

## **Travel Information Meeting – COVID-19 – Remote Session Chat Questions**

**Q: This is assuming they have already been reimbursed, correct?**

Correct; the examples 1 and 2 provided are assuming they have received a reimbursement. The slides have been updated to reflect this more clearly.

**Q: With no one in the office, how can departments receive payments currently?**

You will want to start by checking with your department on current plan of action as far as processing checks.

Travel Services can serve as a backup on an as needed basis through the end of May 31<sup>st</sup>:

Please include the following information:

- Expense report #
- Department contact (email & phone #)
- What expense(s) are being returned

### **Campus Mail:**

Travel Services

UW Box # 354967

Or

### **Physical Address:**

Roosevelt Commons West

Travel Services Box #354967

4300 Roosevelt Way NE

Seattle, WA 98195

**Q: If someone was already reimbursed for their airfare, received a credit for said airfare, then repaid the UW for the reimbursement. If they use the credit towards a future UW business trip, how would we go about reimbursing the traveler for the entire airfare, including the credit?**

To reconcile this, as long as they meet our [change/cancellation of travel plans policy](#), would be to reprocess the original reimbursement as new expense report as that compliance would make them eligible for it. We would recommend adding reference comments to each report to tell the story for audit purposes.

**Q: Has the UW come up with a way to reimburse the University electronically instead of writing a check?**

Not at this time. You will stick to your department check processing procedures and refer to the question above is there are department issues for getting it processed.

**Q: How is this policy executed if the departmental CTA was used for a guest airfare. The credit is applied directly to the individual**

If a credit for a future flight was applied to the individual, they must use that credit for future business, or it must be given over to the department. If it can't be used either of those ways, it is then forfeited. It would not be allowed for personal use unless they pay back the entire original purchase on the CTA. Refer to attached notice in the email for more guidance.

**Q: What if the CTA was charged and the credit was at the travel agency end?**

Normally travel agencies will work with departments directly on these credits to strategize the best use for them. For compliance, the same would apply in which they must be used for future UW business, refer to attached notice.

**Q: How does someone "surrender" an airfare e-voucher?**

This is situational based on the airline/fare, but it is a way for the department to use an e-voucher for future UW business if the original traveler does not have upcoming business they could use it on. This would have to be worked on with the airline or travel agency to see if it is an option.

This would generally be explored further with whoever did the original booking to get an idea of what the options are. This information may be requested of the traveler by the department to evaluate options and determine what is most advantageous to the UW funding.

**Q: How do we handle airfare for staff who will separate from service? Airfare was paid with CTA.**

If this is in regards to an employee leaving the University and therefore no longer being able to go on the trip as planned, it would have to meet one of our change/cancellation of travel plans policy reasons in order for them to not have to pay it back. These are typically paid back as this reason is not a listed reason in the compliance:

*Allowable if change/cancellation was due to:*

- *UW business*
- *Cancelled conference/meeting*
- *Airline cancelled flight (replacement fare must be used for future UW business trip or surrendered to the department)*
- *Unexpected death of a family member*
- *Traveler's own unexpected illness which kept them from taking the business trip or continuing the trip as planned and is not due to the traveler's own misconduct/negligence.*
- *The department has made the determination that if the travel were to take place, the health and safety of the traveler would be at risk (refer to department section in policy accountability). In Ariba, select UW business and provide information.*

**Q: Our students/residents have purchased their airfare for a conference that was cancelled. We usually reimburse them for their conference expenses from department funds. If they are unable to receive any refunds, what will you need for documentation?**

There is a requirement in our [receipt policy](#) requiring any fees related to change/cancellation of travel plans policy be accompanied by an itemized itinerary, so make sure to meet that requirement. We would also recommend in the case that no refund is being given that a confirmation of this be attached to the expense report for audit purposes. Normally the airline would give a confirmation.

**Q: I also have a non-UW traveler who got a travel credit. How do we have them surrender it? They booked it on their own.**

This is situational based on the airline/fare, but it is a way for the department to use an e-voucher for future UW business if the original traveler does not have upcoming business they could use it on. This would have to be worked on with the airline or travel agency to see if it is an option.

**Q: What if the traveler used a personal credit card and was reimbursed? And then the travel was cancelled.**

See attached notice to email which covers this information.

**Q: What if the credit was given to a guest, non-uw, and the original was paid by the CTA? it is on a federal fund**

Refer to UW Post Award Fiscal Compliance's page for guidance:  
[https://finance.uw.edu/pafc/Travel\\_COVID-19](https://finance.uw.edu/pafc/Travel_COVID-19) & email [GCAfco@uw.edu](mailto:GCAfco@uw.edu) with any questions.

**Q: Are we required to contact all of our faculty and staff to ask who cancelled their trips or did not go (for those who were already reimbursed for airfare for example)?**

This will be important to assure that those who are reimbursed meet our [change/cancellation of travel plans policy](#) and that they meet the guidance gone over in our attached notice example to the email regarding refunds/vouchers/credits/etc. It would be an audit risk to ignore.

