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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Guide - This guide combines University of Houston System and University of Houston-Clear Lake travel rules in accordance with the State of Texas Travel Management Program (STMP).

1.1.1 STMP negotiates and administers statewide contracts with travel suppliers including travel card systems, airlines, rental car companies, lodging providers, and travel agencies through their procurement staff.

1.2 Definition – Travel is a broadly defined activity that encompasses planning, reservations, booking, budgeting, payment, reimbursement, documentation and Visa elements.

1.3 State Funds – NO travel is permitted using state funds.

2. GENERAL PROVISIONS

2.1 Authority - Travel regulations are set by the Texas State Legislature and are published in TexTravel under the State Travel Management Program (STMP) tab, which is available here.

2.2 The Basics

2.2.1 University Business Purpose – An employee may be reimbursed for certain travel expenses when they conduct official UHCL business. The reimbursable amount is limited by Chapter 660 of the Texas Government Code General Appropriations Act, and rules adopted by the Comptroller. The travel purpose must clearly demonstrate official university business, consistent with the university’s legal authority.

*Travel expenses incurred for personal reasons are neither payable nor reimbursable*

2.2.2 Cost-Effective Itinerary – UHCL must minimize travel expenses by ensuring that each travel arrangement is the most cost-effective instead of mileage if it is the less expensive option. Texas Government Code Section 660.007.

- EXAMPLE: If the traveler selects a distant airport instead of a local one because of flight availability then they should use a rental car instead of a personal vehicle to get there. The personal mileage cost is typically higher than an auto rental.

2.2.3 UHCL Duty of Care

- Train employees on travel regulations and keep them informed of any changes in travel rules.
- Ensure that Concur training is included in annual mandatory training for all travel card holders
- Review all travel reimbursements prior to payment to ensure compliance with all applicable regulations and limitations.
- An employee must immediate reimburse UHCL for any overpayment.
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Overpayment is defined as (a) receipt of a reimbursement which exceeds the limits established by law, (b) duplicate reimbursement(s), or (c) non-reimbursable expenses paid in error.

3. **PROCESS**

3.1 **Travel Request (R)**

3.1.1 **Necessity** – A UHCL travelers on official university business must initiate a Travel Request (R) before the trip to justify business benefit(s), employee absences and estimated costs.

- **EXAMPLE** – If traveling for a conference, please include the official agenda; meals included in the conference are not separately reimbursable.
- **EXAMPLE** – The approved Travel Request and supporting documentation must be attached in Concur.

3.1.2 **Purpose of Travel** – The R should (a) clearly describe the university business, (b) why the trip is necessary as a function of the employee’s duties, and (c) how the trip will benefit the university.

- **EXAMPLE** – If an employee presents a paper, they would include the title and topic. Or, if the employee is an officer or committee member of a professional organization or group, they should include this detail.
  *Acronyms must be clearly defined*

3.1.3 **Approvals via Concur** – Traveler, Supervisor

- For Grant Funding: Office of Sponsored Programs
- For Foreign Travel:
  - Sr. VP/Provost

3.2 **Booking a Trip**

3.2.1 **Before Purchasing Travel** – No travel may be booked until an approved request in Concur.

*Candidates are an exception to the Travel PO requirement*

3.2.2 **UHCL Travel Office Booking** – Travelers have the option to apply for a UHCL Travel Card by filling out the Travel Card packet located on our UHCL Travel Website. A UHCL travel card is a revolving credit card offered to UHCL employees to use for all Business-related travel expenses.

- Receipts are required for all purchases
- Travel cards are not issued to students
3.2.3 Traveler Books Independently and is Reimbursed – The second option available to travelers is to purchase approved accommodations using personal funds, then creating a Travel Expense Report for reimbursement within 60 days of travel completion.
3.3 General Reimbursement Rules

3.3.1 50% Rule - When >50% of trip days are primarily personal versus business the traveler will not be reimbursed for domestic travel to/from the destination. Each day is evaluated by the travel office to determine whether it was business or personal. Treas. Regs, 1.162-2, 1.212-1, 1.274-4, and IRS Pub 463.

3.3.2 Local Overnight Lodging – If an employee requests local, overnight lodging unrelated to additional same-trip travel then pre-approval is required from the Associate Vice President of Business Operations prior to generating a TA.

