Travel Discussion Panel

June 24, 2010

Travel Overview
Current Issues
Travel Resources
Questions & Answers
TRAVELER OVERVIEW

What do UT business travelers need to know?
Traveler Overview 1

• UT business travel must be authorized BEFORE the trip.

• A Request for Travel Authorization (RTA) is required for faculty, staff, students, prospective employees, and nonemployees (who have no additional fees or honorariums).

• An Authorization for Individual Services (AIS) is required for nonemployees who will also be paid a fee or honorarium.
• Additional authorizations may be required for international travel.
  • Source of Funding
  • Restricted Regions
• Travelers should register with the International SOS (ISOS).
• They should also carry an ISOS Emergency Contact card while they travel.
Traveler Overview 3

• UT business travelers should use **contracted** vendors for airfares, rental car and hotels when possible.

• UT business travelers are **reimbursed** for the costs they cover after the trip.

• They will have **cost limits** for some expenses depending types of expenses and the accounts to reimburse them.

• They must often provide **receipts**.
• *Faculty Travel Grants* are available to assist tenured & tenure-track faculty to present their original research or creative effort at an appropriate organized conference or professional meeting. Senior lecturers with at least 5 years service at UT Austin are also eligible.

• Applications must reach the Faculty Travel Grant office *at least two weeks prior to the date of travel* for processing and approvals.
Credit cards are available for faculty, staff and departments.

- **Diner’s Club** - an individual liability card designed for employees traveling on university business.
- **JP Morgan Chase Hotel Conference Card** – designed for departmental use.
- **JP Morgan Chase Student Group Travel Card** – for departments that escort student groups on official business.

Travel cash advances may sometimes be requested for employees by their departments.
Traveler Overview 6

- Travelers should make their travel plans through their department, if possible.
- The department will provide the expertise necessary to authorize their business travel.
- It is recommended that departments make the travel reservations with contracted travel vendors and will inform the travelers of their cost limits and any receipt requirements.
• When the traveler has completed their trip, they should inform their department as soon as possible.

• They should inform their department of any changes to their trip.

• They should provide receipts with explanations if necessary.
  • NOTE: Some receipts such as online hotel bookings services might not be allowed.

• The department will then process the travel reimbursement.
DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

What do UT departments need to know?
Department Overview A

- When the UT business traveler informs their department of their intention to travel, the department will prepare a Request for Travel Authorization (RTA).
  - VE5 in *DEFINE
  - VE6 in *DEFINE - for changes in original plans
- If the traveler is NOT a UT employee AND will also be charging a fee or honorarium for their services, an Authorization for Individual Services is prepared instead (PBS or APS form).
• Faculty Travel Grant (FTG) support must be authorized before the trip and the FTG account on the RTA.

• If the travel is outside the USA, “International SOS” services are recommended.

• International Oversight Committee (IOC) approval is required for restricted travel regions.

• Travel outside the USA using State Funds, requires permission from the department’s Dean or Vice President.
Department Overview C

- Once the RTA has been approved, centrally billed travel reservations may be made by the department.
  - **Airfare** = *Contracted travel agencies must be used.*
  - **Rental Car** = *Request through TMS or establish between department and rental car company.*
- Centrally billed means that travel is charged directly to UT and the travelers don’t pay the cost.
• Contracted travel agencies are recommended for reservations.

• Quicktrip online is an option.

• Travel Credit Cards are available.

• Be sure to inform travelers of travel cost limits, travel record and receipt requirements and disallowed travel expenses.
• Travelers should provide a record and receipts of their trip as soon as they return.

• Personal car mileages by odometer readings or Mapquest point-to-point.

• Foreign currency exchange rates can be calculated online after the trip.

• Travel reimbursements should be processed within 60 days of travel end date.
• Where’s My Traveler can retrieve authorized RTA numbers, etc.

• Create a VP5 document in *DEFINE to process travel reimbursement; an approved RTA number is required.

• Reimbursements on state funds AND local funds must be processed on separate documents.

• Receipts and supporting documents should then be sent with VP5 print to the Office of Accounting for review. (Departments should keep copies).
Department Overview G

• Charges for centrally billed airfare will be received on VPT documents.

• Charges for centrally billed rental car requested through the Travel Management Services on-line form will appear on a VP6 document.

• Departments will then use their records to review and approve these charges.
CURRENT ISSUES
Current Issues

• Beginning November 2009, the VE5 and VE6 Request for Travel Authorization (RTA) documents have a Section 5 to identify UT employees and students traveling with university students to foreign destinations (including Mexico, Canada, or one of the U.S. territories).

