

# UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-CLEAR LAKE

## TRAVEL GUIDELINES



University  
of Houston  
Clear Lake

Effective September 01, 2020

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# UHCL TRAVEL GUIDELINES

## 1. INTRODUCTION

These guidelines are a compilation of University of Houston System Travel Policy and University of Houston-Clear Lake rules in accordance with the State of Texas Travel Management Program (STMP).

As part of the State Travel Management Program (STMP), Texas Procurement and Support Services (TPASS) staff negotiate and administer statewide contracts with travel suppliers including travel card systems, airlines, rental car companies, lodging providers, and travel agencies. For more information, see the [State Travel Management Program \(STMP\) on Window on State Government](#).

The UHCL Travel Guidelines will serve as a reference. Periodically, updated materials on travel will be featured on the travel web page to replace outdated materials. Most forms mentioned in these guidelines can be downloaded from websites. Additional travel-related information is available in the latest issue of "TexTravel," copy of which is available on the website at <https://fmx.cpa.state.tx.us/fmx/travel/texttravel>.

### 1.1 General Provisions

#### 1.1.1 Authority

Travel regulations are established by the State Legislature and are published in TexTravel, under the State Travel Management Program (STMP) tab, which is available on the website at <http://www.window.state.tx.us/procurement/prog/stmp/>.

### 1.2 Conservation of University Funds

#### 1.2.1 Requirements

- A **university employee** is entitled to reimbursement of certain travel expenses required by the employing agency to conduct official university business. The amount of reimbursement is subject to certain limitations as prescribed by Chapter 660 of the Texas Government Code, the General Appropriations Act and rules adopted by the **Comptroller**.
- A **state agency including universities** must minimize the amount of travel expenses reimbursed by ensuring that each travel arrangement is the most cost-effective considering all relevant circumstances. Texas Government Code Section 660.007

#### 1.2.2 University and Employee Responsibilities

- The university must properly train employees on travel regulations and keep them informed of any changes in travel rules.
- The university must ensure that all travel reimbursements are examined prior to payment to ensure compliance with all applicable regulations and limitations.
- Employees must ensure that their travel complies with applicable laws and rules and must not seek reimbursement for travel expenses that the employee should reasonably know are not reimbursable. Failure to comply will result in delayed reimbursement or rejection of the

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traveler's expense report.

- A university employee shall immediately reimburse the university of an overpayment. An overpayment is an employee's receipt of a reimbursement that exceeds the limits established by law, duplicate reimbursement(s), or the non-reimbursable expenses actually incurred while on business for the university (ex: personal expenses).

## 1.2.3 Official University Business

The **university** may reimburse a **travel expense** only if the purpose of the travel clearly involves official university business and is consistent with the university's legal authority.

Travel expenses incurred for personal reasons are not payable or reimbursable.

## 1.2.4 Participation in TexTravel

The Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts created Textravel to provide information on travel laws and rules to state agencies and institutions of higher education. Textravel is based on Texas Government Code Chapter 660, General Appropriations Act, Article IX, Part 5, and Texas Administrative Code, Title 34, Part 1, Chapter 5, Subchapter C, Section 5.22.

## 1.2.5 Agencies' authority to adopt internal travel policies

A **state agency or university** may specify a **travel expense** reimbursement rate that is less than the maximum rate allowed by law only after notifying the affected individuals in writing. Agencies are solely responsible for enforcing their own internal policies.

## 2. TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION (TA)

Any employee of University of Houston-Clear Lake (UHCL) who travels on official business must have an advance approval on a Travel Authorization (TA) form before a trip is taken. Approval of travel prior to the expenses being incurred is a University of Houston System regulation. The TA along with the Travel PO encumbrance in PeopleSoft Finance provides a record of those approvals. To obtain the most current form visit the Travel website at: <http://prtl.uhcl.edu/travel>.

### 2.1 Purpose of Travel

A complete statement of how the travel relates to official business must be on the TA. Traveler must state why the trip is necessary in the performance of his/her duties as a university employee. "Attending a meeting" is not an acceptable reason or purpose for making a trip.

Employee must participate in some specific manner in which he/she will directly facilitate the function of the university and provide a reasonable, substantial, and direct relationship between the purpose of the meeting and the accomplishment of his/her duties. In addition, a statement as to how this trip benefits the university must be included.

If a paper is to be presented, the title or at least the topic should be indicated. If

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serving on a committee or as an officer of an organization or professional group, this should be specifically noted. If an acronym is used in the purpose of travel it should be identified at least once on the TA.

## 2.2 Travels at No Expense to UHCL

Caution must be exercised to avoid potential or apparent conflicts of interest. In every case of this nature, the employee must specify the source of funding for the travel expense. Also, where official absence is involved, the purpose of the trip must justify the time spent as being in keeping with the functions of the university and the purpose for which the individual is employed. Therefore, the traveler should obtain approval even if there is no expense to the university in order to document the purpose of the trip. This approval should be kept within the department.

## 2.3 Procedure

### 2.3.1 Travel Authorization:

Prior to travel, a TA form must be completed estimating funds to be encumbered for airfare, lodging, meals, taxi, parking and incidentals. If attending a conference, the agenda must be included in the TA supporting documentation. The approved TA and supporting documentation must be uploaded to the Travel Purchase Order (PO) in PeopleSoft Finance.