Local counties in the Houston/Galveston area: (see local travel map)

- Brazoria
- Chambers
- Wharton
- Fort Bend
- Galveston
- Montgomery
- Harris
- Liberty
- Waller

3.3.3 Travel Expense Reports

- 60-Day Rule - Employees must submit their expense report in Concur no later than 60 days after travel is completed. Expense Reports submitted after 60 days will be treated as taxable income [domestic travel]. When submitting an expense report after 60 days, a completed Exhibit B Form must also be attached. The 60-day rule does not apply to blanket mileage.

3.4 Receipts

3.4.1 Stay Organized - Expenses without corresponding receipts will not be reimbursed. Please keep track of them while traveling. Hotel/lodging receipts must show a $0 balance to be reimbursed. Tips are limited to 20% of the bill.

4. DOMESTIC TRAVEL

4.1 Airfare

4.1.1 Lowest Price – Please purchase coach class. Under UHS SAM 03.A.03 the UHCL President or his/her designee may upgrade airfare to business or first class.

4.1.2 Local Funds – Any upgrade from coach must be paid with local funds.

4.1.3 Baggage – UHCL will reimburse the fee on the first bag only. Excess baggage or weight charges are not reimbursable.
4.1.4 **Flight Change** – Any airline fees for a flight change are reimbursable if the change was due to a UHCL business reason, personal emergency or natural disaster.

4.1.5 **Distant Departures** – If the total cost of airfare plus round-trip cost of rental car from an airport outside Houston metro is less than a 14-21 day advance ticket from Houston metro then it is reimbursable. If it is more, then it will not be reimbursed.

4.1.6 **Cancelled Trips** – If the air ticket is refundable then either the traveler will be credited by the airline on their credit card, or UHCL will be credited on theirs. If the air ticket is non-refundable then it must be used for UHCL business within one year from the purchase date. If the airline charges a fee to reticket then see 4.1.4 above.

4.2 **Lodging**

4.2.1 **Overnight in Texas** – If your UHCL business activity occurs outside the Houston/Galveston metro area then you may be reimbursed for hotel/lodging. Please bring a Texas Hotel Occupancy Tax Exemption form for check-in; we do not pay hotel room tax in Texas since we are exempt. Hotel receipts MUST show a zero balance.

4.2.2 **Higher Lodging Expense** – Any upgrade in room rates must be paid from local funds. Indicate if the hotel room rate is higher than state or federal allowed GSA rate by marking the “excess lodging” checkbox on the TA. This applies to both in-state and out-of-state travels.

4.2.3 **Day Before/Day After Event** – Hotel/lodging costs for the day before or the day after a UHCL business event are reimbursable. However, if the attendee departs on a return flight on the last day of the event and also has a hotel room charge for that night then we will not reimburse the room charge for that last night since they did not intend to stay for the night, and may merely have kept the room as a convenience. We are obliged to use the most cost-effective travel plans, including lodging.

4.3 **Meals**

4.3.1 **Overnight in Texas** - An employee traveling overnight within Texas may be reimbursed for meal expenses incurred on days when the employee conducts official UHCL business outside of the Houston / Galveston metro area (see UHCL travel regional map). Travel within the business day with no overnight stay is not entitled to meal reimbursement.

- **Limit** – Daily 24-hour [from 12:01am] reimbursement is limited to the federal general services administration [GSA] maximum allowable per diem rates by location.
- **Meal Receipts** – Receipts are not required. Meals must be itemized daily as breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Snacks, if purchased, should be included with the respective meal; they cannot be reimbursed separately.

4.3.2 **Overnight Continental US** – See 4.3.1 Limits and Receipts
4.3.3 *Overnight Alaska, Hawaii, Canada, Mexico, Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands – See 4.3.1 Limits and Receipts*

4.4 **Mileage, Parking & Tolls** – Employees are entitled to reimbursement for mileage expenses incurred when using their personal vehicle for UHCL business. Mileage for commuting between the home and work location is not reimbursable. If the employee leases a vehicle and the lease calls for mileage charges in addition to the daily lease rate, then we will reimburse for that mileage as well.

