



Angelo State University
Operating Policy and Procedure

OP 70.04: Reimbursement of Travel Expenses

DATE: December 19, 2013

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy and Procedure (OP) is to set forth the guidelines for requesting reimbursement of travel expenses.

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed in January every three years, or as needed by the director of purchasing and operations with recommended revisions forwarded through the vice president for finance and administration to the president by February 15.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. Authority and Applicability

This OP outlines the travel reimbursement rules and regulations for ASU employees. All official travel must be for the use and benefit of the mission of the institution. It is the policy of ASU to follow travel guidelines as set forth by the state in [Texttravel](#), except for items specifically regulated in this OP.

2. Objectives

- a. If travel for employees is authorized in advance and funds are encumbered using a travel authorization (see OP 07.02), the traveler is entitled to reimbursement for certain expenses incurred as a result of the performance of official duties, as prescribed by applicable institutional, local, state and/or federal rules and regulations.
- b. All travel regulations set forth in [Texttravel](#) and this OP are to be followed for all travel, regardless of fund source, with the exception of limits specific to each fund group.
- c. Regardless of reimbursement received from other sources, an employee who travels in performance of official duties is entitled to claim that portion of expenses allowed under this OP from state or local funds, as long as the total reimbursement from all sources does not exceed actual expenses.
- d. Reimbursement of travel expenses may be obtained by completing a travel expense log (Attachment A). The completed expense log and supporting documentation must be submitted to the travel office in a timely manner after returning to the designated headquarters. Requests for reimbursements submitted later than 90 days after the ending date of travel will not be processed and funds will be unencumbered.

3. Responsibilities of the Traveler

- a. An employee is responsible for ensuring that his or her travel complies with applicable state law, [Textravel](#), and ASU OPs. Failure to comply may result in delays or rejection of travel reimbursement.
- b. An employee may not seek payment or reimbursement for travel expenses that the employee did not incur. Receiving free transportation or lodging in exchange for mileage or points does not constitute an expense.
- c. An employee may not seek payment or reimbursement for travel expenses that he or she knows, or reasonably should know, are not reimbursable or payable.
- d. An employee shall immediately reimburse the state for an overpayment. An overpayment is an employee's receipt of a reimbursement that exceeds (1) the amount the employee may receive under applicable law, the travel allowance guide, or this OP, or (2) the amount of travel expenses actually incurred. Failure to do so will result in future travel being suspended until the overpayment has been returned.
- e. An employee shall pay all of his/her *single* share of expenses while traveling.

4. Provisions Applicable to All Types of Travel Expenses

- a. An employee's travel must be planned to achieve maximum saving and efficiency. The travel expenses must be the lowest possible considering all relevant circumstances.
- b. An employee can be reimbursed only for his/her own expenditures. Reimbursements for expenditures incurred by other individuals are not allowed.
- c. Travel expenses incurred in a foreign currency must be converted to U.S. dollars. The current rate of exchange must be noted on the travel expense log.
- d. The university may pay or reimburse an employee for a cancellation charge if:
 - (1) A cancellation or change fee may be reimbursed only if the charge is incurred for a business-related reason or because of illness, adverse weather conditions or a natural disaster. Charges related to transportation expense that were paid in advance to obtain lower rates and is incurred because the employee was unable to travel because of an illness or personal emergency may be reimbursed.
 - (2) The travel expense log must state the business-related reason for the cancellation. Proof that the cancellation charge was paid must be attached to the travel expense log. If the cancellation charge is for an unused airline ticket, the original ticket must be attached to the expense log.

Note: The university is not liable for and may not reimburse an employee for a cancellation charge that a provider assesses because the employee should have but failed to cancel in time to avoid the charge.

- (3) When a package of at least two types of travel expenses (e.g., meals, lodging, transportation, incidental expenses, or registration fees) and the meals and/or lodging

portion of the package is *mandatory*, the meal and lodging expenses are fully payable or reimbursable, notwithstanding any maximum reimbursement limits established elsewhere.

