

## TRAVEL FAQ's

**Q: I need another copy of the travel manual; where do I find it?**

A: <http://www2.kumc.edu/finance/pdf/Travel.pdf>

**Q: How is meal Per Diem determined?**

A: The Research Institute does not utilize the quarter system in order to reimburse per diem. Please refer to the KUMC Research Institute Travel Rates page for an example of time frames.

**Q: Is Per Diem just an allowance for meals?**

A: The Per Diem rate covers meals, tips, and other incidental expenses incurred while on official travel.

**Q: Does the Research Institute consider a “Continental Breakfast” as a provided meal?**

A: No, a “continental breakfast” is not reportable as a provided meal, and the allowance will not be deducted from your Per Diem.

**Q: Is there a limit to how much the Research Institute will reimburse for a meal?**

A: The Research Institute makes individual determinations on how much will be reimbursed for meals based on what is usual and customary for the city and location in which the expense has been incurred. Reimbursement amounts for meals will be reduced if it is considered to be excessive or extravagant, in order to comply with IRS Accountable Plan Rules.

**Q: If I am claiming Per Diem, but I didn't eat a breakfast or lunch but I ate a large dinner that is more than the dinner allowance cost on the “Meal Per Diem” chart, am I only allowed to claim the \$22.00 dinner?**

A: A Per Diem is just that: a Per Diem. Regardless of the meals you consume, or when, you may claim the full days' Per Diem for a full day of business travel as long as your “missed” meal(s) was not provided by a conference, workshop, or a third party.

**Q: My spouse attended a meal. Will the Research Institute reimburse for his/her meal?**

A: If your spouse was part of the business discussion, i.e. is a faculty member, then yes, his/her meal will be reimbursed. However if (s)he attended just as a guest, then his/her meal will not be reimbursed. As with any meal, a list of attendees will need to be provided if actual costs are being reimbursed.

**Q: Will the Research Institute reimburse me for alcoholic beverages charges?**

A: Alcoholic beverages may be reimbursed from residual funds as long as the costs are reasonable. Original and itemized receipts are required, along with a guest list and a copy of a flier for announcement of the event if applicable.

**Q: I am hosting a networking function. May I be reimbursed for this?**

A: Business entertainment is defined as gatherings or social events designed for networking or discussing research in a relaxed atmosphere. These expenses may be reimbursed from a residual account provided that the costs are reasonable and customary for the city in which the expense occurs. Required documentation for reimbursement includes: original and itemized receipts; a guest list including the names of the individuals and the institution they represent; a copy of a flier or announcement of the event if applicable; and, a description of the purpose for the gathering.

**Q: I am claiming reimbursement for a meal, and the group was large enough that gratuity was added into the total. However, the service was so exceptional, I included extra gratuity. May I claim reimbursement for the additional gratuity?**

A: No. The RI will not exceed the base gratuity in your reimbursement.

**Q: I am claiming actual expenses for meals and I submitted my hotel receipt showing that I ordered room service for my dinner. Why can't I get that reimbursed?**

A: When requesting reimbursement for actual expenses, it is the policy of the Research Institute that original and itemized receipts be submitted. Hotel invoices are a summary of expenses and cannot provide itemization of the meal(s). Therefore, when room service is ordered, the receipt that arrives with the meal must be retained and submitted for reimbursement.

**Q: What if I lost a receipt?**

A: Because an itemized receipt is necessary for reimbursement, a lost receipt means the item(s) cannot be claimed for reimbursement. Airlines, hotels, and some restaurants will provide copies of receipts; these copies can be submitted in lieu of the original as long as the copies are accompanied by an explanation as to why the original receipt is not available.

**Q: Is there a limit as to how much the Research Institute will reimburse on lodging?**

A: The RI will reimburse that which is usual and customary for that respective city. Lodging at the conference hotel will be reimbursed at the conference rate. If the conference hotel is booked and accommodations are made elsewhere, the RI will reimburse what is usual and customary. In this event, please provide an explanation in the comments section of the travel module why accommodations were not booked in at the conference hotel.