4.4.1 *Limit* – Mileage reimbursement will be based on Concur map documented miles from the regular work location, at the annual, applicable IRS rate per mile. However, if UHCL business trip mileage is less from the home location than the work location then the employee should use it instead. And if the regular work location is off-UHCL campus then mileage to the UHCL campus for UHCL business [meetings, deliveries, pick-ups] is reimbursable with appropriate support.

4.4.2 *Route* – The employee must use the most cost-effective route for auto travel even when multiple stops are required.

4.4.3 **Airport Mileage** – Mileage occurring during an employee’s regular work schedule is reimbursed using the regular office location. Mileage occurring before or after an employee’s regular work hours is reimbursable using the employee’s confirmed residence address.

4.4.4 **Third Party** – Should another individual drive the employee back and forth from the residence to the airport for a business trip, then reimbursement is limited to what economy or terminal parking costs would have been if the employee had driven to the airport and parked there for the length of their trip.

- **EXAMPLE** – Using 2002 IRS mileage rates, 2 round-trips to Intercontinental Airport (IAH) are reimbursed at $102.00. 2 round-trips to Hobby Airport (HOU) are reimbursed at $40.88.
- Using 2022 DAILY PARKING rates (before tax), IAH economy parking is $6.47 - $8.31 per day; terminal parking is $24-26 per day. VALET parking is not permitted. And HOU is $9.24 economy and $24 terminal parking. VALET parking is not permitted.
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4.4.5 **Personal Liability** – UHCL is not liable for reimbursing an employee for any accident or vehicle damage that occurs when the employee uses their own vehicle for University business other than a worker’s compensation claim should injury occur to the employee during the course and scope of discharging their duties.

4.4.6 **Parking** – Employees will be reimbursed for all parking expenses when picking up or dropping off State employees or candidates. Please make sure you submit receipts for each day.

4.4.7 **Tolls** – Receipts are required for reimbursement of tolls paid while driving on UHCL business whether in a personal vehicle or leased auto.

4.5 **Auto Rentals** – Travelers must use current State of Texas contracted vendors for auto rental unless there are no vendors available on the state contract, or an alternate vendor offers a lower total cost available to the general public.

**Vehicle Rental Tax Exemption Certificate**

4.5.1 **Size** – Rental cars should be full-size or smaller.

4.5.2 **Limits** – If using a non-contracted vendor, reimbursement is limited to the State contract rate.

4.5.3 **Insurance** – The Loss Damage Waiver is included in the State contract and is not reimbursable. No other/extra insurance is reimbursable.

4.6 **Business Incidentals** – Sample list below, not exhaustive list but reimbursable. Please check with Travel for other situations.

- Hotel taxes – Occupancy, local
- Money order costs
- Passport, Visa, Inoculations for foreign travel
- Postage for business
- Sales and Use taxes if exemption not honored
- Medical evacuation insurance
- Laundry services for trips longer than 1 week
- Currency exchange fee
4.7 **Non-Business Incidentals** – These expenses will not be reimbursed. This is not an exhaustive list. Please check with Travel if you are not sure.

- Non-business expenses of any type
- Excess baggage
- Alcoholic beverages [not pre-approved by the President]
- Kennel expenses

4.8 **Hotel Taxes** – Travelers are tax exempt for any Texas hotel occupancy sales tax but must still pay local, city, or county hotel taxes. They should present a completed Hotel Tax Exemption form when they check in. When traveling outside of Texas, travelers must pay ALL occupancy, local, city and state hotel taxes and will be reimbursed for them.

4.9 **United States Cruises**

4.9.1 **General** – The convention, seminar, or meeting must be directly related to UHCL business and all of the ports of call must be within the United States or Unites States possessions. The ship must be registered as a US vessel.

4.9.2 **TA Attachment** – Please attach a written statement to your TA that details (a) the total days of the trip [excluding travel to and from embarkation point], (b) the daily business activities and associated hours related to same, and (c) a program of cruise activities that show nexus to the business purpose of the trip.

4.9.3 **Limits** – Up to $2000 annually (per traveler/per calendar year) per IRS Pub 463.

5. **FOREIGN TRAVEL**

5.1 **General Information**

5.1.1 **40-Days** – Traveler’s department ensures that employee is already set up as a vendor in PeopleSoft.

5.1.2 **40-Days** – Complete an Export Controls form and CITI Export Controls training certificate. Ensure that signatures are obtained from the Office of Sponsored Programs before filling out a TA.

