

Expense Reimbursement Procedure			
Parent Policy	Expense Reimbursement Policy		
Policy Sponsor	Vice President Finance and Administration & CFO	Category	Administrative
Policy Contact	Director, Financial Services	Effective Date	June 1, 2020
Procedure Contact	Director, Financial Services	Review Date	May 6, 2025

1. Purpose

To provide the administrative procedures for expense reimbursement, including prescriptive guidelines and limitations (Appendix A), as applicable.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all expense reimbursements made by Athabasca University regardless of the Funding Source.

3. Definitions

Advances	Payments made to or on behalf of a member of the University Community prior to travel occurring and recorded in a receivable account in the University's accounting system.
Claimant	The member of the University Community making a claim for reimbursement of expenses.
Eligible Business-Related Expense	A transaction that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is for a University business purpose, not a personal purpose; • Is considered fiscally responsible and defensible to an impartial observer; • Has actually been incurred; and • Meets the requirements of this policy and criteria as set out in all applicable policies and procedures.
Employee	A full-time, part-time, casual, or seasonal staff member employed by the University.
Employee Functions	Any function for which the primary purpose is to enable all University Employees, or all Employees within a University Unit, to celebrate a significant occasion or to receive recognition for their contributions.

Executive Team	Is comprised of the President; Provost and Vice-President Academic; Vice-President, Finance and Administration and Chief Financial Officer; Vice-President, Information Technology and Chief Information Officer; Vice-President, University Relations; University Secretary; Chief Human Resource Officer; the Chief of Staff, Office of the President, and any other position as so designated.
Expenditure Approval Authority	A member of the University Community who is delegated the authority to initiate, incur and approve expenditures on behalf of the University.
Funding Source	All sources of revenue directed to an account managed by the University. It includes grant funds awarded from both University and non-University sources as well as funds awarded under the terms of contracts.
Hospitality	Pertains to (food, drink and entertainment) expenses incurred in respect of hospitality provided to guests and external stakeholders of the University or individuals otherwise not engaged in work for the University as a matter of courtesy or to facilitate business of the University, to the extent such expenses are not recovered from the attendees.
Institutional Events	A University-wide or unit-hosted function that is not attributable to an Employee.
Out of Province Travel	Out of Province Travel refers to outside the province in which the community member resides.
Procurement Card (PCard)	A credit card provided by the University to a member of the University Community or business area, issued by a financial institution, associated with a University account, and intend for payment of Eligible Business-Related Expenses.
Tutor	As defined in the Athabasca University General Faculties Rules, means a part time staff member who provides tutorial services to students and includes academic experts.
University Community	All faculty and staff, students, Board Members, contractors, postdoctoral fellows, volunteers, visitors and other individuals who work, study, conduct research or otherwise carry on business of the University.
Working Session	Any assembly or gathering of Employees (primarily) for a purpose that supports the business activities of the University, for which expenditure for food and beverage is necessarily incurred.

4. Guiding Principles

4.1 General Reimbursement Guidelines

- a) Athabasca University is not responsible for reimbursing Employees for non-eligible or non-compliant expenditures.
- b) Alcohol is not reimbursable unless otherwise specified within this procedure.
- c) Where expenses result from a cancellation of travel or an event, the Claimant has responsibility to mitigate the cost as much as possible. Where the cancellation occurred for business reasons, the unmitigated portion is reimbursable.
- d) When a Claimant receives a discount, credit or bonus that reduces the original cost, reimbursement will only be made for the actual expense.
- e) Expenses incurred by one individual on behalf of another must be attributed to the individual for whom those expenses were incurred.
- f) Tutors, as members of the University Community, will be reimbursed for Eligible Business-Related Expenses in accordance with these Procedures and any applicable Standard Operating Procedures.

4.2 Claimant Expense Submissions and Approval Guidelines

- a) All Eligible Business-Related Expenses require sufficient and appropriate supporting documentation for approval and audit purposes. This includes submission of an itemized receipt, provided by the vendor, displaying the following information:
 - Name and address of the vendor;
 - Date of purchase;
 - Description of the goods or services received;
 - evidence of the business purpose;
 - Amount of the expense; and
 - Indication of payment.
- b) A Claimant may elect to personally incur expenses exceeding those permitted or approved under this policy. The Claimant must clearly distinguish between business and personal expenses.
- c) Claims should be submitted within 30 days of incurring the expense and within fiscal year end deadlines.
- d) Prescribed forms must be used.
- e) Both the Claimant and the Expenditure Approval Authority are responsible to ensure that the claim:
 - Is an Eligible Business-Related Expense;

- Complies with all relevant University policy and procedure, or within the terms and conditions of the specific external funding source as applicable;
 - Is correctly coded to the appropriate account and that there are sufficient funds available;
 - Is not a duplicate payment; and
 - Includes all required supporting documentation.
- f) If a Claimant misplaces a receipt for an Eligible Business-Related Expense, and cannot obtain a replacement, the Claimant must include the explanation of the circumstances, as supporting documentation, in order to be considered by the Expenditure Approval Authority. Reasonable requests will be reimbursed.

