

UNIVERSITY *of* HOUSTON
MANUAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SECTION: Procurement
AREA: Travel

Number: 04.02.01A

SUBJECT: Travel Paid from State-Appropriated Funds

I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Travel by University of Houston faculty and staff, and by prospective employees, is restricted by State of Texas and federal regulations. This document is governed by the State of Texas Travel Regulations Act, the General Appropriations Act, and by official interpretation of the Travel Regulations Act as made by the State Comptroller of Public Accounts. This document highlights the primary points of these regulations and provides additional policies as they apply to the university.

This document is to be used in conjunction with the State of Texas Travel Allowance Guide, distributed by the Texas State Comptroller, and the Texas State Travel Directory and other advisories.

For this document, “travel” includes all use of a vehicle between duty points undertaken on behalf of the university – whether outside or within the Houston city limits. These rules apply to all university travel paid or reimbursed from state-appropriated funds. See MAPP [04.02.01B](#) for rules related to travel using local funds.

II. POLICY STATEMENT

All travel paid or reimbursed with state-appropriated funds must use state or university contracted travel service vendors, including travel agencies, airlines, hotels and car rental companies, unless otherwise indicated in this document or the [Travel Allowance Guide](#). All payments and reimbursements for state-funded travel must comply with the requirements of the [Travel Allowance Guide](#). All expenses must be reasonable and necessary for conducting university business during travel and travel must benefit teaching, research, and/or community service at the university.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. City Pair: Cities between which university travel is undertaken.
- B. Continental United States: The 48 contiguous states of the United States located on the North American continent between Canada and Mexico (excludes Hawaii and Alaska).

- C. Contract Travel Agency: Travel agency under contract to the State of Texas or designated by the university to provide travel services to state and/or university employees and others traveling on university business.
- D. Contract Vendor: For this document, an airline, automobile rental agency, charge card, hotel/motel or travel agency with which the state or university has contracted to provide services.
- E. Corporate Travel Card: Charge card contracted by the State of Texas that may be used by qualifying university employees to purchase university business-related travel expenses. Corporate travel cards are issued in the name of the employee, who is personally financially responsible for all charges.
- F. Designated Headquarters: The geographic location in which an employee's place of business is located. In most cases, Houston is designated headquarters for university employees.
- G. Duty Point: The location other than the employee's place of employment to which the employee travels to conduct official university business.
- H. Foreign Travel: Travel by university employees to/from all countries outside Canada, Mexico, the United States and U.S. possessions.
- I. Official Business: Business required to properly perform the duties of the university position held, in accordance with the university's legal responsibilities. Official university business must relate to and benefit teaching, research, and/or community service at the university.
- J. Official Mileage: Mileage based on the shortest practical route between points as listed in the Texas Mileage Guide on the Comptroller's web site. The Internet address is <http://www.window.state.tx.us/comptrol/texastra.html>.
- K. Official Travel Status: The time period between leaving and returning to designated headquarters for approved official travel.
- L. State-Appropriated Funds: Funds appropriated by the Texas Legislature in the General Appropriations Act, whether held inside or outside the State Treasury. Includes general revenue, special line items, Higher Education Assistance Funds, Advanced Research Program/Advanced Technology Program funds, and other funds designated as "state."
- M. State of Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts (CPA): The State of Texas agency with authority and responsibility for regulating procurement and related business for all state agencies.

- N. Travel Coordinator: Person designated by the university to receive and disseminate information relative to the State Travel Management Program for compliance with State of Texas rules related to contracted travel services.
- O. Travel Exemption Certification Form: The form required to document certain accepted conditions of non-use of state contract vendors. The Travel Exemption Certification Form can be found at the following web address: http://www.uh.edu/finance/pages/AP_Travel.htm.
- P. Travel Request: The form used to request and authorize official university travel in advance of the trip. The Travel Request is an Excel document and may be downloaded at the following web address: http://www.uh.edu/finance/pages/AP_Travel.htm.
- Q. Travel Voucher: The form used by employees and prospective employees to document all travel expenses and request reimbursement for any out-of-pocket travel expenses after the trip. Staff must use the Excel form provided at the Comptroller's web site, which is located at: <http://www.window.state.tx.us/fm/travel/>.

IV. ADVANCED APPROVAL OF TRAVEL

- A. All travel paid or reimbursed with state-appropriated funds must be approved in advance for the following categories of travelers:
1. Employees.
 2. Prospective employees and invited spouse, if applicable.
- Note: Student travel may not be paid or reimbursed with state-appropriated funds.
- B. The Travel Request must include the following information:
1. Identifying information for traveler and department contact.
 2. Classification of traveler (employee or prospective employee).
 3. City of departure and destination.
 4. Travel dates (departure and return).
 5. Trip purpose and University benefit.

