**FAQ’s for using Trip Optimizer or requesting Mileage Reimbursements**

***Q - When do I need to use the Trip Optimizer?***

A - Anytime you are using ground transportation for business travel you will need to use the trip optimizer to determine the most cost effective form of travel.

***Q – I am only driving a short distance, is there a minimum number of miles required for completing the Trip Optimizer?***

A - Yes, if there are less than 115 miles in the total trip, the Trip Optimizer is not required.

**Q -** ***If the Trip Optimizer indicates reimbursement is less than a rental, can I still use a rental car?***

A. Yes, employees may utilize a rental car vs driving their personal car for business purposes.

***Q - Is a copy of the Trip Optimizer report required to be submitted as documentation when a rental car is being utilized?***

A - No. If a rental car is used, the Trip Optimizer report is not needed.

***Q - If the Trip Optimizer indicates a rental car costs less than the reimbursement rate for a personal vehicle, can I still drive a personal vehicle and be reimbursed?***

A - Yes, however the rate of reimbursement will be equal to the cost of a rental car.

***Q - Is there a requirement to document the reason for driving a personal vehicle when seeking reimbursement?***

A - The Trip Optimizer report should always be attached to expense account reimbursements. If the cost of a rental vehicle was the lower costs, expense reimbursements for personal mileage should include a statement explaining why a personal vehicle was selected.

***Q - What information should be input into the Trip Optimizer form?***

**Purpose of Trip:** Brief description of trip.

**Travel Begin Date:** Date you leave.

**Travel End Date:** Date you will return.

**Number of Occupants:** If you are traveling with other University employees or guests.

**Vehicle Class:** The default is Intermediate/Standard size vehicle. If you require a different size vehicle, select from the drop-down list.

**Starting Address:** The system uses Google maps. Enter the street address for the starting point of your trip.

**Waypoint(s):** If you have multiple destinations during your trip, you can enter those.

**Ending Address (if one way):** Enter the street address for your destination.

**Additional Miles (if needed):** If you have any additional miles once you reach your destination.

***Q – I’ve input all of my information, now what do I do?***

Once all required fields are completed, select the CALCULATE RENTAL button. The results will indicate if a Rental or Reimbursement is most cost effective.

If a car rental is more cost effective, a BOOK NOW button will appear which will direct you to the Enterprise Car Rental website.

If mileage reimbursement is more effective, select the GENERATE REPORT button. A report will be sent to your email, along with a printable PDF. The PDF must be submitted with your T&E voucher.

***Q - How do I calculate other travel expenses, such as one-way drop fees, airport parking, etc?***

A - All expenses should be considered when making a decision on the most cost effective method of travel.

***Q - How should an expense report be adjusted when requesting reimbursement for personal mileage when the cost of a rental is the lower cost option?***

A - The employee or their delegate would enter the miles driven with their personal vehicle on the expense reimbursement using the University’s mileage rate. Then a second line would be added to the expense report using a new expense type created for the Trip Optimizer which is a negative amount used to reduce the total costs being requested for reimbursement.

***Q – What if you do not know the mileage of the local trips you will need to take once you get to your destination?***  Example:  Driving from Columbia to Ohio is x number of miles; but once in Ohio, the local miles to drive from the hotel to the various study sites each day or to a restaurant, etc. will not be known until after the trip.

A – If possible, estimate the # of local miles you think it might be; then enter notes on the ER explaining that the info entered on the Trip Optimizer was just an estimate and the actual local miles are included on the ER.

***Q – I do not have a One Card, how do I rent a vehicle from Enterprise?***

A - If you do not have a One Card, you may have someone (Travel Arranger) with a One Card create a billing account and make reservations on your behalf. You can find more information on the rental process on the [Enterprise rental website](https://www.umsystem.edu/ums/fa/procurement/carrental).