

Student Travel Guidelines

I. OVERVIEW

[Texas Education Code, Section 51.950](#) requires the regulation of certain types of student travel sponsored, supported or sanctioned by the University. [UHS System Administrative Policy 05.C.03, Student Travel](#), establishes the system wide policy for this type of travel. Travel by students on official university business is restricted by state of Texas and federal regulations and by standards of good business practice. These guidelines are intended for those students who are travelling on any UHS University business as approved by the University.

The types of activities and events covered by this policy include but are not limited to:

- Course related field trips
- Activities of registered student organizations
- Meetings of academic organizations where a student is officially representing the University
- Student attendance or presentations at professional organizations
- Class trips for educational or cultural enrichment
- Student leadership conferences

This policy does not apply to travel undertaken to engage in student teaching, internships, practicums, observations or research, unless the research is organized by a member of the faculty. Grant-funded student travel is also subject to the restrictions and limitations of the grant. University departments may have additional student travel requirements or processes.

II. ADVANCED APPROVAL AND REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

A. All student travelers (drivers and passengers) must complete a [Release and Indemnification Agreement](#) in advance of travel acknowledging that they understand and accept the risks involved in the travel activity and accept responsibility for their behavior.

1. Travel Notification for Organized and Sponsored Activities or Events

- a. Travel funded by the institution and undertaken using a vehicle owned or leased by the institution. Written notification for all student travel organized and sponsored by the University of Houston should be provided by the trip organizer submitting a completed Travel Roster.
- b. The Travel Roster must include:
 - i. Traveler's name
 - ii. Student I.D. number
 - iii. Name and phone number of an emergency contact person
 - iv. Date(s) of travel
 - v. Mode of travel
 - vi. Destination
 - vii. Purpose of travel

- viii. And a notation indicating that the traveler has signed and submitted a university Release and Indemnification Agreement (for minors) or the Release and Indemnification Agreement (for adults).
- ix. The completed Travel Roster must be signed by the dean or director of the university, college or department sponsoring the travel. One copy of the Travel Roster should be kept by the college/department sponsoring the travel and one copy of the Travel Roster should be sent to the university's Police Department Dispatch prior to travel by the department's business administrator.

2. Travel Required by a Registered Student Organization

- a. Written notification for all student travel required by a registered student organization must be provided by submitting a Travel Roster.
- b. The Travel Roster must include:
 - i. Traveler's name,
 - ii. Student ID number
 - iii. Name and phone number of an emergency contact person
 - iv. Date(s) of travel
 - v. Mode of travel
 - vi. Destination
 - vii. Purpose of travel
- c. The completed Travel Roster must be signed by one of the registered student organization authorized representatives and, prior to travel, submitted to the appropriate university department as follows:
 - UH – Center for Student Involvement
 - UHCL – Student Involvement and Leadership Office
 - UHD – Office of Student Activities
 - UHV – Department of Student Life

3. A separate Travel Request Form shall be completed for each trip and will be used for record-keeping purposes, and shall include the following information:

- Name of each traveler
- Dates of travel
- Mode of travel
- Destination
- Purpose of the trip
- Phone numbers for each traveler are also recommended but not required
- Although the name of each passenger must be listed on the Travel Request Form, passengers are not required to sign the request

4. All students participating in travel that is organized and sponsored by the university must complete a university Release and Indemnification Agreement (for minors) or Release and Indemnification Agreement (for adults). The University Release and Indemnification Agreements must be signed and maintained by the dean or director of the university, college, or department that is sponsoring the travel.
 5. Blanket release agreements are acceptable in certain situations such as reoccurring related travel; however an annual blanket release agreement cannot extend past the fiscal year end of August 31.
- B. The department's travel coordinator will ensure that the release agreements are properly completed and will maintain them as part of a system of recordkeeping for student travel for the department including identity of travelers, dates of travel, mode of travel, destination, and purpose of travel.
- C. All overnight travel, including student travel, must be approved in advance (prior to departure and before commitment of University funds) by all of the required approvers on a Travel Request Form.

NOTE: All vehicles must have access to a cellular phone and the number must be communicated to the Department Travel Coordinator.

III. GUIDELINES FOR DRIVERS AND OCCUPANTS

- A. Drivers and occupants engaged in student travel must act responsibly and use sound judgment when traveling. Drivers must:
1. Be at least 18 years of age
 2. Have a valid driver license
 3. If driving a University owned, leased, or rented vehicle, must have an acceptable driving record as approved by the Risk Management administrator for that campus. Contact information for campus Risk Management administrators can be found in Section XI of these guidelines.

Note: How to apply for approval of driving record:

1. Complete and sign the Motor Vehicle Record (MVR) request form, which can be found on the UH Risk Management website at <https://uh.edu/risk-management/request-driver-approval/>.
2. Return the MVR request form to the Risk Management administrator for review.
3. The request should be filed at least one week ahead of the trip, when possible.
4. Upon review, Risk Management administrator will advise if a driver is approved to drive on University business.
5. Please note, Risk Management does not discuss the details of MVRs. For questions about your MVR, contact the Department of Motor Vehicles that issued the license.