If 50% or more trip days are primarily personal versus business, traveler will not be reimbursed for domestic travel to/from destination. See [US Treasury Regulations](#), Subchapter A, Sections 1.162-2, 1.212-1, and 1.274-4, which are summarized in [IRS Publication 463](#), Travel Entertainment, Gift, and Car Expenses.

The TA is also used for the following:

- Student Travel (See Student Travel-Section 16)
- Prospective Employees
- Guests of the University

### 2.3.2 Signatures on TA:

#### Required Signatures:

1. Traveler
2. Supervisor
3. For Grant Funding: Office of Sponsored Programs
4. For Foreign Travel (one of the following):
  - President;
  - Sr. VP/Provost;
  - VP for traveler's division/area

#### Optional Signatures:

1. Business Administrator (CBA/DBA official approval will be in PS Finance)

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when they approve/dispatch the Travel PO)

2. Dean/Department Head

## **2.3.3 Multiple Travelers & Higher Lodging Approvals:**

Multiple travelers and higher lodging approvals have been delegated to the Department level and must be indicated on the TA. If excess lodging is approved, check the appropriate box on the TA.

If known, the number of employees traveling to the same duty point should be disclosed and indicated with the necessity of the employee attending same duty point (i.e., to obtain certification, etc.)

## **2.3.4 Encumbrance Process**

Once the TA has been approved, the funds must be encumbered by the department in PeopleSoft Finance. Use the Travel Purchase Order Instructions to do this. Be sure to upload the approved TA and all supporting documentation.

## **2.3.5 Special Requests to the Travel Office:**

Send a copy of the TA with the Travel PO# added to the travel office to purchase airfare for the traveler and attach the trip's itinerary (airline, flight numbers and travel dates). Travel will purchase the airfare on the itinerary. Additionally, if the traveler needs a hotel TAP card or would like to arrange a rental car, or needs assistance with foreign travel, send a copy of the TA with the Travel PO # with the request.

## **2.3.6 Foreign Travel:**

In the case of Foreign Travel, the President, Sr. VP/Provost, or the respective VP of the traveler's division/area must approve the travel to a foreign country by signing the TA. A Travel Authorization form with Foreign Travel designated must be completed thirty days pre-trip for all foreign travel funded and unfunded. State funds are not allowed on foreign travel. See Section 4 for more information on Foreign Travel.

## **2.3.7 Export Controls and Travel Embargo Form:**

The Export Controls and Travel Embargo form must be completed and processed before starting any other paperwork. The form is for UHCL to conduct an export control evaluation and ensure the traveler is in compliance with Export Controls.

## **2.3.8 Travel by Cruise Ship**

UHCL follows the IRS ruling (Publication 463) regarding travel by cruise ship which allows up to \$2,000 per year. In order to be eligible, the following requirements must be met.

- The convention, seminar, or meeting is directly related to university business.
- The cruise ship is a vessel registered in the United States.

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- All of the cruise ship's ports of call are in the United States or in possessions of the United States.
- A written statement is attached to your TA that includes information about:
  - The total days of the trip (not including the days of transportation to and from the cruise ship port),
  - The number of hours each day that you will be devoting to scheduled activities that relate to university business, and
  - A program of the scheduled university business activities of the meeting.

## 2.3.9 Overnight Stay in Houston/Galveston Area

Reimbursement for an overnight stay must be the most advantageous to the university, when cost and other factors are considered. Circumstances may occur where overnight hotel accommodations may be required within the employee's designated headquarters (Houston/Galveston area). In order for reimbursement in these special circumstances, written approval from the Associate Vice President of Business Operations must be received prior to processing the Travel Authorization (TA). When requesting an exception, an agenda of the conference must be provided along with the justification. Decisions will be made based on the most prudent use of university funds.

### **Examples (not all-inclusive) of exceptions to the rule:**

- Employee with special needs
- Mandatory attendance by employee for early and/or late-night training

### **If an exception is given, the reimbursement:**

- Must use local funds.
- Will be taxable in its entirety, if it is within the Houston/Galveston area.

### **Below is a list of counties in the Houston/Galveston area:**

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

## 2.3.10 Car Rental

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Travelers are required to use the State of Texas car rental contracts no matter the source of funds unless:

- 1) there are no contract vendors available; or
- 2) a non-contract vendor offers a lower total cost that is available to the general public.

If a traveler does not use the state car rental contracts, the reimbursement will be limited to an amount equal to the contract amount. Loss Damage Waiver is included in the state contract rate and will not be reimbursed. No additional insurance is reimbursable. When renting a vehicle larger than a full-size car, justification must be provided.

## 2.3.11 Airfare

All airfare for UHCL employees, prospective employees and university guests must be purchased at the lowest price available (i.e., coach class). If an exception is needed as allowed in [UHS SAM 03.A.03](#), the UHCL President is authorized to upgrade airfare to business class or first class to be paid with local funds. If the President is not available for the approval, the Vice President of Administration and Finance or Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost are his/her designee.

## 2.3.12 TAP Card (Hotel Credit Card)

On request, the university issues TAP cards which are one-time use credit cards to be used for hotel room expenses only. Room expense does not include phone, Wi-Fi, parking, room service, etc.; only hotel room charge and taxes. The traveler must request a TAP card at a minimum ten business days in advance of their trip. University TAP cards are not issued to students.

