

Title

Travel Policy

Sec. 1 Purpose

To establish cost-effective business travel practices and ensure appropriate use of funds.

Sec. 2 Principles

- a) Employees must:
 - 1) use discretion when making travel arrangements to ensure conservation of U.T. System Administration resources;
 - 2) follow Texas state law and U.T. System Administration rules governing employee travel.
- b) Department heads may adopt additional guidelines, including expense and reimbursement rates lower than those referenced herein, but must notify employees in writing prior to adoption.

Sec. 3 Travel Authorization and Responsibilities

Travel Authorization and Notice. Prior written approval is required for out-of-state travel and foreign travel. Additionally, prior notice is required for business travel to Washington, D.C.

- a) Out-of-State and Foreign Travel. The traveler must obtain prior approval from his or her immediate supervisor and from the appropriate Department Head by submitting a completed Travel Approval Form found [here](#). The traveler must retain the signed original approval form and submit it as part of the reimbursement request.

- b) Travel to Washington, D.C. Prior to travel, when a trip involves obtaining or spending federal funds or impacting federal policies, U. T. System Administration personnel must also inform the Texas Office of State-Federal Relations (OSFR) regarding the timing of the trip, the purpose of the trip, and the name of a contact person for additional information. The form can be found on and submitted via the [OSFR](#) website. Additionally, U. T. System Administration personnel must notify the U. T. System Vice Chancellor for Federal Relations prior to all travel to Washington, D.C.

Sec. 4 Travel Expenses - General Provisions

4.1 Conservation of Funds. An employee's travel must be planned and conducted to achieve maximum economy and efficiency considering all relevant circumstances while complying with the guidelines set forth in this travel policy. Travel expenses must be reasonable, appropriately documented, properly authorized, and submitted to Accounting Services (AS) for reimbursement within 60 days of travel completion.

4.2 U. T. System Administration Business. The documented purpose of the travel must be for U. T. System Administration business.

4.3 Approved Travelers. The following people may be approved travelers:

- a) Employees traveling for approved U. T. System Administration business;
- b) Guests and/or consultants traveling for approved U. T. System Administration business;
- c) Attendant Care for Employees with Disabilities. Employees with disabilities may be reimbursed for attendant care travel expenses;
- d) Spouses of Employees. When designated by the Chancellor as a "special assistant" or "Associate to the Chief Administrative Officer" in accordance with UTS120, *Spousal Travel Policy*, and
- e) Prospective Employees. When a prospective employee is requested to travel for an employment interview, the individual may be reimbursed for travel expenses in the same manner as a U. T. System Administration employee. Prospective employees are not exempt from hotel occupancy taxes and may be reimbursed for those taxes.

4.4 Receipts.

- a) Original receipts are required for most travel expenses. However, itemized receipts are not required for meals when the actual expense incurred does not exceed the locality based maximum rates approved by the [Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts](#) and published by the [U.S. General Services Administration](#) or for parking, parking meters, or public transportation costs within a city when the costs are equal to or less than \$25.
- b) Lodging receipts are always required. Lodging receipts must show the name and address of the commercial lodging establishment, the name of the employee, a daily itemization of the lodging charges, and proof of payment. All rates must be at the single room rate.
- c) If an original receipt is not available, a written explanation is required. The authorized signer must indicate approval by signing the explanation. Receipts should be in the name of the traveler and match the dates claimed on the reimbursement request.

4.5 Foreign, Canada and Mexico Travel Expenses. Travel expenses must be converted to U.S. dollars (www.oanda.com). The reimbursement request must specify the exchange rate used.

4.6 Rewards Programs. Customary rewards such as frequent flier miles or hotel rewards may be retained by the employee. Rewards programs may not influence travel decisions.

Sec. 5 Transportation

5.1 Travel by Automobile.

- a) Personal Vehicle.
 - 1) In accordance with State Law, each State agency must determine a tool for benchmarking mileage reimbursement. U. T. System Administration has chosen MapQuest (www.mapquest.com).