6. Estimated amount of travel expenses to be paid or reimbursed by the university, along with the university cost center(s) and account(s) to be charged.
7. If the traveler expects to be reimbursed for travel expenses from someone other than the university (e.g., conference host), this must be indicated on the Travel Request. Supporting documentation (i.e., letter from host) should be attached to the Travel Request, if available.
8. The Travel Request must be approved by the following individuals:
 - a. Traveler's supervisor or unit head paying for the travel expenses.
 - b. Person authorized to approve contract/grant expenditure, if applicable.
 - c. Certifying signatory for the cost center(s) on the Travel Request.
 - d. Appropriate vice president (or designee) for travel by employees or prospective employees to or from foreign countries other than Canada, Mexico, or Puerto Rico and other US possessions.
 - e. The Chancellor or designee, for travel by employees or prospective employees to or from foreign countries other than Canada, Mexico, or Puerto Rico and other US possessions. The traveler is not authorized to begin the foreign trip until the Chancellor or designee has approved the Travel Request.

Note: Travel Requests may be approved by signing and dating the printed document or by email. If approval is emailed, the email from the approver should contain the travel request document and indicate "approved" in the body of the email.

V. NOTIFICATION OF TRAVEL TO WASHINGTON, D.C.

In addition to obtaining advance approval on the Travel Request, the following procedures must be followed for travel to Washington, D.C., on state-appropriated funds:

- A. The Office of State-Federal Relations must be notified of (not approve) travel to Washington, D.C., no later than seven calendar days before travel begins. The responsible unit must complete the Report of State Agency Travel to Washington, D.C., at the following Internet address: <http://www.osfr.state.tx.us>.

- B. When the information has been submitted online, a confirmation page will be created, which must be printed and attached to the Travel Request before it is routed for approval.
- C. If notification is not given within seven days of departure, a letter of explanation must be faxed to the Office of State-Federal Relations at (512) 463-1984. This letter must also be attached to the Travel Request before it is routed for approval.

VI. USE OF CONTRACTED TRAVEL VENDORS

A. Types of Contracted Services

To provide timely and efficient travel services and generate cost savings to state agencies, the State of Texas contracts with travel vendors. Official university travel paid or reimbursed from state-appropriated funds must use state or university contracted vendors, when available, for the following types of services:

1. Travel charge cards (used to purchase airfare, may also be used to make other travel-related expenditures; personal credit cards may be used to purchase any travel expenditures other than airfare).
2. Travel agencies used to purchase airfare.
3. Airfare.
4. Lodging.
5. Rental cars.

Names and rates of current contracted travel vendors for airfare, lodging and rental cars are available at: <http://cpa.state.tx.us/procurement/prog/stmp/>.

B. Documentation of Non-Use of Contracted Travel Vendors

1. When travel arrangements are made through the contracted travel agency, the travel agency will document and report exceptions to using contracted vendors to the State.
2. Other acceptable conditions of non-use of contracted travel vendors will require the completion of a Travel Exemption Certification Form available online at http://www.uh.edu/finance/pages/AP_Travel.htm. The following must be completed on the form:
 - a. Traveler name.

- b. Travel voucher number.
 - c. Reason for not using a contracted travel vendor (check or circle the appropriate reason).
 - d. Traveler's signature and date.
3. Any use of non-contracted vendors not documented by a contracted travel agency or with the Travel Exemption Certificate Form will require all of the following:
- a. A memo or email explaining and documenting the exception request. Exception requests should be submitted before expenses are incurred.
 - b. The Travel Coordinator must approve (sign) the memo or indicate approval by email.

VII. STATE HOTEL OCCUPANCY TAXES FOR LODGING IN TEXAS

A. Claiming Exemption

University employees are exempt from the state portion of hotel occupancy taxes when traveling on official university business in Texas. The following procedures should be used to claim exemption from those taxes:

1. The employee should present a Texas Hotel Occupancy Tax Exemption Certificate to the Texas hotel or motel at the time of check-in. A certificate for university employees is available at the following Internet address: http://www.uh.edu/finance/pages/AP_Travel.htm.
2. The employee should verify that they are not charged for the state portion of hotel occupancy taxes (6 percent) at the time of checkout.