## 2.4 Travel with No TA

An Expense Report must be prepared even though there is no TA.

If traveler did not have prior approval from their supervisor, then their Dean or Department Head send a memo to the Associate VP of Business Operations explaining why travel guidelines were not followed and what steps they will take to ensure this does not happen again. Once the AVP approves, the approval should be submitted with the expense report and supporting documents.

## 2.5 Travel – No TA Required

TA is not required for a travel reimbursement that is for: non-overnight trips if there are no funds involved.

## 3. NO FOREIGN TRAVEL ON STATE FUNDS

No foreign travel **is allowed** using State funds.

## 4. FOREIGN TRAVEL ON LOCAL FUNDS

### 4.1 Approval

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The President, Sr. VP/Provost or the respective VP for the traveler's division/area must approve foreign travel by university employees for which expenses will be reimbursed with non-state funds. A Travel Authorization form with Foreign Travel designated must be completed thirty (30) days pre-trip for all foreign travel. Travel without a 30 day pre-approval may not be allowed.

Procedure to request permission for foreign travel:

- All required travel paperwork has to be processed and the travel must be approved by the President, Sr. VP/Provost, or VP for their division/area on the Travel Authorization form with Foreign Travel designated before traveler can book airfare, hotel, etc.
- Complete an Export Controls and Travel Embargo Form
- If using federal funds, a Fly America Act Waiver Checklist must be completed.

The foreign travel package includes the above items and is required for obtaining proper approval for Foreign Travel.

- If travel to a foreign country is at **NO COST** to the university, the travel paperwork for foreign travel is **still** required. This approval should be kept within the department.

## 4.2 Foreign Travel Encumbrance Process:

Once the TA has been approved, the funds must be encumbered in PeopleSoft Finance by the department. Use the Travel Purchase Order Instructions to do this. Be sure to upload the approved TA and all supporting documentation.

## 4.3 Foreign Travel Reimbursement Process:

Submit expense report with the Travel PO #, to the travel office with the required documents listed below:

- Lodging is reimbursed at actual expense. A complete itemized receipt is required.
- Meals are reimbursed at **actual expense** or **per diem allocation**. Only one reimbursement method can be used each trip.
  1. **Actual Expense:** Meal receipts are required if claiming actual expense. Meals must be itemized daily on travel expense report.
  2. **Per Diem Allocation:** Foreign per diem allocation can be found at: [UHCL allowance](#). If a country is not listed on the UHCL list, GSA rates will apply.
- Foreign currency conversions are to be done and submitted with expense report. All USD conversions must be documented.

## 4.3 Helpful link for foreign travel:

- [U.S. Department of State Travel Warnings, Alerts, & Visa Services](#)

**NOTE: For Foreign Student Travel on Local Funds see Student Travel (Section 16)**

## 5. TRAVEL USING GRANT FUND CODES

Certain grant sponsors require that state rules are followed for travel using the following fund codes: 5014, 5016, 5017 and 5018. Please refer to the state rules in this document when traveling using these fund codes.



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## 6. TRAVEL EXPENSE REPORT

Each employee who travels on university business will be reimbursed on the basis of actual expenses for meals and lodging **UP TO** a maximum daily amount allowed per GSA Per Diem rates. The State Legislature establishes the maximum daily amount allowed. A copy of GSA Per Diem Rates can be found on the [GSA website](#). Foreign Travel, including Canada and Mexico qualify for actual expenses or per diem as listed at: [Foreign Per Diem](#). UHCL reimburses at actual expenses only and itemized meal receipts are not required for domestic travel, however, travelers should not seek reimbursement for expenses not incurred.

Actual hotel expenses incurred, which exceed the per diem rates specified may be reimbursed from local funds at the discretion of the department. This approval must be noted and approved on the TA to get reimbursed. There is no meal reimbursement for non-overnight stay, but other allowable expenses such as mileage, taxi, rental car, airfare and registration will be reimbursed.

Where applicable, the following information should also be included:

- Receipts for lodging costs-must be itemized receipt and have \$0 balance
- Meals itemized per day (including tips which cannot exceed 20% maximum) – not to exceed daily maximum per diem.
- Receipts for taxi, rental car, and other miscellaneous expenses
- Mileage from point to point destination
- Tips for miscellaneous, i.e. luggage handling and maid service

Reimbursement will not be made for the purchase of alcohol, alcoholic beverages, related taxes or tips.

Complete a travel expense report (be sure to include the Travel PO #) and submit the expense report and supporting documents via email to [TravelOffice@UHCL.edu](mailto:TravelOffice@UHCL.edu) for processing of reimbursement.

Employees must submit their expense report to the travel office no later than 60 days after travel is completed. Requests submitted after 60 days will be treated as taxable income to the payee on domestic travel. When submitting an expense report after 60 days, a completed Exhibit B form must be attached with the expense report. The 60 day rule does not apply to blanket mileage.

## 7. AIRFARE

### 7.1 Airfare Baggage Charge

Some airlines charge a baggage fee for the first checked bag. If the flight is a non-contract flight, a baggage fee may be charged. The university will reimburse the traveler for the fee on the first bag only. Excess baggage charges for personal belongings are not reimbursable.