- 2) Mileage Reimbursement. An employee may be reimbursed for mileage when using their personal vehicle for a business purpose for more than a nominal amount. The traveler's department head is authorized to determine what constitutes a nominal amount.
- 3) To and From the Airport. An employee may be reimbursed for mileage to and from the airport from either the traveler's residence or the traveler's place of employment, regardless of the time of day travel occurs. Additionally, an employee may be reimbursed for the mileage incurred by another person transporting the employee to the airport. The reimbursement may not exceed the reimbursement that would have been paid if the employee had parked at the airport or near-by facility.
- 4) Mileage Reimbursement Limitations.
 - i) Reimbursement requests must include one of the following: 1) completion of the to/from fields in the transportation section of the Accounting Services Travel worksheet using the full physical addresses of the origin and destination based on MapQuest mileage, 2) an employee's vehicle odometer readings with specific point-to-point detail, or 3) a printout from MapQuest showing the point-to-point itemization.
 - ii) Tolls and parking expenses are reimbursable.
 - iii) Reimbursement is not provided for travel expenses between a personal residence and the place of employment.
- b) Rented Vehicles.
 - 1) Only actual rental cost may be reimbursed. This includes Texas and other state sales tax, gasoline, parking fees and toll charges.
 - 2) Mandatory Use of U. T. System Administration Contracts. Employees must secure car rentals through System Administration contract vendors to ensure that rental rates include insurance coverage. If all System Administration contract vendors are unable to provide the car type needed for the location and dates required for travel, alternate services may be secured. Collision/loss damage waiver is a reimbursable expense only when a rental car agency that is not a System Administration contract vendor is used. Applicable documentation must be provided with the reimbursement expense.

- 3) **Business and Personal Use.** When an employee uses a rental vehicle for both personal reasons and U. T. System Administration business, only the portion attributable to U. T. System Administration business may be reimbursed.
- 4) **Additional Charges.** Charges for liability insurance supplements, personal accident insurance, roadside assistance fees, personal effects insurance, GPS, frequent flyer credit and satellite radio options are not reimbursable. Non-business essential charges and services may not be reimbursed.
- c) **Coordination of Transportation.** When two or more employees are traveling to the same destination, the employees are required to coordinate their travel to reduce overall costs of travel unless coordination is not feasible for business reasons. When coordination is determined to be not feasible, it must be documented and attached to each person's reimbursement request.

5.2 Travel by Commercial Airline

- a) The cost of commercial air transportation may not exceed the cost of the U.T. System Administration or State-contracted airfare, if available. If not available, then the lowest available fully refundable coach airfare.
- b) **Mandatory Use of Contracted Airfare, Travel Agencies and Online Booking Tools.** Travelers must use U. T. System Administration or State-contracted airfares, System Administration travel agencies, and online booking tools, unless one of the following exceptions applies. When one of these exceptions is used, it must be documented. Exceptions are as follows:
 - 1) Lower total cost to U. T. System Administration;
 - 2) Unavailability of contract travel services;
 - 3) Special needs (related to health, safety, or disability);
 - 4) The traveler is in the course of travel and changes in scheduling render the contract service provider unavailable or its use is impractical;
 - 5) Emergency response; or

- 6) Legally required attendance- the traveler is required by court or other legal entity to appear at a particular time/place without sufficient notice to use contracted service provider.
- c) Nonbusiness Travel. Contract airfares may not be used for leisure, personal, or nonbusiness travel.
- d) Non-employees. U. T. System Administration contract airfares are available for use when non-employees travel on behalf of U. T. System Administration and when travel is paid by U. T. System Administration. However, state-contracted airfares are not available to independent contractors or consultants working for U. T. System Administration.
- e) First Class Airfare and Upgrades. With advance approval by a Department Head, first class airfare may be reimbursed, without limitation as to the source of funds, if it is the only available airfare or if it is required due to medical or physical limitations as documented by an attending physician.
- f) U.T. System Administration reimbursement for upgrades, including the use of Southwest Airlines Business Select, are limited to Executive Officers and Regents. Executive Officers and Regents may elect to upgrade the class of airfare if there is a documented business reason and institutional funds are used. State funds may not be utilized for the cost of such upgrades. An authorized signer must provide advance approval and documentation of the business reason; documentation must be submitted as support for the payment of the upgrade.
- g) Frequent Flyer Miles/Flight Credits. U. T. System Administration may not reimburse for tickets purchased with frequent flyer miles or personal flight/travel credits.
- h) Baggage. One checked bag fee is reimbursable. Additional fees are reimbursable only if supplemental baggage is required to transport state owned equipment or materials (receipts and documentation are required).

5.3 Chartered Aircraft. The use of charter aircraft requires advance coordination with U. T. System Administration Travel Services and contract review by the Office of General Counsel and appropriate Executive Officer. In addition, advance approval for any charter flight paid with state funds must be obtained from the Texas Department of Transportation. With applicable approval, an employee may charter an aircraft if the U. T. System Administration or State-owned aircraft is not available or if the charter would reduce the cost of transportation.

