

## FIN-04 – NMIN Travel Policy

**Effective date:** December 19, 2018<sup>1</sup>

**Review:** Annual

**Board approval:** 4 November 2020

**Board approval:** 21 October 2021

**Board approval:** 14 September 2022

**Annual Review approval pending:** October 2023

The purpose of this policy is to assist NMIN Administrative Centre Staff, administrators and other Network participants (hereafter referred to as “Business Travelers”) in their interpretation of the acceptable use of NMIN funds for travel related to the conduct of NMIN business. Expenses eligible for reimbursement must be directly related to the conduct of NMIN-specific business in relation to the realization of specific NMIN research program/project goals, or business objectives and activities. **NMIN funds must be used as effectively and economically as possible.**

It is the policy of NMIN to reimburse its Business Travelers for reasonable and necessary expenses incurred by them in the course of carrying out their NMIN-related responsibilities. Business Travelers are responsible for ensuring that claims for reimbursement are accurate, and that they conform to NMIN’s Travel Policy and, where applicable, federal funding agency rules (*i.e.*, Tri-Council Agency rules).

Business Travelers will be reimbursed for allowable expenses as outlined in this policy. **In some instances, a customized travel policy may be designed for specific events**, such as NMIN’s Annual Research Conference and trainee workshops. In such cases, the terms of the separate policy will prevail.

Reimbursement requests submitted for approval will be reviewed against this policy by the Accountant of NMIN and approved in writing by the Executive Director of NMIN or **rejected** if the expenses are not eligible or exceed eligible limits for reimbursement.

### SUBMISSION OF EXPENSES

- Paper airline tickets must be accompanied by the travel agency invoice. In the case of electronic tickets, submission of a copy of the itinerary/receipt is acceptable. The invoice or itinerary/receipt must show ticket number, breakdown of cost and form of payment. Boarding pass or electronic boarding pass must be submitted.
- Detailed receipts are required. If submitting a hotel statement or credit/debit card receipt, itemized receipts are required.
- Ineligible travel expenses itemized in this policy (pg. 4) will not be reimbursed.
- Proof of exchange rates in the form of credit card statements or foreign currency purchase are required.
- NMIN expense claims must be received by the Administrative Centre no later than 45 days following the event or other activity for which the expenses were incurred. If expense claims are received after this

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<sup>1</sup> . The *Eligibility Date* for MNIM use of funds as per the NMIN NCE Funding Agreement.

period of time has passed, the Business Traveler will be eligible for a maximum of 50% of the eligible expenses claimed.

- Signed expense reports must be **scanned and emailed** to the NMIN Administrative Centre. NMIN reserves the right to request original copies of receipts prior to provision of reimbursement.

## TRANSPORTATION EXPENSES

### Airfare and Public Travel:

- Only point-to-point travel or the equivalent will be reimbursed. NMIN will not reimburse for portions of a trip not directly associated with NMIN business.
- Airfare and all public travel including rail and bus transportation must be claimed at the lowest available fare paid (e.g. Tango or Flex category on Air Canada, economy on similar airlines, including special discount fares).
- NMIN will not reimburse the imputed cash value of any reward program or credits used to book NMIN business travel, (e.g., Air Miles, Aeroplan or other carrier points, point-of-sale, discounts, etc.). NMIN only reimburses the exact cash value paid out-of-pocket by the traveler and documented on an official vendor receipt.
- Claims for full flexible fares (e.g. Air Canada Latitude), first class and business class travel will be reimbursed at the lowest economy rate unless special circumstances warrant, and the expenditure has been pre-approved in writing by the Executive Director.
- Flights must be booked at least 14 days in advance of travel, unless sufficient prior notice was not provided by NMIN to the traveler.
- Except where pre-approved in writing by the Executive Director, NMIN does not cover airfare change and cancellation fees, or any other additional travel or accommodation costs over and above the original ticketing, booking or travel arrangement costs, unless the change is made for NMIN business reasons. Otherwise, the traveler is liable for these amounts.
- NMIN does not cover airline seat selection fees.
- NMIN will only cover the cost of baggage fees for one bag in situations where the first bag is not free; otherwise, baggage fees are not covered by NMIN.
- Flight cancellation insurance is an allowable expense.

