



Responsible Persons: Andreas Sobisch, Dir Global Ed and Jean Fernandez, Mgr A/P & Payroll

Responsible Office: Center for Global Ed/ Accounts Payable/Finance Office

Related Policy: **Purchasing Policy, Business Expense Policy, Cash Advance Requests**

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Travel Abroad Spending Policies

The purpose of this policy is to inform University faculty and staff (collectively "International Travelers") of the appropriate methods for paying for expenses related to travel abroad. This includes making initial arrangements before a trip and expenses incurred while out of the country.

Planning your trip:

- All International Travelers whose travel is being wholly or partially funded through the University should obtain a **JCU Visa card (P- Card)**. This card should be the primary mode of payment while abroad. It can also be used to purchase tickets and make hotel reservation and other travel arrangements in advance. Please contact the Purchasing Office at ext 1701 to make the necessary arrangements to obtain the P-Card.
- Airline tickets, if purchased from a travel agent such as Hansa Travel, can also be paid via **invoice/direct billing**. Hotel rooms, if purchased in bulk directly from the hotel, can and in some cases must be paid via international **wire transfer**. But please keep in mind that banks impose a significant fee for such transactions and may offer a very unfavorable exchange rate. Expect to pay an additional 5-7% compared to a credit card payment, where the merchant bears the costs.
- It is advisable, and in some cases necessary, to carry **cash** when going abroad alone or with a group. This is only for those occasions when payment via the P-Card is not possible. Most museums, restaurants, and other vendors - even in developing nations - can accommodate P-Card payments, but there can be exceptions. It is important to plan ahead and ask, when making the initial arrangements, whether credit cards are accepted for payment.
- When necessary, a cash advance can be obtained from the JCU Accounts Payable office using a **check request** form. (Select the **Interactive-Multi Voucher Form** found here: <http://www.jcu.edu/fas/links/forms.htm>.) Cash advance requests will be direct-deposited into the International Travelers personal checking account. Please initiate the check request at least 2 weeks prior to departure. For security reasons, the amount of cash carried to international destinations should be kept to a minimum. There are also legal limits as to how much currency a traveler is permitted to bring into a country. Upon return, cash advance funds must be reconciled with appropriate documentation and receipts. Please review the Finance & Administrative website for assistance, or contact Accounts Payable directly at ext 4457.
- **IMPORTANT:** In many countries it is difficult if not impossible to exchange cash for the local currency unless the traveler maintains a bank account in that country/bank. Be sure to investigate this issue before taking a significant sum of money. The use of ATMs abroad is therefore highly recommended. International Travelers who are citizens of the country being visited or who visit there frequently should consider opening a personal bank account in that country for added security and convenience. Under no circumstances can the University open a bank account in a foreign country to facilitate travel.

- When planning to use ATMs, be sure to **notify** your bank ahead of time of your travel plans and find out what the **daily withdrawal limit** is for travel abroad. Be sure to exercise caution when using your card at an ATM, whether at home or abroad. Scam artists have been known to hack into or modify ATM machines to steal card numbers and pin codes. Always monitor your account and contact your bank immediately if you notice fraudulent activity. Advice on using ATMS abroad is widely available online.
- **Travelers checks**, once the primary vehicle for payments by international travelers, have lost much of their value. They are subject to some of the same restrictions as cash and are simply no longer widely accepted. At a minimum they tend to carry a hefty fee and should therefore be avoided unless absolutely necessary.
- Since most expenses can be paid for using the University P-Card, **per diems** are generally not permitted. An exception can be made in some cases for an extended stay abroad, or travel to a remote area where the P-card is not accepted. In this case, VP approval for a per diem must be obtained **BEFORE** departing on the trip. The approved per diem rate must NOT exceed the amount allowed under the published IRS rates : This website lists IRS rates for foreign travel:
http://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=233&menu_id=81

Paying for expenses while abroad:

- For all purchases abroad, the same rules apply as for domestic trips: be SURE TO OBTAIN A **RECEIPT FOR EVERY SINGLE TRANSACTION**. This is required by the University's auditors. When a receipt is missing, please complete a "**missing receipt form.**"
- If cash is to be distributed to students, faculty or staff for meals or other travel related purposes, be sure to get a **signature** from each individual acknowledging the receipt of that cash. Generally, a cash advance should not be used to pay compensation for services unless absolutely necessary. **Please check with the Business Office ahead of time for possible tax implications when paying honorariums in foreign countries.**
- For any questions, please contact the **Center for Global Education** at ext 4320 or **Accounts Payable** at ext 4457.