

Westminster College Student Travel Policy

Westminster College encourages undergraduate research and experiential education. By extension, Westminster College also encourages opportunities for students to travel for academic, research and engagement activities. Travel will enhance the student learning experience. This policy provides the framework for planning and executing student travel and managing the associated risks. This policy does not apply to varsity athletic team travel. For international travel, please consult with the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs for policies and procedures.

Student Travel Experiences

The following guidelines for domestic travel are for currently enrolled undergraduate or graduate students attending sponsored trips.

Domestic travel includes any student travel sponsored by a unit of the College, a registered student organization or financed by College funds that involves travel within the United States, Canada, and U.S. Territories. This includes but is not limited to travel to academic or professional development conferences or student organization sponsored trips. It does not include travel undertaken by students who may travel as individuals to athletic/recreational events as non-participants, or as individuals who travel out of town to engage in student teaching, internships, practicums, observations, or research.

Travel to Canada will require a passport. Trip participants are responsible for securing their own passport in enough time to participate. International and exchange students are responsible for knowing the terms of their travel visas and obeying all laws in locations they visit.

A **College sponsored event or activity** is one that is initiated, actively managed, planned and arranged by a member of the College's faculty or staff, or by members of a recognized student organization that has been granted sponsorship by the College, and is approved by an appropriate administrator and/or an event or activity that the College actively manages, is involved with, or oversees financially, physically, or administratively.

Recognized student organization travel must be consistent with the organization's mission statement and constitution on file with the Office of Student Affairs. Travel must be planned so as not to create an undue interference with academic responsibilities.

Transportation

Automobile: Refer to the *Westminster College Motor Pool Policy*

All drivers must be approved by the College. Procedures for approval are outlined in the *Motor Pool Policy*.

We recommend strongly that no student drive for more than four consecutive hours. If a sponsored trip or program requires greater than four consecutive hours of travel, a new, certified, and approved driver must take over driving responsibilities after each four-hour shift.

Charter bus: Trips involving large numbers of students that cannot be safely accommodated in Motor Pool or rental vans may want to consider charter.

Airline travel: Groups traveling more than 300 miles should consider flying. Airline travel must conform to the rules of the College's *Travel and Entertainment Policy*.

Expectations for Travelers

Whether on or off campus, students serve as representatives of Westminster College and their conduct should be reflective of that responsibility. The Student Code of Conduct applies to all College-sponsored activities, including off-campus travel. All faculty, staff, and students participating in College sponsored travel are bound to applicable College policy, including the guidelines established by the sponsoring department or organization, *Motor Pool Policy*, *Travel and Entertainment Policy*, and the *Handbook for Students*.

Supervision

Although not required, for reasons of safety, emergency coverage, and communication purposes, the College encourages the use of chaperones for group travel. Paid employees of the College are eligible to serve in this capacity.

Trip leader is defined as the faculty, staff, or student responsible for coordinating the trip and assuring compliance

with all related policies. The trip leader holds responsibility for submitting the **Travel & Risk Management Plan** or the **participant list**. If a chaperone is attending the trip, the chaperone will generally fill the role of trip leader. Otherwise, the president or designated student organization officer should fill this role. Additional students, faculty or staff may support the trip leader in their responsibilities. The trip leader must attend the entire trip.

Related Westminster College Travel Policies

Westminster College authors two policy and procedure documents that apply to travel for student groups and organizations: The **Motor Pool Policy** managed through the Physical Plant Office and the **Travel and Entertainment Policy**, a financial policy housed within the Business Office. These policies apply to travel involving students in addition to policies and procedures outlined in this document. Both documents can be found by contacting the Business Office.

Lodging during Escorted Travel with Students (from Faculty Handbook)

For escorted travel with students that require overnight travel, the College employee should stay in the same facilities where the students are lodging. Members of the faculty and staff may share a room if all individuals agree. Under no circumstances will College faculty, staff, or trustees share a room with a currently enrolled student, full- or part-time.

Travel and Emergency Funds

Trips being paid for, in full or in part, by College operating or restricted budgets must comply with the **Travel & Entertainment Policy**.

Trips being funded, in full or in part, by student organization budgets are encouraged to follow the terms of the **Travel & Entertainment Policy**.

In accordance with Student Government Association (SGA) policy, SGA funds may only be used to pay for transportation expenses (i.e. motor pool, charter bus, or airfare).

Student organizations should follow the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) per diem definitions found at <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104877> for lodging and meal expenses which are being covered by the organization's funds. The GSA should be the maximum amount allotted or reimbursed.

All trip participants should be aware that the College and student organization assume no responsibility for providing students with funds for personal or emergency expenses. Personal expenses include snacks, beverages, or desserts that exceed the per diem, gifts, souvenirs, hotel incidentals, etc. Students should be prepared to assume their costs of travel and lodging if there are unanticipated delays or other incidents which may require additional expenditures. Additionally, students are responsible for personal belongings.

No College funds (operating, restricted, student organization) may be used to purchase alcohol. Additionally, alcohol consumption is not encouraged by the College and should be kept to a responsible minimum.

Emergency Protocol

In the event of an emergency, complete each of the following steps:

- The **trip leader** or able participants should first contact emergency services (911) when it is safe to do so.
- **Trip participants** should contact the trip leader to report their condition and location, if the group has separated.
- The **trip leader** should contact Westminster College Public Safety (724 946-7777).
- **Public Safety** will contact Student Affairs personnel who will work with Public Safety to contact advisors, other offices, and parents as needed.

The trip leader(s) will be responsible for taking a head count of all students traveling and providing an update on all participants to Public Safety. In the event that the trip leader is unable to perform these duties, one or more participants should be identified to do so. In addition to a head count, the trip leader should gather information on the condition of all participants as best as they are able (injuries, location, treatments of injuries or hospitalization). HIPAA may prevent the trip leader from gaining access to this information.

In the event of a family emergency, the College will attempt to contact participant(s) via their cell phone. If a family

emergency occurs when the College is not ordinarily in session and/or offices are closed for the day, family members attempting to reach participants should contact Westminster College Public Safety at 724-946-7777.

Required Documents for Student Travel

Risk is inherent in any travel, regardless of location and mode of transportation. As such, it is imperative that student groups and organizations have a plan in place should an emergency occur.

A ***Travel & Risk Management Plan*** should be submitted by the trip leader(s) one week prior to departure from campus. This is required of groups traveling more than 300 miles or staying overnight at their destination. The plan should be submitted to the Associate Dean of Student Affairs (vancegm@westminster.edu) who will share it with the organization advisor and Public Safety Office. A copy of the plan should be held by the trip leader(s) during the trip as it will contain contact information for campus officials who will be needed in the event of an emergency. Participants are advised to carry identification, emergency contact information, and health insurance information.

Academic Affairs will hold records for academic conferences and travel courses which will include the ***Travel & Risk Management Plan***.

A **Participant List** should be submitted by trip leader(s) when the group is traveling fewer than 300 miles or not staying overnight. Participant lists should be submitted to the Public Safety Office.

Travel Waiver and Emergency forms are required of participants for overnight trips or day trips that are inherently dangerous. These forms are available on My Westminster>>Community>>Campus Groups>>Student Affairs>>Student Activities.