

# STOCKTON UNIVERSITY



## PROCEDURE

### University Travel

Procedure Administrator: Director of Disbursement Services

Authority:

Effective Date: August 10, 2005; July 29, 2009; July 3, 2018; December 19, 2019;  
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Index Cross-References:

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Approved By: Dr. Harvey Kesselman, President

### General Guidelines

The purpose of this procedure is to make travelers, approvers, deans, directors, and department heads aware of their respective roles and responsibilities relative to submitting and approving travel and business-related expenses.

Student travel must comply with this procedure and other student specific procedures, as well as with pertinent requirements found in the University Student Manual for Organizations.

The University follows the Accountable Plan as outlined by the Internal Revenue Service.

The Accountable Plan specifies that each employee must:

1. Have paid or incurred deductible expenses while performing services as an employee;
2. Adequately account for these expenses within a reasonable period of time; and
3. Return any excess reimbursement or allowance within a reasonable period.

### *Tax-Exempt*

The University is a tax-exempt organization and individuals should request that taxes not be collected. Unfortunately, the travel industry (e.g., airlines, rail services, hotels, car rental agencies, and restaurants) frequently will not recognize this status and will insist that taxes be paid. In these instances, the employee will be reimbursed for the taxes paid. If the supplier requests a tax-exemption document, a tax exemption letter can be obtained from the Fiscal Affairs Office, Disbursement Services Office or the Office of Procurement and Contracting.

### Responsibilities

Employees traveling on official University business are responsible for complying with these procedures and are expected to be prudent and reasonable in their expenditures.

The Budget Unit Manager/Dean and Cabinet Member are responsible for administering

the travel expenses charged against their budgets and ensuring full compliance with these procedures.

Departments/Divisions are responsible for reviewing and approving all travel disbursements/transactions submitted by employees for expenses anticipated and/or incurred in the course of travel on official business.

### **Approval Procedures**

All travel in connection with official University business must be approved by the Budget Unit Manager/Dean and Provost/Divisional Vice President or authorized agents prior to travel.

The seven major steps in the process (not necessarily in this sequence, except for the last item) are:

1. Reserve a vehicle from the Motor Vehicle Pool, if required or desired;
2. Complete a travel Pre-Approval Request in Chrome River;
3. Process conference registration fee (if applicable);
4. Schedule transportation;
5. Reserve hotel accommodations;
6. Collect all receipts; and
7. Submit a request for reimbursement of travel expenses.

Under many circumstances, as outlined in the University's Ethics Policy, a Request for Approval for Attendance at Events Form must be completed and submitted to the Office of Institutional Diversity and Equity. If you have questions regarding this form, contact the Office of Institutional Diversity and Equity.

All forms must be signed/submitted by the employee and approved by the employee's Budget Unit Manager/Dean and/or Provost/Divisional Vice President or President.

Requests for exception or interpretation of these procedures should be approved by the Budget Unit Manager/Dean and/or Cabinet Member and directed to the Director of Disbursements. Exceptions to these procedures shall be rare and based upon sound justification.

If the amount approved on an original Pre-Approval form is exceeded by ten percent (10%) because of unanticipated expenses, a letter of explanation detailing the extra expense(s) must be submitted to and approved by the Budget Unit Manager/Dean and/or Divisional Executive.

The University continues to encourage professional development for faculty and staff and wants to balance decisions regarding requests for travel with Stockton's commitment to health and safety. Given the current nature of COVID, faculty and staff who travel to a conference and become ill due to COVID will not be reimbursed for expenses incurred beyond the date of the original approved travel regardless of how or where they contracted the virus. At this time, the University strongly encourages that professional development occurs virtually whenever possible due to the high transmissibility of the Omicron variant. The University will continue to monitor transmission rates and adjust this temporary procedure modification as conditions change.

## **Payment Options for Travel and Business Expenses**

### *University Issued Credit Card*

Travelers may use the University issued Visa credit card for business travel. Proper use of the card and prompt submission of reconciliation with the appropriate receipts upon the traveler's return can alleviate the need to use personal funds for business travel expenses. The University will pay the credit card balance in full; the traveler will be required to complete a reconciliation of all credit card expenses. Credit cards will be issued to individual employees at the request of an employee's Budget Unit Manager and appropriate Cabinet Member, (see Credit Card Procedure). In other cases, University offices have credit cards for travel expenses if an employee does not have a card issued to them.

