



Nebraska State  
College System

CHADRON | PERU | WAYNE

# Travel Manual

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## Contents

<b>Purpose</b>	<b>3</b>		
<b>Definitions</b>	<b>3</b>		
<b>General Specifications</b>	<b>4</b>		
College or Department Policies			
NSCS Funds			
Compliance and Exceptions			
Non-NSCS Personnel			
<b>Pre-Travel</b>	<b>5</b>		
Travel Request			
Most Economical Rates			
Personal Travel			
Blanket Travel			
<b>Payment Methods</b>	<b>6</b>		
NSCS Warrant			
Purchasing Card			
Travel Card			
Expenses Paid by Employee			
<b>Travel Settlement</b>	<b>7</b>		
Travel Expense Deadline			
Receipts			
<b>Transportation</b>	<b>8</b>		
Most Economical Mode of Travel			
<b>Air Travel</b>	<b>8</b>		
<b>Automobile Travel</b>	<b>9</b>		
General			
Primary Mode of Transportation			
Supplemental Transportation			
Rental Car Reimbursable Expenses			
Temporary Work Location (Personal Vehicle)			
Extraordinary Modes of Transportation			
Automobile Insurance			
		<b>Lodging</b>	<b>13</b>
		Booking	
		Purchase Methods	
		Lodging Reimbursement	
		Event Special Pricing	
		<b>Meals</b>	<b>14</b>
		General Limitations on Per Diem	
		Meals Provided	
		One-Day Travel	
		<b>Other Expenses</b>	<b>15</b>
		Event Registration Fees	
		<b>International Travel Preparation</b>	<b>16</b>
		Export Control	
		Insurance	
		State Department Smart Traveler Program	
		<b>Appendix 1: List of Travel Expense Types</b>	<b>17</b>
		<b>Appendix 2: Form 13, NE Sales Tax Exemption</b>	<b>20</b>

## Purpose

The purpose of the Nebraska State College System (NSCS) Travel Manual is to:

- Create a uniform travel process (from travel approval through reimbursement) for NSCS employees traveling on NSCS business and employees processing the related expenses.
- Ensure consistent application of travel policies for all travelers across the system.
- Ensure compliance with all Federal and State of Nebraska statutes and policies, NSCS policies, and relevant requirements for International Travel.

This Travel Manual applies to all NSCS employees traveling on NSCS business.

## Definitions

**Affidavit** – an electronically submitted statement confirming the required receipt(s) or proof(s) of payment was unattainable from a business or was lost by the traveler.

**Blanket Travel Authorization (BTA)** – authorization for employee travel for trips with the same business purpose, which can consist of multiple trips throughout a fiscal year.

**Commute** – the normal, direct route between a traveler’s home and permanent work location.

**Departure Time** – the time the traveler leaves their tax home or designated work location to begin travel status.

**Direct Payments** – payments made by the NSCS on behalf of the traveler for business-related travel expenses.

**Direct Route** – the shortest or most efficient route between a point of departure and a destination.

**Financial Approver** – an NSCS employee who oversees, regulates and approves all expenses from a specific NSCS funding source(s); will review Travel Requests prior to approval to ensure the traveler has approved, budgeted funding for the specific trip; will review actual, submitted expenses prior to approval and reimbursement to ensure they are allocated correctly.

**International Travel** – travel outside of the United States and its territories or travel to any destination which requires a passport unless otherwise stated within this Travel Manual or by outside vendors/suppliers.

**Online Booking Tool** – a utility of the Travel Management System that a traveler may use to book airfare, lodging, and car rentals, subject to vendor participation.

**Per Diem** – daily allowance for meals set to a maximum equal to 70% of the most recently published per diem rates established by the federal GSA rate and consistent with the rate established by the Nebraska Department of Administrative Services.

**Return Time** – the time the traveler returns to their home or work location after ending their Travel Status.

**Supervisor Approver** – an NSCS employee who manages the time and performance of duties of a specific NSCS traveler; will review Travel Requests prior to approval to ensure traveler’s compliance with this Travel Manual; may simultaneously be the Financial Approver for the same Travel Request.

**Traveler** – an NSCS employee, including a student employee traveling within the scope of their employment.

**Travel Expense Report** – the traveler’s itemized request for reimbursement of expenses the traveler incurred and paid with personal funds while in a Travel Status.

**Travel Management System** – software application integrated with the NSCS accounting system used to record travel requests, approvals, and expenses. Current software used is “SAP-Concur.”

**Travel Request** – the traveler’s request--processed through the NSCS Travel Management System--to travel for NSCS business and/or to use NSCS funding sources for expenses related to the business travel.

**Travel Status** – when a traveler is outside of their normal city of work or residency or respective regular Commute while conducting or engaging in NSCS business.

**University Travel Office** – the University of Nebraska’s central travel administrator, which shall provide the NSCS with general automation support and training.

## General Specifications

### *College or Department Policies*

This Travel Manual shall be uniformly adopted throughout the NSCS. Chadron State, Peru State, Wayne State, the System Office, and any of their departments may not implement additional travel policy or establish business practices that conflict with any provision of this Travel Manual. Final submissions of Travel Requests and expense reimbursements shall be reviewed internally based solely on this Travel Manual.

### *NSCS Funds*

The NSCS is responsible for two funding types: NSCS funds and NSCS-managed funds.

