

## **Contiguous United States Travel – Local Funds Only Guideline**

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### **I. Title**

Contiguous United States Travel - Local Funds Only Guideline

### **II. Objective**

Travel Guideline DIS-T-GL3 provides procedural information for travel within the contiguous United States (“U.S.”) only. The guideline details the allowances and expenses reimbursed from local funds only for meals, lodging, miscellaneous and incidental expenses in travel status.

University travel conducted must comply with the rules and policies including the State of Texas Travel Regulations Act (Chapter 660 of the Texas Government Code), the General Appropriations Act, the State Comptroller's Office, State Travel Management Program, University of Texas System Board of Regents' Rules, University of Texas System Policies, and the travel guidelines of the University of Texas at Arlington.

This guideline does not apply to individuals traveling for personal reasons with personal funds.

### III. **Scope – Who Should Know**

All University of Texas at Arlington (“University” or “UTA”) employees and students who travel within the contiguous U.S. for official University business and travel charges are expensed from local funds.

### IV. **Guidelines**

#### A. **Travel and Duty of Care Policy**

See UTA [BF-T-PO-01](#) *Travel and Duty of Care Policy* for complete information that applies to this guideline and all University funded travel:

- Definitions
- Relevant federal and state statutes and websites
- Relevant UT System rules and policies
- Applicable UTA policies, procedures, travel guidelines, and additional resources
- Applicable UTA form

#### B. **Meals and Incidental Expenses Per Diem – Overnight Stay Required**

##### 1. **General Services Administration Federal Per Diem Rates**

For meals and incidental expenses (“M&IE”) that occur with overnight travel, all university travelers must use the [federal per diem rates](#) provided by the General Services Administration (“GSA”) for both in-state and out-of-state travel within the contiguous U.S. The [GSA per diem tool](#) is searchable by city, state, or zip code. Cities not appearing on the GSA table may be located within the county for which the rates are listed. To determine what county a city is located, visit the [National Association of Counties \(NACO\) website](#). If the city is not located within a listed county on the table, use the "Standard Rate" for that state. New rates are set October 1 of each year.

##### 2. **Travel Meals and Incidental Expenses – No Receipts Required**

Travelers may be reimbursed per diem for meals and incidental expenses incurred while traveling on university business. Per diem is an allowance related to meal costs (including tax and tip).

Incidental Expenses are to cover tips given to baggage handlers, valet, hotel staff, etc.

**a. Meal Expenses**

- i. The University allows per diem for meal expenses incurred with an overnight stay based on the table known as Meals & Incidental Rates (“M&IE Rate”) which is reflected in the [GSA per diem tool](#) for the duty location.
- ii. M&IE Rates for the full daily amount can be received for a single calendar day of travel, **EXCEPT** when that day is the first or last day of travel.
- iii. First and last days of travel will be prorated to 75% of the total M&IE Rate, regardless of the traveler’s time of departure or time of return, as calculated on the GSA per diem tool for the specific duty location.
- iv. If a meal was provided to the traveler by a third party, that meal must be deducted from the full day’s per diem rate. This might include a meal provided by a conference, meeting host, etc. The applicable meal must be checked in Concur Travel Allowance, which will automatically prorate the per diem rate for the day.
- v. **Receipts for meals taken in travel status are not required.**
- vi. Meal per diem rates must include tax and tip.  
**Note:** Tip cannot exceed 20% of the total bill
- vii. Departments may invoke policies such as only claiming actuals, but the totals cannot exceed the GSA rate allowed for the day and the duty location.

**NOTE:** In accordance with [IRS Publication 463](#), *Travel, Gift, and Car Expenses*, an overnight stay is required for meal reimbursement.

**b. Incidental Expenses**

Incidental expenses are also included in the M&IE daily rate and are limited to \$5/day. The traveler will automatically receive the Incidental Expense for each day of travel except for first and last days of travel. The cost of tips paid out of

pocket to baggage handler, valet, hotel staff, etc. may not be duplicated in reimbursement requests.

