

## SMU Tax Policies

**Subject:** Travel Reimbursement – Spousal Travel

**Effective Date:** 10/01/08

**Revision Date:** 08/23/17

**Tax Policy:** 3.5

---

When a spouse accompanies an employee on a business trip, expenses attributable to the spouse's travel will not be reimbursed unless the travel has been approved by the President or the President's designee. A [Request for Approval for Spousal Travel](#) form should be prepared and submitted for approval. The Spousal Travel form for the President should be reviewed by Legal Affairs.

Spousal travel expenses approved for reimbursement are taxable to the employee unless the spouse's presence on the trip has a bona fide business purpose. A spouse's presence primarily for social purposes does not establish a bona fide business purpose.

Documentation submitted for travel in which spousal expenses are reimbursed must include the approved Request for Approval for Spousal Travel form before any reimbursement will be processed. The Tax Department will review the information provided on the form to determine if there is a reportable benefit for the spousal travel expenses. If there is a taxable amount, the amount will be reported as taxable income on the employee's next paycheck, subject to FICA and federal withholding taxes. The employee will be notified by email prior to reporting the taxable income.

(See [University Policy 3.7 Travel and Entertainment Management](#) for additional procedures to follow when traveling on University business.)