### 7.2 Cancellation of Flight

If a trip must be cancelled the traveler will receive a credit if ticket is refundable. If

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non-refundable, the value of the ticket will still need to be used for university business. The traveler usually has up to a year from the date of purchase to use the ticket. A change fee may apply. If cancellation of flight was due to a business reason, personal emergency or natural disaster, the change fee is reimbursable and/or payable by the university. Traveler is responsible to pay the fee if any of these reasons do not apply. All other expenses encumbered for the canceled trip should be liquidated when an expense report is submitted to pay for the airfare.

## 7.3 Change of Flight

If flight changes are made a fee may be charged. This is reimbursable and payable only if change was for a business reason, personal emergency or natural disaster. Traveler is responsible for the fee if these reasons do not apply.

## 7.4 Departed from an airport outside your headquarters

The cost of airfare and round-trip mileage for university approved travel from an airport outside your headquarters is reimbursable if the total cost is less than the cost of contracted (if available) or a 14-21 day advance ticket purchase from the airport in your designated headquarters.

## 8. MEALS

### 8.1 Overnight Travel within Texas

An employee is entitled to be reimbursed for meal expenses incurred on days that the employee conducts official university business at a duty point located outside the employee's designated headquarters.

The reimbursement is for actual expenses **UP TO** the daily maximum allowable per the GSA Per Diem rates. This reimbursement limit applies without a carryover from one day to another.

**Case Example:** The daily maximum allowable GSA Per Diem rate is \$54/day. Employee incurs meal expenses of \$38 on day one and \$56 on day two of the trip. Day one reimbursement would be \$38 and day two reimbursement would be \$54.

Meal expenses incurred while traveling to and staying at a duty point the day before and the day after official state business begins and ends at the duty point are reimbursable.

#### Meal Receipt Requirements

Receipts are not required; however, the traveler should not seek reimbursement for expenses not incurred. Meals should be itemized on a daily basis and identified as breakfast, lunch and dinner only. Snacks will need to be designated as one of the above and added in with that meal.

### 8.2 Non-Overnight Travel

There is no reimbursement for meals when employee travels without an overnight stay away from the designated headquarters.

### 8.3 Overnight Travel outside Texas, but within the Continental United States

Out-of-state travel is reimbursed for meal expenses incurred on days that the employee conducts official state business at a duty point located outside the

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employee's designated headquarters. The reimbursement is for actual meal expenses **UP TO** the daily maximum allowable per the GSA Per Diem rates. The daily reimbursement may not exceed the maximum allowable rate for the duty point.

Meal expenses incurred while traveling to and staying at a duty point the day before and the day after official state business begins and ends at the duty point are reimbursable.

## **Meal Receipt Requirements**

Receipts are not required; however, the traveler should not seek reimbursement for expenses not incurred. Meals should be itemized on a daily basis and identified as breakfast, lunch and dinner only. Snacks will need to be designated as one of the above and added in with that meal.

### **8.4 Overnight Travel to Alaska, Hawaii, Canada, Mexico, the U.S. Possessions of Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, and Virgin Islands**

Actual meal expenses are reimbursed for travel to the above areas **UP TO** the daily maximum allowable per the GSA Per Diem rates. The daily reimbursement may not exceed the maximum allowable rate for the duty point.

Meal expenses incurred while traveling to and staying at a duty point the day before and the day after official state business begins and ends at the duty point are reimbursable.

## **Meal Receipt Requirements**

Receipts are not required; however, the traveler should not seek reimbursement for expenses not incurred. Meals should be itemized on a daily basis and identified as breakfast, lunch and dinner only. Snacks will need to be designated as one of the above and added in with that meal.

### **8.5 Meal Expenses for Foreign Travel**

1. Meals are reimbursed at actual expense or the per diem rate as listed at: [UHCL allowance](#) .
2. Meal receipts are not required. If submitted with expense report, all receipts must be converted to U.S. dollars and itemized on a daily basis. Currency conversion rate must be stated on the receipts. **The meal/lodging amounts as listed on Federal website for foreign countries are not applicable**

### **8.6 Business Meals**

Business meals while traveling should be **pre-approved** and employee may be reimbursed for the expense on **a departmental voucher**. The applicable business meal rules apply; names of attendees and purpose of business meal should be documented. Itemized receipt is required.

## **9. LODGING**

### **9.1 Overnight Travel within Texas**

An employee is entitled to be reimbursed for lodging expenses incurred on days that the employee conducts official state business at a duty point located

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outside the employee's designated headquarters. Be sure to have a [Texas Hotel Occupancy Tax Exemption Form](#) with you. More on this exemption in Section 10.

GSA Hotel listings can be obtained by emailing the Travel Office.

Lodging expenses incurred while traveling to and staying at a duty point the day before and the day after official state business begins and ends at the duty point are reimbursable.

## **9.2 Hotel Receipt Requirements within Texas**

1. Original or scanned copy of the original complete lodging receipt with proof and method of payment, with a zero balance, is required.
2. Internet receipt must be complete with proof and method of payment, a zero balance is required.

## **9.3 Overnight Travel outside Texas, but Within the Continental United States**

An employee is entitled to be reimbursed for lodging expenses incurred on days that the employee conducts official state business at a duty point located outside the employee's designated headquarters. GSA per diem rates apply.