**NSCS funds** include funds derived from tuition, fees, state appropriations, revolving accounts, and bond revenues.

**NSCS-managed funds** include dollars accepted from sources external to the NSCS, such as private donations held in trust, as well as federal, state, local and industry grants.

Federal and state compliance rules require that NSCS funds and NSCS-managed funds be subject to the same fiscal management policies. The Nebraska Auditor of Public Accounts (APA) does not distinguish between these two types of funds when auditing NSCS financial activity. Therefore, all funding types will be subject to the policies of this Travel Manual.

### *Compliance and Exceptions*

This Travel Manual is designed to ensure compliance with applicable federal law, State of Nebraska statutes and regulations, and NSCS fiscal policies. Non-compliance could subject the NSCS to financial risks such as tax assessments, penalties, and interest. Failure to comply with the requirements stated within this Travel Manual may result in a traveler not receiving reimbursement for some or all claimed expenses, or the traveler may be restricted from future access to NSCS funds, as determined by their Supervisor Approver. Compliance by all travelers will be monitored and addressed by their Supervisor Approver(s) and other NSCS administrators, as applicable. Non-compliance with this Travel Manual should be referred to the respective Vice President for Administration and Finance (VPAF) or Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration (VCFA) for review, which may result in disciplinary action.

Travelers may request exceptions to this Travel Manual in writing, and exceptions may be authorized by the respective VPAF/VCFA. Authorizations must also be in writing and must provide a reasonable rationale for granting each exception. Exceptions should be constrained to accommodations for physical limitations. This also applies to travelers who qualify for an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

accommodation plan. The accommodation plan must be on file with the traveler's respective ADA/504 Coordinator. In such cases, the ADA/504 Coordinator shall provide the VPAF/VCFA with sufficient information to evaluate a traveler's request for exception.

The respective traveler's trips and related expenses then may be processed in accordance with these approved and documented accommodations. The traveler must document the authorization for any exceptions to Travel Manual with every Travel Request. Exceptions not documented until the claim for expense reimbursement may be disallowed at the discretion of the Financial Approver(s) on the basis such cost was unbudgeted.

Time-sensitive situations, including but not limited to weather, unexpected health issues, and other emergencies, may merit a traveler exception to this Travel Manual. These may be evaluated and approved by the traveler's Supervisor Approver on a case-by-case basis. The traveler still must document the request for any such exceptions with the Travel Request, and the Supervisor Approver must document the rationale for approval/denial of the request. In such occurrences, the Supervisor Approver shall notify the respective VPAF/VCFA of the request, approval/denial, and rationale.

The NSCS assumes travelers act as good stewards of NSCS funds who limit their travel expenses to the lowest reasonable cost. Travelers shall not be required to demonstrate lowest reasonable cost unless it is required by this Travel Manual, State of Nebraska statutes and regulations, or unless it is requested by the traveler's Supervisor Approver, the respective VPAF/VCFA, or NSCS finance staff performing pre-audit of expenses. Finance staff should limit such requests to those expenses that seem extraordinarily excessive cost for the expense in a particular local economy.

### *Non-NSCS Personnel*

This Travel Manual applies only to active NSCS employees, but it may be used as guidance for travel by non-employees, including but not limited to:

1. The NSCS Board of Trustees and Student Trustees who are traveling on NSCS business.
2. Students who are not in an employment status.
3. Individuals doing business with or for the NSCS, including but not limited to consultants, guests, independent contractors, volunteers, and speakers who have contracted with the NSCS for an event, project or other service.
4. Candidates/applicants for employment.

## Pre-Travel

### *Travel Request*

All travelers are required to submit a Travel Request prior to every instance of being in Travel Status. This includes Travel Status trips with no associated business expenses to the traveler or the NSCS. All requests will require approval by the traveler's Supervisor Approver and Financial Approver (may be the same person) for all respective funding sources being utilized for the trip as applicable. Travel Requests are required prior to any bookings, direct payments, and reimbursements for travel expenses. Blanket Travel Requests will require a single Travel Request at the beginning of each fiscal year.

Travel Requests for International and United States territories travel should be submitted at least sixty (60) days in advance of travel to ensure timely review by the NSCS, and to ensure compliance with any relevant government regulations for foreign travel. International Travel will require additional approval from the traveler's respective College President or their designee(s), or in the case of travelers employed at the System Office, approval is required from the Chancellor or their designee(s).

Privately owned or piloted planes, chartered planes, and the State of Nebraska plane require additional approval from the Chancellor or their designee(s) for all travel subject to this Travel Manual.

### *Most Economical Rates*

All travelers should use their best efforts to choose the lowest economic means of travel which meets the approved goals of the trip within the limits of this Travel Manual. The traveler's business purpose, potential time in transit, special needs, cost efficiency, and other business-related circumstances contribute to considering the most economical travel options.

### *Personal Travel*

Travelers who engage in personal travel, while in Travel Status, should acknowledge and include details of the personal travel in the Travel Request. However, only NCS business-related travel expenses may be included in the Travel Request and Travel Expense Reports. The NCS will pay for or reimburse the traveler for the portion of the expenses that relate to the business purpose of the respective trip. When submitting a request for reimbursement, the traveler must deduct all personal expenses and related taxes and fees from the submitted, detailed receipts.