5.1.3 **30-Days** – If export controls review is satisfactory then the President, Provost or respective Vice President must approve any travel to a foreign country.

5.1.4 **Budgeting** – All travel, and foreign travel in particular, should be budgeted before the R is submitted.

5.1.5 **College or Department Administrator** – Reviews and approves the trip Concur. No state fund may be used to pay for foreign travel. If using
a federal fund then please complete a Fly America Act Checklist in addition to the Export Control Form. If foreign travel is at no cost to UHCL then a R is still required.

5.1.6 **Travel Office** – The Travel Office will assist the department with any remaining itinerary details or questions before travel takes place. The Travel Office may book airfare on the traveler’s behalf. After travel has occurred, the Travel Office will audit every reimbursement request submitted through the Concur to ensure that receipts are attached, costs are in line with limits, and calculations are correct.

5.1.7 **US State Department** – Please always check the US Department of State Travel pages for alerts and Visa services

5.1.8 **Travel Funds** – Travel for certain faculty selected by each department where only a pre-set portion of the trip is reimbursable with local University funds. The traveler is expected to cover the remainder of the cost, should there by any, with personal fund.

5.2 **Reimbursement** – Foreign travel requires substantial documentation and receipts for many different types of transactions.

5.2.1 **Paying with Local Funds** – Submit an expense report in Concur with itemized lodging receipt(s), and meals receipts if you are requesting actual instead of GSA per diem reimbursement. Actual expenses which exceed the per diem rate may be reimbursed with local funds. Foreign currency conversion costs are reimbursable but receipts for those transactions are required.

- If the room rate exceeds GSA, show a combined GSA + excess rate on single line of expense report
- Room taxes should be shown on a separate line.

5.2.2 **Paying with Grant Funds** – Please check with the Office of Sponsored Programs. Certain sponsors require the use of fund codes 5104, 5016, 5107 or 5018.

5.3 **Special Travel Office Support** –

5.3.1 **Groups** - If you require special travel planning for groups please forward an itinerary to the Travel Office. They will assist in purchasing air travel, car rental, or foreign travel.

5.4 **Meals**

5.4.1 **Actual Receipts** - Actual meal receipts are required. Meals are reimbursed for any overnight stay. Federal GSA meal rates do not apply. Receipts must be converted to U.S. dollars and itemized daily, showing the conversion rate applicable.

5.5 **Incidentals**

5.5.1 **Types** –
• Incidentals include mileage, luggage handling, maid service, taxi charges, rental cars, event registration, etc. Receipts are required for every expense. Hotel/lodging receipts should show a zero balance at check-out. Tips are limited to 20%.

• Telephone call reimbursement requests must show the business purpose for each call.

• Books, tapes, recordings and other media materials purchased at or for the conference are the property of UHCL and not the employee.

• Supplies and materials purchased to develop or prepare a conference or seminar presentation must be processed through normal purchasing channels and are not reimbursable through the travel office.

5.6 Hotel Taxes

5.6.1 Reimbursable - Travelers are tax exempt for any Texas hotel occupancy sales tax but must still pay local, city, county or foreign hotel taxes.

5.6.2 Reporting - When traveling out-of-state, the entire amount of tax charged should be fully paid and is reimbursable. This expense must be noted as “hotel tax” separate from the hotel room on your expense report.

6. CONFERENCES

6.1 Conference payments – Departments may register and pay for conference participation directly via P-card, or indirectly via PeopleSoft voucher. If by voucher then accounts payable will process the payment. Both methods of payment require an agenda that documents the conference, dates, location, meals, and activities.

6.1.1 Employee paid – When an individual employee registers and pays for a conference with their personal credit card they will be reimbursed after the conference by submitting an expense report with documentation.

6.1.2 Extracurricular activities – Meals that are not included in the conference are considered extracurricular. If reimbursement is requested then these costs are included in the daily GSA limit. Social activities unrelated to the conference, such as golf, sightseeing, etc. are not reimbursable.

6.2 Shared Lodging

6.2.1 Shared - If employees share a hotel room, and the room is charged as a double occupancy then each must obtain their own pro rata receipt/folio. The folio must have the person’s name, room, date(s) of stay, and charges.