**3. Business/Entertainment Meals During Overnight Travel – Itemized Receipt Required**

Business/entertainment meal expenses taken during overnight travel are allowed to entertain and conduct business with a customer or client and the traveler. Only employees (no student workers) of the University can claim business/entertainment meals which must be reasonable and benefit the University.

**a. Reimbursements Include the Following Requirements:**

**i. Meal Total for the Day**

A business/entertainment meal is counted as part of the traveling employee's meal total for the day. The traveler's per diem allowance will be automatically calculated and prorated in Concur Expense.

**ii. Deduction from M&IE Rate**

The meal that is being consumed as a business/entertainment meal (breakfast, lunch, or dinner) must be deducted from the full day's M&IE Rate by checking the appropriate box in the Travel Allowance in Concur Expense.

**iii. Itemized Receipt Required – Actuals Only**

Business/entertainment meals will only be reimbursed for actuals, and will require an itemized receipt as documentation, regardless of the dollar amount.

**iv. Alcohol Allowance**

Alcohol is only allowed when purchased and consumed as part of a business/entertainment meal.

**v. Alcohol Prohibition**

Alcohol cannot be paid with funds generated from student tuition, fees, or state appropriated funds.

**vi. Identification of Attendees**

In Concur Expense, all attendees of the business/entertainment meal must be identified by their name, affiliation, and attendee type.

**vii. Tax and Tip Allowance**

Sales tax and a maximum tip of 20% of the total bill will be reimbursed for the business/entertainment meal.

**Concur Expense Requirements**

- Agendas for conferences, meetings, etc.
- Itemized receipts for business/entertainment meals.

**C. Lodging – Itemized Receipt Required**

**1. General Services Administration Federal Per Diem Rates**

- a. All lodging is reimbursed for actuals up to, but not exceeding, the [GSA federal per diem rate](#) given for the location. Cities not appearing on the GSA per diem table may be located within a county for which a rate is listed. To determine what county a city is located, visit the [National Association of Counties \(NACO\) website](#). If the city or county is not listed on the per diem table, use the "Standard Rate" for the state. New rates are set October 1 each year.
- b. Proximity/distance from the traveler's place of lodging to the site of where University business will be conducted **cannot** be a consideration of exceeding the GSA per diem rate for the location. This includes meetings, trainings, etc. Travelers will be reimbursed applicable transportation costs to/from lodging to business address as noted in [Section D](#) of this guideline.
- c. Taxes and fees are not counted as part of the GSA rate. Reimbursement for taxes and ancillary fees are limited to the reimbursable lodging costs and may be prorated if necessary.

**2. Varying Nightly Rates**

If the nightly lodging rate varies, the total of lodging expenses cannot exceed the total of the nightly per diem rate times (X) the number of designated nights.

Note: In Concur Expense, each night must be notated as the actual nightly rate or the maximum GSA per diem for the duty location.

### 3. Shared Lodging

- a. When at least two (2) University travelers share lodging, the total reimbursement may not exceed the applicable per person maximum lodging reimbursement rate for the location.

**EXAMPLE:** Occupant 1 and Occupant 2 are sharing a hotel room. The maximum allowable lodging rate for the location where they will be staying is \$90 per night. The room rate of the selected hotel is \$140 per night. Occupant 1 and Occupant 2 may combine their lodging rates for a reimbursable rate up to \$180.

Concur Expense Requirements:

- Use expense type “Hotel - Group” in Concur Expense
- Attach an occupant list
- Attach the applicable GSA rate schedule for the duty location.

### 4. Lodging Receipt Requirements

#### a. Itemized Receipt Must Contain the Following

- The name and address of the commercial lodging establishment
- Name of the traveler/occupant
- Single room rate
- A daily itemization of the lodging charges
- Proof of payment

#### b. Texas (In-State) Lodging - Non-Reimbursable Tax

Texas Hotel Occupancy Tax will not be reimbursed. Traveler must present to the commercial lodging establishment UTA Form [BF-T-F2](#) *Texas Hotel Occupancy Tax Exemption Certificate*.

#### c. Outside of Texas Lodging – Hotel Occupancy Taxes

Payments made by travelers for hotel occupancy tax or similar taxes for lodging outside the State of Texas are allowed to be charged using the Travel Card, or reimbursable to the traveler.

