

Effective Date: March 15, 2022

Summary of Policy Update Scope and Details

This policy update provides guidance across common areas of business and travel expense, including lodging, ground transportation and meals. VPDOR is in alignment with Stanford's campus-wide policies.

[Business and Travel Meals \(Link\)](#)

As stewards of Stanford's resources, all business meals and other business expenses are ***expected to continue to fall below*** the maximum amounts permitted.

Business Meal Guidelines

- A **business meal** is defined as a meal at which faculty, staff, students and/or guests are present for the purpose of conducting university business. Business meals must take place at a restaurant or catered by an approved supplier. A business meal that occurs while traveling will result in a prorated travel meal reimbursement.
- A business meal must have a **business purpose** which is connected to the university mission and clearly documented in the expense report. In addition, the business meal must be deemed reasonable and necessary under university policy.
- The maximums below **include the actual cost per person for food, tax, tip and alcohol** (excludes room rental and non-food costs). The total cost for the meal, including all fees, taxes and tips, should not exceed the daily per person maximum. Alcohol should always be moderate to minimize the risk and liability to the University.
- **Tips should not exceed 20%** and should be based on the total that excludes tax, discounts and fees (such as for food delivery) unless there is a mandatory charge for a large group.

VPDoR Business Meal Maximums (include tax, tip, & alcohol)	
Meal Type	Maximum for All
Breakfast	\$40
Lunch	\$70
Dinner	\$130

No exceptions allowed. This excludes Travel Meals (separate guideline). Reception combined with dinner is considered one event; therefore, the dinner maximums apply.

Alcohol expense should be moderate to minimize the risk and liability to the university.

Business Meal Expenditure Types

- **52355 FOOD** - All working meals, food purchased for meetings, staff training classes, in-house conferences, other food purchased for work including bottled water, coffee, tea, etc. Food cannot be charged to Federal sponsored awards unless approved by the sponsoring agency. Meals purchased when traveling are charged as travel (524XX). **Fundraising and lobbying meals** must be charged to 52320 and 55190. See Admin Guide: 5.4.2, 5.4.3. Ref: Uniform Guidance 200.423.
- **52356 FOOD** -All working meals **WITH ALCOHOL**, including business meals, food purchased for meetings, staff training classes, in-house conferences, other food purchased for work including bottled water, coffee, tea, etc. Food WITH ALCOHOL are not allowed on Federal sponsored awards. If the working meal does not include alcohol, charge the entire cost to 52355. Meals purchased when traveling are charged as travel (524xx). Fundraising and lobbying meals must be charged to 52320 and 55190, respectively. See Admin Guide: 5.4.2. Ref: Uniform Guidance 200.423.

Travel Meal Options

- A **travel meal** is defined as an ordinary and necessary meal that occurs while traveling on University business.
- The primary purpose for reimbursing a travel meal is to defray the cost of meal expenses when traveling outside of one's local area, which is defined as **more than 50 miles** one way from home or Stanford, whichever is greater.
- No additional justification is needed for a travel meal as long as it occurs within the travel period.
- Reimbursements are adjusted for the **first and last days of travel, conference provided meals and business meals**.
- **Long term travel** is defined as when a travel period is 30 days or longer. In these instances, the traveler is required to use the per diem reimbursement method, and the per diem rate is reduced to 55 percent for the trip. The assumption is that when staying 30 days or longer, a traveler can plan for or prepare less expensive meals.

Daily Maximum Per Person (Required for visitors)	
Domestic	Actuals up to \$75
International	Actuals up to \$125
Policy Details	
Receipts	Only required in ERS for individual receipts over \$75.
Alcohol	Allowed. No longer need to itemize separately. Allocate that entire amount to an unallowable expenditure type.
Exceptions	No exceptions.

Per Diem (Required for sponsored awards)	
Domestic	GSA rate (Link , varies by location)
International	Dept. of State rate (varies by location)
Policy Details	
Receipts	Only required in ERS for individual receipts over \$75.
Alcohol	Cannot be charged to sponsored awards.
Exceptions	No exceptions.