**Q: So we are not requiring travelers to repay the UW for airfare credit even if they have been reimbursed?**

If the traveler meets our [change/cancellation of travel plans policy](#), they are eligible to be reimbursed for the original ticket and don't have to pay for the credit. The credit is just applied to future business. See attached notice email example for more information.

**Q: Any tips for doing a retro flight comparison for a trip taken in early march? flight prices very different now b/c of virus (they purchased comfort plus fare)**

Since there is now a way to do a retro comparison, our after the trip comparison procedures would still be used: <https://finance.uw.edu/travel/personal#Compaftertrip> There has been no change to the compliance. When building the future comparison, adjustments can be made to make it to be what the department believes to be the most accurate representation of UW business cost, but a comparison is still required.

**Q: What if the credit can't be used while the student is at UW ( graduating)**

It would be treated the same as if an employee had no business they could apply it to, it would just be forfeited. Refer to the attached notice example for more information on this as well.

**Q: Did you say that travel office encourages not buying basic economy? I thought we were expected to buy the cheapest flight possible?**

This has been discouraged over the years because of the known issues with these fares. We have them disabled in our contracted travel agencies because of it.

A common issue with them is that they can't be changed or cancelled at all which causes issues for business travel. They also a lot of time can be more expensive on discount airlines because nickel and dime for certain fees such as a carry-on bag that another fare may not charge for.

**Q: What if the UW paid only a partial fare reimbursement on a flight including non-UW business? Can the recipient use the fare for personal business? Or at least the amount that they paid out of pocket?**

If a traveler was reimbursed based on a comparison airfare because there was personal travel, if they pay back in full that comparison amount that was reimbursed then they could use any credits/vouchers for personal use. Refer to the attached example notice for more information.

**Q: What if faculty paid for their airfare, the conference was cancelled, but the airline reimbursed with credit. Can they get reimbursed for that? Or in the future, if they used the credit for UW business, can they then get reimbursed?**

If the traveler meets our [change/cancellation of travel plans policy](#), then they would be eligible for reimbursement of the original airfare purchase even when a credit was issued. As far as how to manage the credit, refer to our attached sample notice that can be sent to the traveler.

**Q: To confirm, someone cannot "buy" their airfare voucher for personal use?**

Correct; things are handled based on the original fare not the voucher. If they pay back the original fare/reimbursement in full then the voucher could be used for personal use. They can't just pay voucher itself, there is opportunity for personal gain on UW funding.

**Q: Can I reimburse a non-refundable airfare on a grant budget?**

Refer to UW Post Award Fiscal Compliance's page for guidance:  
[https://finance.uw.edu/pafc/Travel\\_COVID-19](https://finance.uw.edu/pafc/Travel_COVID-19) & email [GCAfco@uw.edu](mailto:GCAfco@uw.edu) with any questions.

**Q: So we can reimburse them the full amount and just tell them they shouldn't use it for personal use, on the honor system? But if they've already been reimbursed, we can't ask them to repay the university and then let them use it for personal use?**

You can think of it like an honor system but know that the department has the authority to be stricter on this, just can't be more lenient. If there are stricter funding or compliance concerns those can be managed with department policy. If the department is requesting to be paid back when the credit can't be used for future business this should be clearly written into department policy and all travelers treated the same in like circumstances.

**Q: Per MRAM notification on 3/25: Q: What should we do if a traveler receives a personal credit from an airline, rather than a refund?**

**A: The cost of the airfare cannot be charged to the Sponsored Award. This is because there is no assurance that the airline credit will be used for travel for the same Award and for the same purpose.**

**Also, there is a chance that the travel may never be rescheduled during the life of the Award. The cost of this ticket cannot be charged to a Sponsored Award. This is now an FAQ on the PAFC COVID-19 Travel webpage.**

Refer to UW Post Award Fiscal Compliance's page for guidance:

[https://finance.uw.edu/pafc/Travel\\_COVID-19](https://finance.uw.edu/pafc/Travel_COVID-19) & email [GCAfco@uw.edu](mailto:GCAfco@uw.edu) with any questions.

**Q: So why not get them to return funds if they can't use the credit for business but for personal travel?**

The department has the authority to do this as it is stricter than our policy and not more lenient. You will just have to make sure it is clearly written in department policy and all travelers are treated the same in like circumstances.

**Q: What if we already processed a Cash Transmittal for a faculty who had received a credit for airfare, it went back into the proper budget... Should we re-process the original reimbursement they just repaid?**

Since we don't allow just the credit to be reimbursed, the full amount of the original ticket should be paid back and then this would allow them to use if for personal use. A second cash transmittal could be processed to make up the difference.

**Q: The notification/statement we can send to Non-UWs for not using airline credits/vouchers for personal use will satisfy an audit even though the funds are forfeited, correct?**

Our office does not have the authority to guarantee something will hold up in the event of an audit as we don't know specific funding requirements at the department level. Based on our compliance as it relates to all funding types, this is our recommended guidance.