## **9.4 Employee Sharing Hotel Room**

When two employees share a hotel room, each individual should obtain their own receipt from the hotel. Receipt should have the person's name and date(s) of the stay. If the hotel does not give separate receipts, one receipt can be obtained where each traveler's name appears on the receipt. The other option is, the receipt shows two forms of payment. The traveler can only claim half of the cost and allowable local taxes of a room. A statement should be written on the receipt stating "only one half of hotel cost is being claimed." If half of daily rate is in excess of total allowed by GSA Per Diem Rates (higher lodging), then approval on TA needs to be noted in order for reimbursement.

Both travelers must process expense reports and claim their half of the expenses. Most hotels will print two bills, each having the correct traveler's name. Sometimes the hotels cannot do this and, in that case, both names should be on one bill. If the hotel cannot provide this or the traveler did not get this done then this will need to be documented.

## **9.5 Hotel Room Shared with Non-State Employee**

When claiming hotel room shared with non-state employee, a statement must be written on hotel receipt indicating double-occupancy rate same as single occupancy if applicable. If rate is higher than single occupancy, only single occupancy rate would be allowed.

## **9.6 Lodging Receipts Requirements**

A receipt issued by a lodging establishment for a lodging expense incurred by a university employee must be included in the supporting documentation for the reimbursement or payment of that expense.

## **9.7 Overnight Travel to Canada, Mexico, the U.S. Possessions of Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, and Virgin Islands**

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An actual expense for lodging is paid to travel to the above areas. Receipt requirements are same as in-state and out-of-state lodging.

All receipts must be converted to U.S. dollars and itemized. Currency conversion rate must be stated on the receipt(s)

## 9.8 Lodging Expenses for Foreign Travel

Lodging expenses are reimbursed at actual expense. Lodging receipt requirements are same as in-state and out-of-state lodging.

All receipts must be converted to U.S. dollars and itemized. Currency conversion rate must be stated on the receipts.

## 9.9 Lost Lodging Receipt Requirements

If a receipt is not available, a faxed or emailed copy from the hotel will be accepted. Receipt must show proof and method of payment.

## 10. HOTEL OCCUPANCY TAX EXEMPTION CERTIFICATE

All employees of UHCL are considered to be employees of an educational organization. As such, they are exempt from paying the state portion of the Hotel Occupancy Tax when traveling in Texas and the [Texas Hotel Occupancy Tax Exemption Certificate](#) must be presented to the hotel. Reimbursements for Texas Hotel Occupancy Tax charged on lodging will be made only in those instances where the traveler attempted to claim exemption as an employee of an educational organization, but was denied by the lodging establishment. A note to this effect must be stated on the expense report naming the lodging establishment that refused to honor this certificate. **This does not apply to guests or students.**

City, county and local taxes on lodging are reimbursable.

When traveling out-of-state, the entire amount of tax charged can be claimed and no exempt form is needed. Tax has to be claimed under "Hotel taxes". Do not include the tax with the lodging amount.

## 11. REQUEST FOR HIGHER LODGING RATE & EXCEPTIONS

Approval for reimbursement for hotel rates higher than the state or federal allowed GSA rates must be indicated on the TA by marking the checkbox for approved excess lodging, provided the difference is paid from a local or discretionary account. This applies to both in-state and out-of-state travels. Higher lodging will not be reimbursed or paid if the checkbox is not marked on the TA.

### 11.1 Expense Report Requirements

When a hotel expense includes higher lodging, the GSA allowable rate and the higher lodging amounts are added together and entered as one line item and submitted on same expense report. (i.e. GSA \$108/night, Higher Lodging \$20/night, total line item \$128). Do not include the local hotel taxes as part of the lodging expense. Local hotel taxes are considered "hotel taxes".

## 12. PACKAGED TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

When a university employee purchases a conference package to be used on university

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business: (meals, lodging, transportation, incidental, and registration fees), the expense report must separately state the cost of each type of travel arrangement included in the package. Each type is payable and/or reimbursable only to the extent it would be payable or reimbursable had it not been included in the package. For example, if a package of travel arrangements included a lodging expense in Texas of \$90 per day, and the GSA allowable is \$80 per day, then only \$80 of the expense is payable or reimbursable.

When the package of travel arrangements includes a registration fee/meals/lodging, or meals and lodging, the mandatory meals and lodging expenses are fully payable and/or reimbursable. Meals and lodging expenses that are not mandatory are payable and/or reimbursable only to the extent they would be payable and/or reimbursable had they not been packaged with a registration fee. (i.e. Registration Fee includes meals and lodging – all is fully payable and reimbursable; Registration Fee does not include meals and lodging – Can only pay or reimburses the GSA allowable rates for meals and lodging)

State the cost of each type of travel arrangement 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.

A meal or lodging expense that is packaged with a registration fee is considered to be part of the registration fee and must be charged to the same account number as the registration fee. A meal or lodging expense that is not mandatory must be stated separately from the registration fee and must be charged to the usual account number for meals and lodging.

## 12.1 Social Events Meals and Activities Cost

- Social event meals that are not included as part of registration can be considered part of the daily GSA allowable meals.
- Social activities unrelated to conference, such as golf, sightseeing, etc. are not reimbursable.

