Reimbursements and Justifications

The process, the dos, and the don’ts

July 16, 2012
Writing the Perfect Justification
Justifications

• What are justifications?
  – An explanation of why the expense is critical to the completion of the project.

• Why do we need write justifications?
  – They ensure that grant money is being utilized correctly.
  – Protect the University during audits.

• When are they required?
  – Any time you want to get reimbursed for something that was purchased while on UCM business, for use on a project, or after using a UCM vehicle.
Justifications- Minimum Requirements

- **What:** What you were doing
- **Where:** Where you were doing it
- **Project:** What project you were working on

- **Good:** “Installed monitoring wells, downloaded data, and collected water quality samples in the Sierra NF for CZO.”
- **Bad:** “Fieldwork for CZO.”
Justifications for Travel

- Minimum plus:
- If you are claiming meals
- Where you stayed
- How you got there

Example: “Met with UCB collaborators at an American River project site (‘Alpha’) near Fresh Pond then drove to Foresthill for some final mounting installations at Bear Trap met station (also for the American River). Transport w/UCM vehicle; no lodging claimed because we camped in the NF.”
Justifications for General Reimbursements

• Minimum *plus*:

• Why you needed to purchase

• Example: “Bolts, washers, and nuts were purchased to mount instrument masts to u-channels at American River sites. We ran out of hardware and required more to complete the work at the time.”
Getting your money back
Reimbursements - The Process

1. You purchase something for a project or while doing UCM business (aka travel, fieldwork, or supplies for a project). **SAVE RECEIPTS**
2. Upon returning, write out a justification and fill out the travel reimbursement form.
3. Turn all receipts and documents in to the SNRI office
4. SNRI office fills out an Express expense report for you through UCLA (they are our “bank” for now).
5. An email will get sent to you asking for approval of the Express expense report - follow the link at the bottom.
6. Read over the report and approve, if all information is accurate.
   - If not accurate, reject it and enter a reason why so it can be corrected and resubmitted.
• Many departments do it differently
Reimbursements- General Rules

• Be honest
  – If you didn’t buy it, don’t claim it.
  – If something is on a receipt that cannot be claimed, don’t try to claim it.

• If you’re unsure what to do, go talk to the SNRI office staff.
  – This will prevent issues that cause it to get rejected.
  – When a reimbursement is rejected, it creates more work for the SNRI office and will slow down the delivery of your reimbursement.
Sierra Nevada Research Institute
Travel Reimbursement Form

E-mail Address: __________________________ Daytime Phone #: __________________
Mailing Address:

Justification


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Departure</th>
<th>Arrival</th>
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<td>Location</td>
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Receipts Required? | Expense Type | Amount |
---|---|---|
Yes | Airfare (if paid with personal funds) | |
Yes | Other Long Distance Transportation: Bus/Trains | |
No | Mileage (if personal vehicle) | miles |
Yes | Rental car | |
Yes | Fuel (Rental Car Only) | |
Yes | Taxi/Shuttle/Limo | |
Yes | Parking | |
Yes | Lodging (Hotel Folio w/zero ending balance required) | |
Yes | Meals (Must travel more than 24hrs/day) | |
Yes | Other (Please List): | |

Total

By submission of this expense form, I certify that the expenses claimed as reimbursable on this form are true and accurate. I have, and will not, be receiving reimbursement for any other source for these expenditures nor have any of these expenses already been paid by another entity.

Traveler’s signature __________________________ Date __________

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<tr>
<th>Loc</th>
<th>Acct</th>
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<th>Fund</th>
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Travel - Meals

- Must travel more than 24 hrs
- Daily allowance: $71.00
  - Don’t make it a point to try to spend it all
- All receipts must be itemized
- No alcohol
  - Must be on a separate receipt from the one you are planning to turn in
- Can only purchase meals for yourself
  - If there is more than one guest per receipt, ID which meal items were yours
  - Make sure the receipt only says “1” guest
    - If it says “2” you must explain and then ID your items
- You can’t purchase food a week before you travel
Travel - Transportation

- **Cars**
  - Rental: Gas is reimbursed so save receipts
  - Personal: Only mileage is reimbursed

- **Train/Bus**
  - Turn in original receipts

- **Parking and Taxis**
  - Must have original receipts
Travel- Other Expenses

• No price limit but “other” expenses generally aren’t officially accepted on travel reimbursements
  – If <$10, it might work, but otherwise it needs to be claimed through the general reimbursement process

• Examples
  – Dry ice
  – Bridge tolls
  – Batteries (if on grocery store receipt)
Travel - Lodging

- Must have folio or itemized receipt from hotel indicating a "$0.00" balance
  - This proves that you actually stayed there and paid for it.
  - Note: you will probably have to check out at the front desk to get a receipt with this on it.

- You can only pay for your own lodging
  - If you shared a room, mention it
  - Two options:
    - One of you pays and the other claims nothing on the reimbursement
    - OR
    - Get two separate folios showing that the room cost was split
Travel- Lodging

• Camping
  – Get as much information as you can
  – Notes from campground managers work as proof as long as it says what you paid and (if possible) some contact info for them

• Groups – when you haven’t paid
  – If you have a group leader that paid for everyone (group housing, hostel, campground, etc.)
  – State on the reimbursement that lodging was paid for by the group leader (give their name).
    • “[Name] paid for everyone.”
Sierra Nevada Research Institute
General Reimbursement

E-mail Address: __________________________________________

Name ____________________________ Daytime Phone # ____________

Mailing Address
__________________________ __________________________

Justification (Must be emailed)

__________________________ __________________________

Date | Expense Type | Amount

__________________________ __________________________

__________________________ __________________________

__________________________ __________________________

Total $0.00

By submission of this expense form, I certify that: The expenses claimed as reimbursable on the form are true and accurate accounting of the necessary business-related expenses incurred for this business trip; and there are no items listed as reimbursable which relate to personal or unallowable expenses. I have not, and will not, be receiving reimbursement from any other source for these expenditures nor have any of these expenses already been paid by another entity.

Signature ______________________ Date ______

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Reimbursements- General

• What qualifies?
  – Anything that isn’t food, lodging, or vehicle related
  – Common examples: dry ice, batteries, hardware, hand tools

• What doesn’t qualify?
  – Toiletries (with the exception of sunscreen as this can be considered PPE - must explain this in justification)

• Use the “official” route as much as possible.
  – Try not to make purchases with your own money; only out of necessity (e.g. while doing fieldwork).