all receipts and other documentation onto the form. If travel advance was requested, please indicate the dollar amount on the first line of the form under “cost,” which should be negative. Reimbursement requests with a travel advance must be submitted within 30 DAYS after completion of the trip.
4. When the form is finished, print and scan along with all original receipts and submit to NYC Finance Team as a PDF via email; hand deliver originals.

FINANCE TEAM:
5. NYC Finance Team will review request and supporting documents. If questions, team will request corrections from support staff. Once corrections are made, NYC Finance Team enters the information onto the Travel Reimbursement System. An automated email is sent to the traveler.
6. Once approved by the traveler, the NYC Finance Team is notified via email that it’s been approved.
7. NYC Finance Team creates cover sheet that includes Trip ID number and account number and sends to Lya Simonet (NYC Finance Manager) for final review and approval.
8. Once signed and approved, NYC Finance Team sends copy of the travel reimbursement as a PDF in the Finance Shared Drive.
9. Original travel-related documents are sent to FTC for final review.
10. FTC (Wei Lin) will notify NYC Finance Team of any questions/corrections. If there are corrections, the request will be rejected and routed back to the preparer (NYC Finance Team). If changes are needed, it will be resubmitted for reimbursement and re-approval from NYC Finance Team.
11. If everything is approved, the traveler will be paid within 2 to 3 weeks.

Additional Resources:
University Policies 10.1, University Travel
University Policy 10.4, Business Expenses

Originally Issued: January 2015
Last Updated: December 16, 2015
## Travel Expense Reimbursement Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>Expense Description</th>
<th>Expense</th>
<th>MILES</th>
<th>MEALS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MM/DD/YY</td>
<td>CITY, STATE</td>
<td>COST ($)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Include Vendor Name</td>
<td></td>
<td>BREAKFAST</td>
<td>LUNCH</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$0.00</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
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</tbody>
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### Totals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>$0.00</th>
<th>$0.00</th>
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</thead>
</table>

Due: $0.00

**Last Updated: Dec. 10, 2013**
International Travel Reimbursement Procedure

The following information is provided to process requests for reimbursement of expenses incurred while traveling on official university business. Reimbursement will take place after the trip has occurred.

DEPARTMENT SUPPORT STAFF:
1. Seek Invitation Letter from sponsor, if visa is needed. (3-5 months prior to trip)
2. Request Business Letter from Ed
3. Submit passport, one 2x2 passport photo, and visa application form to expediter
4. Request travel advance (2 weeks prior to trip)
5. Collect original receipts (transportation, lodging, meals, etc.) for all travel-related expenses from the traveler. Cornell reimburses traveler's meals using the receipt method or per diem method. One method must apply for the entire trip.
   a. Foreign per diem is established by the federal government for travel outside the continental U.S. Foreign per diem rates are used for Hawaii and Alaska.
   b. If using the receipt method, an original ITEMIZED receipt that lists what was purchased, including beverages must be included.
   c. If receipts are in foreign currency, please include the U.S. dollar amount on each receipt. A simple way to convert all foreign currency to U.S. dollars (and provide backup for the conversion) is to use the XE.com currency converter.
6. Organize and tape receipts by date on an 8 1/2 x 11 sheet of paper.
7. Complete the Travel Expense Reimbursement Form and include any other supporting documents. Enter all receipts and other documentation onto the form. If travel advance was requested, please indicate the dollar amount on the first line of the form under “cost,” which should be negative. Reimbursement requests with a travel advance must be submitted within 30 days after completion of the trip.
8. When the form is finished, print and scan along with all original receipts and submit to NYC Finance Team as a PDF via email, hand deliver originals.

FINANCE TEAM:
9. NYC Finance Team will review request and supporting documentation. If questions, team will request corrections from support staff. Once corrections are made, NYC Finance Team enters the information onto the Travel Reimbursement System. An automated message requests approval from the traveler.
10. Once approved by the traveler, the NYC Finance Team is notified via email that it has been approved.
11. NYC Finance Team creates cover sheet that includes Trip ID number and account numbers and sends to Lys Simonett (NYC Finance Manager) for final review and approval.
12. Once signed and approved, NYC Finance Team mates copy of the travel reimbursement as a PDF in the Finance Shared Drive.
13. Original travel-related documents are sent to FTC for final review.
14. FTC (Wei Liu) will notify NYC Finance Team of any questions/corrections. If these are corrections, the request will be rejected and routed back to the preparer (NYC Finance Team). If changes are needed, it will be sent back to the traveler for resubmission and reapproval from NYC Finance Team.
15. If everything is approved, the traveler will be paid within 2 to 3 weeks.