## 12.2 Conference Registration Fees

Advance payment of conference registration fees are charged to a p-card or a voucher is created and sent to Accounts Payable requesting payment directly to the conference organization. Conference registration fees may also be paid directly by the employee. However, employee will only be reimbursed after attending the conference. Claim for reimbursement should be made on an expense report with a copy of receipt and registration form uploaded to expense report. The travel office does not process "Registration Only" reimbursements.

## 12.3 Organizational Membership Fee

Organizational membership fees should be submitted on a voucher and should not be submitted on a travel expense report. In order for an organizational membership fee to be paid, it must have prior approval by the President on the official membership list.

## 12.4 Travel by More than One University Employee to Conferences and Meetings – Multiple Travelers

If more than one employee travels to the same duty point, number of travelers

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and justification must be clearly stated on the Travel Authorization. A Dean or Department Head's approval is required on the TA.

If three (3) or more university employees attend any out-of-state meeting/program or five (5) or more university employees attend any in-state meeting/program, the Dean or Department Head's approval is needed and justification must be clearly stated on the TA.

Multiple travelers must also be noted on the travel expense report with justification.

## 13. MILEAGE

A State employee is entitled to be reimbursed for the mileage incurred during the employee's use of a personally owned or personally leased motor vehicle. Mileage reimbursement to a State employee is inclusive of all expenses associated with the employee's operation of a personally owned or personally leased motor vehicle.

The amount of a mileage reimbursement may not exceed:

- The number of miles traveled as limited by Google Maps; and
- The applicable mileage rate.

### 13.1 Travel Expense Report Requirements:

The supporting documentation for a reimbursement of mileage must show that the travel was by a personally owned or leased motor vehicle.

### 13.2 Mileage Rate

The current mileage reimbursement rate for travel is located on the UHCL travel website.

### 13.3 Using Odometer Reading

The number of reimbursable miles traveled by a university employee may not exceed the number of miles of the most cost-effective route between the origin of the employee's travel and the employee's final destination. If the employee conducts official university business at locations between the origin of the travel and the final destination, the most cost-effective route between the origin and the final destination must include the intermediate locations.

The shortest route between points is presumed to be the most cost-effective route. An employee may request reimbursement for mileage using their odometer readings (starting mileage vs. ending mileage broken down point to point) or by utilizing Google Maps if one of these methods is more cost effective.

If you are traveling to a location and you are staying for a few days, you can claim point-to-point intra-city mileage with point-to-point odometer readings, listing either a physical or descriptive address. A descriptive address can be used when there is not a physical address. This can be listed on a Mileage Log and attached to the travel expense report. Those miles are not reimbursable unless they are properly itemized on a point-to-point basis with point-to-point odometer readings. Traveler may also use the Google Maps website.

**"Point"** means:

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- The entire area within the boundaries of an incorporated municipality, if the origin, intermediate location, or final destination of the travel is within those boundaries, or
- The building, house, highway intersection, or other similarly localized spot where the origin, intermediate location, or final destination of the travel is located, if that spot is not within the boundaries of an incorporated municipality.

## 13.4 Travel Expense Report Requirements:

1. The supporting documentation for a reimbursement of mileage must show that the travel was by a personally owned or leased motor vehicle.
2. If odometer readings are utilized, a mileage log showing the addresses of point-to-point locations must be attached.
3. If Google Maps is used to calculate the mileage, a Google Maps pdf documenting point to point address mileage calculations must be attach to travel expense report.

## 13.5 Out of State Mileage Computation

Mileage to out-of-state duty point is limited to the cost of the contracted average coach airfare unless cost of mileage is less. The quote for the airfare must be obtained 14 - 21 days before the trip is scheduled. If the quote is obtained outside the 14 day window before the trip, the traveler will be limited to half of the quote since it was not obtained as required. A quote on the refundable rate can be used as long as it does not exceed 25% of the cost of the non-refundable rate. Cost comparison is required. The travel office will obtain a comparison airfare quote when auditing the expense report if department has not submitted it.

Travel time allowed for trip by driving a car is limited to a day before conference or event and one day after conference or event. Hotel and meal expenses will be reimbursed for the day before the conference or event and meals will be reimbursed for returning to headquarters after the conference/event. Anything in excess of this is not reimbursable. Comparison must be stated on travel expense report or a spreadsheet attached to the travel expense report to claim reimbursement.

Date	Meals	Lodging
Travel Day 1- before conf.	yes	yes
Conf. Begins	yes	yes
Conf. Ends	yes	yes
Travel Day 2- return to	yes	no

If an employee uses a longer route to calculate the amount of a mileage reimbursement for an out-of-state travel, then the supporting documentation for the reimbursement must include a statement and a reasonable justification from the Dean or from the Department Head that the longer route is the most cost-



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effective rather than the shortest route. Cost comparison is required.

## 13.6 Local Mileage

If an employee's headquarters is located off the UHCL main campus, the employee may be entitled to claim reimbursement for mileage from their office to the UHCL main campus for travel relating to university business only (i.e., required meetings, dropping off or picking up business paperwork). Claiming mileage for traveling to UHCL main campus for personal business would not be considered reimbursable travel.