B. Claiming Reimbursement

If the Texas hotel or motel refuses to honor the Exemption Certificate, the employee may be reimbursed for the state hotel occupancy tax as follows:

1. The employee provides the name, address and phone number (if available) of the Texas hotel/motel that refused the certificate.
2. The employee faxes or emails the above information and the following or similar statement to the Travel Coordinator: “[name of hotel] refused to honor Texas Hotel Occupancy Tax Exemption Certificate on [date].”

3. The Travel Coordinator signs the statement and faxes it back to the employee or returns the email indicating approval.
4. The Travel Coordinator notifies the Comptroller's Office that the Texas hotel or motel refused to honor the Exemption Certificate.

Employees may not be reimbursed for state hotel occupancy tax with state funds if they did not properly present the Exemption Certificate to the hotel. Non-employees are not exempt from the state hotel occupancy tax and should be reimbursed for this expense without explanation.

VIII. TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

A. Airfare

Airfare may be purchased with state-appropriated funds in one of the following ways:

1. Airfare charged directly to the Department State Travel Card.

The person making the travel arrangements must verify that state-contracted airfare is purchased, if available. A list of contracted airfares may be found at: <http://cpa.state.tx.us/procurement/prog/stmp/>.

If the trip is later cancelled or not approved by a higher administrative authority (e.g., supervisor, Chancellor), the airfare should be refunded to the Department Travel Card. If non-refundable airfare is cancelled, the original charge should be moved to a local, non-state, cost center.

2. Airfare charged to an employee's Corporate Travel Card either by (a) using the contracted travel agency or (b) purchasing contracted airfare directly from the airline. If state-contracted airfare is purchased directly from the airline, the Travel Exemption Certification Form is required. The form is available at the following website: http://www.uh.edu/finance/pages/AP_Travel.htm.
3. Airfare charged to an employee's personal credit card because the insurance provided by the personal credit card is greater than the insurance offered by the Corporate Travel Card (\$500,000). State-contracted airfare is not available to employees who use their personal credit card. The Travel Exemption Certification Form, available at http://www.uh.edu/finance/pages/AP_Travel.htm, is required.
4. Airfare purchased by a non-employee. State-contracted airfare is not available to non-employees who purchase their own airfare.

5. Airfare purchased from a non-contracted travel agency. Requires exception approval from the Travel Coordinator.
6. All airfare must be purchased at the lowest price available (i.e., coach class), unless the President or designee approves a higher airfare (i.e., business class or first class) for one of the reasons below:
 - a. First class airfare may be paid or reimbursed only if it is medically necessary or other airfare is not available.
 - b. Business class airfare may be paid or reimbursed only if it is medically necessary or a lower airfare is not available.

The necessity for business or first class airfare must be stated on the travel request or attachment to the travel request and approved by the President or designee.

B. Hotels

Lodging may be purchased in one of the following ways:

1. State-contracted hotel room charged to an employee's Corporate Travel Card or personal credit card. Lodging may be arranged by the traveler or through a contracted travel agency. The person making the travel arrangements must verify that a state-contracted hotel room is purchased, if available. A list of contracted hotels is available at: <http://cpa.state.tx.us/procurement/prog/stmp/>.
2. Non-contracted hotel room charged to an employee's Corporate Travel Card or personal credit card. Requires a Travel Exemption Certification Form, available at http://www.uh.edu/finance/pages/AP_Travel.htm, for one of the following reasons:
 - a. Travel was part of a group program (conference or convention) with a requirement to obtain hotel reservations through a specified source to obtain a discount or special service.
 - b. Contractor not time efficient (cannot provide service in time period required).
 - c. Contractor not available in particular location.
 - d. Contractor sold out or does not offer the service required.

- e. Non-contract vendor offered lower total cost. For hotels, total cost includes room without taxes, travel time to business location, transportation costs (taxi or rental car), and parking fees.
 - f. Disabled traveler or medical emergency requiring special or immediate service.
 - g. Security/safety risk to traveler, such as a hotel located in an unsafe neighborhood or a hotel that does not have a non-smoking room available, if one is required.
3. Non-contracted hotel room charged to a prospective employee's personal credit card. Requires a Travel Exemption Certification Form, available at http://www.uh.edu/finance/pages/AP_Travel.htm, (“not eligible for contract”).

C. Rental Car

State-contracted rental car costs include liability and loss/damage waiver insurance in the base rate, while non-contracted rental car costs do not. If a non-contracted rental car company is used, it is the traveler's responsibility to obtain the proper insurance coverage.

