



Department of
Education

Travel Accommodation, Meal and Other Expenses procedures

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These procedures must be read in conjunction with the Official Travel policy.

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These procedures must be read in conjunction with the Official Travel policy.

1. Policy supported

Official Travel policy

2. Scope

These procedures apply to all employees of the Department travelling on official business.

Guidance

The procedures cover accommodation, meal expenses and incidental allowances for domestic and international travel. They do not cover procedures for motor vehicle allowance claims.

3. Procedures

3.1 Travelling employee responsibilities

Employees must:

- Prior to travel, complete the applicable travel application form and obtain approval from an approving officer in accordance with Appendix A - Travel Approval Schedule:
 - for non-air overnight travel, please completed Appendix E – Non-Air Travel Application Form if applicable (refer to guidance notes)
 - for domestic air travel, please complete Appendix B – Travel Application Form – Domestic Air Travel (employees must refer to and comply with the Department’s Official Air Travel procedures)
 - for international travel, please complete Appendix C – Travel Application Form – International Travel (employees must refer to and comply with the Department’s Official Air Travel procedures)
- carry out purchase card acquittals and approvals on a timely basis in accordance with purchase card procedures. For schools refer to Manage school purchase cards (staff only) and for central office staff refer to Manage central services purchase cards (staff only)
- submit all incidental or travel allowance claims in HRMIS within two weeks of trip

completion. For school-based staff completing a trip during school holidays, claims must be submitted within two weeks of returning to school.

- not use a purchase card for personal purposes. For details, refer to [Understand purchase card holder obligations \(staff only\)](#).

Guidance

Non-Air Travel Application Form (Appendix E)

This form has been introduced to provide oversight of non-air travel and ensure compliance with the official travel policy and relevant procedures. It serves as a record of travel details for accountability purposes. While completing this form is not mandatory, the form content is and must still be documented and retained in an alternative format, for e.g. in an email.

Employees whose regular job duties require frequent travel within their region are not required to complete the Non-Air Travel Form or equivalent for these trips. This applies only to non-air travel directly related to their regular duties and does not extend to infrequent or out-of-the-norm travel. Travellers must ensure that all travel still complies with other applicable policies and approvals.

Principals are not required to complete the Non-Air Travel Form for intrastate overnight business travel involving fewer than three nights of accommodation. For trips exceeding three nights, approval must be sought from the line manager (Assistant Director of Education or higher) prior to travel. The regional office reserves the right to lower the number of nights that necessitate completing and submitting the Non-Air Travel Form (or equivalent) for approval.

The use of the Non-Air Travel Form for all other employees is not required where the same details and approvals are documented in an alternative written format and retained for audit purposes (achieving the same objective as the form).

Requests for overnight travel should be submitted at least two weeks prior to travel, with justification provided if this timeframe cannot be met.

Purchase cards

Frequent travellers (staff that travel five or more times per calendar year) are strongly encouraged to obtain a Department purchase card.

Where an employee holds a purchase card and the merchant accepts card payments, the employee is strongly encouraged to use it for meal expenditure related to business travel.

Purchase cards must not be used for personal expenses.

Meal and Incidentals

Where an employee is entitled to a travel allowance under the Teachers (Public Sector Primary and Secondary Education) Award 1993 (TA), Public Service Award 1992 (PSA) or applicable industrial agreements, the decision as to what travel is approved and how travel costs are met is that of the department, and not the employee.

The travelling officer is responsible for ensuring that all incurred expenses are reasonable, which includes:

- the ability to justify that the expenditure incurred was for business purposes
- ensuring travel costs are in accordance with award conditions and rates.

Where an employee uses a purchase card for travelling meal expenses, they are not entitled to claim any residual from the full allowance as identified in the TA or PSA or receive reimbursement for items which have already been paid for by the department.

Meals are not to be purchased on purchase card or allowances claimed where the cost has been covered by other means. For example claiming a meal allowance when attending a professional development course where meals were provided.

It is not appropriate when using a purchase card to participate in tipping or gratuities.

