

## FAQs RELATED TO FEBRUARY 2024 PER DIEM CHANGE

- **What has changed?**
  - Effective February 6, 2024, the lodging and per diem amounts for meals will follow the rates set by the federal [U.S. General Services Administration](#) (GSA) instead of rates set by the State of Illinois. These rates are specific to the geographic area to which you are traveling and are typically higher than the rates allowed by the State of Illinois in the past.
  - SIU will still be based on the Quarter System for computing the allowance for days or fractions thereof ([Administrative Code Section 3000.500](#)). (This means that the 75% on first and last day of travel listed on the GSA Charts does not apply to SIU travelers.) Each quarter shall be 6 hours commencing at midnight, 6:00 am, noon, and 6:00 pm.) The traveler shall be allowed one fourth of the allowance for each period of 6 hours of fraction thereof. In order to calculate the quarterly rate, take the M&IE (Meals and Incidental Expense) total for your location and divide by 4. Be sure to include departure and arrival times in the itinerary section of the Travel Expense Voucher so that we can verify per diem calculations.
  - Nothing has changed with the travel voucher process itself except that traveler must attach a copy of the GSA per diem rates for the location(s) to which he or she is travelling to the Travel Expense Voucher.
  - If the lodging rate (before taxes) exceeds the GSA lodging rate, the traveler must complete a [Lodging Exception Request](#) and attach it to the Travel Expense Voucher.
    - These “exceptions” are reported quarterly to the Higher Education Travel Control Board (HETCB) for review.
    - If the HETCB has additional questions regarding the exception, the traveler will be contacted.
    - The traveler will not be asked to repay the overage unless the HETCB denies the exception request.
  
- **Do I have to pay the difference if my hotel costs more than the federal per diem?**
  - The traveler will not be asked to repay the overage unless the HETCB denies the exception request.
  
- **What are Incidentals?**
  - Incidental expenses include (but are not limited to) fees and tips given to porters, baggage carriers, hotel staff, and staff on ships.
  - The federal GSA meals and incidentals rate includes \$5 for incidentals per whole day. We do NOT need to know how this is used and no receipts are required for incidentals.
  - A traveler is entitled to the incidental portion of meals and incidentals even if all meals are provided.
  
- **If meals are provided, how much do I deduct from the per diem?**
  - Breakfast includes a hot meal only. A continental breakfast does not need to be deducted.

- See the [GSA Meals & Incidental Breakdown](#) shown below. Locate the daily meals and incidentals rate in the left column and deduct the corresponding meal(s) which were provided.

**M&IE Breakdown**

M&IE Total <sup>1</sup>	Continental Breakfast/ Breakfast <sup>2</sup>	Lunch <sup>2</sup>	Dinner <sup>2</sup>	Incidental Expenses	First & Last Day of Travel <sup>3</sup>
\$59	\$13	\$15	\$26	\$5	\$44.25
\$64	\$14	\$16	\$29	\$5	\$48.00
\$69	\$16	\$17	\$31	\$5	\$51.75
\$74	\$17	\$18	\$34	\$5	\$55.50
\$79	\$18	\$20	\$36	\$5	\$59.25

- **What if someone takes two days to travel back?**
  - Traveler will receive a full day of per diem for the first night of the return trip. Per diem rates will be based on the location where the traveler spends the night. Per diem amounts for the date of return to Headquarters will be adjusted by the time (quarter) at which the traveler returns.
- **Did meals and lodging for international travel change?**
  - No changes were made to international travel.
- **Does time of departure or arrival affect per diem?**
  - Yes. While we are adopting the federal GSA per diem rates, SIU will still calculate per diem based on the Quarter System outlined in the [Administrative Code Section 3000.500](#).
- **Are taxes and tips included in the Meals and Incidental expense rate?**
  - Yes, the meals and Incidental expense rate does include taxes and tips in the rate, so travelers will not be reimbursed separately for those items.
- **How do I determine the meal allowance for a day trip that is less than 18 hours and does not include an overnight stay?**
  - According to the [Administrative Code Section 3000.510](#), rates for breakfast and dinner will be the same as the GSA per diem rates for the location to which the individual traveled.
  - Breakfast is payable when an employee is on travel status and leaves headquarters or residence (if reporting directly to the destination) at or before 6:00 am.
  - Lunch is not a reimbursable expense.
  - Dinner is payable when an employee is on travel status and arrives back at headquarters or residence (if reporting directly from destination) at or after 7:00 pm. For employees commencing travel after close of business but before 6:30 pm, dinner reimbursement is allowed if the traveler would not be eligible for per diem.
- **What if the hotel refuses to honor the federal per diem rate?**

- Hotels are not required to honor the federal per diem rate. It is each property's business decision whether or not to offer the rate. If the rate they offer is higher than the lodging per diem allowed by the GSA rate schedule, the traveler must submit a [Lodging Exception Request](#) and attach it to the Travel Expense Voucher.
- The same applies if the hotel offers a "GOV" rate that is higher than the federal per diem rate. It is the traveler's responsibility to know the federal per diem reimbursement rates and should not assume a GOV rate is the same as the federal per diem rate.
- **What if I have multiple destinations?**
  - We will use the location where the traveler spends the night to determine which per diem rate to use.