



Angelo State University
Operating Policy and Procedure

OP 70.02: Authorization for Official Travel

DATE: August 6, 2019

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy and/or Procedure (OP) is to set forth the policies and procedures governing the approval process for ASU employees requesting official travel status and to provide information to employees regarding vendors contracted by the State of Texas to provide travel services, as negotiated by the Comptroller of Public Accounts Texas Procurement and Support Services (TPASS). This OP also outlines procedures relating to compliance with the travel program regulations.

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed in September every five years, or as needed, by the purchasing and travel supervisor and the executive director of contracts and materials management, with recommended revisions forwarded through the vice president for finance and administration to the president by October 15 of the same year.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. General

- a. The approval process for official travel is activated by the submission of the *Pre-Approval* (PA) in Chrome River. Detailed instructions for completing the Pre-Approval are available on the [Travel Office](#) webpage. The PA must be completed and submitted for all official travel, regardless of the funding source and amount of travel.

2. State Travel Management Program (STMP)

- a. The State Travel Management Program (STMP) has negotiated travel contracts for airline fares and hotels. When on official travel, ASU employees **must** use the contracted rates when travel is funded by **state appropriated funds**, unless one of the noted exceptions apply (see section d below).
- b. When renting a vehicle, employees should refer to the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts website, STMP – Car Rental Contract to determine if the rental company is a state contracted agency.
- c. The State Travel Management Program (STMP) requires that state agencies use a state travel credit card to purchase all airfare when using state-appropriated funding. Travel services for lodging, rental vehicles, and other necessary travel expenses shall be charged to a state travel credit card, when feasible. (Texas Administrative Code (TAC), Section 20.413)

Details of the contracted agencies and applicable rates may be found at [STMP website](#).

For rental cars, STMP has contracted with the following vendors:

- (1) [Avis Budget Group, Inc.](#);
- (2) [Enterprise Rent-A-Car/National Car Rental](#);
- (3) [The Hertz Corporation](#)

Please refer to the [Travel Office](#) website for ASU's state rate discount code for each contracted rental company.

The STMP also has also contracted travel agency services, and the use of these services is optional for the university. At this time, the university has chosen not to exercise this option.

d. Exceptions:

The contracted travel services should be used as required, unless one of the following conditions exists:

- (1) Travel is part of a group program or conference for which reservations must be made through a specified source to obtain a specified rate or service.
- (2) A contract travel vendor cannot provide services in the time required to accomplish the purpose of the travel.
- (3) A contract hotel is not available in a location that will reasonably allow the traveler's business requirements to be fulfilled.
- (4) A contract hotel, airline, or rental car company cannot provide the required services because it is sold out or it does not offer services in the city being visited.
- (5) Alternative rental car or hotel arrangements can be made at a lower total cost than the contract hotels or rental car companies. Note: For rental cars, the total costs should include the base rate, loss/damage waiver or liability insurance protection, mileage charge, taxes, and surcharges. For hotels, the cost of the guest room, less taxes, shall be used to compare total costs.
- (6) A non-contract airline offers a lower published fare to the general public. However, identical airfares offered to state travelers only are not included as part of this exception.
- (7) Travel is undertaken by persons with disabilities, other persons in the custody of the state, or in a medical emergency.
- (8) Use of contract travel vendors may present a security or safety risk to the traveler.
- (9) Even though a traveler is not required to use the contracted rental car companies for travel paid from non-appropriated funds, the amount of reimbursement (including the

loss/damage waiver protection) will be limited to the contracted rates unless a valid exception is claimed. (Documentation may be required to verify the exception.)

- (10) Any travel service obtained at a price lower than the contracted rate may be used. ASU employees should also use these contracted services when reimbursement will be requested from institutional (local) funds.

Please notify the Travel Office as soon as possible if problems arise with any of the contracted vendors.

3. State Contracted Credit Card System

The STMP has contracted with a credit card company to provide charge cards for official travel use. The procedure outlining the use of the state travel card may be found in [OP 70.08](#), Use of the State Travel Card.

Compliance Policy:

- a. It is the responsibility of the traveler's supervisor and the financial manager to review the employee's travel arrangements listed on the PA and then review the travel expenses claimed on the expense report or travel voucher to ensure that travel expenses reimbursed from appropriated funds meets the requirements (rates) of the STMP contracted travel services or one of the above noted exceptions.
- b. The Travel Office will check expense reports for compliance with the requirements of the STMP and university operating policies. Expense reports that are not in compliance with these provisions may be delayed or rejected.
- c. If charges such as airfare or hotel are to be charged to the Business Travel Account (BTA), the PA provides the authorization to charge the specified fund/organization (See [OP 70.03](#) Business Travel Account).

4. Authority to Approve Travel

- a. Prior to travel, the traveler's supervisor and the financial manager will approve the PA, provided that such travel contributes to the mission of the university and is in accordance with current travel regulations. A detailed business purpose/benefit statement must be listed on the PA and/or Expense Report.
- b. Prior approval for all travel is required for absences from the campus (or other designated headquarters) for business purposes for periods of half a day (4 hours or more) during the normal working period, whether or not there is a cost to the university. The traveler must complete a PA and obtain approval as noted within each division's succession plan. (As well as any additional approvals needed dependent on the type of trip.)
- c. Appropriate arrangements for disposition of duties must be made in advance of the travel. If classes are to be missed, a qualified member of the instructional staff shall be identified and approved by the department head as a substitute instructor. Under normal circumstances, classes should not be rescheduled.

[Major Revision: August 6, 2019]

- d. Any changes in travel dates and/or estimated expense amounts will require the traveler to contact the Travel Office.

5. International Travel

All international travel, which includes Canada and Mexico, must be approved in advance by the provost, regardless of the funding source (See [OP 70.07](#) International Travel).