4. Cell phone use, including texting, is strictly prohibited while the vehicle is in motion.
5. Do not operate the vehicle in unsafe weather conditions, such as heavy rain or ice.
6. Not use head phones or earplugs as they are prohibited while driving.
7. While driving, avoid adjusting any navigation system or radio controls.
8. Obey all traffic laws and regulations, including posted speed limits.
9. Not drive under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs or transport or possess alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, unauthorized firearms or other types of weapons
10. Ensure that the vehicle in which the group or individual is traveling has appropriate insurance as mandated by the state of Texas, as well as a current state inspection and registration
11. Wear seat belts at all times; the number of occupants in the vehicle must not exceed the number of seat belts
12. Ensure the vehicle manufacturer's recommended load capacity is not exceeded
13. Avoid rowdy behavior, racing, or other distracting or aggressive behavior
14. When using vehicles owned or leased by a UHS University or its employees for student travel, such travel must be in compliance with [SAM 01.C.13](#) – *Business Use of Vehicles*. This policy articulates the System guidelines for the use of vehicles owned, leased, or rented by UHS universities by establishing standards for granting driving privileges, insurance coverage and reporting requirements when there are accidents or losses.
15. Prior to departure, drivers must:
 - a. Ensure that all travel documents are with you, such as your driver's license and insurance cards
 - b. Check the vehicle to ensure that safety features such as brakes, lights, and steering are all functional
 - c. Ensure that all passengers, including the driver, are wearing their seat belts
 - d. Note: Any person who is not directly involved with University business shall not be transported in a University owned or rented vehicle
 - e. Ensure that vehicles are not loaded with more passengers and/or baggage/equipment than the vehicle can safely accommodate
 - f. Baggage and equipment must not block the driver's line of sight

B. ADDITIONAL DRIVING PRECAUTIONS

1. Begin the trip well rested
2. Notify a designated contact person upon departure and arrival
3. Avoid driving when conditions are hazardous (this includes but is not limited to fog, heavy rain, snow or ice conditions)
4. Be prepared to stop the trip and check into a motel when fatigue or travel conditions warrant
5. Plan routes in advance, and carpool and caravan when possible
6. Divide the trip into segments, stopping for rest as necessary
7. Carry at least one cellular telephone or other two-way communication device in each vehicle for emergency purposes

8. Establish a reasonable departure and arrival time to and from the activity or event
9. Avoid driving between midnight and six a.m.
10. Have at least one other approved university driver in the vehicle. It is recommended that drivers rotate every two hours. A passenger or second driver should ride in the front passenger seat and remain awake at all times to help the driver maintain alertness
11. Carry a flashlight and approved fire extinguisher
12. Avoid taking medication prior to driving that may impede the ability to operate a motor vehicle
 - g. Drivers must consult with their physicians concerning the administration of medication and related restrictions.

C. TRAINING

Universities are encouraged to make available driver safety training for staff and other individuals who act as drivers for student travelers.

IV. USE OF PERSONAL VEHICLES

A. USE OF PERSONAL VEHICLES BY STUDENTS

1. The System and its universities assume no liability for a student's use of personal (non-University owned) vehicles. Any student who utilizes their personal vehicles for University purposes or to an activity shall assume all responsibility for themselves and all passengers. Personal liability may be incurred in the event of an accident caused through personal negligence or violation of laws. The student's personal auto insurance will be primary at all times when the student uses their person vehicle for University travel.
2. Students driving privately-owned vehicles for organized student travel (as defined by [University policy](#)) within the U. S. must:
 - Be at least 18 years of age
 - Have a valid Texas or other state driver license
 - Possess personal automobile insurance coverage as mandated by the State of Texas
 - Vehicles must have a current state inspection and registration
3. Students driving privately-owned vehicles for organized student travel taking place outside the U.S. must:
 - Be at least 18 years of age
 - Have all appropriate licenses, certificates and insurance as required by the country in which travel occurs

B. USE OF PERSONAL VEHICLES BY EMPLOYEES WITH STUDENT PASSENGERS

System or University employees occasionally use personal vehicles while transporting students to or from events organized and sponsored by universities. Because personal automobile insurance will be looked to first in the event of an accident, all persons who use their vehicles while conducting university business should be made aware of the possibility of personal liability related to such use. Personal insurance will always respond first in the event of an accident.

V. ACCIDENT NOTIFICATION

All accidents that occur while driving on University sponsored travel must be reported within 72 hours of the incident. Should an incident occur (i.e. accident, mechanical failure, medical emergency, code of conduct violation, etc.) the responsible University official overseeing the activity must notify his/her supervisor as soon as feasibly possible. The supervisor should contact:

- the appropriate university Campus Police Department,
- the campus Risk Management administrator (see Section XI of these guidelines), and
- the Student Affairs Office.

VI. STUDENT COMMERCIAL TRAVEL

Students traveling by commercial transportation, whether domestic or international, must comply with all laws regulating travel and the rules of the specific carrier.