#### d. Traveler Pays Lodging for Another Traveler

A traveler may pay for, and be reimbursed for, another University employee's or student's lodging expense.

**Concur Expense Requirements:**

- Use expense type “Hotel – Group”
- Include an attestation statement by the lodging occupant whose expenses were paid, that they will not submit a claim for travel expenses already reimbursed to the traveler who paid the expense.
- Attach the GSA rate schedule for the duty location
- Attach the hotel invoice/folio with names of all lodging occupants

**e. Additional Lodging Information**

- i. University travelers may also use the hotels listed in Concur, or through the contracted travel agencies. (See UTA Travel Guideline [DIS-T-GL6](#) *Travel Agencies and Concur – All Fund Types*).

**NOTE:** It is the traveler’s responsibility to ensure that the nightly rate does not exceed the GSA federal per diem rate for the location.

- ii. Per diem rates are available from most major chain hotel websites by requesting “State Government Rates”. Please contact the hotel to ensure this rate is available for the specified travel dates.

**Resources to find GSA rates:**

[Job aid for GSA rates from major hotel websites](#)

[State of Texas lodging portal](#)

- iii. The appropriate expense type within Concur is ‘Hotel’, unless otherwise notated above.

**5. Conference/Seminar Lodging**

- a. If a traveler uses the commercial lodging establishment that is affiliated with a conference, seminar, workshop, etc., supporting documentation must be submitted with the expense report reflecting the affiliation and the special daily room rate of the dedicated hotel(s).

- b. Documentation to support the affiliation can be in the form of a registration, advertisement, agenda, webpage screenshot, email from the organization, etc.
- c. If a traveler does not obtain the special daily lodging room rate for the event, or stays at a non-affiliated hotel, the traveler will be reimbursed for actuals that are at or below the documented affiliated hotel rate, regardless of the GSA federal per diem rate for the location.
- d. The appropriate expense type in Concur Expense is 'Hotel - Conference'.

## **6. Lodging Within the Employee's Designated Field Office**

An employee may only be reimbursed for lodging expenses incurred within the employee's designated field office if the expenses are associated with training, seminar, or a conference.

### **Concur Expense Requirements**

- Itemized lodging receipt/folio; and
- Conference/Seminar lodging affiliation documentation.

## **D. Miscellaneous Business Travel Fees**

### **1. Pre-Travel Fees**

#### **a. Registration Fee – Receipt Required**

Registration fees are reimbursable for attending official business conferences, seminars, and other meetings.

Receipts are required and must be attached to Concur Expense. The receipt must detail:

- Full name of the meeting (do not use abbreviations)
- Date(s) of the meeting
- Sponsor of the event
- Where the meeting, conference, seminar, etc. was held (location)
- Attendance benefit to the University.

### **Additional Concur Expense Requirement:**



- Agenda or program identifying all activities included in the registration fee.

**Note:** Entertainment, excursions, or other personal expense items are not reimbursable..

**b. Dues and Membership Fees**

Dues or membership fees that are included in a registration fee can be reimbursed on an Expense Report.

**Note:** Memberships require a statement explaining the benefit to UTA.

**2. Allowed Business Travel Expenses (Partial List) – Itemized Receipts Required**

**a. Rental of Motor Vehicle**

Expense documentation must include a receipt that indicates:

- Rental car company name
- University's traveler name
- Starting and ending dates of the rental

**b. Transportation**

**i. Travel by Bus, Subway, Taxi, Ridesharing (e.g., Uber & Lyft), Shuttle, or Other Modes of Mass Transit**

The receipt must itemize:

- The date of service received
- Fare charged for each trip

**NOTE:** Tips cannot exceed 20% of the total bill.

**ii. Travel by Railroad, Boat, Bicycle, or Other Motor Vehicle**

The receipt from a commercial transportation company must include:

- Transportation company's name
- University employee's name
- Travel dates
- Mode of transportation

- Itemization of expenses incurred

### 3. **Misc. Business Travel Expenses – No Receipt Required**

All other allowed miscellaneous business travel expenses do not require receipts for payment or reimbursement.