### *Blanket Travel*

Blanket Travel Authorizations (BTA) may be granted for multiple business trips with the same business purpose during a single fiscal year. Requests for a BTA must be submitted as a single Travel Request through the NCS Travel Management System. The VPAF/VCFA may set limits on the geographical radius of blanket travel, as appropriate. A BTA must specify a specific term, which may be for up to one fiscal year, but the term may not cross fiscal years. A BTA may only be extended or renewed by submitting a new Travel Request.

BTA travelers should submit Travel Expense Reports for completed trips monthly through the NCS Travel Management System.

## **Payment Methods**

### *NCS Warrant (Direct Bill)*

The NCS may pay directly for travel expenses incurred before the dates of travel, including but not limited to approved air travel, rail, bus, car rentals, lodging, and conference registrations.

### *Purchasing Card*

The NCS-issued purchasing card (known as a "P-Card") may be used for certain travel purchases in accordance with state and NCS purchasing card rules and guidelines.

### *Travel Card*

The NCS may maintain credit accounts to serve NCS travelers who use the Online Booking Tool feature of the Travel Management System. A traveler's use of this feature for available purchases will generate a vendor invoice to the NCS instead of the traveler. Travelers may use the Online Booking Tool to purchase airfare, lodging, and rental cars to the extent vendors and accommodations are available.

### *Expenses Paid by Employee*

The NCS encourages the traveler, as much as is possible, to arrange for travel which allows the NCS to pay directly for the associated expenses. Personal funding sources, including but not limited to cash, credit cards and debit cards, may be used to pay for travel expenses. The NCS shall reimburse the traveler for authorized travel expenses the traveler paid with personal funds, unless otherwise stated within this Travel Manual. Such expenses must be submitted through the NCS Travel Management System and must include itemized receipts, subject to certain exceptions detailed in [Appendix 1](#).

## Travel Settlement

### *Travel Expense Deadline*

Travelers must submit their reimbursement requests through the NCS Travel Management System no later than sixty (60) calendar days after the final day on which expenses were incurred. This State of Nebraska statutory requirement cannot be waived. The NCS will not pay for or reimburse any reimbursement request submitted by the traveler past this deadline.

The 60-day time limit remains in effect for each trip taken under the BTA. If a blanket traveler submits a Travel Expense Report containing one or more trip start/end dates allowable under a BTA, then expenses with trip end dates less than 60 days old are eligible for reimbursement. Expenses with trip end dates older than 60 days are not eligible for reimbursement.

The Financial Approver(s) shall review and approve reimbursement and the assignment of the appropriate cost center(s) after the corresponded travel has ended. Approved reimbursements will then be pre-audited for payment. Pre-Auditors shall evaluate all BTA Travel Expense Reports to ensure each individual itinerary meets the 60-day rule.

### *Receipts*

Travelers must provide receipts that are detailed and itemized for all NCS business-related travel expenses unless otherwise exempted by this Travel Manual (see [Appendix 1](#) for exceptions). In accordance with State of Nebraska requirements, failure to submit required receipts may result in the NCS not paying for or reimbursing the traveler for the related expenses.

Detailed and itemized receipts must include:

- item(s) purchased (including gratuities, taxes and fees)
- name of the business where the transaction took place
- transaction date/time
- amount of the transaction

**Split Receipts.** If a receipt includes expenses for multiple travelers, then travelers must coordinate among themselves to cover the total cost of reimbursable expenses. A single traveler is limited to seeking reimbursement for only their own expenses. If multiple travelers are seeking reimbursement from a single receipt that includes the expenses of each of the travelers, then each traveler must provide a copy of the itemized receipt with their Travel Expense Report, which annotates their corresponding share on the receipt.

If receipts are listed in any language other than English, the traveler must translate the business name, location, date, and individual items. Associated prices can be converted through the Travel Management System to the U.S. dollar equivalency on the day of the transaction.

### **Exceptions for International Travel**

When on International Travel: if a receipt has been lost, is not available, or is impossible to obtain, then an Affidavit may be allowed in lieu of receipt for certain expenses. An Affidavit is primarily an option used to mitigate the lack of adequate receipting practices in foreign countries. Except for situations specified in this Travel Manual, Affidavits are not allowed for domestic travel. Affidavits for international expenses require the same information required for receipts.

**Details on specific receipt requirements and authorized Affidavits are outlined in [Appendix 1](#).**

## Transportation

### *Most Economical Mode of Travel*

A traveler shall use the most economical mode of travel. The NSCS will pay for or reimburse the traveler for travel expenses only up to the total cost of the most economical mode. The NSCS may waive this limitation and reimburse the full amount of the alternative mode of travel if the most economical mode will conflict with the traveler's itinerary or if it is incompatible with the traveler's physical limitations. The traveler must document such conflicts in the Pre-Trip request. A traveler may also request a less economical mode of travel due to personal preference. In such a case, the Supervisor Approver and Financial Approver must compare the costs of all reasonable modes of travel for the Travel Request to determine the most economical option. If the traveler's requested mode exceeds the cost of most economical mode, then the Approver(s) shall document the cost of the most economical mode and annotate that any reimbursement will be limited to cost of the most economical mode.

## Air Travel

### Ticket Pricing

The traveler should book a ticket not to exceed the price at the time of purchase for the lowest-priced available tier of seating, often referred to as "coach," "economy," or "main cabin" rate. Prior to booking, the traveler may request from their respective VPAF/VCFA an exception to these limitations by documenting a reasonable justification for a higher priced fare that complies with this Travel Manual, as well as State of Nebraska statutes and regulations. The justification may be but is not necessarily limited to lack of seat availability, lack of compatible and reasonable itinerary, an approved physical accommodation, or if the traveler intends to pay the difference in fare. If the VPAF/VCFA approves the exception, then the traveler may book the higher fare and annotate the approval on the Travel Expense Report, as applicable. When using the Online Booking Tool, the traveler, when prompted, must indicate the VPAF/VCFA-approved justification for not choosing lowest available fare.