### *Check Request*

Travelers may request a University check to prepay certain expenses. The department support staff may submit a direct pay document to the Disbursement Services Office for check disbursement to pay for such expenses as conference registrations and hotel reservation deposits. If this option is utilized and the trip is cancelled, the traveler is responsible for arranging reimbursement to the University.

### *Personal Funds*

If the traveler makes all or part of the travel-related purchases with personal funds, at the completion of the trip the reconciliation and receipts must be submitted to the department support staff. Support staff will then submit a direct pay document via an expense report for reimbursement to the traveler. Appropriate receipts are to be attached to the credit card reconciliation or the expense report.

## **Travel Guidelines**

Only the actual and necessary expenses related directly to traveling in the performance of University official duties shall be reimbursed. A travel expense settlement is to be processed within 30 calendar days of completed travel but no later than 60 days.

Reimbursement to the University if a traveler owes the University money from a credit card transaction or any other travel expense is to be completed via a Bursar transmittal form and must include the TXN number and/or information specific to the travel document. The transmittal form must be submitted to the Bursar's Office. A copy of the transmittal form signed by the Bursar's Office must be attached to the appropriate document.

### *Personal Convenience*

When a traveler interrupts their business travel, or deviates from the direct route, for personal convenience or personal leave, only the rate for uninterrupted travel by the most direct route is an acceptable trip expense. Additional costs related to such deviations are the personal responsibility of the traveler.

Travelers wishing to maximize their comfort and convenience (example: business or first

class instead of economy class), must pay the difference between the most economical method and the traveler's selection.

When travelers must use premium transportation or other upgrades for medical reasons, travelers should provide justification to Human Resources. If deemed medically necessary, Human Resources will authorize the upgrade.

Where reimbursement for travel is from a grant or contract, the employee must receive prior approval from the Grants Accountant to ensure that all anticipated travel costs will be allowable for reimbursement in accordance with the grant/contract terms.

### *Meals and Lodging & Incidental Expenses*

- Meals:

Meal expenses are ordinarily reimbursed using the University approved breakfast, lunch and dinner per diem rates.

Meal per diem is authorized when overnight stay is required. The first and last day of travel are to be included in the calculation; the calculation should include the departure time as well as a deduction for meals provided by other sources (e.g. part of conference registration).

Reimbursement is approved for the full cost of an official convention meal when such a meal is scheduled as an integral part of a convention or conference proceeding. If a meal is included in the registration fee, the allowance for that meal is to be deducted from the per diem subsistence allowance.

Regardless of actual cost, reimbursement for meals shall ordinarily be at the breakfast, lunch, and dinner per diem rates. The credit card may be used for meals. Upon return from traveling, the traveler will be required to reimburse the University for meal costs charged on the card that exceed the breakfast, lunch, and dinner per diem rates.

- Lodging & Incidental Expenses:

Reimbursement of the actual cost for lodging at a convention site will be approved when such lodging is an official part of the convention (i.e., the lodging is either in the official convention hotel or in an alternative hotel arranged by the organization sponsoring the convention).

Non-conference actual cost of lodging shall be reimbursed unless it exceeds the regular Federal per diem rate for the partic location. Reimbursement for tips, gratuities, and similar fees are defined as incidental expenses and are limited by the approved per diem reimbursement rate.

Commercial lodging should be utilized when available; deviation from conventional lodging would be a contractual arrangement requiring the contracting process.

- Receipts:

Original receipts itemizing expenditures are required and must be submitted to the Disbursement Services Office when reporting travel expenses or seeking reimbursement, certification of non-alcoholic beverages may be required. If the Federal per diem rate is used, proof of travel will be required under the Internal

Revenue Code's Accountable Plan and Adequate Accounting rule.

- Proof of Travel:

The name badge from the conference, hotel receipt or plane boarding pass are examples of proof of travel.

*Certifications: Employee and Approval Authorities*

All University employees requesting payment or reimbursement for travel-related expenses shall certify the accuracy of the request and its compliance with this and other procedures. Approval and certification for payment of a Travel Expense Reimbursement Request by a Budget Unit Manager/Dean or Divisional Executive should be based upon a diligent compliance review of the reimbursement request.

