



The Campus Traveler

November, 2017

Welcome to the new department newsletter devoted to keeping our traveling faculty current on the latest LSU traveling news. This issue will cover the most common mistakes and omissions I see in travel spend authorizations and expense reports and food reimbursement expense reports (meeting refreshments).

TRAVEL

Incomplete Information

Spend authorizations should always include enough information for approvers to understand your intentions. Pay attention to details so approvers aren't left guessing at what you meant to state. The July Campus Traveler newsletter discusses spend authorization technical requirements, but travelers should also include in attachments of things like conference invitations and award letters. The Justification field should contain detailed presentation titles.

Explanatory paragraphs are necessary if you plan to travel days before or after the conference. Your paragraph should include the business purpose of the needed extra days. Examples include library research, interviews with business colleagues that can't take place during the conference, required ground transportation (train travel or rented car) because your flight isn't able to land in the city where the conference takes place, etc. The more information you provide the less chance your spend authorization will be returned for more information. A good rule of thumb is that if you feel something should be explained, then explain it.

Expense Report Missing Forms

The most frequent omissions I see on expense reports are the award letters received from external funding sources (ORED, Dean) and the required [AS150](#) needed when travelers pay a fee via Paypal. The AS150 must be signed by the traveler and department Chair before it can be attached to the expense report.

In addition I occasionally find that travelers have forgotten to provide a currency conversion web page for each foreign currency receipt. Don't forget that the currency conversion must be printed using *the date the expense occurred*, not the date the expense report was created. Since the receipt is printed in a foreign language, it will be necessary to provide a few words explaining the nature of the receipt. Just write a very brief English description on the receipt.

I also occasionally find that travelers requesting mileage reimbursement for driving to and from the airport have forgotten to attach a mileage calculator webpage showing miles from the domicile to the airport and back. Travelers are welcome to use any mileage calculator, but Oanda.com is a good one if you don't already have a favorite.

Something I
travelers use the
was created for
date the expense



sometimes see is that
date the expense report
each line item. Use the
occurred.

I occasionally see
hotel confirmation
hotel folio. Hotel
what was charged

travelers using a web page
in place of the detailed
confirmations do not show
to the room each night.

Auditors need to see what was charged to the room each night to confirm that every charge was an allowable charge.

Lastly...travel auditors are starting to ask for conference details in the expense report attachments even though this information may already be attached to the spend authorization. Details include a program page showing the conference location and dates and the program page showing the date you presented your paper.

Meeting Refreshment Spend Authorizations & Expense Reports

The basic rule for food reimbursement is that there must be a business purpose for ordering food. Business purpose is defined as a purpose that compliments or enhances the mission of the department. In our case that would be the study of languages and culture. A business purpose can be something like providing refreshments after an orientation meeting of graduate assistants where further discussion takes place, or perhaps refreshments after a guest speaker presentation where attendees can interact with the speaker. Whatever the purpose, it must benefit or enhance the mission of Foreign Languages & Literatures and the expense must be approved by the account manager.

One cannot be reimbursed for food using a State funded account (the department budget) simply for entertainment. It's actually against State law to use State funded accounts for gifts and entertainment. For example, you cannot be reimbursed the cost of a food basket that's intended as a gift for a speaker or anyone else. Another example is ordering food a retirement party. Retirement parties are viewed as entertainment so State funds cannot be used for reimbursement. Nor can anyone be reimbursed from a State funded account for a retirement gift.

Can one be reimbursed for these kinds of expenses from a Foundation account? Perhaps. It depends on the account donor's intent on how the funds can be used and if the Department Chair elects to approve the expense.

Completing the Spend Authorization and Expense Report

The best way I know to explain how to create a spend authorization and expense report is to provide an example from a previously paid expense report.

Step 1 - The AS499

The first step in the process is to complete an [AS499](#) *in advance of the event!* It takes anywhere from 7-10 days to receive back a fully approved form so please submit the form to Jeannie at least two weeks prior to the event. No approved AS499, no reimbursement. Need help understanding how to fill it out? Click [HERE](#) to see an example of a fully approved refreshment AS499. Check with Jeannie to find out what account number to use and what spending limits may be in place.

Step 2 – The Spend Authorization

A refreshment spend authorization is not required if NO travel is involved. So what does this mean exactly...If you simply want to provide refreshments for a group of people already here (grad assistants for example), no travel is involved so you can skip the Spend Authorization. However...if you want to provide refreshments for a guest speaker who traveled here at the expense of the department, then the Spend Authorization is required. Here's an example of a completed refreshment Spend Authorization when one is needed:

Spend Authorization Details

The screenshot shows two panels for a Spend Authorization. The left panel, 'Spend Authorization Information', includes fields for Company (Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College), Start Date (10/19/2017), End Date (10/20/2017), Description (Guest Speaker Refreshments), Business Purpose (Travel - Special Meal), and Spend Authorization Total (100.00). The right panel, 'Spend Authorization Details', includes Reimbursement Payment Type (Direct Deposit) and a Justification text box containing: 'Refreshments for Dr. Mike D. Tiger guest speaker who is visiting the department to give a guest lecture on animal rights and habitat destruction in Hispanic countries. His talk will explain the cultural differences between US and Hispanic countries in terms of views on habitat destruction and needs of human populations.'

Spend Authorization Lines

The screenshot shows the 'Spend Authorization Lines' section with a table containing one line item: 'Special Meal - Refreshments' with a total amount of 100.00. To the right of the table is a detailed form for the selected line item, including fields for Expense Item (Special Meal - Refreshments), Quantity (1), Per Unit Amount (100.00), Total Amount (100.00), Memo, Cash Advance Requested (checkbox), Program (PG000151 | LSUAM | Foreign Languages and Literatures), Project, Gift, Grant, Cost Center (CC00117 LSUAM | Col of HSS | Foreign Languages and Literatures), *Fund (FD100 Unrestricted Fund), and Function (FN10 Instruction).

Don't forget to attach the completed and fully approved AS499 in the Attachments tab!

Check with Jeannie about the account number.

Step 3 – The Expense Report

Now that you have receipts, the completed AS499 and the event has occurred, you can proceed with the reimbursement expense report. You can't process an expense report until after the event. A word of caution about receipts: *do not combine personal purchases with your refreshment purchases on the same receipts!* Again, here's an example of a previously approved and paid refreshment expense report:

Expense Report Details

Expense Report Information		Expense Report Reference Information	
Company	Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College	Expense Payee Paid	Yes
Expense Report Date	11/14/2016	Reimbursement Payment Type	Direct Deposit
Created On	11/14/2016	Spend Authorization	(empty)
Approval Date	11/15/2016	Memo	Spanish recruitment event for undergraduate students and what the Spanish program can offer.
Business Purpose	Travel - Special Meal		

Expense Report Line Items

Click here to sort		Expense Report Line	
11/08/2016	59.10	Date	11/08/2016
Special Meal - Refreshments		Expense Item	Special Meal - Refreshments
11/09/2016	191.89	Quantity	1
Special Meal - Refreshments		Per Unit Amount	59.10
11/09/2016	5.38	Total Amount	59.10
Special Meal - Refreshments		Memo	(empty)
		Personal	No
		Program	PG000156 LSUAM Hispanic Studies
		Project	(empty)
		Gift	(empty)
		Grant	(empty)
		Cost Center	CC00117 LSUAM Col of HSS Foreign Languages and Literatures
		*Fund	FD100 Unrestricted Fund
		Function	FN10 Instruction
		Disallowed Expense Type	(empty)
		Review Indicator	Expense Audited

Don't forget to attach your receipts and the fully approved AS499 in the Attachment tab.