## 13.7 Travel between a Residence to Airport or Airport to Residence

An employee may be reimbursed mileage when traveling between a residence and an airport. If the travel occurs during working hours, the reimbursement may not exceed the reimbursement that would be paid if the employee had traveled between the employee's place of employment and the airport. The latest time that an individual may check in for the flight as specified by the airline, determines whether travel to the airport occurs during working or non-working hours. If flight check-in time is before working hours, mileage claimed should be from residence. The actual arrival time of a flight determines whether travel from the airport occurs during working or non-working hours.

Example: Employee's working hours are 8:00 am -5:00 pm. Flight departing at 10:00 a.m. with a check-in-time of 8:30 a.m. Employee leaves their residence to the airport at 7:00 a.m. Employee is reimbursed from their place of employment to the airport as the check-in time is during working hours. Also, employees will be reimbursed to place of employment when arrival is during working hours that is before 5:00 pm.

- From place of employment if flight check-in time is during working hours
- From residence if check-in time is before working hours

The university may reimburse a university employee for the mileage incurred by another person while transporting the employee between the employee's residence and an airport. However, the reimbursement may not exceed the reimbursement that would be paid if the employee had parked a personally owned motor vehicle at the airport. This section only applies when the purpose of traveling between a residence and the nearest airport is to catch or disembark from a flight.

### **Travel Expense Report Requirements:**

If claiming reimbursement for mileage incurred by another individual while transporting the employee between the employee's residence and the airport, then specify the cost of parking at the airport that would have been incurred had the employee transported himself or herself. Mileage cost cannot exceed airport parking cost.

## 13.8 Travel To/From a Residence and a Duty Point

Mileage to or from residence must be less than or equal to mileage to or from place of employment unless travel was on weekend or traveler returned after working hours.

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When claiming mileage to or from residence, mileage must be less than or equal to place of employment. A statement saying that mileage claimed is no greater than to or from place of employment must be added to the travel expense report.

## 13.9 Personal Vehicle Liability

On occasions when you choose to use your personal vehicle for a business purpose, be aware that should an accident occur, there could be some personal insurance ramifications. Any claim made pursuant to an accident involving an employee's personal vehicle would be made against either the employee's personal automobile insurance or the other driver's insurance. Other than worker's compensation, the university is not liable for any claims, including the employee's deductible. It should also be noted that, in some cases, insurance carriers may deny a claim for an employee's accident if the employee is not paying the higher insurance rates for a vehicle used in business.

## 14. INCIDENTAL EXPENSES

### 14.1 Parking

A university employee on official university business may be reimbursed for the parking expenses incurred when the employee travels in a university owned motor vehicle, a personally owned or leased motor vehicle or a rented motor vehicle.

A parking expense incurred by a person while dropping off or picking up a State employee at the airport is reimbursable. List each day the expense was incurred.

Parking receipts are required and must be itemized on the expense report.

### 14.2 Tolls

A university employee on official university business may be reimbursed for tolls paid when the employee travels in a personally owned or leased motor vehicle, a rented motor vehicle, or a university owned or leased motor vehicle.

Toll receipts are required and must be itemized on the expense report.

No reimbursement will be paid for tolls:

- While operating a personally owned or leased motor vehicle if the mileage incurred while engaged in that travel is not reimbursable;
- While operating a rented motor vehicle if the rented cost is not reimbursable; or
- While using a rented motor vehicle to obtain a meal within the employee's designated headquarters.

### 14.3 Other Reimbursable Expenses

A university employee is entitled to be reimbursed for the following expenses if they are incurred for an official university business reason. This is only a partial list and should not be considered all inclusive.

1. Hotel occupancy or local hotel taxes
2. Business telephone calls

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3. The cost of money orders
4. Gasoline charges when rented, university owned or leased motor vehicle is used
5. Repair charges when a university owned motor vehicle is used
6. Business copying charges
7. Freight charges for university equipment or materials
8. Foreign travel: passport or visa charges, airport boarding passes, departure taxes, and inoculations
9. Business postage expenses
10. Notary fees
11. Charges to exchange U.S. currency for foreign currency and vice versa
12. Travelers check charges if the university requires the employee to purchase the checks
13. Mandatory charges by a commercial lodging establishment other than room rate and additional person's charges
14. Books or documents purchased for and while attending a seminar or conference. A signed statement must be included with the travel expense report that the books or documents will remain the property of UHCL.
15. Mandatory service charges for loading and unloading university equipment
16. Business facsimile charges
17. Sales and use taxes if either the applicable law does not provide an exemption from those taxes or the procedure for claiming a legally available exemption is not honored by the person collecting the taxes.
18. Medical evacuation insurance when traveling in a country whose medical facilities makes the insurance reasonably necessary.
19. Service charges validly imposed by a travel agency.
20. Laundry services for extended trips.

## **14.4 Non-Reimbursable Expenses**

The following expenses are not reimbursable, regardless of whether they are incurred while conducting official state business. This is only a partial list and should not be considered all inclusive.