If the traveler books a higher-cost fare without receiving pre-approval from the VPAF/VCFA, then the traveler may be subject to disciplinary action, which may include reimbursement to the NSCS if the VPAF/VCFA later determines the higher priced fare was not justified. The NSCS shall not be required to pay for any travel expense incurred by a traveler that violates the provisions of this Travel Manual and/or State of Nebraska statutes or regulations.

### Personal Preference Upgrades

A traveler may choose to upgrade a ticket to a higher-tier seat as a matter of personal preference, but the traveler will be personally responsible for that upgrade. At a minimum, the traveler must document the upgrade, itemize its cost differential on the airfare receipt, and deduct the difference from the request for expense reimbursement. The NSCS will not reimburse airfare costs incurred because of a personal preference upgrade. This option is only available if the traveler chooses to book travel outside of the Online Booking Tool.

### Cancellations

In the case of a cancellation, the value of airfare purchased through the Online Booking Tool will be held in reserve by the NSCS for future business travel. The NSCS shall reimburse non-refundable airfare (or any non-refundable portion) purchased by the traveler outside of the Online Booking Tool if the NSCS cancels the travel or if the traveler fails to travel on the booked flight for any reason except misconduct, negligence, personal preference, or resignation from employment. In the event of such an exception, then any expenses incurred by the traveler shall be the sole responsibility of the traveler, and the NSCS shall not reimburse any such expenses.



## Automobile Travel

### *General*

The traveler must have a valid driver's license and valid personal automobile insurance, both issued in the United States, to drive an automobile anywhere on NSCS business, including on NSCS or other private property. The traveler must successfully complete a defensive driving course approved by the State of Nebraska Transportation Services Bureau (TSB) to drive an automobile anywhere on NSCS business.

### *Primary Mode of Transportation*

#### **State-Owned Vehicle**

If the automobile is the primary mode of transportation (no air or rail travel), then traveler should first consider a state-owned vehicle provided by TSB or the corresponding College motor pool. State-owned vehicles are each issued a charge card (ex. Voyager). The traveler must use the state-issued vehicle charge card for all fuel expenses and other expenses as may be allowed by TSB. In the event a state-issued vehicle card is not functioning or is not otherwise available, then the traveler may personally pay for fuel, and the traveler may request reimbursement in accordance with this Travel Manual. It is the traveler's responsibility to identify what expenses are authorized by TSB, and any expenditures rejected by TSB may be charged back to the traveler.

Only NSCS employees may operate a state-owned vehicle while in Travel Status. NSCS students may ride as passengers if they have signed and submitted a liability waiver. All other use of state-owned vehicles must be approved in advance by the respective VPAF/VCFA. This Travel Manual does not apply to the use or occupancy of any vehicle not being used for purposes of travel. Exceptions may be made for non-employees acting in emergencies that pose imminent risk to life and/or property.

The traveler may not operate a state-owned vehicle for personal use. The traveler may not retain possession of state-owned vehicles during nonworking hours and weekends, unless in an overnight travel status. Vehicles may not be taken home before or after scheduled travel. The only exception is in accordance with State of Nebraska Executive Order 99-01 and only when approved in advance in writing by the traveler's College President (or Chancellor) or their designee. Vehicles must be returned to the appropriate motor pool as soon as possible after the completion of travel.

#### **Personal Vehicle**

The preferred method for employee travel is for employees to use State of College vehicles. If an employee chooses to use a personal vehicle (including cars, van, pickups or motorcycles) when a State or College vehicle is available, they will be reimbursed at \$0.25 per mile.

There are limited circumstances that would warrant the use of a personal vehicle when a State or College vehicle is available. The use of a personal vehicle may be authorized by the designated agency head or their delegate if the location of departure for the authorized travel would result in a significant reduction of mileage and overall cost reduction to the college or would result in significant time savings and be more efficient for the college. If an employee's primary work location is other than the city where the college is located, a blanket authorization can be provided by the college to use a private vehicle and be reimbursed at the higher rate. The cost savings and efficiency are determined by the college considering the overall use and cost of providing fleet vehicles.

If a State or College vehicle is unavailable or when an employee has obtained written approval from the authorized personnel explaining the exception to use a personal vehicle, the reimbursement rate will be \$0.56 per mile. The higher rate will be paid when the notice that there was no State or College vehicle

available is uploaded with the reimbursement request in the Travel Management System. If approval to use a private vehicle has been granted, the email approval should be uploaded with the reimbursement request in the Travel Management System to receive the higher rate.

The NSCS shall not reimburse for any other type of cost associated with a personal vehicle.

### **Rental Vehicle**

The NSCS may authorize the use of a commercial rental vehicle for primary travel only if a state-owned vehicle (passenger car, pickup, van, etc.) is not available, and if the traveler is unable or unwilling to use a personal vehicle. A rental vehicle shall be limited to the lowest priced vehicle that can accommodate the traveler's needs. The traveler shall identify the size/type of vehicle needed in the Travel Request. Before approving a rental vehicle for primary travel, the Supervisor Approver must evaluate what vehicle size/type is appropriate and whether travel dates could be rescheduled to accommodate the availability of a state-owned vehicle. If rescheduling is viable, then a rental vehicle should not be authorized.

