

**FAS Guidelines for  
Travel, Business Meals & Entertainment Spending**  
Effective November 1, 2004

FAS faculty and staff are expected to spend Harvard funds prudently. Business travel and other expenses will be paid by FAS if they are reasonable, appropriately documented, properly authorized, and within the parameters of these guidelines. Individuals who incur business expenses should neither gain nor lose personal funds as a result of their travel and other business transactions.

Local FAS units may impose stricter or more detailed guidelines than the ones outlined in this document. Travelers should consult with their local financial offices to ensure adherence to all guidelines and policies at the department, FAS and University level.

Faculty and staff may not authorize payment of their own travel or business expenses. In general, employees should not be asked to approve travel or entertainment expenses for an individual to whom they report.

**Air Travel**

**FAS travelers whose destination is within North America (Alaska and Hawaii excluded) should book the lowest-priced, non-stop coach class\* airfare available.**

The University has negotiated special rates and discounts with certain airlines. For information about special rates go to <http://vpf-web.harvard.edu/ofs/travel>, click on “Exclusive Travel Discounts” and then click on “Discounts with Harvard’s Preferred Airlines.” In order to capture the greatest potential savings, travelers should use these preferred carriers whenever their discounted fares are lower than those of other carriers with similar schedules and service.

Rate comparisons should be made through the use of Harvard’s Expedia website ([www.expediacorporate.com](http://www.expediacorporate.com)) which gives details of multiple rates and carriers to the same destination.

*Note: For travel using sponsored project funds, a rate comparison must be printed and archived in that grant/contract file to provide auditable evidence of lowest fare.*

The University’s preferred travel agencies, including Expedia, are the exclusive distributors of Harvard-negotiated air discounts. Therefore, whenever possible, these preferred travel agencies, including the Harvard Expedia Corporate website, should be used. For more information on registering to use the Harvard Expedia Corporate website, please visit <http://vpf-web.harvard.edu/ofs/travel/pdf/1sttimeuserxWGH.pdf>.

Reservations should be made as soon as travel plans are finalized to receive advance purchase discounts. A possible source of savings is to compare your trip with one including a Saturday-

night stay. Any resulting savings need to be weighed against the additional cost of meals and lodging associated with the longer stay.

*\* North America is defined as Canada, Mexico and the United States. For flights to Alaska, Hawaii and destinations outside North America, Business Class airfare is allowed. For flights to Canada or Mexico that exceed six (6) hours, Business Class is also allowed. First Class travel is prohibited for all destinations unless an exception is requested from the Financial Dean documenting medical reasons or extenuating circumstances that require such service (see University Business Expense Policy for more details).*

### **Car Rentals**

**The FAS traveler may rent a car to his/her destination when:** (1) driving is less expensive and more convenient than airline or rail travel; (2) driving is necessary to transport large or bulky material for business. **The FAS traveler may rent a car at his/her destination when** it is less expensive than other transportation modes such as taxis, airport limousines, and airport shuttles.

When traveling on business, **FAS travelers may rent up to and including a full-size vehicle** and should take advantage of the University-negotiated rates by renting from Harvard's preferred rental agencies using the Corporate ID numbers listed for each agency. For more information go to <http://vpf-web.harvard.edu/ofs/travel>, click on "Exclusive Travel Discounts" and then click on "Car Rental Discounts."

FAS travelers renting cars must refer to the Car Rental Insurance Guidelines to ensure proper coverage. These guidelines are listed under each rental agency section of the website outlined above. Rentals must be made using the Corporate ID to obtain the proper insurance coverage.

*Note: Student drivers of rental cars have special restrictions. Please refer to the Student Rental Car Drivers section of the University's Travel Manual.*

### **Other Ground Transportation**

**Private sedan or car services are normally more expensive than taxis and should be used only when valid business reasons\* preclude the use of more economical modes of transportation.** For information on preferred sedan service partners go to <http://vpf-web.harvard.edu/ofs/travel>, click on "Exclusive Travel Discounts" and then click on "Harvard Preferred Sedan Services."

**Use of limousines is not a reimbursable expense.**

**Standard-rate rail travel may be used whenever the FAS traveler finds it more economical and convenient.** For more information on negotiated rates for the Acela Express go to <http://vpf-web.harvard.edu/ofs/travel>, click on "Exclusive Travel Discounts" and then click on "Amtrak Acela Express." First-class rail travel is not allowed.

\* *Examples of valid business reasons which allow use of private sedan or car services are travel with the President, Provost, Dean or major donors*

### **Lodging**

**FAS travelers will be reimbursed for standard room costs at Harvard's discounted rates for each day that lodging away from home is required for business purposes.**

The FAS will limit lodging reimbursements to the University's negotiated rates at partner hotels in selected cities. The University has negotiated discounted hotel rates in selected cities most frequented by Harvard travelers. Go to <http://vpf-web.harvard.edu/ofs/travel> for more information, click on "Exclusive Travel Discounts" and then click on "Hotels." In the case where use of partner hotels is not feasible due to documented business reasons, travelers should book rooms at or below the partner hotel rates. When this option is not feasible due to documented business reasons, travelers should book rooms at or below the average corporate rate in Harvard's selected cities with no 40% fluctuation allowed (see below). When booking reservations directly at partner hotels and not through the corporate Expedia site, it is necessary to identify the traveler as a Harvard employee in order to obtain the negotiated or discounted rate.

For a city not included in Harvard's selected group, travelers will be reimbursed for actual hotel expenses based on the average corporate rates in major cities provided on the Travel and Reimbursement Office web site (see above). Since rates can fluctuate by season, at times a traveler's choice of hotel may exceed the corporate rates for A STANDARD ROOM by 40%. However, PRIOR approval is required from the Financial Dean if the rates go above this 40% limit.