1. Any expense that does not relate to official university business.
2. Any expense, with the exception of parking and toll expenses that are related to the operation of a personally owned or leased motor vehicle.
3. Excess baggage charges for personal belongings
4. Personal expenses, such as the rental or purchase of videotape for entertainment, or an alcoholic beverage
5. Kennel expenses for a pet

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## 14.5 Travel Expense Report Requirements

1. The supporting documentation for a reimbursement of a telephone call expense must include a determination that the call was related to official university business.
2. Books or documents purchased for and while attending a seminar or conference require a statement that the items will remain the property of UHCL. This is also required of any supplies purchased that are consumed during the business trip.
3. If materials for a presentation are purchased before the travel occurs, the purchases should be made in accordance to university purchasing guidelines. The supplies purchased will remain the property of UHCL.
4. Parking, Tolls, and Taxi receipts are required and must be itemized on the expense report.

## 15. PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYEES TRAVEL

### 15.1 Prospective Employee's Travel Authorization (TA)

Prospective employee expenses are processed the same way as faculty and staff. A Travel Authorization (TA) must be processed. Examples of expenses to be encumbered are mileage, meals, parking, airfare and hotel, etc. A prospective employee is not exempt from hotel occupancy taxes. Those taxes may be reimbursed as an incidental expense if expense incurred by prospective employee.

Prospective Employee's signature is not required on the TA, but the supervisor or designee must approve the TA.

When the university requests a prospective university employee to travel to the university's offices for an interview or evaluation, the university may reimburse the prospective employee for travel expenses in the same manner as an employee.

### 15.2 Airfare

Airfare arrangements can be made through the travel office or by the prospective employee. Airfare for the spouse will be reimbursed if approved by the appropriate Vice President. This expense is taxable income to the individual.

### 15.3 Hotel Accommodations

Hotel accommodations can be direct billed to the university or paid by the prospective employee. Contact the Travel Office for information on direct billing.

### 15.4 Travel Expense Report

Additional expenses for the candidate can be reimbursed on a travel expense report. The travel expense report will require receipts for airfare, lodging and rental car.

## 16. STUDENT TRAVEL

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## 16.1 Travel Guidelines

Student Travel on States Funds is prohibited.

## 16.2 Procedures for Reimbursement of Student Travel

Any person who travels on behalf of the university in a student capacity must adhere to the same travel rules and regulations as faculty and staff. A student traveling in the capacity of an employee must refer to procedures concerning employee travel. Before a trip is taken, a Travel Authorization (TA) must be processed by the sponsoring department. This TA is required for permission to travel and outline budget/expense restrictions the department may wish to impose. Student travel should be classified as "Domestic Student Travel" or Foreign Student Travel" on the TA and the travel expense report.

## 16.3 Travel Authorization (TA)

A Travel Authorization (TA) must be processed providing destination, date(s) of trip, purpose and benefit of trip with approval by the processing department. Estimate funds for encumbrance such as: airfare, lodging, meals, taxi, parking, incidentals and mileage. The sponsoring department will encumber travel funds in PeopleSoft Finance using the Travel PO instructions.

## 16.4 Student Travel Expense Codes

Student travel should be classified as Domestic Student Travel or Foreign Student Travel. See Travel Account Code list on Travel website.

## 16.5 Expense Report

1. Student will receive reimbursement from UHCL for all allowable expenses incurred. Please check that student has a Vendor ID and direct deposit for Accounts Payable set up.
2. A travel expense report and all receipts (i.e. hotel, meals (when using grant funds), registration, vehicle rental, bus, train and airfare) must be submitted for reimbursement.

### Receipt Requirements:

- **Airfare passenger receipt:** Receipt required.
- **Lodging receipts:** Receipt required. If room is shared with another person, both names must appear on the receipt and each student has to claim half the amount of cost. If only one person's name is on the receipt, then that person has to add a statement certifying that his colleague paid for his/her share of the room. Since students are not state employees, they must pay both state and county or city tax. These taxes are reimbursable.
- **Lodging** cannot exceed the daily maximum allowable as stated on the General Services Administration (GSA) Guide for Domestic Per Diem Rates unless a Dean or Department Head approves a higher lodging rate in excess of the maximum allowable.
- **Meals:** Actual meal expenses cannot exceed daily maximum allowable as stated on the (GSA) Guide for Domestic Per Diem Rates.

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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. Enterprise, Hertz and Avis are the State contracted rental car agencies that should be used.
- **Taxi/Parking:** Receipts are required for taxi and parking and must be itemized on the expense report.
- **Tips:** Tips are reimbursable as part of the meal expense and cannot exceed 20% maximum.

A student has to file a travel expense report **within two weeks** of his/her return from the trip. If this is not done, a financial hold may be placed on student until travel is reconciled. Travel is considered reconciled once a student's travel expense report and/or journal entry is sent to the Travel office for processing.

## 17. TRAVEL FUNDS – YEAR END PROCESS

- Travel Reimbursement – All travel reimbursements are processed within 10 business days.
- Travel Encumbrance – Current fiscal year funds may be used to encumber next fiscal year travel expense provides, the actual travel occurs on or before Oct. 31<sup>st</sup>.
- Use Year End Calendar for all pertinent timelines related to finance (including travel).
- Contact Accounts Payable-Travel at [Traveloffice@uhcl.edu](mailto:Traveloffice@uhcl.edu) or 281-283-2270 should you need assistance.

## 18. DEFINITIONS

**Duty Point** – Travel destination

**Designated Headquarters** – Location at which the traveler is assigned, i.e. UHCL main campus, Pearland campus, etc.