6.2.2 Receipts – If the hotel does not provide separate receipts, the one receipt must show all occupant names, room number, dates of stay, and all charges.

6.2.3 Mixed guests – If an employee shares a hotel room with a non-UHCL employee or non-state employee and the charge is for a double
occupancy room, then UHCL will only reimburse at the single occupancy rate.

6.3 Split Payment

6.3.1 Multiple payment types – If the guest or guests offer multiple payments, then that should be reflected on the folio/receipt. For example: cash, credit cards, check. Each traveler may claim their pro rata portion of the total lodging cost including any taxes.

6.3.2 Limits – If the pro rata portion exceeds the daily GSA Per Diem rate (higher lodging), then the TA excess lodging box must be checked.

6.4 Lost Receipt – When the employee has lost their hotel receipt, they must obtain a faxed or emailed copy from the hotel. This substitute receipt must show proof and method of payment.

7. PACKAGES – for UHCL Business

7.1 Definition – A package typically means meals, lodging, transportation, incidental, and registration fees.

7.2 Expense Reporting – Separately state the cost of each element included in the package.

7.2.1 Reimbursement – Each element is reimbursable only to the extent it would be payable or reimbursable had it not been included in the package.

7.3 Meals and lodging

7.3.1 Meals – Meals are typically included in travel packages. They should be included as part of the registration fee for conferences. Use the same account number as the registration fee.

7.4 Itemize – Show the cost for each element included in the package. In addition, a receipt from the seller of the package and any other receipts received must be included in the documentation. The receipts must be complete and show proof and method of payment.

8. OTHER

8.1 Organization Membership Fees – Submit these on a voucher, not a travel expense report. Departments decide the memberships they need, based on budgeted funding.

8.2 Candidates
Candidate employee travel expenses are processed the same way as faculty and staff. Prospective Employees will not have access to Concur but may have a delegate assigned. Should the prospective employee expect to be reimbursed for any travel expenses a candidate needs to be set up as a vendor in PaymentWorks. To do this, a Vendor Invite will need to be sent to the candidate’s personal email address. Once the PaymentWorks process has been completed and a Vendor ID has been generated, the candidate may receive reimbursement. Signature is not required on the TA, but the supervisor or designee must approve the TA.

8.2.1 Airfare

Please make candidate travel arrangements through the Travel Office. Spousal airfare is reimbursable if approved by the appropriate Vice President. These expenses are taxable income to the candidate.

8.2.2 Hotel Accommodations

Contact the Travel office to make Hotel accommodations for candidates.

8.3 Student Travel

8.3.1 Limits - Student Travel on states funds is prohibited.

8.3.2 Procedures

- **Student** – Same as faculty/staff process. However, Travel Cards will not be issued to students.

- **Student Worker/Employee** – A travel request is required by the sponsoring department. Use “Domestic Student Travel” or “Foreign Student Travel” descriptors on R.

- **Travel Expense Report** – Student must be setup as a vendor through PaymentWorks for reimbursement. All receipts are required for reimbursement. Expense report must be submitted within 2 weeks of return date or financial hold can be placed on student’s account with UHCL.

8.3.3 Receipts

- **Airfare passenger receipt** – Receipt required.

- **Lodging receipts** – Receipt required. See shared lodging above, if applicable.

- **Lodging** – Limited to GSA Domestic Per Diem Rates. If requesting a higher rate please check the excess lodging box on the TA.
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- **Meals** – Students and student-workers are required to submit actual receipts for meals to ensure that we uphold cost-effective strategies. Student workers are eligible for actual meal reimbursement when these expenses are less than GSA domestic per diem rates. For In-State travel, if a location is not listed, the standard rate applies.

- **Public transportation** – Receipts are required for bus or train.

- **Registration** – Receipt required. Social events are not reimbursable unless approved by a Dean or Department Head in advance of travel, justified on the travel expense report and local account used. Conference agenda must be submitted.

- **Rental Vehicle** – Receipt required. Use State-approved and contracted vendors.

- **Taxi/Parking** – Receipts are required for taxi use or auto parking and must be itemized on the expense report.

- **Tips** – Tips are reimbursable as part of the meal expense and cannot exceed 20% maximum.

9. **TIP SHEET** (see link for full document)