

Pre-Travel Requirements – All Fund Types Guideline

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I. Title

Pre-Travel Requirements – All Fund Types Guideline

II. Objective

Travel Guideline DIS-T-GL2 provides information for requesting authorization to travel and obtaining permission to travel in accordance with applicable laws and rules. This Guideline does not apply to individuals traveling for personal reasons with personal funds. This Guideline distinguishes the difference between State Appropriated Funds and Local Funds. Also, processes regarding how to request authorization for travel, obtain a Travel Advance, and obtain permission for travel to Washington D.C. are included in this Guideline.

Travel rules and policies come from a variety of sources including the State of Texas Travel Regulations Act (Chapter 660 of the Texas Government Code), the General Appropriations Act, the State Comptroller's Office, and the Board of Regents' Rules and Regulations.

The chartfield funding source for travel determines whether the chartfield follows UT State Travel Rules or UT Local Travel Rules. Thus, one must distinguish (prior to travel) the difference between the two types of chartfields and how to determine if a chartfield follows state or local travel rules. Travel to benefit the University or for University business must be approved prior to travel. Moreover, further approval must be acquired from a departmental head, Chief Administrator, and/or their designated representative prior to international travel or travel to Washington D.C. (Please note that this Guideline does include the few exceptions when obtaining approval for travel.)

III. Scope

All UTA employees, students, prospective employees, and non-employees who are traveling for UTA business.

IV. Guidelines

A. State Appropriated Funds vs. Local Funds

1. When planning to travel, the traveler needs to determine the source of funding that will be utilized to pay for the travel. **The chartfield value determines whether the cost center / project ID will follow state travel rules or local travel rules.**
2. Cost Centers with “2xxxx” or chartfield values with a Fund containing “2100 or 2110” must use state travel rules. All other cost centers and Fund groups are required to follow local travel rules.

B. Travel Authorization

1. A Travel Authorization is used to authorize business travel. The State regulations permit two purposes for travel:
 - a. To benefit the University of Texas at Arlington, and
 - b. The presentation of original research before a national, international, regional, or state-learned society that has been approved in advance.
2. **UTA Employees and Students**
 - a. A fully approved Travel Authorization is required before a trip occurs, whether or not there is a cost to the university. 'Fully approved' indicates that all required workflow approvals have been completed. The Travel Authorization must clearly state how the university will benefit from the trip, including, but not limited to, what is learned that can be brought back to the classroom, or that it is beneficial to the performance of other duties, or other essential criteria.
 - i. If the travel involved attendance at and participation in a meeting, the travel authorization must provide the name and date of the meeting, the sponsor, where it was held, and what benefits will inure to the University.
 - ii. In every instance, the description must include a very clear statement of what the traveler did, and the names

of the individuals contacted in addition to the benefit that inured to the University of Texas at Arlington.

- b. The Travel Authorization is to be completed by the department and approved by the immediate supervisor or department head. A Travel Authorization should state the traveler's name, dates of travel, destination, purpose and benefit of travel, and the cost center/project ID to be charged for travel expenses.
- c. The Travel Authorization encumbrance must reasonably reflect the anticipated cost of the trip. If there is no cost to the university, the Travel Authorization may reflect an encumbrance of \$ 0.01.
- d. The Travel Authorization is to be processed electronically in UT Share. For information on how to complete the Travel Authorization in UTShare please see [UTShare Financial Resources](#).
- e. Blanket Travel Authorization for Athletic Team Travel Only (Athletic Department Only): Blanket travel authorizations for team travel require approval of the University's Chief Financial Officer and Vice President for Business & Finance. By obtaining this approval the Athletic Department acknowledges that all current and future employees will not receive reminders for submission of travel expense reports from the University.

NOTE: 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 ends. Travelers with an approved Travel Authorization that have not submitted an Expense Report within 30 calendar days after trip end will receive a communication of non-compliance to aid in avoiding taxation. Travelers with mileage only, non-overnight travel, or an approved exception which does not require a Travel Authorization (including individuals traveling under a blanket travel authorization for athletic team travel) 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 "error free" within 60 calendar days after trip end. See UTA Travel Guideline [DIS-T-GL11 Travel Reimbursement – Timelines & Receipting](#) – All Fund Types Section IV. D., for Submission Timelines of Expense Reports.

3. Prospective Employees / Non-Employees

- a. A Travel Authorization is only required when the following apply:
 - i. Paying for airfare booked through one of the University's dedicated travel agencies. See UTA Travel

Guideline [DIS-T-GL6](#) *Travel Agencies and Concur – All Fund Types*.

- ii. Reimbursing the non-employee for approved travel expenses
- iii. Renting a vehicle that will be direct billed to the University by one of the contracted rental car agencies
- b. If required, a Travel Authorization must be fully approved prior to the start of a trip. 'Fully approved' indicates that all required workflow approvals have been completed by the department and approved by the immediate supervisor or department head.
- c. A Travel Authorization should state the traveler's name, dates of travel, destination, purpose and benefit of travel, and the cost center / project ID to be charged for travel expenses.
- d. The Travel Authorization encumbrance must reasonably reflect the anticipated cost of the trip.
- e. The Travel Authorization is to be processed electronically in UT Share. For information on how to complete the Travel Authorization in UTShare please see [UTShare Financial Resources](#).