• This enhancement improves our ability to find and assist travelers when international incidents occur, such as disease outbreaks, terrorism, political unrest, floods, or other natural disasters.
Current Issues

Countries under U.S. State Department Travel Warnings and UT areas of concern are restricted regions for UT students, faculty and staff.

These regions now have special travel approval procedures:

http://world.utexas.edu/risk/
Current Issues

The Faculty Travel Grant has a special account number. Departments are unable to view the ticket charges for their faculty because they do not have access to this account.

Contact Maggie Keeshen at 232-3608 or mkeeshen@austin.utexas.edu
Current Issues

VP5 travel reimbursement vouchers should be processed within 60 days of the authorized travel end date.

Travel encumbrances are automatically disencumbered after that.

Vouchers processed close to this deadline often have disencumbrances which are invalidated by this automatic process.

*Best solution* . . . Process documents sooner!
Current Issues

Common VP5 Problems

- Incorrect Locale Codes (Sections 1 & 3)
- Not separating taxes from lodging (Sections 2 & 3)
- Including state sales tax with Texas hotel expenses (Section 2)
- Exceeding meals and/or lodging limits (Section 2)
- Expenses claimed by someone else
- State & local funds on the same VP5
Current Issues

Common VP5 Problems

- Putting expenses in the wrong section *(Sections 1 & 3)*

- Not separating tips from meals & taxis *(Sections 1, 2, & 3)*

- Omitting the traveler’s signature on the cover sheet when the traveler is a UT employee or prospective employee

- Leasing an apartment or house from an individual rather than a commercial lodging establishment
Travel Resources

- Online Help (in *DEFINE)
  - PF6 – per screen
  - PF10 – glossary articles
  - “?” – per field
- Online Help (on the web)
  - Handbook of Business Procedures
  - Frequently Asked Questions
  - Videos, Slideshows, Handouts
Travel Management Services

http://www.utexas.edu/travel/faqs.php
Travel Management Services

https://utlists.utexas.edu/sympa/subscribe/travel-updates

Travel Update Email List!
Travel Services

http://www.utexas.edu/business/accounting/tr/

Travel Services

Reimbursement is provided for UT employees, prospective employees, and UT students for expenses incurred in traveling on official University business. The Travel office processes reimbursement forms and provides information on procedures.

Spotlight:
- RTA Auto Encumbrance
- VE5 / VE6 Travel Audits
- Where’s My Traveler?

UT Austin Travel Policy
Travel policies are available in the Handbook of Business Procedures, Part 11: http://www.utexas.edu/business/accounting/hbp/11_trav/index.html

Travel Management Services
For additional travel information, please see Travel Management Services.

Foreign Currency Exchange Rates
Current foreign currency exchange rates are provided on the Web by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. If this link is not working at a particular time, try again later.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Contact Travel Services
For help, see the askUS knowledge base.
Faculty Travel Grant Program

2009-2010 Faculty Travel Grant Application (pdf)

- Maximum Limit of $1200/academic year
- Can be used for all allowable travel expenses (see below)

General Information

Eligible faculty will be guaranteed up to $1200 per academic year for travel expenses to present original papers at scholarly and professional meetings. This includes reimbursement for all allowable travel related expenses (such as lodging, meals, transportation and registration, which are non-taxable reimbursements), and can also be used to cover extra childcare expenses incurred because of the travel (a taxable reimbursement). An approved “Request for Travel Authorization” or RTA must be on file prior to making the travel. These funds may be used for foreign or domestic travel.
https://austin-utexas.custhelp.com/

Other Suggested Searches:
- non-employee travel
- disencumber travel
- US
- foreign travelers
- affiliates
- AR codes
- travel reimbursement

42 Answers Available

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Travel Resources

SLIDESHOWS:

Travel Rules and Regulations

Travel Authorizations (VE5)

Travel Authorization Corrections (VE6)

Travel Reimbursements (VP5)
Travel Resources

ONLINE VIDEOS

http://links.utexas.edu/tssfyi
VE5 – Electronic Travel Authorizations
VE6 – Travel Authorization Corrections
VP5 – Electronic Travel Vouchers
Regenerating Transactions

COMMAND HANDOUT (VE5, VE6, VP5):
Travel Resources

✓ Travel Management Services
471-6641
tms@austin.utexas.edu

✓ Travel Services Desk
471-7821
oa.travel@austin.utexas.edu

✓ Faculty Travel Grants
232-3608
mkeeshen@mail.utexas.edu

✓ Office of Accounting Helpline
471-8802
askUS@austin.utexas.edu

✓ askUS
https://austin-utexas.custhelp.com/
QUESTIONS and ANSWERS
Q: How can a traveler pay for a rental car?