## *Supplemental Transportation*

The traveler shall be reimbursed for transportation costs incurred to and from the point of embarkation/debarkation for the primary mode of transportation (such as airport or rail station), as well as for transportation costs between locations at the traveler's destination when such transportation is necessary for NCS business. Travelers are expected to limit supplemental transportation by choosing business locations (such as from conference to restaurant or hotel) that are reasonable distances apart. Upon pre-audit review of a Travel Expense Report, the NCS may deny or reduce reimbursement of an expense for supplemental transportation if the distance is unreasonably greater than the distance to the nearest suitable location. Transportation that is not necessary for NCS business (such as for personal leisure, sightseeing, mall shopping, etc.) is considered to be **not** reimbursable.

### **Personal Vehicle**

Supplemental mileage shall be reimbursed at the standard mileage rate established by the NCS Chancellor. The traveler must record the business-related mileage in a log that documents to/from miles, date, time, and purpose. The traveler may use a personal vehicle for personal reasons at any time, but the additional mileage is not reimbursable and should not be included in a log for reimbursable additional mileage.

### **Taxi/Shuttle Service**

Vendor charges for taxi/shuttle service shall be reimbursed when a personal vehicle or rental vehicle is not used. A valid receipt is required for reimbursement.

### **Rental Vehicle**

Rental vehicles may be authorized for supplementary transportation only if the primary transportation is aircraft, rail/train, or rental car. When primary transportation is aircraft or rail/train, the traveler should first consider taxi/shuttle service. If the traveler expects to incur supplemental transportation to the extent that taxi/shuttle service may cost more than a rental vehicle, or if taxi/shuttle service would be incompatible with the various destinations, then the traveler may request a rental vehicle in the Pre-Request Trip. The Supervisor shall evaluate the relative cost benefit and compatibility concerns before approving a rental vehicle.

### *Rental Car Reimbursable Expenses*

If a traveler is authorized to rent and pay for a vehicle personally, then the NCS shall reimburse the traveler for authorized rental car expenses upon final settlement of the Travel Expense Report. If the traveler books a rental vehicle through the Online Booking Tool, then the NCS shall pay all authorized costs directly to the vendor.

If the Travel Request is approved for personal travel dates, then the traveler may rent a vehicle personally for a period that includes the approved personal travel dates. The NCS shall reimburse the traveler only for the rental car costs associated with business dates of travel. The traveler shall not utilize the Online Booking Tool to rent a vehicle for a period that includes personal travel dates.

The following are the only rental car expenses that are automatically eligible for reimbursement to the traveler from the NCS:

- Rental price, mandatory fees, and taxes.
- Fuel, fluids, and compressed air purchases.
- Car wash, general cleaning.
- Flat tire repair (if rental car company does not provide roadside assistance). Does not include purchase of new tire.

Potentially Reimbursable Expenses (with relevant approval) may be, but are not necessarily limited to the following:

- Larger/upgraded vehicle
- Additional insurance and associated deductibles (see section, Automobile Insurance)
- Trailer hitch
- Navigation device
- Rental of a replacement vehicle if original rental vehicle malfunctions.

### *Temporary Work Location (Personal Vehicle)*

When assigned to a temporary work location for which daily travel is most cost effective, it is expected that the employee will travel from their residence to the temporary work location. Personal vehicle mileage to a temporary work location is reimbursable for the mileage more than the employee's normal commute. Mileage for travel to a temporary work location that will require the employee to be away from home for multiple days will be fully reimbursable. Commuting mileage is not reimbursable.

### *Extraordinary Modes of Transportation*

Any traveler wanting to use an extraordinary means of travel—including but not limited to privately owned or piloted aircraft, chartered aircraft (including the State Plane), and chartered buses—must document the rationale for such in the Travel Request, outlining the cost comparison with the most economical form of customary travel modes (commercial air, commercial rail, or automobile). Only the Chancellor or their designee may approve a request for extraordinary transportation, except for chartered buses, which may be approved by the relevant College President or their designee.

### *Automobile Insurance*

#### **State-Owned Vehicle**

All vehicles owned by the State are covered by the State for liability (bodily injury and property damage to personal or real property) caused by a State vehicle.

#### **Personal Vehicle**

The traveler's personal automobile insurance shall be considered primary, with the State of Nebraska automobile insurance policy providing excess liability coverage under certain circumstances. However, the state's policy will not provide any coverage for damage to the employee's personal vehicle, and the NCS will not reimburse or be held responsible for any personal insurance coverage, deductibles, or uninsured losses.

#### **Rental Vehicle**

The State of Nebraska automobile insurance policy provides physical damage insurance to rental cars. When renting a car, the traveler should usually decline the addition of any such coverage.

For domestic (non-international) travel, the NCS shall not reimburse the traveler for any additional insurance the traveler may purchase from a rental car company. In the Travel Request, the traveler may request and document the rationale for additional insurance, and the Supervisor Approver may approve in writing.

For international travel, the NCS shall reimburse the traveler for any additional insurance coverage that is mandatory in accordance with the laws of the host nation and the rental company's policies.