Rental cars may be obtained for university travel in one of the following ways:

1. State-contracted rental car charged directly to a university department account through a direct billing arrangement set up in advance by the Travel Coordinator.
2. State-contracted rental car charged to an employee's Corporate Travel Card or personal credit card. Reservation made by traveler or through contracted travel agency. The person making the travel arrangements must verify that a state-contracted rate is charged by the contracted rental car company, if available. A list of contracted rental car companies may be found at: <http://cpa.state.tx.us/procurement/prog/stmp/>.
3. Non-contracted rental car charged to an employee's Corporate Travel Card or personal credit card. Requires a Travel Exemption Certification Form, available at http://www.uh.edu/finance/pages/AP_Travel.htm, for one of the following reasons:
 - a. Contractor not time efficient (cannot provide service in time period required).
 - b. Contractor not available in particular location.

- c. Contractor sold out or does not offer the service required.
 - d. Non-contract vendor offered lower total cost. For rental cars, total cost includes base rate, loss/damage waiver, mileage charge, surcharges, and cost of liability insurance.
 - e. Disabled traveler or medical emergency requiring special or immediate service.
 - f. Security/safety risk to traveler, such as a rental car company located in an unsafe neighborhood or a company that does not have a non-smoking car available, if one is required.
4. Non-contracted rental car charged to a prospective employee's personal credit card. Requires a Travel Exemption Certification Form, available at http://www.uh.edu/finance/pages/AP_Travel.htm, ("not eligible for contract").

IX. TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENTS

A. Form to Request Reimbursement

A State Travel Voucher and the Finance System Voucher are required to reimburse (1) employees and (2) prospective employees for travel expenses.

B. Deadline for Submission of Travel Voucher

Employees and prospective employees must submit their request for reimbursement, including required documentation, to the department business office no later than 60 days after travel is completed. Requests submitted after 60 days may not be forwarded to Accounts Payable for reimbursement, unless approved by the appropriate division vice president.

The department should make every effort to submit vouchers for employee and prospective employee travel reimbursements to Accounts Payable as soon as possible but no later than 15 days following receipt of all required documentation from the traveler.

C. Reimbursement Rules and Documentation

State-funded travel reimbursement rules and documentation requirements, which are contained in the Travel Allowance Guide, are too lengthy to be listed here. However, the Guide, may be found at the following web address: <http://www.window.state.tx.us/fm/travel/>.

A list of out-of-state meal and lodging per diems (i.e., outside Texas but inside the continental US) may be found at: <http://www.window.state.tx.us/fm/travel/>. The per diem for overnight travel within Texas may be found at: <http://www.cpa.state.tx.us/comptrol/texastra.html>.

Though the Travel Allowance Guide permits reimbursement of non-overnight meals under certain circumstances, UH travelers will not be reimbursed for non-overnight meals because of an Internal Revenue Service requirement that these reimbursements be considered taxable income.

Travelers are responsible for knowing the state-funded travel rules. Personnel who prepare and approve Travel Vouchers are responsible for knowing and following the documentation requirements listed in the Travel Allowance Guide. Questions regarding travel reimbursements should be directed to the Travel Coordinator or other designated individuals in Accounts Payable.

X. COMPLETING THE TRAVEL VOUCHER

- A. The following information, if applicable, must be completed on the front of the Travel Voucher:
1. Agency number (i.e., 730 for University of Houston; 783 for UH System).
 2. Agency name (i.e., University of Houston or UH System).
 3. Traveler (payee) name.
 4. Traveler job title.
 5. Designated headquarters for traveler (i.e., Houston for most travelers).
 6. Travel Request number.
 7. Trip dates (departure and return).
 8. Destination (city and state or city and country).
 9. An itemization of expenses for in-state or out-of-state travel, whether paid by the traveler or directly billed to the university.
 10. The following items must be subtracted from total travel expenses:
 - a. Expenses billed centrally to the university.
 - b. Expenses paid on a local-fund Travel Voucher.

- c. Other expenses that will not be reimbursed due to departmental discretion.
11. The original signature of the traveler and date signed must appear on the Travel Voucher.
- B. The following information, if applicable, must be completed on page two of the Travel Voucher:
1. The date and time of departure and return from travel, if claiming meal or lodging expenses. If flying, the departure time is when a traveler is required to be at the airport to board an airplane. The return time is when the flight actually returns to designated headquarters (i.e., lands in Houston for university employees).
 2. The amount of meal and/or lodging expenses claimed each day of travel. Each day's expenses must be entered on a separate row in the per diem column in the in-state or out-of-state section. The sum of meal and lodging expenses for each day must be entered in the total column and that column must be totaled as well.
 3. The destination, travel purpose and benefit to the university must be noted.
 4. Public transportation (airfare, taxi, bus, train) must be itemized with applicable dates in the left hand column.
 5. Personal car mileage must be itemized point-to-point with applicable dates in the left hand column (attach a separate page, if necessary).
 6. The total mileage claimed must be entered in the box on the right hand side of the voucher.
- C. Documentation for the Travel Voucher