4. Corrections, Changes, and Unauthorized Travel

If any of the circumstances below apply to a Travel Authorization, use the [SharePoint Supplemental Travel Authorization \(STA\)](#) and reference the STA number in the comment section of the Expense Report when settling travel in UTShare.

Note: This process will be used in lieu of submitting an Exception to this Guideline.

- a. Travel Authorization was not final approved in UTShare prior to the first day of travel.
- b. Travel Authorization was not created in UTShare prior to first day of travel.
- c. Change in travel dates of two (2) or more calendar days.
- d. Change to destination/location.
- e. Change to an approved Travel Authorization encumbrance.

C. Travel to Washington, D.C. – State Funds Only

All University travelers that travel to Washington, D.C. for activities that involve obtaining or spending federal funds or that impact federal policies, and are **using state appropriated funds for travel**, are required to inform the [Office of State-Federal Relations \(OSFR\)](#) about the trip. The traveler must include information about the timing and purpose of the trip and provide OSFR with the name of an individual who may be contacted for additional information.

1. Go to the OSFR website and click “State Funded Travel to DC”. The traveler must download, print and fill out the State-Funded Travel to DC Form, and email to OSFR@gov.texas.gov .

When creating the UTShare Travel Authorization, select YES in the field *Are you doing business in Washington, DC?, and indicate the purpose of the visit as given in the dropdown menu. Additionally, attach the State-Funded Travel to DC Form to the UTShare Travel Authorization.

D. Cash Advance for Travel

1. A cash advance is available for a traveler on official UTA business. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) requires the University to issue travel cash advances within the requirements published in [IRS Publication 463, Travel, Entertainment, Gift, and Car Expenses](#).
2. IRS allows issuance of a cash advance for travel expenses within 30-calendar days of the travel expense. In order to ensure compliance with the IRS restrictions, the traveler must comply with the following process for the issuance and reconciliation of a cash advance.
3. The cash advance is a promissory note, and must be acknowledged by the traveler that:
 - a. They accept the travel cash advance terms;
 - b. Acknowledge all travel rules; and
 - c. Will repay unused funds upon completion of the trip.
4. A traveler may be eligible for a cash advance if any of the following are true:
 - a. The cash advance request is a minimum of \$100.00.

- b. The destination is in an isolated area or region with limited access to suppliers or services that accept credit cards.
- c. Travel is for an extended period of time.
- d. A faculty member takes a group of students overseas for educational purposes, such as for a study abroad program.
- e. It would be a financial hardship for the traveler to pay the travel expenses out of pocket.

5. **How to Request a Travel Cash Advance**

Travel cash advance requests must be submitted to Office of Disbursements at least seven (7) business days, but no more than thirty (30) calendar days prior to the first date of travel. To request a travel cash advance, take the following steps:

- a. Traveler must have a fully approved UTShare Travel Authorization completed.
- b. Create and submit for approval a Cash Advance in UTShare. The travel cash advance amount cannot exceed the estimated cost of expenses given in the Travel Authorization.
- c. A Cash Advance must be certified by the traveler and approved by both the traveler's supervisor and Travel Services in UTShare before the payment will be released.

Note: A Cash Advance to an individual student requires the student to have a valid EMPLY ID prior to processing the Cash Advance voucher.

6. **Prohibited Travel Cash Advances.** Travel cash advances are not *normally* made under the following conditions:

- a. When the employee or student has an outstanding advance.
- b. When the traveler is a Non-Employee or Prospective Employee.
- c. The travel cash advance requested is less than \$100.00.

7. **Methods of Distribution for Approved Travel Cash Advance**

a. **Cash Advance Check**

Travel cash advance checks are held for pick-up at the Student Accounts Office, Room 130, Administration Building.

b. Direct Deposit

When this method is used, the funds will be deposited into the travelers' bank account approximately 2-3 days after final approval of the cash advance.

8. Reconciliation

a. Returning Unused Travel Cash Advance Funds

i. All unused funds related to a travel cash advance must be repaid and deposited by the traveler or department at the Student Accounts Office, no later than 30 calendar days after the last day of travel. To deposit the unused funds:

- 1) Retrieve the traveler's cash advance in UTShare
- 2) Click on '**Details**' in the amount line
- 3) Click on '**Accounting Detail**'
- 4) Deposit into the chartfield given in Accounting Details
- 5) GL Account Code of 11704

ii. Forms of repayment for unused funds accepted are:

- 1) Cash (must be exact change)
- 2) Check
- 3) Traveler's Check
- 4) Money Order

b. Reconciliation Timelines

i. Within 30 Calendar Days

All unused funds related to a travel cash advance must be repaid and deposited by the traveler or department, at Student Accounts, no later than 30 calendar days after the last date of travel.

