Department of Chemistry – Expense Report Guidelines
Expense Reports / Business Office Contact: Lynn Mandenberg

Employees of the university (i.e., persons who are paid regularly by the university) are able to enter their own expense reports for reimbursement using the NUFinancials System. If you need access to the NUFinancials System, please see Aaron Jones or Ann Wheatley in the Business Office, Tech K130. All travel by a staff member, post-doc, or graduate student must have prior approval from his or her supervisor. Please see the Department of Chemistry's Travel Policy for information on the request process.

Reimbursements must be processed within 30 days after returning from travel. *If the expense report is not submitted within 90 days from return of travel, a '90 Day Exception' form must be included*.

Only one expense report may be created per trip. If any issues arise while entering data onto the report, contact the Business Office for assistance – do not create a new expense report.

FAQ's:

- The **Comment Section** is mandatory. Document the trip or event by providing:

    1. Destination.
    2. Date and business purpose.
    3. If trip is supported by outside agency, explain what was covered and include documentation as attachments. Walkthrough.

- The **Detail** tab is mandatory. Clarify the expense line (Examples below)

    1. Domestic Airfare – Roundtrip airfare from Chicago O'Hare to Denver, Colorado.
    2. Domestic Public Ground Transportation – Uber taxi from Evanston to Chicago O'Hare Airport.
    3. Domestic Hotel – Name of Hotel.
    4. Domestic Dinner – Name of Restaurant.

- A single expense report must be submitted for the entire itinerary on the air reservation (all destinations listed).

- Paperwork for pre-purchased expenses that have been charged to a One Card or chartstring must be included as an attachment. For example, airfare, hotel, conference registration.

- Flights, trains, hotels, cars cannot be charged to a One Card .

- **Airfare**

1. Purchased Airfare: If any airfare has been booked using a university approved travel agency (Egencia, Travel 100 Group, or Intra World Travel) and direct charged to a chart string, the following process must be followed:
    a. Receipts must be included and marked as non-reimbursable.
    b. On the expense line item, under the **Detail** tab, check the **Non-Reimb** box.

2. Upgrades
    a. Business Class
        i. University approved air travel may be charged to discretionary accounts if total air travel time is 12 hours or more. Travel time includes stopovers and change of planes.
        ii. When charged to a grant, there must be a request made to the granting agency prior to travel. This approval must be included in the attachments.
    b. Premium Economy Class
        i. An exception may be requested for flights where the price of the upgrade is considered "reasonable" relative to the cost of the ticket and duration of the flight.
        ii. Faculty must use their discretionary funds for the cost of the upgrade and the exception request form should be sent to the Dean's Office with your reimbursement materials.
        iii. Examples of "reasonable" upgrades:
            1. For a 3-hour flight to the West Coast, an upgrade of around $50.
            2. For an 8-hour flight to Europe, an upgrade of around $200.
        iv. Example of an "unreasonable" upgrade:
            1. For a 1-hour flight, an upgrade costing around $50

3. Foreign Air Carrier
    a. Use of foreign-based carriers is restricted on sponsored programs.
    b. Please see page 14 in the Northwestern University Travel Policy for more information.

4. Flight Change Fees
    a. May be reimbursed, but only if the change was due to a justifiable business reason.
    b. If justified, this must be included in the **Comment** section.

- **Private Auto Mileage**

    1. Currently the rate of reimbursement is 57.5 cents per mile.
    2. Tolls and reasonable parking charges will be reimbursed in addition to the mileage allowed. Please see page 16 in the Northwestern University Travel Policy for more information.

- **Rail**
    1. The University will reimburse the cost of fare not to exceed the cost of the least expensive airfare.
    2. Please see page 16 of Northwestern Travel Policy for more information.

- **Hotel**

    1. Receipts must be itemized.
    2. Separate entries required for lodging, food, alcohol, internet, valet.
    3. The individual paying for the hotel room will receive 100%. reimbursement regardless how many people shared the room. List names of all individuals sharing the room.
    4. NOTE: If hotel room was paid by other organization or traveler, indicate in the comment section who paid for the room (including meals and rental car).
    5. AirBNB – non-conventional lodging – this is usually fine as long as it demonstrates the costs are cheaper or on par with commercial class hotels.

- **Group Meals**

    1. Receipt must be itemized.
    2. If more than one person attends, a list of attendees must be entered including Affiliation and Title.
    3. Applies to both domestic and foreign travel.
    4. Breakfast and lunch must be of a reasonable cost.
    5. Dinner should not exceed $65 per head including tip and alcohol.

