

Procedure 20330: Travel Advances

Travel advances are disbursed to individuals to provide upfront financial support to cover expenses incurred while in travel status on official university business. The advance amount requested should include only those anticipated reimbursable expenses for food, lodging and local transportation (taxi, rental car, etc.). The amount requested should not include registration fees or air transportation. Registration fees may be paid on the departmental P-Card, processed as a direct payment through accounts payable prior to the conference, or paid by the traveler and reimbursed through the expense report. Air transportation is billed to the university through any of the university's contract travel agencies or the departmental P-Card in accordance with [Procedure 20335e](#).

The travel expense report should be submitted within 30 days of the last day of travel to facilitate the travel advance's repayment within the accountable plan rules. If the traveler has an advance in delinquent status, they are not eligible to request an additional advance without an approved exception by the Controller's Office.

A. Eligibility

Travel advances can be issued to full-time employees or to graduate assistants traveling on official University business. Advances may support individual or group travel such as study abroad programs or athletic and academic group travel. Any exceptions to the eligibility criteria should be forwarded to the Controller's Office for review.

Employees requesting a travel advance must sign the [University Travel Advance Payroll Deduction Agreement](#) prior to receiving the advance. If a Chrome River expense report cannot be submitted to substantiate the traveler's expenses, and/or the funds cannot be returned to the university Bursar's Office to reconcile and close the advance, it is the policy of the university to collect the outstanding funds through payroll deduction.

B. Disbursement Options and Request Process

Travel advances can be issued by ACH or wire at a minimum amount of \$250. The wire will only be utilized for international payments. Larger scale programs such as study abroad may receive the advance on a [declining balance debit card \(DBDC\)](#) at a minimum amount of \$2,000. If an advance request exceeds \$10,000, the advance must be issued on a DBDC. Cash can be

withdrawn against the DBDC. If an exception to the DBDC requirement is needed, please contact the Controller's Office.

| <u>Payment Method</u> | <u>Minimum Amount</u> | <u>Maximum Amount</u> | <u>Submission of Advance Request</u> | <u>Receipt of Advance</u> | <u>Requirements</u> |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|--|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| | | | <u>(prior to departure)</u> | | |
| ACH (Direct Deposit) | \$250 | \$9,999 | 15-90 days | 20 days | Registered for direct deposit of ‘All Other VT Payments’ |
| Wire* | \$250 | \$9,999 | 15-90 days | 20 days | Wiring Instructions |
| Declining Balance Debit Card (DBDC) | \$2,000 | maximum out of pocket budget for the program | 15-180 days | Up to 180 days | DBDC Authorization Form |

*Wires may only be processed for international travel

A travel advance must be requested by the traveler or delegate through the Chrome River system and approved by the department head or their designee. Individuals should not approve their own advance request.

The fully approved Chrome River preapproval with travel advance request must be received in the Controller's Office at least 15 working days before the advance disbursement is required. Those requests not received within the proper time may be delayed. The travel advance request will specify the disbursement option used to transfer funds to the traveler. Once approved, the department should not expire the preapproval prior to the advance being repaid.

C. Group Travel

Group travel requires careful planning and budgeting to ensure travel advances are adequate to cover expenses. Travel advances may be issued earlier than 20 days prior to departure if approved by the Controller’s Office. The declining balance debit card is typically used for advances over \$2,000 and must be used for advances over \$10,000. Travel advance uses may include daily per diems, group lodging, transportation while at destination, group meals, etc.

D. Repayment of Travel Advance

When an employee obtains a travel advance but does not complete the trip as planned, the advance must be repaid immediately. An employee who receives a travel advance and completes the trip for which the advance was requested must repay the advance according to the following process:

1. Complete a Chrome River travel expense report against the preapproval used to request the advance within 30 days of the last day of travel. Do not expire a travel preapproval associated with an advance request. All university travel policies and procedures will apply.
2. The travel advance transaction resides in the e-Wallet in Chrome River and must be added to the expense report. If the expenses are less than the travel advance amount, a travel advance return expense needs to be added to the expense report.
3. The Controller's Office travel staff reviews the travel expense report in accordance with university travel procedures.
4. The Chrome River system will repay the travel advance from the travel expense report, and the traveler is reimbursed by direct deposit for any amount exceeding the advance.
5. If the travel expense report is less than the advance amount, the Bursar's Office will invoice the employee for the balance of the travel advance when due. The employee will repay this amount directly to the Bursar's Office either online or in-person.

After travel completion, the traveler will be sent an electronic billing statement from the university Bursar's Office. These statements are typically provided around the 15th of the following month with a due date of the 10th of the next month. Travelers should promptly complete their Chrome River expense report to ensure their travel advance is repaid before the advance due date. Employee advances not repaid by the due date may be collected through payroll deduction in accordance with the "University Travel Advance Payroll Deduction Agreement."

E. Termination of Employees

Departmental staff should verify terminated or resigning employees do not have outstanding travel advances. All outstanding travel advances and expense reports should be completed prior to the employee's last day of employment.

F. Misuse

Improper use of the travel advance program will result in the permanent termination of this service to the employee. Misuse could be defined as using the advance for personal expenses, non-travel related expenses, failure to submit expense reimbursements, or failure to repay the advance in a timely manner.