5.4 Travel by Mass Transit, Taxi, Ride Sharing, or Limousine. Cost efficient use of bus, rail, taxi, and ride sharing (such as Uber and Lyft) is permitted and reimbursable. The cost of limousine transportation may be reimbursed only if it is the lowest cost transportation available.

Sec. 6 Meals and Lodging

6.1 General.

- a) Same-Day Travel. When the entire trip begins and ends in the same calendar day, reimbursement for meals is not allowed.
- b) Texas State Occupancy Tax. Employees of U. T. System Administration are exempt from the Texas State Occupancy Tax when traveling on U. T. System Administration business in Texas. A traveler must present the lodging establishment with a completed tax exemption form upon check-in.
- c) Non-reimbursable Expenses. An employee may not be reimbursed for meals or lodging expenses incurred within the city of the employee's designated headquarters unless expenses are mandatory and connected with training, a seminar, or a conference, and a statement is added to the reimbursement request stating such.

6.2 Meals and Lodging.

- a) Lodging and Accommodations: Employees may stay at the hotel of their choice; however, the costs must comply with the applicable System Administration or State of Texas limits and requirements.
- b) Reimbursement for meals and lodging is based on actual expenses.

- c) Travel Within the Continental United States Utilizing State Funds or Institutional Funds:
 - 1) If the locality based rate for meals or lodging is exceeded, written justification is required.
 - 2) If approved, actual meal expenses exceeding the locality based rate will be paid with institutional funds using itemized receipts for all meals incurred on that day.
- d) Travel Outside the Continental United States Utilizing State or Institutional Funds. For travel to a U. S. Possession, Alaska, Hawaii, Canada, Mexico, or foreign country itemized receipts are always required.
 - 1) Mexico and Canada are considered domestic travel.

Sec. 7 Other Expenses

7.1 Parking.

- a) Airport Parking. Employees based in Austin may park in the lot or garage of their choice at or near Austin-Bergstrom International Airport for business-related travel and reasonable parking expenses will be reimbursed.
- b) Valet Parking. Itemized charges for valet parking may be reimbursed if the traveler is staying at the lodging establishment or attending a conference at the establishment; otherwise, the expense is considered personal and is non-reimbursable.
- c) Other. Other parking fees incurred away from the place of employment while transacting U. T. System Administration business may be reimbursed and must be listed separately on the reimbursement request.

7.2 Cancellation or Ticket Change Fees. A cancellation or change fee is reimbursable only if the charge is incurred for a business related reason, personal emergency, illness, adverse weather conditions, or a natural disaster and is approved by the appropriate Department Head.

7.3 Free or Discounted Travel. An employee may not be reimbursed for travel if no expense has been incurred. Receiving free transportation or lodging in exchange for mileage or points does not constitute an expense. If money is paid directly to obtain a discount, then reimbursement is limited to the lesser of the cost of obtaining the discount, the amount of the discount, or the maximum reimbursement allowed for that type of travel expense.

7.4 Tips and Gratuities

- a) Institutional Funds. Tips and gratuities paid with institutional funds must not exceed generally accepted standards.
- b) State Funds. Gratuities may not be reimbursed when using State funds.

Sec. 8 Other Exceptions

Exceptions to this travel policy may be approved when necessary to meet special circumstances or when in the best interest of U. T. System Administration. Requests for exceptions must be documented, explained by the traveler, and approved in advance by the supervising Vice Chancellor or Executive Vice Chancellor. Exceptions may also be subject to review by the Controller and Chief Budget Officer.

Resources

UT System [Travel Services](#)
State Comptroller's Travel Guide ([TexTravel](#))
[Texas Hotel Occupancy Tax Exemption Certificate](#)
[UTS157 - Automobile Insurance Coverage for Officers and Employees and General Requirements for the Use of Vehicles](#)
UT System [Travel Approval Form](#)
UT System Accounting Services [Travel Reimbursement Checklist](#)
UT System Accounting Services [Travel Worksheet – State Funds / Local Funds](#)
UT System Accounting Services [Travel Expense Report Form](#)
Contract airfare information can be found at: www.utsystem.edu/travel/air_travel.htm.

Applicable Law and Regulation

[Texas Administrative Code](#)
[Texas Government Code, Chapter 660](#)
[The General Appropriations Act](#)
UT System Board of Regents' *Rules and Regulations* [20801](#) and [20601](#)
[Internal Revenue Code, Publication 463](#)

Responsible System Administration Office

[Office of the Controller](#)

Contact Information

Questions or comments should be directed to the [Office of the Controller](#)

Dates Approved, Amended, or Reviewed

December 1, 2004

July 18, 2010

September 13, 2012

April 10, 2013

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