[Business Travel Lodging Rates \(Link\)](#)

- New guidelines include guidance for higher cost locations. Domestic per diem rates can be found [here](#) and foreign [here](#).
- Employees **will be expected to use the Stanford Travel program**, which has negotiated rates and automatically registers travel reservations in the university's Travel Registry, which connects to Stanford's provider of medical, personal, travel and security assistance.
- **Exemptions** from Stanford Travel program are available under certain circumstances such as **conference hotels**, which may be booked directly with the hotel at the conference or meeting rate per the Lodging Policy, remote travel to destinations that are **hard to access or have limited options** or group travel bookings for **10 or more travelers** going to the same destination. Booking policy exemptions do not require pre-approval but must be clearly documented in the Expense Request business purpose.
- Stanford Travel will flag hotels for non-negotiated rates above location guidelines to alert the traveler.
- A rational and reasonable explanation will be required for reimbursements that exceed location guidelines.

Maximums Effective for 2022

Location	Average Nightly Room Rate (excludes taxes/fees)
Domestic	\$220 (effective March 15, 2022)
International	Refer to Federal Per Diem (effective April 8, 2022)
Exceptions	
Palo Alto and vicinity (10 miles from city center)	\$450
New York City, San Francisco	\$385 (effective March 15, 2022)
Geneva, London	\$350 if booked before April 8 Removed as exception as of April 8 (refer to Federal Per Diem)
Chicago	\$330 (effective March 15, 2022)
Shenzhen, Tokyo	\$300 if booked before April 8 Removed as exception as of April 8 (refer to Federal Per Diem)
Boston, Los Angeles area (includes Los Angeles County, Ventura County and Orange County), San Diego, Washington D.C.	\$275 (effective March 15, 2022)
Bangalore, Hong Kong, Paris, São Paulo	\$250 if booked before April 8 Removed as exception as of April 8 (refer to Federal Per Diem)

Conference Attendance Lodging Rates

- Conference hotels **may be booked directly with the hotel** at the conference rate, even if the conference rate exceeds Stanford's hotel and lodging rate maximums.
- When multiple conference hotel options are available, the traveler should choose the mid-price option. **Five-star hotels** may be selected when they are the only hotel for the conference. If the only room available is at a five-star property, support must be provided showing all other rooms were sold out. It is best practice to take a screenshot of the conference website where it lists all conference hotels, as conference websites do not always preserve that information after the conference. Attach this screenshot to the expense request and note that it was the conference hotel in the business purpose field.
- A rational and reasonable explanation will be required for reimbursements that exceed location guidelines.

[Air Travel \(Link\)](#)

- The university pays reasonable and necessary transportation expenses within limits and guidelines when they are incurred in the course of university-related business travel.
- When the trip is **funded by a federal award**, the Fly America Act requires all flights charged to be booked with **U.S. flag air carriers**.
- The traveler should select the **most direct route** for air travel.
- The university pays for air travel in **coach or economy class for all domestic and most international flights**. Stanford defines coach or economy class as: the lowest economy air fare which includes a reserved seat, one personal item, one carry-on bag and one checked bag. **Business class** is permissible for international flights with duration of eight hours or more (including connecting domestic legs, excluding layover time), but may not be charged to a sponsored or restricted award.
- **Refundable air ticket is not allowed.**
- **Pre-approval** (with full travel budget) will be required by VPDoR for any travel that exceeds university policy.

[Bay Area Airport Transportation \(Link\)](#)

- Travelers should use reasonable and economical means for travel to and from their destination airport. Typically, a shuttle, ride share service and taxi are reasonable and economical options. **Car service is typically not the most economical option** and should only be used when it is the best option for the needs of the traveler such as a very early or late flight, travel to or from a remote residence, or when the traveler requires assistance. The use of ride share services is not required, even if it is the most economical option.
- For ground transportation to and from Bay Area airports (SFO, SJC and OAK), Stanford travelers may be reimbursed for actual roundtrip expenses **up to \$230**. No receipt required in ERS unless an individual receipt is above \$75. The traveler should choose the most reasonable and economical option that fits their needs.

[Remote Work Travel Expense Policy \(link\)](#)

Travel to a Stanford Work Location is not reimbursed for those remote employees whose residence is **within a 10 county area** (see list in AGM 2.1.21). For Remote employees outside of that area, Stanford will reimburse expenses for occasional, required travel to a Stanford Work Location as long as the travel is necessarily incurred and approved by the employee's department/manager. For more information, see

Flexible Work Equipment and Expense Guidelines (see link above).