### Car Mileage:

- Mileage when driving one's own vehicle is admissible under 200 km (400 km round trip). If flights or other transportation are not available, mileage claims exceeding 200 km (400 km round trip) may be authorized in writing by the Executive Director in advance of travel.
- Mileage will be reimbursed at \$0.57/km, covering gas and vehicle "wear and tear".
- Mileage claims must be validated with appropriate documentation, e.g., Google Map.
- Passengers may not claim a mileage allowance; the names of all passengers must be shown on the claim.
- NMIN does not assume responsibility for any damage to the traveler's automobile when used for business travel. Business Travelers should establish with their insurance agent whether it is advisable to take out supplementary business insurance for such trips.

**Car Rentals:**

- When pre-approved in writing by the Executive Director, car rentals will be reimbursed when required to attend NMIN events or meetings. Lowest available economy cars should be used.

**Taxi and Airport Limousines:**

- Taxi and dedicated Airport Limousine fares are allowable expenses. At no time should a taxi or limousine driver be asked to wait on a Business Traveler for the duration of a meeting, as car waiting fees will not be reimbursed.

**Highway Tolls:**

- Highway tolls and similar toll charges are allowable expenses, subject to the provision of related itemized invoices.

**Parking Fees:**

- Parking fees, with receipts, are allowable expenses.

**ACCOMMODATION EXPENSES**

- Accommodation costs will be reimbursed at single occupancy rates (except for HQP and NMIN HQP Network [NHN] members; see below). Such accommodations should be conveniently located in relation to the NMIN business activity. The use of luxury accommodation at Network expense is not permitted. Where luxury accommodation is used, NMIN reserves the right to cover only the amount equivalent to a single room rate at a non-luxury hotel instead of the amount claimed.
- Itemized receipts must accompany any additional charges to the hotel bill, e.g., restaurant charges.
- Charges for movies, laundry, and mini-bar items will not be reimbursed.
- Telephone calls will not be reimbursed, unless for the sole purpose of preauthorized NMIN business.
- NMIN will reimburse costs for accommodation used from no sooner than the night before the NMIN-related business activity, when the activity begins at or before 10:00 am, and for no longer than the night following the NMIN-related business activity, only when the activity ends after 6:00 pm. Exceptions to this require written pre-approval from the Executive Director.
- Private, non-commercial accommodation allowances of up to \$50.00 per day may be claimed where commercial accommodation costs were avoided for pre-approved NMIN business travel.

**MEAL EXPENSES**

- Reimbursement for meals consumed when traveling on NMIN business will be limited to the maximum rates of reimbursement detailed below, when supported by itemized receipts.
- Meals claimed on a receipt basis must **exclude** any charges for alcoholic beverages.
- When meals are provided at the NMIN business activity, no claim for meals may be made.
- For travel status of less than a full day, only meals related to travel time are eligible for reimbursement.

**Meal Reimbursement Rates:**

- The Business Traveler may claim, **with receipts**, up to a maximum of \$85/day to cover meals and gratuities. For each full day of travel status, the Business Traveler may claim:

Breakfast .....	\$25.00
Lunch.....	\$30.00
Dinner.....	\$60.00
Maximum reimbursement full day rate <b><u>with receipts</u></b>	\$115.00

- **Without receipts**, NMIN Business Travelers may claim *per diems* in the following amounts per meal:

Breakfast .....	15.00
Lunch.....	\$15.00
Dinner.....	\$20.00
Maximum reimbursement full day rate <b><u>without receipts</u></b>	\$50.00

**SUPPORT FOR NMIN HQP/NHN TRAVEL & EVENTS**

- For NMIN trainees, research staff, new professionals and NHN members, the accommodation reimbursement shall be at one-half the cost of the room (double occupancy), unless otherwise pre-approved by the Executive Director. The HQP & Events Coordinator will assist in coordinating shared accommodations.
- All trainees, research staff, new professionals and NHN members who attend NMIN-supported events understand and agree that if they should fail to fully participate in the event without prior authorization of the presiding NMIN Administrative Centre officer, the costs of all travel, accommodation and meals associated with the NMIN event will be treated as the personal responsibility of the individual traveler and their immediate supervisor.
- For non-NMIN events, all trainees, research staff, new professors and NHN members must provide proof of the event with their expense reports, e.g. event program/agenda and name tag.