4.3 Method of Payment

- a) Paying by Procurement Card (PCard) is the preferred method of payment for non-travel expense reimbursement (to the limits of the Procurement Policy).
- b) Expense reimbursement claims must be made through the University's electronic expense management system and payment shall be made by Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT).
- c) Reimbursements will be made in Canadian Dollars regardless of the currency used to pay expenses.
- d) In rare cases, Advances for travel-related expenses may be provided. In these cases, the Claimant is personally accountable for reimbursement to the University of any amounts advanced that exceed the actual Eligible Business-Related Expenses within the time period identified in the Appendix A.

4.4 Monitoring and Compliance

- a) Financial Services will conduct random, ongoing compliance monitoring procedures with regard to claims made and approvals applied. Internal Audit will perform independent reviews in accordance with the annual Internal Audit Plan.
- b) The Vice President Finance and Administration & CFO may issue interpretive bulletins or guidelines in respect of these Procedures and governing Policy.

4.5 Travel

- a) Preapproval for out of province travel is required. Expense claims incurred for travel out of Province must be accompanied by a Pre-Approval Report completed through the electronic expense management system.
- b) Pre-approval of business class by the Expenditure Approval Authority is required, and acceptable when there is a demonstrated business reason and includes the following circumstances:
 - A medical condition that necessitates an upgraded travel class, supported by a supporting physician's note; or
 - The flight segment is greater than 5 hours.
- c) Reimbursement will not be made for travel between residence and base of work. All mileage reimbursements will be calculated from base of work.
- d) When travelling outside of Canada, a Claimant may be reimbursed for the costs related to carrying out University international business, including vaccinations, work permits and travel visas. The cost of passports is not reimbursable. If a Claimant becomes ill and requires medical attention or hospitalization, these expenses are reimbursable. All eligible costs of carrying out University international business is only reimbursable to the extent not covered by medical insurance.
- e) A Claimant shall be reimbursed for losses incurred due to any change in the rate of exchange for foreign currency purchased to meet reimbursable expenses when travel is required outside of Canada.

4.6 Hospitality, Institutional Events and Employee Functions

- a) Where planning a Hospitality, Institutional Event or Employee Function, diligence and discretion should be exercised in the determination of the necessity of the function, the location, the amount to be expended on food and beverage and the total number of guests to be invited.
- b) Where expenses are incurred for such events, the expense must be incurred by the most senior position of the organizing business area.
- c) In addition to the supporting documentation required by 4.2 (a), the following information must be provided:
 - The nature of a function or event;
 - The purpose or occasion of the event;
 - The names (except for institutional events) and number of the people in attendance;
 - The average total cost per person;
 - Detailed original receipts; and
 - Any additional material relevant to the occasion or event, such as a copy of the agenda or program.

- d) Alcohol related expenses are permitted in certain circumstances for Hospitality, Institutional Events and Employee Functions. These require the prior approval of a member of the Executive Team which must be included with the supporting documentation for the claim.

4.7 Professional Membership

A claimant may claim the expense of professional memberships where appropriate for the performance of the claimant's job. Appropriateness should be determined based on the requirements noted in the job description. In circumstances where this is not the case, the approving authority is required to consult with HR.

5. Applicable Legislation and Regulations

[Alberta's Financial Administration Act](#)

[Alberta's Fiscal Planning and Transparency Act](#)

[Alberta's Post-Secondary Learning Act](#)

[Alberta's Public Disclosure of Travel and Expense Policy](#)

[Canada's Income Tax Act](#)

6. Related Documents

CUPE Collective Agreement

[CUPE Professional Development Allowance Guidelines Policy](#)

[Expense Reimbursement Policy](#)

[Expenditure Reimbursement Procedure – Appendix A](#)

NOTE: The subject matter and scope of this procedure and its related policy are also supported by internal-use only Standard Operating Procedures.

History

<i>Date</i>	<i>Action</i>
May 6, 2020	Policy Approved (Executive Team)