Purchase Card Acquittals

Purchase card acquittals must contain sufficient information to enable the manager to efficiently and effectively review purchases. This includes providing a copy of the approved travel form and itinerary, ensuring the dates align. While optional, Appendix I – Travel Expense Log for Purchase Card Acquittals of Meals and Incidental is available to assist staff in accurately recording and acquitting travel meal and incidental expenses.

3.2 Line manager/principal responsibilities

Travel requests must be approved by line managers prior to any travel being undertaken or expenses being incurred, ensuring compliance with the travel policy.

In order to approve travel expenditure made by purchase card and /or travel allowances claimed through HRMIS. Line managers and principals must ensure the following:

- claims are for official purposes
- travel application has been approved
- accommodation is within the applicable award rates
- number of meals claimed aligns with the approved travel itinerary
- meal expense claims are reasonable
- alcohol is not claimed
- employee cannot claim an allowance through HRMIS if the meal and/or incidental expenses are provided as part of the trip or purchased using a purchase card.

Guidance

The manager is to exercise discretion when deciding whether to approve travel expenditure.

The officer's relevant award entitlements are to be used for guidance only purposes:

- for domestic travel the relevant award (Teachers Award 1993 or Public Service Award 1992)
- for international travel the [Australian Tax Office \(ATO\) Reasonable Expense Amounts for Overseas Travel Allowance rates](#)
- expenditure does not include items not ordinarily required for the purposes of sustenance such as alcohol.

Any higher-than-expected expenditure, should be documented and justified as part of the employee's support for consideration by the line manager. The following procedure is to be followed:

- the employee must notify their line manager as soon as they realise that their travel expenses will exceed the approved budget
- within five working days of returning, the employee must provide a written justification for higher-than-expected expenditure, either in writing or via email, with all relevant receipts and explanations attached. This documentation must be retained for audit purposes
- the line manager reviews the justification and supporting documentation to determine if the expenses were reasonable and unavoidable. The line manager either approves or rejects the additional expenditure. If uncertain, they may escalate the decision to a higher authority. Where needed, cases can be reported to Standards and Integrity
- any purchases that are excessive or not supported are deemed personal expenses and must be paid back to the Department via standard procedures. For school staff – please refer to [Report personal use of a school purchase card \(staff only\)](#) and for central services staff, please refer to [Report personal use of a central services purchase card \(staff only\)](#).
- the employee submits the expenses (purchase card acquital or application for reimbursement of expenses) through the standard expense management process.
- all related documentation must be retained according to the department's policies.

For allowance rates please refer to [Apply for travel allowance or a travel advance \(staff only\)](#).

Refer to the following for the most frequently used allowance rates:

Appendix H Teachers Travel Allowances

Appendix F Public Service Officers Travel Allowances

Appendix G ATO Reasonable Amounts for Overseas Travel Expenses

3.3 Accommodation expenses

Employees must:

- Make or confirm accommodation bookings after approval of the relevant travel application and prior to official travel
- accommodation bookings must:
 - align with award conditions/rates and if exceeded justification must be provided by the traveller and approved by the relevant approval authority
 - paid for by either purchase card or, only where it cannot be paid by purchase card, direct billing to the Department or school for payment.
- arrange separate billing and personal payment for accommodation costs incurred during approved recreational leave while travelling.

Guidance

An administration officer can make bookings for approved travel for flights, accommodation and car hire on behalf of the employee.

Where the travelling officer has approval to utilise non-commercial accommodation such as staying with family and friends it is considered that the travelling officer is fully responsible for their own accommodation costs.

The relevant travel application form (Appendix B, C and E) requires approval prior to accommodation bookings being made. The appropriate form requires an estimate of costs. The manager has the discretion to allow an increase in cost up to a nominated tolerance prior to re-application being essential.

Employees are entitled to a reasonable standard of accommodation when travelling. When approving accommodation, line managers should have regard to economy, functionality and safety and take into account proximity of the accommodation to the location of work being performed. Refer to Appendices F, G and H for guidance on reasonable accommodation costs when using a purchase card.

Refer to Appendix E Non-Air Travel Application Form, Appendix B Travel Application Form – Domestic Air Travel and Appendix C – Travel Application Form – International Travel.