In addition to the Travel Voucher, the following documentation must be attached to the PeopleSoft Voucher (see [Travel Allowance Guide](#) for additional information):

1. Original receipts for:
 - a. Traveler-paid airfare (airline ticket stub, unless "ticketless" travel; travel agent's or airline's invoice/itinerary).
 - b. Traveler-paid rental car (itemized receipt).

- c. Traveler-paid hotel (itemized receipt).
 - d. Incidental expense transactions that exceed \$75.00 (itemized receipt).
 2. Receipts in a foreign currency must be converted to U.S. dollars and the exchange rate must be indicated.
 3. Itinerary from travel agency, if ticketless travel and/or airfare were purchased through a university-contracted travel agency.
 4. Registration receipt or other proof of payment, if applicable.
 5. Copy of approved Travel Request. If approved by email, attach a copy of the approving emails along with the printed Travel Request.
 6. Copy of Travel Voucher used to pay some of the travel expenses on a local-fund cost center, if applicable.
 7. For travel to Washington, D.C., copy of the confirmation page for submitting the Report of State Agency Travel to Washington, D.C., to the Office of State-Federal Relations and any related documentation.
 8. For state hotel occupancy tax charged by a Texas hotel or motel, copy of statement approved by the Travel Coordinator that the hotel/motel refused to honor the Exemption Certificate.
- D. If airfare charged to the Department Travel Card is the only travel expense incurred, the department will note this on the Travel Request and upload the original Travel Request and invoice/itinerary in the Finance System.
- E. Accounting for third-party travel reimbursements to employees
 1. If a third-party reimbursement is received before the employee signs the Travel Voucher, expenses related to the reimbursement should be included in the expenditure detail and the reimbursement should be deducted from the total line on the Travel Voucher.

2. If the third-party reimbursement is received after the employee signs the Travel Voucher, travel expenses covered by the third-party reimbursement should be included in the expenditure detail and paid to the employee. A personal check from the employee for the amount of the third-party reimbursement must be deposited into the appropriate university cost center and account within 10 days of receipt of the third-party reimbursement.

XI. TRAVEL ADVANCES ON STATE FUNDS

Travel advances are paid and cleared on department local cost centers only. See MAPP [04.02.01B](#) for travel advance instructions for local funds.

XII. TRAVEL-RELATED INSURANCE

- A. Travel must be approved in advance to ensure travelers are covered under the university insurance and workers' compensation programs and to provide legal protection as they perform official duties.
- B. Under the university travel accident policy, full-time employees (defined as having a 30-hour or greater work week) are insured in the amount of five times their annual salary up to \$250,000 against accidental loss of life or dismemberment when traveling on official university business. Coverage applies to students who are employed by the university 30 hours or more per week. (Property damage and liability is not covered.)
- C. In addition, the corporate travel card vendor provides \$500,000 portal-to-portal travel insurance when the airfare is charged to the State Department Travel Card or to the traveler's individual corporate travel card. Also, the contracted travel agencies may provide additional insurance benefits for business travelers.
- D. State-contracted rental cars include liability insurance and the collision damage waiver in the contracted price. However, they are not generally included in the price of non-contracted rental cars. Therefore, travelers should purchase liability insurance, unless covered by their own car insurance, and the collision damage waiver for non-contracted rental cars. Total cost may not exceed the cost of state contracted rental car that includes the liability insurance and the LDW.
- E. A Travel Request is not required for insurance purposes when travel is limited to the Houston area (i.e., for intercity mileage). However, it should be evident that the employee was driving to or from a university-related meeting.

XIII. REVIEW AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsible Party: Associate Vice President for Finance

Review: Every three years, on or before June 1

XIV. APPROVALS

Jim McShan

Interim Vice President for Administration and Finance

Renu Khator

President

Date of President's Approval: April 7, 2008

XV. REFERENCES

State of Texas Travel Rules and Regulations
UH System Administrative Memoranda [01.C.05](#) and [03.A.03](#)
MAPP [04.02.01B](#) and [04.02.01C](#)
MAPP [05.02.01](#)

Index Terms: Air travel
Charge cards
Foreign travel
State travel service vendors
Travel
Travel request