VII. REIMBURSEMENT OF STUDENT TRAVEL EXPENSES

Each university is responsible for developing policies and procedures for addressing the reimbursement of student travel expenses.

VIII. AIR TRANSPORTATION GENERAL GUIDELINES

- A. Commercial air carriers, charter, time-share and other aircraft may be used for the purposes stated and are subject to the provisions below:
1. Commercial Airlines Commercial airlines are an acceptable means of travel for students that travel.
 2. Tickets must be procured under the travel guidelines established by the State of Texas
- B. General Requirements for Charter Aircraft Insurance:
1. Aircraft owners/operators shall furnish proof of insurance in advance
 - a. Liability insurance should be at least \$25 million for light turboprop aircraft, \$50 million for light jet aircraft, and a minimum of \$3 million per seat for commercial airlines
 - b. The university shall be endorsed as an Additional Insured on the insurance policy. Given the volatility in the insurance market, it may not always be possible to achieve these minimum coverages in the marketplace. If it becomes necessary to establish limits in keeping with current industry standards, it shall be the responsibility of the Director of Risk Management to approve the limits.
 2. Pilots: Two pilots will be required for all university travel involving student athletes. Pilots for small aircraft (minimum gross weight of 12,555 lbs. or less), whether charter, time-share or other shall have, as a minimum:
 - a. Captain
 - 1) Airline Transport Pilot (ATP) rating with current first class medical

- 2) Type rating in aircraft to be used for team travel
 - 3) Training in the aircraft type to be used at Flight Safety International, Simuflite Training International, or equivalent aircraft manufacturer's training within the past 12 months.
 - 4) Be employed as a full-time pilot
 - 5) 2000 hours total flying time
 - 6) 200 hours total flying time in the aircraft to be used
 - 7) 20 hours flying time in the past 90 days in the aircraft type to be used
 - 8) Three instrument approaches and three night landings in the previous 90 days
- b. Copilot
- 1) Commercial Pilot Certificate with current second class medical with multi-engine and instrument ratings
 - 2) Training in the aircraft type to be used at Flight Safety International, Simuflite Training International, or equivalent aircraft manufacturer's training within the past 12 months
 - 3) 1500 hours total flying time
 - 4) 100 hours total flying time in the aircraft to be used
 - 5) 10 hours flying time in the past 90 days in the aircraft type to be used
 - 6) Three instrument approaches and three night landings in the previous 90 days
3. Maintenance
- a. Inspection and maintenance must be performed by an appropriately rated FAA certified repair station, the manufacturer or a manufacturer authorized service center (no Aircraft and Powerplant Mechanic signoffs)
 - b. Maintenance personnel (or at least the person signing the log books) must be appropriately rated and trained to maintain the aircraft type to be used by either Flight Safety International or Simuflite Training International within the previous five years
 - c. Charter aircraft used according to this policy must be maintained under the appropriate FAA operations specifications.
4. Operation
- a. On all light turboprop and light jet aircraft, weight and balance computations using average passenger weights are prohibited. A weight and balance form must be completed for each flight using actual weight figures for passengers (no quick weight and balance using normal passenger weights)
 - b. No over-weight or out of center of gravity operation shall be allowed.
 - c. No aircraft may depart into forecast hazardous weather conditions, such as severe icing, thunderstorms or severe turbulence or wind shear. Additionally, in no case will the pilot fly if weather conditions do not meet the standards of the pilot's and co-pilot's certification.
 - d. No circling instrument approaches shall be authorized with ceilings less than 1,000 feet and at least three miles visibility

- e. All flights shall be conducted on an instrument flight plan. No passengers may enter the cockpit or distract pilots when the aircraft is below 10,000 feet on takeoff or landing operations
- f. Aircraft should be hangered whenever possible during inclement weather.
- g. No aircraft used for team transportation may be piloted by a team member
- h. All flight operations must be conducted in accordance with all relevant FAA regulations or insurance requirements, whichever is stricter.

C. Air Transportation Charter Services (Specific requirements)

1. All charter services procured shall be subject to the involvement of that university's Purchasing Department
2. Every charter company used must have and demonstrate evidence of a current air carrier certificate under FAA Part 135 or 121
3. The university institutional aviation consultant shall assure the Director of Athletics or designee that written verification has been received for all charter flights from the FAA Flight Standards District Office (FSDO) that an Air Carrier Operating Certificate has been filed and is being maintained in good standing

IX. LEARNING/STUDY ABROAD GUIDELINES

See individual University websites for up to date information.

University of Houston:

<https://www.uh.edu/learningabroad/>

University of Houston – Downtown:

<https://www.uhd.edu/academics/international/Pages/international-index.aspx>

University of Houston – Clear Lake:

<https://www.uhcl.edu/academics/study-abroad/>

University of Houston – Victoria

<https://www.uhv.edu/study-abroad/>

X. FAILURE TO COMPLY

Failure to comply with these requirements may result in one or more of the following actions:

- Departmental suspension of student travel
- Restrictions against specific students from participating in future group travel
- Student disciplinary action in accordance with University policy
- Employee disciplinary action in accordance with University policy