Short Stay Accommodation

Whenever possible, accommodation bookings should be made through the Department's Travel Service Provider or directly with the hotel/motel. The use of short stay accommodation such as Airbnb and Stayz should only be considered where booking is not available through the Travel Service Provider or directly with the hotel/motel.

3.4 Meal expenses

Employees must:

- select one payment method for travel-related meal expenses for the entire trip – either Department purchase card or HRMIS travel meal allowance and apply it consistently for

the duration of the trip. Mixing methods within the same trip is not permitted

- retain proof of purchase documents to substantiate the purchase of meals
- not claim a meal allowance or reimbursement for any meals that has already been provided or paid for by the Department (e.g. included in conference fees or accommodation packages)
- not double-claim, i.e. where a meal is paid using a purchase card, the employee must not also claim the travel allowance or seek reimbursement for that meal
- during employee recreational leave periods pay for any meals as a personal expense.

Guidance

An employee who holds a purchase card is strongly encouraged to use the purchase card for their travel-related meal expenditure, subject to the following: official travel exceeds a radius of 50 kilometres from the employee's usual place of work

- if travel is for part of a day, calculation of allowed meal expenses is as per the part-day formula in the relevant award. Travel times are to be recorded to inform this calculation
- meals have not already been provided (for example at professional development or breakfast as part of the accommodation package)
- meal expenses have not been paid via another method such as direct billing.

Reasonable costs for a meal are guided by the officer's relevant entitlement and are not definitive limits (please refer to Appendix F, G and H for guidance):

- for domestic travel the relevant award (Teachers Award 1993 or Public Service Award 1992)
- for international travel the [Australian Tax Office \(ATO\) Reasonable Expense Amounts for Overseas Travel Allowance rate](#)
- and does not include items such as alcohol.

For clarification, 'per annum' is considered to be the school calendar year.

In instances where the traveller does not use the purchase card for their travel-related meal expenditure, such as when an EFTPOS machine is unavailable, they may personally pay for their meal and submit a request for reimbursement. Travellers who use the purchase card for meals during a trip are not eligible to claim meal allowances. Only the purchase card expenses or approved reimbursements where the purchase card could not be used are allowed.

Expenditure reimbursement is available through:

- Central and regional services staff refer to [Claim out-of-pocket work expenses in Oracle Financials \(staff only\)](#)

- School staff refer to [School payment voucher form \(staff only\)](#)

Employees who travel frequently (five or more times per annum) are strongly encouraged to obtain a purchase card. Line managers may recommend applying for a purchase card where travel become frequent to streamline payment and acquittals.

If two officers are travelling together and only one holds a purchase card, then the officer with the purchase card may cover the meal expenses for both the travelling officers as long as prior approval has been obtained from the line manager responsible for purchase card acquittals.

3.5 Incidental allowance

Employees must:

- only claim the incidental allowance where accommodation is provided on business travel
- use HRMIS to claim the incidental allowance
- use a purchase card for additional incidental expenses that are above the allowance (where required and justifiable)
- exercise economy when incurring additional incidental expenses
- make an expense claim for additional incidental expenses that are above the allowance only where the traveller does not hold a purchase card
- confirm the additional incidental expenses relate directly to the business travel and provide proof of purchase documents to substantiate the additional incidentals
- pay for any incidental expenses as a personal expense during employee recreational leave periods.

Guidance

Purchase cards should only be used where incidental expenses are in excess of award rates.

Receipts are not required when claiming the incidental allowance unless they are additional incidentals that are in excess of the award rates. If additional incidentals are claimed, then the total receipts of all incidental and additional incidental expenses must be retained and only the residual amount of the total incidentals less the incidentals allowance paid should be claimed.

Additional incidental expenses are minor but necessary expenses associated with your work-related travel – for example, a car parking fee, bus ticket or a charge for using the phone or internet for work-related purposes at your overnight accommodation. Items of a personal nature should not be included, for e.g. toiletries, hotel room entertainment or snack bar.

Travellers who do not hold a purchase card refer to the following to claim additional expenses:

- Central and regional services staff Claim out-of-pocket work expenses in Oracle Financials (staff only) or via an expense claim form
- School staff School payment voucher form (staff only)

4. Definitions

Domestic Travel

Includes travel within the state (intrastate) and travel between states (interstate) of Australia.