## Lodging

### *Booking*

Travelers are expected to book lodging that is reasonably priced and relevant for the specific destination, time of year, and business purpose. When choosing a location, the traveler should always ask the vendor or booking agent if a government or “GSA” rate is available, and the traveler should book the lowest rate offered. The Financial Approver should conduct market research whenever the traveler submits a request for lodging reimbursement that appears excessive with respect to the locality. The Financial Approver may require the traveler to provide further justification for expense, and if not satisfactory, may recalculate a market-appropriate lodging rate, document the rationale, and reduce the approval for reimbursement accordingly.

### *Purchase Methods*

#### **Accounts Payable Billing**

The NSCS often can coordinate with a vendor to bill the NSCS directly for employee lodging, which the NSCS may pay with state warrant or purchasing card. The traveler should inquire with the respective NSCS accounting office to determine if lodging with a desired vendor can be direct billed. Direct charges to the NSCS are limited to room rate plus fees and taxes associated with the room rate only. The traveler is solely responsible for initially paying any other charges incurred with the lodging vendor and must make separate arrangements with the vendor upon check-in/check-out.

#### **Traveler Purchase**

The traveler may personally reserve and pay for all lodging expenses.

### *Lodging Reimbursement*

For lodging costs paid for by the traveler, the NSCS shall reimburse for the amount(s) attributable to room rate, plus mandatory fees and taxes associated only with the room rate, and certain other itemized charges on the lodging receipt if such charges are required for NSCS business. The NSCS is not required to pay lodging taxes in Nebraska, so the traveler must notify a Nebraska lodging vendor of the NSCS business and request a tax exemption by completing “Form 13, Nebraska Resale or Sale Certificate for Sales Tax Exemption.” If the lodging vendor refuses to provide the exemption, then the traveler shall be reimbursed for Nebraska lodging taxes if the traveler submits with the Travel Expense Report a copy of the Form 13 and attests in writing that the lodging vendor refused the exemption.

Form 13 and instructions on how to complete it shall be provided by the traveler’s respective accounting office; and it is attached herein as [Appendix 2](#).

Charges incurred for personal comfort/entertainment are not reimbursable. Meals charged to a room and included on a lodging receipt are not reimbursable (see [Meals](#) section). Allowable charges are limited to those itemized in [Appendix 1](#).

Payment/reimbursement for a traveler will be limited to the single occupancy rate, plus applicable fees and taxes. If more than one traveler on NSCS business chooses to share lodging, then the lodging expenses must be cross-referenced in each traveler’s request for reimbursement. Total reimbursement for the shared lodging shall not exceed the combined costs of a single occupancy rate, plus applicable fees and taxes, for each traveler. Additional costs to lodge individuals not on NSCS business shall not be reimbursed.

## *Event Special Pricing*

Lodging blocked and specially priced for events should be booked as far in advance as possible to take advantage of any discount offered in conjunction with the event. If discounted lodging collocated with the event is no longer available, then the traveler may choose the lowest priced rate currently available at the location; or the traveler may choose nearby lodging that does not exceed the lowest available rate of the collocated lodging. The traveler shall indicate on the Travel Expense Report that a discounted rate was not available at the time of booking and that the rate paid was the same or lower than the lowest available rate near the event.

Travelers attending events with prescribed lodging arrangements may book lodging in accordance with the requirements of such events when applicable. If there is no separate contract or receipt for lodging, then the traveler must submit documentation of the event that details what items were included in the total price of the event. If lodging is billed separately to the traveler, then the documentation must include an itemized cost of the prescribed lodging. The corresponding lodging receipt must be itemized and show that payment was made in full to be considered for reimbursement.

## **Meals**

### *General Limitations on Per Diem*

Travelers shall be paid a per diem allowance for up to three (3) meals per day. Receipts are not required. The maximum per diem for meals is equal to 70% of the most recently published per diem rates established by the federal General Services Administration (GSA) and is consistent with the rate established by the Nebraska Department of Administrative Services (DAS).

GSA establishes base per diem as specific amounts for various localities and regions throughout the world. GSA may change per diem rates for one or more locations any time, but it usually makes major updates once per calendar year. The GSA schedule of baseline rates can be found at:

<https://www.gsa.gov/travel-resources>

Per diem for first and last days of multi-day travel is limited to 75% of the maximum per diem (first reduced for provided meals, if applicable).

The applicable per diem rate for each day of a trip shall be determined by the traveler's destination location on the first day of travel at midnight. The rate paid on the traveler's Day of return is based on the where they spent the previous night.

If the cumulative daily meal expenses are in excess of the allowable per diem, then these excess expenses shall be the sole responsibility of the traveler; the NCS will not pay for or reimburse direct travel meal expenses.

Travelers may not be reimbursed for meals they purchase on behalf of another employee of the State of Nebraska. However, in accordance with NCS purchasing guidelines regarding group meals, the NCS may be authorized to pay a vendor directly via state warrant or purchasing card for meals provided to one or more state employees.

**Meals Provided**

Meals provided but not paid for by the traveler shall be deducted from the maximum per diem by the component amount of per diem allocated for the meal provided. Using the Travel Management System, the traveler must indicate every meal that was offered for which the traveler was not required to pay directly, regardless of whether the traveler consumed the meal. This may include, but is not limited to a free airline meal, free hotel hot protein breakfast (which can include eggs, bacon, sausage and/or oatmeal) or any meal included in the overall registration fee of a conference or included on a formal meeting agenda. Exceptions may be granted for documented dietary/health reasons that are approved by the NSCS. Donuts, pastries, coffee and other drinks provided at a meeting and not identified on an agenda or formal meeting schedule are not considered a provided meal.