Travelers that have a fully approved Travel Authorization, their travel ended over 30 days, and

have not processed or submitted an Expense Report to Office of Disbursements for review, will receive a communication of non-compliance.

ii. More than 60 Calendar Days

Travelers that reconcile travel cash advance funds more than 60 calendar days after the last date of travel will be subject to income and employment taxes.

iii. More than 120 Calendar Days

All travel cash advances that are more than 120 calendar days outstanding will be charged to the traveler's department.

NOTE: Additional requests for travel cash advances will not be processed until all prior cash advances have been reconciled. Also, if the traveler routinely does not reconcile travel cash advances/Expense Reports in a timely manner, the traveler may be subject to refusal for future travel cash advances.

E. Exceptions to this Guideline

Exceptions to the travel cash advance Guideline must be documented in writing and approved by the Associate Vice President for Business Affairs and Controller. The request must be submitted using the **Business Affairs Exceptions Tracker** located in [SharePoint](#). Each request must include detailed justification for the exception and the benefit to the University if the exception is granted. Documentation of the request and its disposition will be maintained in the Business Affairs online exception file. In every case the account administrator is responsible for ensuring that all travel and charges are appropriate and support the mission of the University.

F. Responsibilities

1. The Traveler/Individual(s) Responsible for Travel Planning

- a. Verify the department completes a Travel Authorization and that the Travel Authorization is fully approved in UTShare by their immediate supervisor and/or department head.
- b. Completes the Office of State-Federal Relations (OSFR) form when planning to travel to Washington D.C. and intending to confer on Legislative or Appropriation issues with U.S. Congress/the federal government, staff or officials when using state appropriated funds.

- c. Plans all travel to achieve maximum savings and efficiency. Ensure that each travel arrangement is the lowest possible considering all relevant circumstances.
- d. Deposits any unused funds related to a Cash Advance at the Student Account Office no later than thirty (30) calendar days after the last day of travel.

2. Department

May adopt expense reimbursement and payment rates lower than the maximum rate. The department's employees must be notified in writing before the lower rates are implemented. The department is solely responsible for enforcing the rate.

3. Department Head / Supervisor

Approves employees, students, prospective employees, and non-employees' Travel Authorization

4. Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Approves faculty or student requests for international travel that use state appropriated funds.

5. Associate Vice President for Business Affairs & Controller

Approves staff requests for international travel that use state appropriated funds.

V. Definitions

Actual Expense: University business expenses that are reasonable and appropriate to the circumstance. Personal expenses are not included.

Authorized Signers: Employees authorized to approve expenditures in the UTShare accounting system.

Chartfields: Data fields used to segregate accounting information, i.e., cost center, department, fund, account, business unit, project, activity, and function.

Local Funds: All chartfields that are not State Appropriated Funds chartfields. Please check with the head of your department or the chartfield administrator for specific travel or entertainment restrictions which may be placed on individual chartfields within the Local Funds chartfields.

Personal Expenses: Expenses that benefit the employee or spender only and do not benefit the University either directly or indirectly. Also includes inappropriate or excessive expenses that appear to be University related.

Travel Authorization: This document is used in UTShare to authorize travel for employees, prospective employees, students, and non-employees who are traveling for UTA business.

State Appropriated Funds: Chartfields that are funded by State general revenue. Most state appropriated funded chartfields have a Fund of 21xx. State appropriated funded chartfields also appear in other numbered chartfield series.

UTShare: The computerized accounting system used at UTA.

VI. Relevant Federal and State Statutes

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

Texas Administrative Code, Title 34 Public Finance, Part 1 Comptroller of Public Accounts, Chapter 5 Funds Management (Fiscal Affairs), Subchapter C Claims Processing – Travel Vouchers, [§ 5.22 State of Texas Travel Guidance](#)

Texas General Appropriations Act, [Article IX., Part 5](#)

Texas Government Code, [Chapter 660](#) Travel Expenses

VII. Relevant UT System Policies, UTA Travel Guidelines and Forms

UTA Travel Guideline [DIS-T-GL6](#) *Travel Agencies and Concur – All Fund Types*

UTA Travel Guideline [DIS-T-GL11](#) *Travel Reimbursement – Timelines & Receipting – All Fund Types*

Supplemental *Travel Authorization Form* in [Sharepoint](#)

UT System Rules and Regulations of the Board of Regents Rule [20801](#) *Travel*

UT System Rules and Regulations of the Board of Regents Rule [31005](#) *Faculty or Staff Absence*

UT System Policy [UTS 120](#) Spousal Travel

Additional Online Resources:

[Learn How to Save on Travel Expenses](#)

[Traveler's Personal Checklist](#)

[UTShare Training Resources](#)

VIII. Who Should Know

All UTA employees, student, prospective employees, and non-employees

IX. UTA Office(s) Responsible for Travel Guideline

Responsible Officer: Chief Financial Officer and VP for Business & Finance

Sponsoring Department: Office of Disbursements

X. Dates Approved or Amended

August 1, 2019

July 13, 2021

April 29, 2024

XI. Contact Information

Questions regarding this Guideline should be directed to the Office of Disbursements at 817-272-2194, or email travelservices@uta.edu.

Send notifications of errors or changes to: travelservices@uta.edu