International travel

Travel overseas, outside Australia.

Domestic travelling allowance

Travelling allowances received by staff members as per the relevant award when on official travel within Australia.

International travelling allowances

Travelling allowances received by staff as per the Australian Tax Office (ATO) Reasonable Expense Amounts when on official travel outside Australia.

Meal

Refers to a substantial amount of food for sustenance, consumed at regular intervals throughout the day (breakfast, lunch or dinner) within reasonable expenditure limits. The applicable employee award rates serve as a guide only and are not strict limits. Light snacks and alcohol do not qualify as a meal or part thereof.

Official travel

Is approved travel by staff members and non-employees where public monies are used to fund all or part of the travel.

Oracle financials

Oracle Financials is also known as Oracle E-Business Suite.

Central and regional services staff can claim out-of-pocket expenses by creating an expense report in Oracle E-Business.

Reasonable costs

Clause 54 of the Public Service Award 1992 and clause 60 of the Teachers Award provide rates that are to be used as a guide for what is a reasonable level of domestic travel-related expenditure

5. Related documents

Relevant legislation or authority

[Education Department Ministerial Officers' Salaries, Allowances and Conditions Award 1983](#)

[Government Officers' Salaries, Allowances and Conditions Award 1989](#)

[Teachers \(Public Sector Primary and Secondary Education\) Award 1993](#)

Related Department policies

[Gifts Benefits and Hospitality Policy](#)

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Other documents

[Official Air Travel Procedures](#)

[Code of Conduct](#)

[Financial Management in Schools: Finance and Accounting Manual \(staff only\)](#)

[Understand purchase card holder obligations \(staff only\)](#)

6. Contact information

Policy manager:

Director Financial Services

Policy contact:

FinancialPolicy.Advice@education.wa.edu.au

7. History of changes

Effective date	21 February 2017
Last update date Procedure version no.	1.0
Notes	These new procedures support the Official Air Travel Policy that replaces the Official Air Travel, Domestic Travelling Allowance and International Travelling Allowance policies. Endorsed by Director General at Corporate Executive on 28 November 2017.
Effective date	21 February 2017
Last update date	23 February 2017
Procedure version no.	1.1
Notes	Minor typos and corrective changes D17/0080388
Effective date	21 February 2017
Last update date	11 August 2017
Procedure version no.	1.2

Notes	Minor change to guidance s3.3 - process for international travel claims taken over by HRMIS D17/0343385
Effective date	21 February 2017
Last update date	10 October 2018
Procedure version no.	1.3
Notes	Minor change to position titles D18/0437050
Effective date	17 February 2026
Last update date Procedure version no.	2.0
Notes	Major change D24/0816572 review of meal reimbursements/ payments and to align with Premiers Circulars 2021/02 & 2021/15 Approved by the DG on 16 January 2026
Effective date	17 February 2026
Last update date	26 March 2026
Procedure version no.	2.0
Notes	The minor edits impact supporting information and do not affect policy content. The Director Financial Services has approved these edits (refer to D26/0245870 and D26/0241733). Appendix F TRIM # D26/0247438

8. Appendices

Appendix A: [Travel Approval Schedule](#) (DOCX file - 36.8kB)

Appendix B: [Travel Application Form Domestic Air Travel](#) (DOCX file - 44kB)

Appendix C: [Travel Application Form International Travel](#) (DOCX file - 59.6kB)

Appendix D: [Not Applicable](#) (DOCX file - 59.6kB)

Appendix E: [Non-Air Travel Application Form](#) (DOCX file - 37.4kB)

Appendix F: [Public Service Officers Travel Allowances](#) (DOCX file - 43.9kB)

Appendix G: [ATO Reasonable Amounts for Overseas Travel Expenses](#) (DOCX file - 36.4kB)

Appendix H: [Teachers Travel Allowances](#) (DOCX file - 31.9kB)

Appendix I: [Travel Expense Log for Purchase Card Acquittal of Meals and Incidentals](#) (DOCX file - 35.9kB)

9. More information

Supporting content

Policy

[Official Travel policy](#)

Procedure

[Official Air Travel procedures](#)

Procedure review date

17 February 2029