- (4) If an employee on personal leave at a location outside the designated headquarters is required to travel to a duty point, the travel expenses incurred may be reimbursed. The reimbursable expenses are limited to the amount of travel expenses that would have been incurred had the employee traveled from his/her headquarters directly to the duty point. When an employee is required to return to headquarters while on personal leave, the employee may be reimbursed for the travel expenses they incurred while traveling to headquarters and returning to the place they were staying while on personal leave. The expenses are reimbursable only if the travel to the duty point is from a location other than the employee's residence.

For a detailed listing of all allowable travel exceptions, please refer to the [Textravel](#) website.

5. Reimbursement for Meal and Lodging Expenses

Applicable to both Meal and Lodging Expenses

- a. An employee may be reimbursed only for his/her actual meal and lodging expenses not to exceed the maximum reimbursement rate for that location. The state travel expense reimbursement rate is not a per diem. The maximum should not be claimed unless the actual expenditures equal or exceed the maximum allowable rate.
- b. Agencies must use the federal rates provided by the [General Services Administration](#) (GSA) for both in-state and out-of-state travel within the contiguous United States.
 - (1) If the city is not listed, but the county is listed, use the rate of the county.
 - (2) For areas not listed (city or county), the rates are limited to the GSA current maximum rates.
 - (3) The reimbursement limit applies without a carry-over from one day to another.
 - (4) Meal and lodging expenses are not reimbursable for any days the employee is absent from duty for personal reasons not connected with official duties.
 - (5) If an employee travels to more than one duty point on the same day, the maximum meal and lodging reimbursement for the day is equal to the highest of the maximum rates for the duty points visited.
- c. Employees who travel outside the continental U.S. (including Mexico & Canada) may not exceed the amount actually incurred not to exceed the rates set by the [US Department of State](#) per diem rates.

6. Reimbursement for Meal Expenses

- a. The university will not reimburse employees for meal expenses incurred while conducting state business that does not require an overnight stay.

- b. Meal expenses incurred within the employee's designated headquarters are not reimbursable unless the expenses were mandatory and connected with training, a seminar or a conference.
- c. The meal allowance represents the maximum charge allowed for a day of travel that includes an overnight stay. Receipts are not required for meals. The reimbursement should not exceed the actual expense for each meal. If departure time from the designated headquarters is before 8:00 a.m. and return time is after 7:00 p.m., the employee shall receive reimbursement for a full day per-diem not to exceed actual expenses. If the employee departs or returns to the designated headquarters at any other time of the day or evening they shall not be entitled to full per-diem for that particular day.
- d. An employee may not be reimbursed for the purchase of an alcoholic beverage or tips and gratuities. Exceptions may be allowed depending on the source of funding.

7. Reimbursement for Lodging Expenses

- a. An employee may not be reimbursed for a lodging expense incurred at a place that is not a commercial lodging establishment.
- b. An employee is entitled to reimbursement for lodging expenses at the duty point no more than one night before official state business begins and one night after official state business ends. Exceptions are allowed when extra days are required to qualify for discount airfares or when travel to the duty point reasonably requires more than one day.
- c. In order to be reimbursed for lodging, not to exceed the limits noted above, the employee must attach the original lodging receipt to the travel expense log. The lodging receipt must include the name and address of the commercial establishment, the employee's name, the single room rate, a daily itemization of the lodging charges, and must indicate a zero balance. If the original receipt is not available, the employee must obtain a detailed copy or reimbursement will be denied. A statement must be included declaring why the original receipt is not available.
- d. When two individuals share lodging and both are state employees, the state agency shall reimburse each employee for the employee's share of the lodging expense, not to exceed the applicable maximum lodging reimbursement rate. When only one of the individuals is a state employee, the agency must reimburse the employee the room rate for a single occupancy or the applicable maximum lodging reimbursement rate, whichever amount is less.
- e. For travel within the state of Texas, ASU employees are exempt from paying the state hotel occupancy tax, but are not exempt from paying any county or municipal hotel taxes. According to [Textravel](#), a state agency *may not* reimburse an employee for state hotel tax if the employee fails to present a properly completed exemption certificate to the establishment. However, if the employee presents the certificate to the establishment and the establishment refuses to honor the certificate, the employee must state this on the travel expense log. The university may then reimburse the employee, but must provide the Comptroller's Office the name of the establishment that refused to honor the exemption certificate.