- **Alcohol**

    1. Separated from meal receipt.
    2. Enter under Expense Type column as Domestic Alcoholic Beverages.
    3. Prohibited to be charged to a grant.
    4. Must be in compliance with the University's Policy on Drugs and Alcohol. The ratio of food to alcohol at all events should be reasonable.

- **Conference Registration**

1. Receipts must be included as attachments and labelled as non-reimbursable.
2. On the expense line item, under the **Detail** tab, check the **Non-Reimb** box. Walkthrough.

- **Per Diem**

1. Per Diem is permissible for meals and incidental expense for authorized business travel.
2. Please refer to the links provided (here and here) in order to see the criteria and to calculate the amount for per diem based on foreign or domestic travel.

- **Foreign currency conversion**

1. All expenses must be listed in US dollars.
2. Per each transaction, an OANDA conversion page must be attached.
3. The rates must be the exchange rate on actual day of transaction, not the rates in effect at the time of the expense report submission.
4. The original itemized receipt plus the OANDA conversion page with the exchange rate and date of transaction is required.
5. In the event a receipt is missing:
    a. Credit Card: provide a copy of the bank statement and highlight the transaction.
    b. Cash: using OANDA, calculate the amount in US dollars on date of transaction.
6. Use the receipt's total amount when performing a currency conversion – do not use $1.00 for the conversion rate. Walkthrough.

- **Domestic Tolls & Parking:** A receipt may be submitted for parking fees. This includes airport, parking garages, street parking, etc.

- **Expense Report Status:** To determine an expense report's status, navigate to NU Portal\Financial\Payments\ Find\Modify Existing Expense Report\Employee Self-Service\Travel and Expense Center\Expense Report\View\Click 'Search'\Click 'Report ID'\Under 'General Info', click on the status link. Walkthrough.

- **'Other Policy Exception'** form must be included for the following situations:

1. If you are missing a receipt greater than $40.
2. Other situations: If you have any questions about whether or not a policy exception form is required, please contact the Business Office prior to submitting the report.

- **Expense Report Process When Ready to Submit (for Faculty Expense Reports ONLY):**

    1. Faculty administrator pulls together the receipts and other documentation for reimbursement.
    2. Creates an electronic expense report, clicks "Save for Later" and then clicks "Check Budget."
    3. Faculty administrator sends email with expense report number to Mary Lynn Mandenberg (Business Office Level One Approver) and copies Ann Wheatley (Business Office Level Two Approver.)
    4. Lynn conducts a thorough review and will let Faculty administrator know if there are issues. Correspondence will continue by email until the report is satisfactory.
    5. Once accurate, the Faculty administrator will submit the expense report.
    6. Faculty electronically approves.
    7. Business Office electronically approves.

MAKE SURE EXPENSE REPORTS ARE APPROVED IMMEDIATELY (after 30 days they will drop off NUFinancials).

Current process

1. Faculty administrator pulls together the receipts and other documentation for reimbursement.
2. Creates an electronic expense report, budget checks, and submits.
3. When submitted, the expense report is routed to faculty for their electronic signature.
4. Upon faculty approval, Mary Lynn Mandenberg (Business Office Level One Approver) receives expense report in her work list and conducts a thorough review.
5. Lynn communicates with Faculty Administrator issues with the report and fixes them when possible or sends back to Faculty administrator.
6. Problems are fixed and resubmitted by Faculty administrator.
7. Faculty approves again.
8. If accurate, Business Office approves. If not, it is sent back again for corrections.
9. Steps 5-7 will repeat until the report is accurate.

New Process

1. Faculty administrator pulls together the receipts and other documentation for reimbursement.
2. Creates an electronic expense report, clicks "Save for Later" and then clicks "Check Budget."
3. Faculty administrator sends email with expense report number to Mary Lynn Mandenberg (Business Office Level One Approver) and copies Ann Wheatley (Business Office Level Two Approver).
   For faculty procurement card *My Wallet* expense reports, Faculty administrators should contact Olga Shvarts (Business Office Level One Approver for Procurement Card) and copy Aaron Jones (Business Office Supervisor for Procurement Card Program).
4. Lynn conducts a thorough review and will let Faculty administrator know if there are issues. Correspondence will continue by email until the report is satisfactory.
5. Once accurate, the Faculty administrator will submit the expense report.
6. Faculty electronically approves.
7. Business Office electronically approves.