Additional Resources:
- university Policy 5.16: University Travel
- university Policy 5.14: Business Expenses

Originally Issued: January 2016
Last Updated: December 18, 2018
# International Travel Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>International Travel Requirements</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRE-TRAVEL NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail Theresa H. Woodhouse regarding dates and tentative travel locations abroad at <a href="mailto:th32@cornell.edu">th32@cornell.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check if international destination is listed on the State Department Travel Warning Site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If so, the traveler(s) will require the Dean’s written approval for travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For more information on notification process, review University Guidelines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PASSPORT REQUIREMENTS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check passport expiration date at least 1 month before travel date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If passport expires within 6 months of your departure date, renew your passport here to avoid issues prior to and while traveling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most consulates require US passport to be valid more than 6 months to receive a visa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VISA REQUIREMENTS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check if a business visa is required for travel destination on the U.S. Department of State Travel Site immediately upon booking trip – it can take over a month to receive a visa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If visa is required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begin visa application process at least 1 month in advance using Travisa expeditor service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review specific visa and travel requirements for your country of travel to ensure forms are correct before submitting visa application to expeditor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure correct visa application forms for your specific destination are filled as it varies according to country. This information is found on Travisa site and U.S. State Government International Travel website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finalize all international contact information and place(s) of stay (both hotel and business locations) as this information is required for the visa application process and can be used for emergency contact purposes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INOCULATIONS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check CDC (Center for Disease Control) website for necessary and/or recommended inoculations specific for countries of travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inquire early; receiving a series of inoculations can take up to 1 month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inoculation expenses are reimbursable upon completion of travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HIGH RISK DESTINATIONS (ITART)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check the Cornell University Travel Registry to see ITART (International Travel Advisory Response Team) has listed travel destination as an &quot;elevated-risk country&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITART country, apply for approval prior to departure in the ITART Cornell Travel Portal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EMERGENCY PROTOCOL AND MEDEX INSURANCE REGISTRATION</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty and staff are strongly encouraged to register with the Cornell University Travel Registry and to sign up for FrontierMEDEX, a free insurance program available to members of the Cornell community traveling abroad on university business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By registering for MEDEX located within Cornell’s Travel Registry, you gain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verified eligibility for University approved emergency medical insurance and support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact with the University and those listed as emergency contacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immediate University support in case of urgent health, safety and security issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review and fill out the Emergency Protocol and Procedures form to ensure detailed guidelines are in place in case of an emergency situation while abroad</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**International Travel Recommendations**

**BEFORE YOU GO...**

- Review Cornell’s Guidelines for Travel with Technology
- Enroll in Instant Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP): o STEP provides updates on Travel Warnings, alerts and other information about international destinations as provided by US government

*Updated: 2/19/2014*
Travel Reimbursement - Quick Tips

**Transportation**
- All travel expenses, including those incurred upon return to campus, must be submitted with your travel report. When booking through an approved travel agency, the Price Summary Table (PST) provided by the Airline will include the carrier’s name and the cost of the ticket. **Non-Reimbursable:** In-flight beverages, first-class and business class flights, flights arriving late by the Dean, Associate Dean, or Director of Finance has been received.
- Multiple Destinations: Provide the business purpose for each destination associated with the trip. First and business class flights may be reimbursable in certain cases for international travel with prior approval.
- Rental Car and Fuel: Include rental receipt, gas and other related receipts. For reimbursement, all receipts must include the carrier’s name and the cost of the ticket. **Non-Reimbursable:** For UAlbany, personal and secondary use vehicles, New York State sales tax.
- Airfare: Provide airfare receipt and any information related to the payment of the ticket. **Non-Reimbursable:** For UAlbany, personal and secondary use vehicles, New York State sales tax.
- Lodging: Include hotel and airfare receipt and any information related to the payment of the ticket. **Non-Reimbursable:** For UAlbany, personal and secondary use vehicles, New York State sales tax.
- Parking: Provide all receipts, including tip. **Non-Reimbursable:** For UAlbany, personal and secondary use vehicles, New York State sales tax.
- Transportation: Provide all receipts, including tip. **Non-Reimbursable:** For UAlbany, personal and secondary use vehicles, New York State sales tax.