*Expenditures That May Not Be Reimbursed*

- Personal telephone calls.
- Expenses for personal services, including those appearing on a hotel bill.
- Charges for alcoholic beverages; if an alcoholic beverage was included in a meal charge, reimbursement to the University is to include appropriate tax.
- Unless required by contract or local agreement, no meals, lodging, or mileage expenses at their official station, at the place where they reside, or within a radius of 25 miles from such station and home.
- Meals served as part of transportation accommodations when the cost is included in the transportation charge.
- Meals served as part of conferences/seminars when the cost is included in the conference/seminar cost.
- Moving expenses unless authorized by the Board of Trustees.
- Fines and other expenses for motor vehicle violations including parking offenses.
- University issued credit card cash advances.
- The differential in cost for parking in an express or standard lot when an economy lot is available.
- Upgrades that are for the comfort or convenience of the traveler.
- Attending educational, instructional or other conferences, which involve out-of-state or out-of-country travel when equivalent programs are available locally.
- Mileage and tolls for travel between instructional sites, unless the distance is more than 25 miles one-way or negotiated in a union local agreement.

*Other Prohibitions*

- Using a University vehicle for any personal obligations or with unauthorized persons.
- Using University equipment or vehicles in a manner that is unsafe or in violation of Federal, State or municipal laws including motor vehicle laws.
- Using University vehicles for travel when a substantial part of the total travel time is for parking at an airport or train station.

*International Travel: Employees/Students*

All travel requests for University-authorized travel and reimbursement outside of the Continental United States requires pre-approval and must comply with the University's international travel procedures, the Office of Global Engagement (OGE) procedures, and other University procedures. Unless approved by the Provost or appropriate Cabinet member, no employee shall be permitted to travel outside of the Continental USA. Employees must attach to requests for travel outside of the Continental USA, any State Department issued prohibitions on travel or travel warnings to the area. Employees must sign a waiver of liability prior to travel outside of the Continental USA.

Individuals are encouraged to purchase travel insurance for international travel. Faculty travel funds may be used to cover this cost, however, any amount over the faculty travel fund threshold will not be covered by institutional funds.

Individuals with travel insurance must seek a refund directly from the vendor (airline/hotel, etc.).

Employees and students are to have passports and medical/evacuation insurance in order to be approved for travel outside of the United States.

It is the sole responsibility of the employee and student approved for travel outside the Continental USA to ensure that he/she has appropriate insurance coverage, is medically suited for travel, and is fully capable of undertaking this travel.

The traveler's health insurance policy, including medical and emergency evacuation insurance, must be examined by OGE to ascertain whether coverage is effective (in force) at travel destination. The insurance information will be kept on file in the Office of Risk Management.

The University's student health insurance generally is sufficient for most foreign travel. Travelers must comply with all immunization requirements and immunization records should be on file with the University's Health Service Office.

Reimbursement for foreign travel will be in accordance with the most current IRS Foreign Travel Index ([www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)).

Each student (parent or guardian if the student is under 18 years of age) will sign a Waiver of Liability Form. The form will be kept on file in the Office of Risk Management.

The Office of Student Development has prepared a checklist for student travel (including foreign travel). The list is very comprehensive and should be reviewed as a planning tool for student travel.

All non-Stockton persons (i.e. third parties) must sign the University's Waiver of Liability Form. As with University employees and students, health insurance, passports and immunizations are imperative for each traveler.

### *Ground Transportation*

All travel must be by the most direct, economical and usually traveled route. Prior to departure from campus, a list of attendees must be on file with Campus Police.

When the number of persons in a group exceeds twenty (20), a charter bus should be used for the trip, rather than personal or University-owned vehicles.

- Train:  
If rail travel is authorized, the most economical fare is to be utilized.
- Taxi/Ridesharing:  
Necessary taxicab and/or ridesharing charges are permitted. However, travel to and from airports and downtown areas should be confined to regularly scheduled shuttle service, whenever such service is less costly. If shuttle service between the airport and downtown destination is not available, taxicab/ridesharing service may be used.
- Limousine rental is not authorized.
- Car Rental (Economy Only):  
Expenses for car rentals, utilized for either airport transportation or transportation at a conference, convention, etc., are not permitted unless a car rental is necessary for the conduct of State business and the use of public transportation is impractical. If approved, the most economical car rental is to be used, including the use of University authorized vendors and use of subcompacts, discounts and special rates.

#### *Use of University-Owned Vehicles*

The University maintains a central pool of vehicles for use by employees and students. The guidelines for the use of these vehicles, including the vehicle reservation process and driver approval and responsibility protocols, is found in University Procedure 6830 Use of University-Owned Vehicles.

#### *Personal Vehicles (Mileage Basis)*

Employees are encouraged to use University vehicles; however, under certain circumstances they may use their private vehicles for official University business. Mileage will be reimbursed at the University allowance rate, in lieu of all actual expenses of transportation. This is provided if the employee's use of their personal vehicle away from their official station has been approved by the Budget Unit Manager/Dean and/or Divisional Executive. In addition to the mileage allowance, economy parking and toll charges are reimbursable.