A: There are 3 ways:

1) Pay by individual credit card and seek reimbursement upon return.

2) Centrally bill car rental after reservation has been made using AVIS or Enterprise corporate ID number via TMS online Rental Car Central Billing Request form.

3) If your department establishes a direct billing account with State of Texas rental car vendors, use their direct billing account number. The department will be billed and will pay the rental car company.

Contact TMS for assistance at tms@austin.utexas.edu
Q: What if the traveler’s RTA (VE5) is not final approved and we need to have a ticket issued to secure the airfare (or rail fare)?

A: The Office of Internal Audits has given Travel Management Services the authority to authorize the travel agency to issue air or rail tickets prior to final RTA approval.

The department must contact Travel Management Services at 471-6641 to request this.
Q: What travel costs may be centrally billed through the UT travel agencies?

A: Only airfare or rail fare may be centrally billed through the contracted travel agencies.

Q: Which are the contracted travel agencies?

A: UT Austin currently has 4 travel agencies:

- Anthony Travel
- Carlson Wagonlit Travel
- Corporate Travel Planners
- Alamo Travel
Q: Where do I look or whom do I contact for estimates so I can complete the VE5: a) air travel b) car rental or taxi and c) lodging?

A: Here are some options:

You can use QuickTrip (the UT online booking tool): http://www.utexas.edu/travel/quicktrip/

You can call or email one of our contracted agencies: http://www.utexas.edu/travel/agency_contacts.php

See the State of Texas Travel Management Programs: http://www.window.state.tx.us/procurement/prog/stmp/
Q: What is the International Oversight Committee (IOC)?

A: The IOC is made up of campus representatives that meet to review international health and safety issues.

In May 2010, the Chancellor charged the IOC with reviewing and approving travel to countries under U.S. State Department Travel Warnings and UT areas of concern.

http://world.utexas.edu/risk/ioc
Q: How can my staff view information on “Where’s My Traveler”?  

A: People can view information on “Where’s My Traveler” if their desk & view is authorized for GT1. They are limited to the accounts in their view.

Travel information about Deans and upper level administrators is restricted to Accounts Payable and the Office of Accounting helpline staff.

There is a link to “Where’s My Traveler” on the Travel Services page and in askUS.
Q: Will there be an increase of the daily allowance for local accounts? In this department, curators and our museum director attend meetings and travel to medium to high-ended establishments due to the nature of the business and therefore it's difficult to maintain limits.

A: There are no current plans to increase the local account limit of $41 for reimbursing actual meal costs without receipts, however there is a policy which allows a reimbursement for travel meals of more than $41 for any day when all receipts for that day are provided along with a business reason for the higher reimbursement amount.
Questions & Answers

Q: Are employee signatures required for the cover sheets? I've heard that they are not but we have been getting signatures this whole time. If we don't need them, we could cut down on the time it takes the employee to be reimbursed.

A: The University of Texas at Austin employees, student employees, and prospective employees must sign the VP5 printouts that are sent to the Office of Accounting.

Fax copies of signatures may also be received. Nonemployees and non-employed students do not have to sign VP5s.
Questions & Answers

Q: I don't have a good understanding of the time to report on time sheets when traveling. So, this is a question.

A: Any time spent actually working may be counted as work time for non-exempt employees. If a non-exempt employee travels during their shift time, regardless of the day of the week, they may count it as work time.

However . . .
More Answers

• If a non-exempt employee travels outside of their regular shift time, they cannot count it as work time, unless they are driving. The passenger may not claim time outside of their regular shift for the time spent as a passenger.

• If a non-exempt employee attends non-required “after hour” or social events at a conference they may not count that time as work time.

• For more information, please contact:

  Employee and Management Services:
  hrs-ems@austin.utexas.edu
  512-232-2327
Q: Why do DEFINE codes not carry forward from the RTA to Centrally Billed Airfare Charges?

A: VE5 & VE6 (RTA) documents are linked to VP5 documents because they authorize the absence and reimbursement of UT business travelers.

The VPT documents do not reimburse travelers and are not directly linked to the RTA documents (though RTA account information is used on the VPT documents).

Therefore DEFINE codes transfer from VE5 & VE6 documents to VP5 documents, but not to VPT documents.
Q: When a guest consultant, performer, etc, for which we are reimbursing airfare only, is traveling from their home (not Austin) to another destination (not Austin) for a conference, performance, etc, should both cities be included on the VE5? Or just the destination city?

A: Only the destination city needs to be on the VE5. Their home address should already be on their vendor record.