**Lodging**
- Hotel: Include detailed receipt(s) and must submit a receipt. **Non-Reimbursable:** For UAlbany, personal use vehicles, New York State sales tax.
- Hotel Provided: Traveler needs to explain reason (e.g., paid for by another organization).

**Meal/Miscellaneous (S)**
- One Trip: Original receipts must be submitted with a meal stub. **Non-Reimbursable:** For UAlbany, personal and secondary use vehicles, New York State sales tax.
- Caviar: Can only be used for a trip that is more than one day (minimum: 33% of the cost of the meal). **Non-Reimbursable:** For UAlbany, personal and secondary use vehicles, New York State sales tax.
- Airport: Only provide receipts from the restaurant associated with the travel expense. **Non-Reimbursable:** For UAlbany, personal and secondary use vehicles, New York State sales tax.
- Alcohol: Purchase must be clearly identified on the receipt to be reimbursed. **Non-Reimbursable:** For UAlbany, personal and secondary use vehicles, New York State sales tax.
- Miscellaneous: Include all receipts with a meal stub. **Non-Reimbursable:** For UAlbany, personal and secondary use vehicles, New York State sales tax.

**Miscellaneous Receipt**
- Miscellaneous: Include all receipts with a meal stub. **Non-Reimbursable:** For UAlbany, personal and secondary use vehicles, New York State sales tax.

**Contact Us for Additional Information**
- Cornell University: 252-3333 EMAIL: ilrfinance@cornell.edu
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FAQ’s

TRAVEL/MISC. REIMBURSEMENT FAQ

Traveling Domestically
Q: Do I need to submit receipts that are Direct Billed in my reimbursement?
A: Direct Billed expenses are generally NOT required when submitting a standard reimbursement.

EXCEPTION: if the reimbursement is related to a contracted on-site program where the client will reimburse the university, Direct Billed receipts MUST be saved and submitted with the reimbursement.

Q: What requires an original receipt?
A: Original receipts are required for ALL expenses EXCEPT for the following: Meals associated with overnight travel claimed under the per diem method, personal auto mileage reimbursed at the current IRS rate, miscellaneous expenses that are less than $75

Q: What’s considered a miscellaneous expense?
A: Miscellaneous expenses are travel-related expenses such as local transportation, mail, fax, phone, internet hotel charges, entrance fees, etc. Lodging, meals (when using the receipt method) and transportation to and from your destination (air, train, rental car) are NOT miscellaneous expenses.

Q:
A:

Q:
A:

Traveling Internationally
Q: When should I seek an invitation letter from Sponsor?
A: An Invitation Letter should be sought from sponsor, if visa is needed, 3-5 months prior to trip. A letter of invitation on company letterhead from sponsor (either host company or individual) explaining the relationship to the applicant and the purpose of travel. In addition, the letter must indicate the length of stay, place of stay, and contact information. The invitation should also confirm the validity of visa applied for (1 Year, 5 Year or 10 Year), as well as places and organizations to be visited.
Additional Expense Related Updates

• **Direct Deposit**: We encourage you to sign up to receive non-payroll reimbursements through direct deposit by completing the following form: [http://www.dfa.cornell.edu/payments/processing/reimbursements/ach.cfm](http://www.dfa.cornell.edu/payments/processing/reimbursements/ach.cfm)

• **Use of Object Codes**: It is no longer necessary for department administrative staff to assign object codes to expenses reimbursement requests. FTC and the Finance Team will assign these on behalf of each Department.

• **Direct Billing Receipts**: It is no longer necessary for department administrative staff to submit a copy of a receipt for direct billings (Statler Hotel, C2C Bus) with the travel reimbursement form. It is only necessary to identify charges as direct billing.

• **Tax Exempt Certificate**: If we need a tax exempt certificate, we must now request it from FTC (Wei Liu) for each individual request. Keeping a blank form in our files is against Cornell Policy. Previously we contacted Patti Giordano in the Tax Compliance to request a tax exempt certificate. This practice is no longer applicable.

• **IRS 2014 Mileage Rates**: The IRS mileage rates for 2014 have decreased. Business miles reimbursement is now 56 cents per mile, down from 56.5 cents in 2013.
Future Goals

- Introduce a travel portal on the ILR Finance website
- Convert existing forms to web forms to further automate the workflow
- Consider other areas where the Lean process can help remove waste and add value at ILR-NYC

http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/fiscal/policies/index.html

For more information about this revised travel process contact your department administrative staff, Lya Simonet or Wil Stringer
ILR Lean Team for Travel Reimbursement Process