**Q: If the traveler has been reimbursed previously and then reimburses the UW the entire cost of the ticket, can the traveler then use any airline voucher for personal travel?**

Correct; if the original ticket has been paid back in full and that can be backed up in an audit, then it would be eligible to be used for personal use.

**Q: The original fare was already charged to a federal budget. The conference was cancelled and airline credit/voucher was issued directly to the individual. So does the original airfare expense charged to a federal budget will need to be transferred to a non-federal budget because it cannot be guaranteed that the credit/voucher will be used to benefit that specific federal budget, correct?**

Refer to UW Post Award Fiscal Compliance's page for guidance:

[https://finance.uw.edu/pafc/Travel\\_COVID-19](https://finance.uw.edu/pafc/Travel_COVID-19) & email [GCAfco@uw.edu](mailto:GCAfco@uw.edu) with any questions.

**Q: And if the reimbursement for only for a comp fare for a trip including non UW business?**

If a traveler was reimbursed based on a comparison airfare because there was personal travel, if they pay back in full that comparison amount that was reimbursed then they could use any credits/vouchers for personal use. Refer to the attached example notice for more information.

**Q: Traveler's ticket was \$812 (paid for initially by traveler because of personal travel included and price comparison unfavorable), but UW is reimbursing \$640, of it, with the balance on the traveler**

**because of personal time/travel included. Delta is not refunding, just crediting. Conference not cancelled, but postponed till fall. Traveler believes that \$172 is her personal credit. How are we to differentiate? Can we? How can we prove to potential auditor that we did everything right?**

As long as they meet our [change/cancellation of travel plans policy](#) they are eligible for the \$640 as reimbursement. The credit would then just be used for the future business and not included as a reimbursable amount on that next expense report. I would recommend including a comment to clarify on the new ER for audit purposes. If they wanted to use the credit for personal use, the entire \$640 would have to be paid back. Refer to attached sample notice to this email for further guidance.

**Q: Isn't the documentation of the Cash Transmittal in the ER sufficient documentation of that situation for audit reason?**

If a cash transmittal is clearly shown in the accounting data, it is sufficient documentation for showing the funds have been returned to the budget for audit purposes.

**Q: Just to clarify, if a traveler repaid the UW for airfare credit for airfare they were reimbursed for, should we reprocess the original reimbursement? You first answered my question saying we should reprocess the reimbursement, but you just answered a question saying to leave the repayment in the budget. I'm confused.**

In order to use the credit for personal use, the original fare would need to be paid back in full by the traveler. If the traveler meets our [change/cancellation of travel plans policy](#), they are eligible to be reimbursed for the original fare and then the credit must be used for future business. If it can't be used for business, it would just be forfeited but they would still be eligible for the original reimbursement. Refer to our attached sample notice to this email for further guidance.

**Q: What if: a traveler paid for their airfare with a personal credit card, has not yet been reimbursed by the department, is being offered a credit from the airline for the full price of their ticket, and the traveler wants to use it for personal travel this year? Do we need to do anything?**

For this case, the department would just be responsible for making sure no reimbursement is processed and then it would be OK to use for personal use since there was no reimbursement.

**Q: Foreign travel later in the summer to Greece, via Turkey. On department budget. Air carriers within EU may not give credit or voucher to use later. If conference is canceled does the dept budget just eat the costs?**

If any credits/vouchers can't be used for future business then correct, generally the budget would just eat the cost. Refer to attached sample notice for travelers that has more information.

**Q: If the traveler received a credit for the full airfare amount that was reimbursed, and repaid the UW for the full amount of the credit, what do we do? Leave the repayment in the budget, or reprocess the original airfare reimbursement?**

If the traveler meets our [change/cancellation of travel plans policy](#), then they are eligible for reimbursement of the original ticket so it would take some department evaluation on whether it should be reprocessed or not. If they want to use the credit for personal use, the entire ticket must be paid back in full, so in its current state it would be good on that. If the credit is being applied to future

business, then it would be best to reprocess the original airfare and then the credit gets applied to future business with no reimbursement. Also refer to our attached sample notice for more information.

**Q: Should we then ask for travelers to repay the UW for airfare credit they receive if they were already reimbursed for the airfare? If not, why wouldn't we reprocess the original reimbursement for someone that repaid the UW?**

If they meet our [change/cancellation of travel plans policy](#), they are eligible for reimbursement of the original fare. The credit just must be used for future UW business and would have no reimbursement tied to it. To use the credit for personal use, the original fare would have to be paid back in full. Refer to attached sample notice for travelers for further guidance. The department has the authority to be more strict on this but not more lenient. It just has to be clearly written into department policy and all travelers treated the same in like circumstances.

**Q: Traveler paid for ticket using his personal credit card. It covered 2 back-to-back meetings. The first part of his trip was to attend a conference and partial reimbursement would be paid off a gift account and the 2nd part of the trip was research related and part of it to be paid via federal funds. The airline would not refund ticket. How should we reimburse traveler?**

Refer to UW Post Award Fiscal Compliance's page for guidance:

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