These include but are not limited to the following. However, Concur Expense must include an itemization and description of the expense for payment or reimbursement.

- a. Tolls
- b. Parking
- c. Fuel for rented motor vehicles
- d. Laundry charges – when traveling for five (5) or more consecutive business days

- e. **In-Flight Internet Services**

Internet fees while on a flight will only be reimbursed if it is for employees to conduct official University business.

**Note:** In-flight internet service for students will not be reimbursed.

### 4. **Non-allowed Expenses**

The following expenses cannot be paid or reimbursed:

- a. Meals within traveler's designated field office.
- b. Fuel, charging, and repair costs for personally-owned vehicles.
- c. Excess baggage charges for personal belongings.

**Note:** This includes checking more than one (1) piece of luggage and overweight or oversized luggage.

- d. Personal items not required for official university business – including, but not limited to:
  - Dental hygiene products
  - Haircare products
  - Cleaning/laundry if traveling less than five (5) consecutive business days
  - Alcoholic beverages

- Sporting events
- Kennel or boarding charges for a pet
- Babysitting or daycare charges for a child(ren)
- Tours – personal only

**Note:** If the tour supports a University need, the expense report must state the specific business need

### **Concur Expense Requirements**

- Registration fee receipt
- Itemized receipts if required

### **E. Non-Overnight Travel – No Travel Request Required**

A travel request is not required for this type of travel. To qualify the following must apply:

1. No overnight stay.
2. No rental car or airline ticket expense or reimbursement.
3. Tolls paid when an employee or student travels in a personally owned or leased vehicle, rental vehicle, or UTA-owned vehicle – receipt required.
4. Registration fee is reimbursable on the same expense report as the related mileage. Receipt must clearly reflect the following:
  - Traveler's name
  - Name of the organization
  - Date and amount of payment made
5. Emergency/unanticipated expenses while away from the University may also be reimbursed on the same expense report. **Receipt is required.**

EXAMPLE: Charger for University-owned laptop, printed materials for presentations, etc. Original receipts are required. Texas State Sales Tax is not reimbursable. UTA Form [BF-AS-F3](#) *Texas Sales and Use Tax Exemption Certificate* must be presented with each purchase.

### **F. Entertainment/Official Occasion Meals with No Overnight Stay**

Business meals and official occasion expenses that occur with no overnight stay must comply with UTA Procedure [BF-PGS-PR-12](#) *Entertainment & Official Occasion Expenses*.

#### **G. Non-Entertainment Meals with No Overnight Stay**

Reimbursements are not allowed for social meals between two (2) or more UTA employees, student employees, or employees + students that occur during non-overnight travel or in a UTA designated field office.

Reference [Internal Revenue Service Publication 463](#), *Travel, Gift and Car Expenses*.

#### **H. Mileage**

1. Mileage is Reimbursable
2. Concur Expense will calculate mileage in the expense report using Google Maps for the route of travel.
3. Mileage will be reimbursed in accordance with [GSA Privately Owned Vehicle \(POV\) mileage reimbursement rate](#) which is usually updated January 1 of each year. Archived mileage rates may be viewed at [POV Mileage Rate Archived](#)

NOTE: For complete information on mileage and personally owned motor vehicle use, see UTA Travel Guideline [DIS-T-GL7](#) *Transportation Options in Travel Status – All Fund Types*.

#### **I. Taxation**

Travelers are required to account for their expenses by creating and processing an expense report through workflow to the Office of Disbursements within 30 calendar days after trip end. Travelers with an approved Travel Request that have not submitted a Concur Expense Report within 30 calendar days after trip end will receive a communication of non-compliance.

Travelers with mileage only, non-overnight travel, or an approved exception which does not require a Travel Request, will not receive a communication. These types of travel are still subject to the submission timeline requirements and the traveler will be subject to taxation for submissions not received “In Good Order” within 60 calendar days after trip end.

See UTA Travel Guideline [DIS-T-GL11](#) *Travel Reimbursement – Timelines and Receipting – All Fund Types* for submission timelines of expense reports.

