The University of Texas at Austin  
Division of Housing and Food Service  

TRAVEL GUIDELINES  

1. Travelers must demonstrate how trip will benefit the Division of Housing and Food Service. Before submitting any travel forms, travelers must check the budget to ensure availability of funds.  

2. An employee’s travel must be planned to achieve maximum savings and efficiency. The travel expenses must be the lowest possible considering all relevant circumstances. Employees are strongly encouraged to use the Capital Metro Flyer whenever possible for transportation to the airport.  

3. Travelers should complete the “Request for Travel” form (HF119) and submit it to the appropriate unit Director as soon as possible and no less than five working days prior to the date of travel for approval prior to entry into *DEFINE. All travel by staff members must be approved in advance by their unit Director, and when appropriate, the Executive Director and the Vice President for Student Affairs.  

4. A “Request for Travel” form must be completed and submitted to the unit Director anytime the employee will travel outside of the Austin city limits on official business, this includes day trips, and anytime the employee will be away from headquarters for more than 4 hours whether in or outside of the Austin city limits.  

5. Once approved, the Administrative Associate who supports the Traveler’s unit will enter the “Request for Travel” in *DEFINE (VE5) for electronic approval, make travel arrangements, and register Travelers for conference if applicable.  

6. Travelers are responsible for making their own lodging reservations. If the conference has a selected hotel for attendees and the lodging rate is within the allowed daily maximum, the traveler should stay at the conference selected hotel. Hotel direct bill may be possible for student travel if the arrangements are done at least one month before the date of travel. This would be handled by the Administrative Associate who processes travel for each particular unit in DHFS.  

7. As of September 1, 2007 the daily limit using local funds for meals and lodging within Texas is $220.00 and outside of Texas but within the continental United States, $325.00. Travelers should be aware that the maximum allowed reimbursable daily amount for meals is $41.00. Reimbursement is based on actual expenses only, not a per-diem rate. Itemized receipts are required for all meals. Transportation expenses to and from meals are reimbursed only when they plus the cost of daily meals do not exceed the maximum allowed daily amount for meals.  

8. Airline reservations for direct bill to the University must be made by the Administrative Associate processing the travel through one of the State contracted travel agencies only. Once airfare is booked, all charges resulting from changes requested by the traveler are the traveler’s responsibility. The traveler should not directly contact the travel agency to book airfare or make changes.
9. An employee may be reimbursed mileage for travel between home and the nearest airport. Effective July 1, 2009, a traveler may be reimbursed actual 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. When mileage is reimbursed for travel between home and the nearest airport, airport parking is not reimbursed. 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.

10. If a rental car is approved by the unit Director, arrangements will be made at the time that the “Request for Travel” is processed and other travel arrangements are made, i.e. airline, registration, etc. Arrangements for rental vehicles will be made with the State contracted firms Avis, Advantage, or Enterprise Rent a Car. If another firm is to be used, Travel Management should be contacted and reimbursement is limited to the contracted rates unless the location of travel is remote and the contracted firms are not available at the locale. Justification for not using one of the contracted rental car firms should be fully explained in the VE5 document. Because the contracted rates include collision damage waiver (CDW), this insurance should be declined on rental agreements when traveling inside the United States. Personal accident, safe trip or personal effects insurance is not payable on rental cars or air travel. The Traveler must pay for the rental car up front and be reimbursed after the trip; a paid invoice must be provided.

11. The cost of limousine transportation may be reimbursed only if it is the lowest cost for transportation considering all relevant circumstances.

12. Employees must coordinate travel in one vehicle whenever possible. A traveler will be reimbursed mileage or gas only if the use of a personal vehicle was required due to unavailability of a UT owned vehicle or the unit Director approves it for other business reasons (combination of personal and business travel, length of time the vehicle will be unavailable to other uses, etc.) When a University vehicle is available for travel but a personal vehicle is approved at the traveler’s preference, gas and mileage will not be reimbursed.

13. As of January 1, 2014 the mileage reimbursement rate is 56.5 cents per mile. Any additional lodging and meal expense required by driving to an out-of-state duty point (destination) can be no more than the average cost of coach airfare. Travelers can look up official mileage on *DEFINE GG2, the State of Texas Mileage Guide via the web at http://window.state.tx.us/comptrol/texastra.html or contact Payroll (1-7998.)

14. Use of University owned vehicles is restricted to University business. The University Property Manager should be contacted when there is a question about the use of University owned vehicles. All University and Division of Housing and Food Service policies regarding use of University vehicles apply. Travelers are responsible for making sure the gas tank is full when they depart and requesting a UT credit card in advance for gas on the road. Travelers wishing to use University vehicles outside of the state of Texas:

   a. Within the United States must have a letter of approval from the Director. This letter should state the destination, inclusive dates, purpose of trip, name of the individual driving the vehicle, and a description of the vehicle being used, including license plate number and VIN number. The letter should be in possession of the operator of the vehicle throughout the trip.

   b. Outside of the United States, must make the request through the Director and must have the approval of the Property Manager. A notarized letter from the Property Manager and title to the vehicle must be kept in the vehicle throughout the trip and must be presented to authorized officials upon request.
15. Employees are reimbursed for expenses after travel has been completed. Receipts are required for all expenses submitted to be reimbursed. Employees should keep track of actual amounts spent, itemize their expenses on the Travel Expense Report, and submit all receipt to be reimbursed.

16. The hotel occupancy tax imposed by the State of Texas is not a reimbursable expense. To prevent the tax from being added to the lodging cost, a Texas State Occupancy Tax Exemption Certificate available from the DHFS Central Office must be presented to the lodging establishment.

17. One employee may not claim expenses of another employee. A traveler must pay for only his/her expenses. Travelers will not be reimbursed if they pay any expenses for someone else, i.e. meals, lodging, taxi, incidentals, etc. If a hotel room is shared by two travelers, each person should pay half per day and make clear to the reception desk that two invoices are needed. The lodging folio received at checkout should reflect “0” balance due.

18. Tips and gratuities are reimbursable only up to 20%, unless automatic percentage is shown on the receipt. The tip or gratuity is separate from the daily meal limit and should be itemized in the "Miscellaneous Charges" section of the Travel Expense Form.

19. Some airlines have added fees for checked baggage. If an airline has a mandatory first bag fee for checked baggage, the expense is considered reimbursable as long as the bag meets airline weight requirements. Fees related to second bags are reimbursable only if the state agency or UT department verifies that the second bag is needed for business purposes and the bag meets weight requirements. If a second bag is used, documentation explaining why the baggage is necessary is required as part of travel approval. For baggage fee reimbursements, a receipt for the baggage charge must be provided along with an explanation identifying the business purpose of any additional bags. Any reimbursement for overweight baggage must be accompanied by the additional explanation of the business purpose that required any weight overage.

20. Employees traveling on official business where there is no overnight stay are not reimbursed for meals.

21. Recording time during Travel (Please see attached Non-Exempt and Exempt Guidelines)

These guidelines reference key travel information only and are not intended as a comprehensive list. Staff members with travel plans should review, understand, and adhere to Division Policy 1.15 and the University Handbook of Business Procedures travel section at http://www.utexas.edu/business/accounting/hbp/11_trav/index.html

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