NOTE: Their designated headquarters is wherever they are physically living.
Questions & Answers

Q: Can we possibly make a check list for DO NOT PAY on travel reimbursements?

A: A list of commonly disallowed travel expenses is provided at the Travel Workshops and in the online slideshow for VP5 travel documents.

Examples include: Alcohol, Laundry, Movie Rental, Personal Phone Calls, Personal Internet Use, Personal Toll Tag Use, Travel Insurance, Kennels, Fish Feeding, Tips on State Accounts, any non-business travel including spouses or other family members.
Q: And a "before travel list" for the professor/traveler before he goes on a trip?

A: Departments are encouraged to provide a travel list for their travelers before a trip.

A list of commonly allowed travel expenses is provided at the Travel Workshops and in the online slideshow for VP5 travel documents. This information is also in the Handbook of Business Procedures (Section 11.5.5)
Questions & Answers

**Q:** Some travel expenses may be claimed without receipts. What are these?

**A:** No receipts are required for:
- meals within the daily limits,
- parking,
- public transportation within a city,
- tips,
- business phone calls or business tolls.
Questions & Answers

Q: Please address the rules about separating hotel taxes on a VP5. Is this extra step required for all domestic travel? Does that include only the 50 states, US? What about Canada & Mexico?

A: All hotel tax should be claimed on the VP5, Section 3 – for all destinations (including Canada & Mexico).

State of Texas hotel taxes cannot be claimed by UT employees, because they are exempt and should not pay them. Students, non-employees and prospective employees can be reimbursed for all types of hotel taxes.
Q: Have departments had difficulty getting billing information from Avis? We are not able to get detailed invoice information from them, either by phone or online.

A: Please contact AVIS, Business Service Representative Holly Ferguson
holly.ferguson@avis.com
1-800-525-7521, ext 31695
Q: What is the difference between state and local fund receipt requirements?

A: The receipt requirements are currently the same for state funds or local funds.
Q: How have our international travelers been impacted by the ash cloud?

A: If travel is affected because of a volcanic eruption or any “Act of God” (which is beyond the travelers’ control) any travel changes because of this will be approved. Examples include changes of travel dates or payment of cancellation charges.
Questions & Answers

Q: What can department staff do to make life easier in dealing with a travel crisis?

A: Travelers should register with the International SOS (ISOS) and carry the ISOS emergency contact card.
Questions & Answers

Q: What is the rule about two people splitting the cost of a hotel room?

A: Each person claims only their share of the room cost.
Q: How do I isolate a certain amount of money to one account on a VP5? Each time I've used an account with limited funds, I can never find a way of adding the account number and just putting $400.00. The VP5 breaks down the cost according to the sections, so I usually just end up putting the closest amount possible. For example, if the "other travel" section came out to $375 I would just use this one. That still leaves $25 that I could be using. Is there a way to input $400?

A: You can use separate vouchers for each account and corresponding amount.
Q: Is an RTA/VE5 required when away from one's office for 4 hours or more if just taking a 4+ hour course at another location on campus grounds? I was told that it was needed when away from office space for more than 4 hours (even if still on campus).

A: No RTA is needed when traveling around Austin to any UT Austin campuses. Prepare an RTA only when going to a UT business location outside Austin when you will be away from your office more than 4 hours.
Q: Regarding per diem. . . if a conference only provides one of the 3 meals per day, do you pay the full per diem or require receipts for the other two meals and reimburse only the cost of the those two meals? Are charges for snacks allowed if the full per diem has not been met?

A: “Per diem” is misleading – travelers must state the actual amount spent for meals; actual amounts are reimbursed (without receipts) up to the state or local meal limit for the location, regardless of any meals provided at a conference, unless the conference meal amount is both stated and optional. Snacks are allowed.
Q: Do you need receipts for tips to hotel and airport porters and taxi drivers?

A: No, but tips are only allowed on local funds. Tips should be identified on the VP5 in the miscellaneous section as meal tips, taxi tips, baggage handling tips, and can be accumulated in daily totals by each uniquely identified category (meals, taxi).
Q: If a faculty member travels with 2 assistants, do they all need to have a VE5? If the faculty member turns in her receipts following the trip and then says that 2 assistants went with her and she paid for their part of the hotel on her credit card, how is this handled?

A: A VE5 is needed for each person.

Each person is reimbursed for their own expenses. No person can be reimbursed for the expenses of another person. The assistants’ loans from the faculty member can’t result in the faculty member’s reimbursements of their hotel expenses.
Q: How do we reimburse for meals when some meals are provided but not all of them?