Hotel Breakfast

Employees are entitled to claim reimbursement for breakfast if the hotel does not provide a hot protein meal. A hot protein meal would include one of the following: eggs, bacon, sausage or oatmeal.

Agenda of Schedule Required

Any time meals are claimed the traveler must provide a copy of the event or meeting agenda with their travel report that highlights any meals that were included at no cost to the traveler. Any meals provided as part of a conference or meeting and listed on the agenda cannot be claimed, including a continental breakfast. If no agenda or schedule is available, the traveler should note that on their claim.

**One-Day Travel**

Per diem for one-day travel is limited to the component amount of per diem allocated for breakfast or supper, or both, depending on the departure and return times of the trip. The component amount of per diem allocated for lunch is not allowable for one-day travel. To determine meal allowances, refer to the Departure Time and Return Time stated within the traveler’s trip details:

One-Day Travel	
Breakfast	Departure time is at or before 6:30 am
Lunch	Not Allowed
Dinner	Return time is at or after 7:00 pm

Travel that crosses into the next calendar day but does not include an overnight stay is considered one-day travel.

Reimbursements for one-day travel food expenses are reportable on the employee’s W-2 if the total expenses are greater than \$200 from December 1 to November 30.

**Other Expenses**

Refer to [Appendix 1](#) for a complete list of authorized travel and non-travel-specific expenses.

## *Event Registration Fees*

The NCS may reimburse for travelers' event registration fees if the traveler chooses to pay the fee directly. Travelers shall not be reimbursed for this expense until completion of the travel event. Meal expenses included in the registration fee shall be indicated as provided meals on the employee's Travel Expense Report in accordance with procedures explained in the [Meals](#) section of this Travel Manual.

## **International Travel Preparation**

### *Export Control*

Export controls are regulations designed to ensure that certain information, technology, biological and chemical agents and other sensitive items are secure and not improperly transferred to an international entity or person. When planning travel abroad, it is important to ensure that any information or items taken out of the U.S. are either not controlled; or if controlled, the proper approvals or licenses are in place.

All NCS employees, visiting scholars, students and all other persons retained by or working on behalf of the NCS and its affiliates shall comply with [Export Administration Regulations \(EAR\)](#), [International Traffic in Arms Regulations \(ITAR\)](#), or [Office of Foreign Assets Control \(OFAC\) regulations](#), and all other applicable export control or sanction-related regulations.

### *Insurance*

The NCS has secured international travel insurance for NCS business travel. The traveler should check with the respective VPAF/VCFA regarding coverage.

### *State Department Smart Traveler Enrollment Program*

Travelers are encouraged to enroll in the [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#), which is a free service that allows U.S. citizens and nationals traveling and living abroad to enroll their trip with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate.



## Appendix 1 – List of Travel Expense Types

Expense Type	Expense Classification	Reimbursement Policy	Receipt Required? *
Abstract, proceedings	Miscellaneous Travel	Actual expense for copies of conference materials or related abstracts/papers.	Yes
Airfare	Airfare	Actual expense.	Yes
Airline baggage fees	Baggage & Airport Fees	Actual expense.	Yes
Airline fees	Baggage & Airport Fees	NSCS will reimburse the traveler for airline fees that are necessary/required by for the NSCS business purpose; unusual charges require supervisor approval.	Yes
Airport shuttle	Taxi/Shuttle/Train/Bus	Actual expense.	Yes*
Airport tax/exit fee	Baggage & Airport Fees	Actual expense may be claimed when not already included in the cost of the ticket (mainly international airports).	Yes
Alcoholic beverages	N/A	Not reimbursable.	N/A
Animal boarding	N/A	Not reimbursable.	N/A
Car rental	Car Rental	Actual expense.	Yes
Cellular Plan (International)	Phone/Fax/Internet	Reimbursed if required for NSCS business during International Travel.	Yes
Child care	N/A	Not reimbursable.	N/A
Conference facilities	Rental of Facilities	Actual expense.	Yes
Conference registration/expenses	Registration/Fees	Documentation of conference expense and agenda required for reimbursement.	Yes
Currency conversion fees	Miscellaneous Travel	Actual expense on amount required for NSCS business travel.	Yes
Entertainment (including in-room movie rentals)	N/A	Not reimbursable.	N/A
Exercise equipment/room fees	N/A	Not reimbursable.	N/A
Educational Supplies	Educational Supplies	Actual expense of supplies needed and purchased while in Travel Status.	Yes
Faxes	Phone/Fax/Internet	Actual expense necessary for NSCS business.	Yes*
Film developing	Copy Charges	Actual expense necessary for NSCS business; purpose should be explained on reimbursement.	Yes
Flight insurance	N/A	Included when booking through the Online Booking Tool; personal purchase of insurance is not reimbursable.	N/A
Gasoline	Fuel/Gas	Actual expense for rental or state-owned vehicles; not reimbursable for travel with personal vehicle.	Yes
Gifts	Miscellaneous Travel	Actual expense of gift when it is considered customary to present a gift to a host within international countries; no alcohol.	Yes
Gym fees	N/A	Not reimbursable.	N/A
Internet fees	Phone/Fax/Internet	Actual expense for NSCS business	Yes
Laundry/Dry Cleaning	Laundry/Dry Cleaning	Reimbursable for International Travel with a trip more than six days.	Yes*
Lodging	Lodging or Lodging/Conference Rate	Itemized lodging receipt required; charges for staying with family or friends are not reimbursable; parking and NSCS business-related long-distance fees must be listed as a separate expense item.	Yes