For cities not included in either group, travelers will be reimbursed for ACTUAL hotel expenses for a STANDARD ROOM in that city up to the lodging *per diem* rate (with a 40% fluctuation allowance for seasonality) as per the federal *per diem* guidelines found at: <http://vpf-web.harvard.edu/ofs/travel>, click on "Access Mileage, Exchange & Per Diem Rates." Or travelers may choose to claim the lodging *per diem* rate and not submit a hotel folio; however, proof of travel must be provided, i.e. airline ticket receipt, etc. and the 40% fluctuation allowance will **NOT BE ALLOWED**.

Rate comparisons should be made through the use of an individual traveler's account at Harvard's Corporate Expedia website: [www.expediacorporate.com](http://www.expediacorporate.com). Deeply discounted hotel accommodations are available on this site. Travelers should choose quality hotels based upon rates, location, business amenities, and traveler safety.

*Note: When traveling on sponsored project funds, travelers should request the hotel's government per diem rate. A letter on University letterhead from someone representing the sponsored project documenting the funding source is usually required upon check-in. Hotels that offer government per diem rates can be found at: <http://hotelsatperdiem.com>.*

If a conference is being held at a luxury or 5-Star property, FAS travelers may stay at that hotel. However, if the choice of several conference hotels is offered, FAS travelers should choose the non-luxury property which most closely adheres to the guidelines outlined above. In either case, the traveler should attach a brief explanation to the completed Expense Report.

FAS travelers who stay in their own residence or a private residence with relatives or friends while traveling on business may NOT claim lodging *per diem* for their stay. They will be reimbursed for reasonable actual expenses incurred to extend appreciation to friends or relatives for their hospitality. Gifts are limited to under \$75 and meals of appreciation are subject to the standard set by these guidelines (see Meals/ Business & Entertainment). For some departments, prior approval is needed for any token of appreciation to be given to relatives and friends, and tokens of appreciation are NOT allowable when traveling on federal projects. FAS travelers should check with their department administrator or financial officer prior to actual travel so no misunderstandings or problems occur.

FAS travelers **MUST RECEIVE PRIOR** approval from the Financial Dean when their nightly room rates are expected to exceed the guidelines. Requests where rates are deemed excessive and unrelated to the stated business purpose will be denied. Without prior approval, travelers will be reimbursed using University funds for ONLY that portion of actual costs which are equivalent to the guideline rates unless extenuating circumstances exist, in which case a request for an exception must be submitted to the Financial Dean (refer to the FAS Exception Request Policy).

### **Meals/Business & Entertainment**

**For business and entertainment meals, FAS faculty and staff will be reimbursed up to a maximum of \$75/person for dinner and \$35/person for lunch excluding tax and tip. For receptions and other forms of group entertainment, expenses should not exceed \$25/person for food and beverages.**

As a general rule, tips should not exceed 20% of the bill.

The use of alcohol for business meals and entertainment purposes should be kept to a minimum. Employees should be aware that the purchase and use of alcohol places significant legal exposure on the University.

For personal meals while traveling, travelers must choose either to file actual meal receipts upon their return or claim a meal *per diem* upon their return -- up to the maximum set above. Combining reimbursement methods for the same trip is NOT allowed.

For business meals, defined as meals taken with students, colleagues, or donors, during which specific documented business discussions take place, individual meals should not exceed the above standard.

Faculty and staff will be reimbursed up to the standard set above for non-travel, business-related meals taken with other faculty and staff under the following circumstances: (1) when business

must be conducted off University premises for confidentiality reasons, or (2) when authorized by the department for reward, recognition, or other appropriate business purpose.

Celebratory meals to honor an individual for personal reasons (e.g. wedding, baby shower, housewarming, etc.) CANNOT be expensed to University funds.

*Note: When the cost for multiple individuals is reflected on one meal receipt, it is necessary to list the number of attendees and include names/affiliations when possible.*

### **Telephone Usage While Traveling**

**FAS travelers will be reimbursed for business phone calls that are reasonable and necessary for conducting business** only when the itemized hotel bill or an original phone bill with itemized calls is attached to the Expense Report.

With department approval, business travelers will be reimbursed for personal telephone calls allowing them to stay in reasonable contact with their family (1-2 calls/day).

Use of air phones will NOT be reimbursed except in emergencies or extenuating circumstances. An explanation must be noted on the Expense Report.

### **Fundraising/Development & Faculty Development Travel**

The University and FAS recognize the unique nature of certain travel and entertainment expenses incurred for fundraising, development or faculty recruitment activities. If these activities necessitate a deviation from the FAS spending guidelines, the traveler should obtain approval for the exception prior to incurring the expense whenever possible. In the case of fundraising/development, an email explaining the exception should be sent to the FAS Development office (contact Deb Sweeney at [dsweeney@harvard.edu](mailto:dsweeney@harvard.edu)) and written approval from that office attached to the completed Expense Report before submission to the Travel Office. In the case of faculty recruitment, an email explaining the exception should be sent to the FAS Faculty Development Office (contact Joanna Honig via email [jmhonig@imap.fas.harvard.edu](mailto:jmhonig@imap.fas.harvard.edu)) and written approval from that office attached to the completed Expense Report before submission to the Travel Office.

An exception letter from the Financial Dean for fundraising or recruitment expense reporting is not required, except in the case of first-class air travel, if the procedures in the previous paragraph are followed.

### **Reimbursement Process and University Travel Policies**

The above are specific spending guidelines for the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. For details on processing actual expenses, refer to ABLE and/or the Travel Policy At-A-Glance at <http://www.travel.harvard.edu/office/Policyataglancenov02.pdf>.