A: Actual meal expenses are reimbursed up to the daily limit without receipts based on the traveler’s actual cost. Although the department may have tighter limits of reimbursements for specific meals, there is no general policy of a daily meal allowance breakdown by breakfast, lunch, etc.
Q: If the hotel stay charges the greater amount the first day and then lowers it for each day after and the first day exceeds the meals and lodging expense for the day, such as $325 per day, how does the traveler get reimbursed? Do we justify it in the notes section and then get reimbursed?

A: Each daily limit stands alone. An exception to the daily limit can be granted only on local funds. Mark the exception field in Section 2 of the VP5 document and provide the business reason for the exception to the lodging limit in the VP5 document notes.
Q: What is the best way for a traveler to get reimbursed if they are traveling for business and pleasure and may want to keep the rental car for the entire trip?

A: Divide the rental car expenses by the total days of the rental period and multiply the daily amount by the number of business days. Reimburse only for the business portion.
Questions & Answers

Q: When a travel scholarship/fellowship document is processed, are we required to have previously completed a VE5 authorization for the travel?

A: No. Scholarships are for the personal educational pursuit of the individual receiving the award. Personal travel does not require a VE5 authorization.

However, we defer to your dean’s office requirements, so please prepare an RTA if you are instructed to do so by your dean’s office.
Q: When a student has a financial bar, the bar is deducted from their scholarship but a VP5 travel reimbursement reflects no deductions. If the scholarship is "for travel," why is the "travel money" reallocated by accounting to cover an unrelated debt?

A: A VP5 would be for UT business purpose, either as an employee or when a student travels representing a UT student group so the travel is nontaxable and is not subject to financial bar deductions.

A scholarship travel award would be for the personal educational pursuit of a student, and this is taxable income to the student. Any financial bars for tuition, etc. would be deducted, and this is the case with all scholarship payments, even travel awards.
Questions & Answers

Q: How do I claim travel expenses for a trip that crosses fiscal years?

Prepare separate VP5 docs for each fiscal year period (8/15 to 8/31 and then 9/1 to 9/12).
Q: What are Faculty Travel Grants (FTGs)?

A: FTGs cover all allowable travel expenses up to $1200 per academic year for eligible faculty members who are presenting scholarly papers at research conferences. The FTG account follows the travel rules for local funds.
Faculty Travel Grants

Q: How many trips may a faculty member take with FTG funds?

A: There is no limit on the number of trips they may make within the $1200 limit. IMPORTANT: Each trip requires an approved application to use these funds and must be approved in advance of travel.
Faculty Travel Grants

Q: Can Faculty Travel Grants be used for foreign travel?

A: Yes.

Q: If the faculty member purchased his own ticket for an approved trip, can he be reimbursed from a Faculty Travel Grant?

A: Yes.
Faculty Travel Grants

Q: A trip approved on a FTG was cancelled, and no charges were incurred. Can the faculty member use the funds for a different meeting?

A: Yes, as long as the use of the FTG funds was pre-approved for that specific meeting.
Faculty Travel Grants

Q: Can child care expenses be paid from the Faculty Travel Grant?

A: Yes, if you needed to pay for childcare expenses while traveling on an FTG approved trip and the cost was over any amount normally incurred. These reimbursements for child care are taxable.

There is a link to this request form on the FTG website.
Faculty Travel Grants

Q: Do the child care expenses need to be approved in advance?

A: The child care does not need to be approved in advance. The FTG child care reimbursement form is submitted with the other receipts for the VP5 reimbursement.
Cash Advances

Q: Who is eligible to be issued a cash advance?

A: Any UT employee with a current appointment during the dates of the cash advance period.

Q: How do you request a cash advance?

A: Contact Alesha Williams for the format of a cash advance request letter and information on the cash advance process. alesha.williams@austin.utexas.edu
Cash Advances

**Q: When is the reconciliation due for my cash advance?**

**A:** No longer than 30 days past the ending date of the activity period.

**Q: What is the procedure if I don’t use the entire advance I was given?**

**A:** Return the excess to Alesha Williams by cash, check, or money order along with the reconciliation.
Cash Advances

Q: What is the procedure for being reimbursed if I spend more than the advance I requested?

A: Please include all the expenses on the Cash Advance reconciliation voucher. Alesha Williams will prepare the additional reimbursement to the traveler when the reconciliation is submitted.
Q: When a cash advance is being requested for a trip, do I encumber the amount on the RTA?

A: No. Alesha Williams prepares the encumbrance when the advance is issued. Prepare the RTA with just a nominal amount ($1), since an amount is required to complete the RTA.