Expense Type	Expense Classification	Reimbursement Policy	Receipt Required? *
<b>Meals – Multi-Day Travel</b>	<b>Meal (Travel)</b>	<p>NSCS per diem rate for each travel destination at the end of each day of an extended trip. Reimbursement is limited to seventy-five percent (75%) of per diem for the first and last day of a multi-day trip.</p> <p>Per diem is reduced by the component amount of per diem for any meal that was not authorized or was provided at no cost to the traveler.</p> <p>“Incidental Rate” is a flat amount of per diem that is always paid to the traveler, regardless of authorized or provided meals. This amount reimburses the traveler for small payments paid for services performed without cost, such as baggage handling or courtesy shuttles. Proof of payment is not required, and itemized reimbursement is not authorized.</p>	No
<b>Meals – One Day Travel</b>	<b>Meal (One Day Travel)</b>	<p>NSCS per diem rate, reduced by the amount of per diem allocated for lunch (which is never authorized for one-day travel), and further limited to the amount of per diem allocated for breakfast and/or supper, depending on the times of departure and return.</p>	No
<b>Mileage for personal vehicle</b>	<b>Mileage/Personal Car</b>	<p>Calculation of reimbursement is limited to the most direct round trip road route from home/work address to travel destination address as per State of Nebraska statute 81-1176. If traveler does not provide exact addresses, then the NSCS may compute the relative distance between city centers, or as is computed by commercial map services.</p> <p>Additional round trip mileage may be authorized if traveler indicates the presence of a required detour or alternate route due to inclement weather.</p> <p>Additional mileage for business purposes in and around the travel destination requires an additional mileage log.</p>	Log required for additional miles; otherwise, N/A
<b>Office Supplies</b>	<b>Office Supplies</b>	<p>Actual expense of supplies needed and purchased while in Travel Status.</p>	Yes

<b>Expense Type</b>	<b>Expense Classification</b>	<b>Reimbursement Policy</b>	<b>Receipt Required? *</b>
<b>Parking</b>	<b>Miscellaneous Travel</b>	Actual expense limited to lowest rate at business location for covered parking, or uncovered if covered is unavailable, excluding public street parking, which is not limited. Valet parking is not eligible for reimbursement unless required by parking lot operator. If not required, a portion of the valet parking fee may still be reimbursed, up to the price of non-valet parking if traveler provides evidence of the non-valet parking rate.	Yes*. For domestic travel, affidavit is acceptable for cash-only parking or illegible machine receipts.
<b>Passports</b>	<b>N/A</b>	Not reimbursable	N/A
<b>Periodicals</b>	<b>N/A</b>	Not reimbursable	N/A
<b>Personal grooming items</b>	<b>N/A</b>	Not reimbursable	N/A
<b>Personal Vehicle: repairs, maintenance, accidents, washes, oil changes, or locksmith charges</b>	<b>N/A</b>	Not reimbursable	N/A
<b>Photocopying</b>	<b>Copy Charges</b>	Actual expense if required for NSCS business purposes	Yes
<b>International, personal cell phone plans</b>	<b>Phone/Fax/Internet</b>	Reimbursed if required for NSCS business during International Travel	Yes
<b>Job applicant &amp; applicant recruiting</b>	<b>Job Applicant</b>	Actual expense; domestic travel only; applicant meeting itinerary required	Yes
<b>Safe deposit box/secured storage</b>	<b>Miscellaneous Travel</b>	Actual expense if required for NSCS business purposes; storage of personal items is not reimbursable	Yes*
<b>Spouse/companion expenses</b>	<b>N/A</b>	Not reimbursable except for spouses specifically authorized pursuant to NSCS Board Policy 5024.	Yes
<b>State, private, rented or chartered planes</b>	<b>State/Private/Rented/Chartered Plane</b>	Actual expense or expense based on standard rates	Yes
<b>Student expenses</b>	<b>Subsistence/Student Expense</b>	Actual approved expenses: additional list of students required	Yes
<b>Taxis, Ubers, Lyfts, buses, fee-charging shuttles, subways, etc.</b>	<b>Taxi/Shuttle/Train/Bus</b>	Actual expense including tips.  Tips must be included on the respective receipt with a cap of 20% of the pre-tip bill.	Yes*
<b>Telephone calls</b>	<b>Phone/Fax/Internet</b>	Actual expense of NSCS business related calls	Yes
<b>Tolls</b>	<b>Miscellaneous Travel</b>	Actual expense	Yes*
<b>Tour/cruises</b>	<b>Subscriptions/Fees/Dues</b>	Actual expense for NSCS business related tours or mandatory conference events; optional tours are not reimbursable	Yes
<b>Vaccinations</b>	<b>Visa/Vaccinations</b>	Actual expense, including the office visit charge, if required for NSCS business travel; may only claim amount not covered by personal insurance	Yes
<b>Visas</b>	<b>Visa/Vaccinations</b>	Actual expense if required for NSCS business travel	Yes

\*Asterisked items indicate that an Affidavit may be acceptable for International Travel only.

## **Appendix 2 – Form 13, Nebraska Sales Tax Exemption**

**SEE NEXT PAGE FOR PRINTABLE COPY OF FORM 13**