**Q: When entering my lodging in PeopleSoft, do I place all charges paid to the hotel in the "lodging" category?**

A: No. Only the room fees and any applicable lodging taxes should be placed in the lodging category. Any other items, such as meals, parking, faxing, etc, should be placed in their appropriate categories.

**Q: What does the mileage rate cover?**

A: The reimbursable mileage rate covers gasoline, oil, maintenance, and other wear-and-tear on a personal vehicle used in the course of official business.

**Q: May I claim mileage from my home to the airport, or should I claim mileage from my official workstation even if I leave from home?**

A: The shorter distance will be determined, and mileage will be reimbursed at that rate.

**Q: If I drive to a conference in lieu of flying, how do I figure my mileage reimbursement?**

A: You will need to provide documentation regarding the price of airfare. Mileage and subsistence will be reimbursed up to the rate that it would have taken an individual to fly if the cost of flying was the more economical option.

**Q: I am required to visit various locations throughout the city as a part of my job. How do I get reimbursed for that mileage?**

A: Please complete a mileage log recording the following:

1. Dates traveled
2. Starting point
3. Destination
4. Distance in miles

A blank mileage log in Excel format that you may use for this purpose may be found at:

[http://www2.kumc.edu/researchinstitute/spa/SPA\\_Forms/blank\\_mileage\\_log.xls](http://www2.kumc.edu/researchinstitute/spa/SPA_Forms/blank_mileage_log.xls)

**Q: Is the turn-around time for reimbursement of International travel the same as reimbursement for Domestic travel?**

A: No. International travel reimbursements generally take longer to process due to currency conversion. It may take up to a week longer for International travel to be reimbursed, provided that everything is in order. The reimbursement will be delayed if there are additional questions for the traveler.

**Q: Which website does the Research Institute use to determine currency conversion?**

A: The RI uses OANDA. Please utilize the “Typical Credit Card Rate” option.  
[www.oanda.com/converter/classic](http://www.oanda.com/converter/classic)

**Q: May I get my travel reimbursement direct-deposited?**

A: Yes. In order to request direct-deposit of travel reimbursement, please contact a KUMC Research Institute Accounts Payable Accountant for instructions and a form. All future reimbursements will also be direct-deposited.

A list of AP Accountants may be found at: [http://www2.kumc.edu/researchinstitute/fas/post-award\\_and\\_acctg\\_staff.html](http://www2.kumc.edu/researchinstitute/fas/post-award_and_acctg_staff.html)

**Q: Are travel cash advances given?**

A: Not generally. Because the Research Institute is designed to directly pay travel agencies and conference registrations, cash advances are not given. The Research Institute is also designed to reimburse an individual for out-of-pocket expenses quickly so as not to cause undue hardship to a traveler, if the appropriate documentation is submitted in a timely fashion.

**Q: May I use a travel agency to book my travel?**

A: The Research Institute would prefer that airline tickets be purchased directly from the airline or another online service such as Expedia.com and paid via the traveler’s personal credit card. The Research Institute is designed to reimburse an individual for out-of-pocket expenses quickly provided that the appropriate documentation is submitted in a timely fashion. However, this does not restrict you from utilizing travel agencies; just be aware that the Research Institute does not have accounts set up with any travel agencies, and that some funding agencies may restrict where you may make your purchases (minority-owned businesses, etc).

**Q: May I rent a vehicle when I arrive at my travel destination?**

A: The Research Institute would prefer that you avoid renting a vehicle, and would prefer that you utilize public transportation whenever possible. If the cost for public transport exceeds the price for a rental car, then the rental of the vehicle would be justified. For example, if the cost of the taxi fare to and from SEA-TAC airport would exceed the rate of a vehicle rental, and there are no hotel shuttles available, the rental would be acceptable. The RI would require in writing that justification. The objective is to be as cost-effective as possible to save your research dollars.

**Q: The Research Institute had already paid for my airfare and registration but I didn’t go to the conference. Do I need to reimburse the RI?**

A: This will be decided on a discretionary basis. However, if the trip was not made due to negligence on the traveler’s part, the traveler will be expected to reimburse the RI for the expenses. If the trip was cancelled due to illness, family emergency, work emergency, flight cancellation, bad weather, or any other cause beyond the control of the traveler, the RI will not expect the traveler to reimburse the expenses.