## J. Combining University and Personal Business

If a traveler combines personal travel with official university business travel, the traveler is only allowed reimbursement for meals, lodging or car rental that occurred on official business days.

### 1. Travel To/From a Duty Location – No More Than One Day Before or After Official University Business

- a. Overnight meals and lodging expenses incurred while traveling to/from a duty location no more than one (1) day before official university business begins, or no more than one (1) day after the conclusion of university business, may be reimbursed at the discretion of the traveler's supervisor, if deemed appropriate.

### 2. Travel To/From a Duty Location – More Than One Day Before or After Official University Business

- a. Overnight meals and lodging expenses incurred while traveling to/from a duty location more than one (1) day before official university business begins, or more than one (1) day after the conclusion of university business are only reimbursable if traveling to and from the duty location requires more than one (1) day of travel. All other reasons will require the following for consideration of reimbursement:
  - i. Submission of Business Affairs Exception Tracker Request (see [Section L](#) of this guideline)
  - ii. Documentation from CTP, ATI or Concur reflecting transportation cost comparisons for:
    - Official University business days only, and
    - Personal days + official business days.

**Note:** If the cost of transportation for personal days + official business days exceed 'university business days only', the traveler must reimburse UTA the difference and attach proof of repayment made at UTA Student Accounts to Concur Expense.

### 3. Car Rentals

Travelers who use a rented motor vehicle for both personal business and official University business may be reimbursed only for the portion of the rental charges that are attributable to official University

business. See UTA Travel Guideline [DIS-T-GL7 Transportation Options in Travel Status – All Fund Types](#) for detailed information.

### **Concur Expense Requirements**

- Transportation cost comparisons from travel agencies or Concur.

### **K. Cancellation and Change Charges**

1. A traveler will be reimbursed for travel expenses incurred when the traveler returns from a duty location to his/her designated field office before University business is completed because of an illness, personal emergency, or University recall.
2. Cancellation Charges related to a travel expense may be reimbursed if:
  - a. Reason is related to state business, or
  - b. Reason is related to state business that could not be conducted because of a natural disaster
3. When claiming reimbursement for cancellation, charges, receipts, or invoices are required to document each cancellation charge submitted for reimbursement.
4. Cancellation charges for "no shows" due to personal reasons are not reimbursable.
5. Cancellation charges for airfare paid by the traveler will only be reimbursed if approved by the Associate Vice President for Business Affairs and Controller, or designee. Please [Section L](#) of this guideline.

### **L. Exceptions to Guideline**

There may be occasions when employees need to request an exception to some portion of the travel rules (this applies only to chartfields following UT local rules). Exceptions to any of the travel and entertainment policies must be obtained PRIOR to the start of travel and booking travel arrangements and must be documented in writing and final approved by the Associate Vice President for Business Affairs and Controller, or designee. The request must be submitted using the **Business Affairs Exception Tracker** located in [UTA SharePoint](#). Each request should include detailed justification for the exception and the benefit to the University if the exception is granted. **Concur Expense must reference the approved BAET number.** Documentation of the request and its' disposition will be maintained in the Business Affairs Exception Tracker. In every case the account

administrator is responsible for ensuring that all travel and charges are appropriate, comply with the source of funds, and support the mission of the University.

**NOTE:** The circumstance of the request will be taken under consideration. Any exception ultimately granted does NOT alter the existing travel guideline and should not be construed as precedent for allowing repeated exceptions to the existing guideline.

**V. UTA Offices Responsible for Guideline**

**Responsible Officer:** CFO and Vice President for Business and Finance

**Sponsoring Department:** Office of Disbursements

**VI. Dates Approved or Amended**

August 1, 2019

September 14, 2020

May 21, 2021

October 26, 2022

July 12, 2024

November 4, 2024

**VII. Contact Information**

Questions regarding this guideline should be directed to the Office of Disbursements at 817-272-2194, or email [travelservices@uta.edu](mailto:travelservices@uta.edu)

Send notifications of errors or changes to [travelservices@uta.edu](mailto:travelservices@uta.edu)