When employees use their own personal automobiles for official business, they should be aware that the employees' auto insurance is primary. The State's self-funded auto liability program, described in the previous section, may provide coverage for claims in excess of the coverage under employees' personal automobile insurance policy provided the employees are using their personal automobile on official University business. The State does not cover any physical damage to an employee's auto, nor will it reimburse collision or comprehensive deductibles.

Because of the potential liability resulting from the use of a personally owned car to transport students on field trips, the University must maintain a record of all such usage. Any employees proposing to use a personally owned car to transport students must complete a travel Pre- Approval form and submit it to the designated Travel Officer at least five (5) working days prior to the trip. A copy of the statement must be attached to

the Travel Expense Reimbursement Request when claiming reimbursement for mileage or other expenses involved with the trip.

Reimbursement for travel to points outside the State by automobile shall be permitted when such arrangements prove to be more efficient and economical than other forms of public transportation. In determining the relative costs of private and public transportation, all associated costs (i.e., tolls, taxicabs, airport, or station transfers, etc.) should be considered.

#### *Calculating Mileage:*

If an employee is operating their own vehicle and deviates from the course of travel necessary for completing the business purpose trip to handle personal business, they cannot claim a mileage reimbursement for those miles that are attributable to personal use.

When employees travel in their personally owned vehicles on official University business they will only be reimbursed for the difference between the cost of traveling from their residences to their official station and the cost of traveling from their residences to the location of the official University business. Reimbursement will only be made if the total cost of travel exceeds the regular traveling cost from home to the University.

Departure location and destination are required information for reimbursement. It is not understood that departure is automatically set from work. Actual departure location is to be stated on the Pre-Approval form and expense reimbursement. Reduction for normal work commute should be shown.

Travel on non-scheduled workdays or holidays to anywhere other than the official stations is reimbursable from the employee's home.

Employees are not entitled to mileage reimbursement from their residence to their official station, or between instructional sites unless the distance is more than 25 miles one-way or negotiated in a local agreement.

#### Example of mileage reimbursement calculation:

- An employee lives in Cape May, NJ which is approximately 47 miles from Stockton University and is traveling to Trenton which is approximately 113 miles from home;
- Employee's official station is Stockton main campus
- The reimbursement for traveling to a meeting in Trenton from home and returning home, not leaving from Stockton will be calculated as follows:
  - Cape May to Trenton and return: round-trip = 226 miles
  - Normal work commute round-trip = 94 miles
  - Reimbursement mileage = 132 (226 miles minus 94 miles)

#### *Air travel*

The most economical air travel must be used. Charges for extra costs for classes of service other than economy/coach (e.g., Business or First Class) are ineligible for payment or reimbursement from University funds. Travelers must book the lowest coach class airfare, available proof of class is to be provided when reconciling charges, which may be the boarding pass.

#### Baggage:



Most airlines require a baggage fee for checked baggage. The University will cover the expense for one carry-on (if applicable) and one standard checked bag.

Seating:

Commercial airlines that require nominal seat selection charges are allowable with approval by the Budget Unit Manager. The seat is not to be an upgrade status (e.g. exit row, window, front seat, main cabin, etc.). Seat upgrades not pre-authorized by Human Resources are at the expense of the traveler.

Other transportation:

Travel on cruise ship as transportation to an event is prohibited.

*Candidate Travel*

Prospective employees who are invited for University employment interviews are eligible for reimbursement based on actual costs limited by the regular Federal per diem rates. Original receipts must accompany any request for reimbursement attached to the direct pay. In general, reimbursement for candidate travel expenses is subject to the same restrictions that apply to reimbursement of employee travel expenses (e.g. economy parking, rental vehicle, etc.).

Prospective employees authorized to receive travel reimbursement, shall submit a fully approved reimbursement. Original receipts that substantiate the expenditures for which reimbursement is requested must be attached, along with the candidate's itinerary from the visit. The prospective employee's certification and legal signatures must be in ink. The Budget Unit Manager/Dean and/or Divisional Executive are responsible for the review and approval of a Direct Pay and must forward the form and original receipts to the Disbursement Services Office for reimbursement. Airfare and hotel expenses should not be paid in advance by the University but should be paid by the candidate and reimbursed after the visit.

Review History:

	Date
Procedure Administrator	01/17/2023
Divisional Executive	02/14/2023
General Counsel	04/13/2023
Cabinet	04/13/2023
President	04/13/2023