**INELIGIBLE EXPENSES**

**In addition to those noted above, ineligible expenses include but are not restricted to:**

- Abstract fees and research poster preparation, printing and shipping costs
- Alcoholic beverages
- NMIN Conference registration fees
- Extra costs associated with extended stays, pre- or post-event. When stays are extended pre- or post-event, support documentation must be provided as proof that higher transportation costs were not incurred

as a result of the extended stay

- Basic services such as heat, light, water, compressed air, distilled water, vacuums, janitorial services
- Costs of commuting between one's residence and place of employment, or between two places of employment
- Costs related to education, thesis preparation, tuition and course fees
- Damages to uninsured rental cars and privately-owned vehicles
- Entertainment, hospitality and gifts (except as noted in *Exceptional Situations*)
- Fees related to changes and/or cancellations of non-refundable tickets, hotel bookings and/or other travel-related costs not pre-approved in writing by the Executive Director
- Insurance coverage for privately owned vehicles
- Insurance for buildings or equipment
- Interest charges levied on overdue invoices or credit card statements
- Lost or stolen items
- Meals included in another reimbursable item, e.g., plane, train, travel, meetings
- Membership in professional associations or societies
- Movies, laundry, and mini-bar charges
- Non-business or personal items, e.g., food, travel, supplies, etc.
- Parking fines and other traffic fines
- Passport and immigration fees
- Personal travel insurance
- Pet care
- Professional training or development
- Repairs of privately-owned vehicles
- Telephone calls, unless made for the sole purpose of preauthorized NMIN business
- Unauthorized accommodation charges
- Unnecessary/unauthorized stopovers
- Unauthorized travel charges

## EXCEPTIONAL SITUATIONS

- An expense without an itemized receipt may be reimbursed if every effort has been made to secure a detailed receipt, and a written explanation is provided and approved by an NMIN signing authority.
- If original receipts for major costs are lost, destroyed, or stolen, a written explanation of the circumstances must be provided by the Business Traveler and approved by the Executive Director before the claim can be processed.
- Where a contract exists, and a monthly bill, receipt or invoice is not issued, a credit card or bank statement may be submitted in lieu of a detailed receipt.

- With the prior written approval of the Executive Director, claims may be made for meals, gratuities and incidental expenses exceeding the approved meal reimbursement rates, provided that the claim is supported by a full explanation and a list of guests. Normally, acceptable entertaining expenses involve NMIN guests, visitors, or business partners. This type of business (entertainment) expense is limited to use by NMIN Executives and members of the Board and Research Management Committee, strictly for the purpose of conducting NMIN business. Allowable expenses may include food, beverages, and social or recreational activities.

### **International Travel:**

These provisions apply when a Business Traveler is required to attend an NMIN event outside Canada or the continental USA.

- A daily comprehensive allowance may be pre-authorized in circumstances where established allowances are determined to be impractical, unreasonable or inequitable. This must be arranged in advance of travel and approved in writing by the Executive Director.
- The standard for air travel is economy class. The lowest available airfares appropriate to itineraries should be sought and bookings should be made as far in advance as possible.
- Where available, business/executive class air travel may be pre-authorized where continuous air travel exceeds nine hours. Continuous air travel starts at the scheduled departure time and ends with the arrival at destination or with an overnight stop or layover equivalent to an overnight stop. Any exceptions to using economy class where continuous travel is less than or equal to nine hours must be pre-approved by the Executive Director, upon presentation of proper written justification.

### **APPROVAL SIGNATURES**

All travel expense claims must have the appropriate approval signatures before they are processed. The following signatures are required:

- 1st Signature: Business Traveler making the claim
- 2nd Signature: Network Administrative Centre Approval - Executive Director

**Note:** The Executive Director's expense claims must be approved by the Scientific Director and CEO, or the Board Chair or the UBC signatory authorized to approve the expenses of NMIN's Scientific Director and CEO. The Scientific Director and CEO's expense claims may be approved by either the Chair of the Board, or the Chair of The University of British Columbia's Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology or a University of British Columbia designate assigned by the Office of the VP Research.

If a circumstance arises that is not specifically covered above, the traveler and signing authority must adopt the most conservative course within the "spirit" of this policy or consult the Executive Director.