[Minor revisions: December 19, 2013]

- f. The state maintains lodging contracts for many in- and out-of-state locations. Employees should review the [Comptroller's Hotel Directory](#) website for current fiscal year contracted hotels/motels.
- g. Any employee requesting reimbursement for excess lodging over the State of Texas established rates for all locations must provide justification on the Travel Authorization Request (TAR) (Attachment B) and receive approval from the appropriate financial manager prior to traveling. The Travel Office will deny requests for excess lodging not approved and documented prior to traveling.

8. Reimbursement for Mileage, Parking, and Tolls

a. Reimbursement of Mileage

- (1) With the exception of tolls and parking expenses, a mileage reimbursement is inclusive of all expenses associated with the employee's operation of a personally owned or leased vehicle. The term "all expenses" includes damage to the employee's vehicle from any cause. ASU is not liable for the employee's insurance deductible or any other cost associated with an accident or vehicle damage.
- (2) Coordination of travel must occur when two, three, or four state employees employed by the same state agency travel on the same dates with the same itinerary to conduct the same official state business. Only one employee riding in the personally owned or leased vehicle may be reimbursed. The appropriate financial manager must approve the justification for two or more employees traveling on the TAR prior to travel.
- (3) The amount of mileage reimbursement may not exceed the applicable mileage rate multiplied by the number of miles traveled. The approved mileage rate will be referenced on the [Travel Office](#) website. The number of miles traveled shall be calculated using an on-line mapping tool or by point-to-point itemization. The employee may also use odometer readings to calculate mileage. If the employee's odometer is used to determine the mileage, the employee must properly itemize the mileage on a point-to-point basis, sufficiently detailed enough for ASU to verify that number, in order to be reimbursed.
- (4) An employee may be reimbursed mileage for travel between the employee's home and the nearest airport. If travel occurs during working hours, the amount of the reimbursement may not exceed the amount that would have been reimbursed had the employee traveled from the employee's designated headquarters to the airport. The latest time that an individual may check-in for the flight, as specified by the airline, determines whether the travel to the airport occurs during working or non-working hours.
- (5) An employee may be reimbursed for the mileage incurred by another person transporting the employee to the airport. The reimbursement may not exceed the reimbursement that would have been paid if the employee had parked at the airport.
- (6) The amount of mileage reimbursement for out-of-state travel to duty points served by commercial airlines is limited to the average coach airline fare plus the per diem necessary to complete such a flight. The amount due may also include the expenses of transportation to airports from points where commercial air transportation is not

available. If the actual mileage reimbursement would be less than the cost of the average coach airline fare, the maximum that can be claimed is actual mileage.

- (7) Alternate routes may be taken if employees are concerned about safety when determining mileage reimbursement. An explanation for the alternate route must be attached to the travel expense log.
- (8) Employees whose job responsibilities customarily require travel within their designated headquarters may receive mileage reimbursement only if the appropriate financial manager approves. Justification on how the travel benefits the state and documentation of itemized point-to-point odometer reading log must be attached to the travel expense log. For more information, refer to the [Travel Office](#) website.

b. Reimbursement of Parking and Toll Expenses

- (1) Parking and toll expenses incurred while an employee is on official state business are reimbursable, whether the employee is using a personally owned or leased vehicle or a rented vehicle.
- (2) Parking or toll expenses will not be reimbursed if none of the other transportation expenses incurred are not reimbursable.
- (3) A parking expense incurred by an individual while dropping off or picking up a state employee at the airport is reimbursable.
- (4) Receipts are not required for parking and toll expenses; however, expenses must be itemized on the travel expense log.

9. Reimbursement for Travel by Rented or Public Conveyance

a. Commercial Airlines

- (1) The reimbursement for commercial air transportation may not exceed the cost of the lowest available airfare. First class or business class airfare will be reimbursed only at the lowest available airfare rate, unless it was the only airfare available or a medical necessity. For international travel, travelers may also consider flying with only “alliance” airlines if the airfare cost is comparable to the lowest available airfare.
- (2) When an employee combines business and personal air travel, the reimbursement may not exceed the amount of airfare that would have been charged had the employee not included personal travel. So long as that limit is not exceeded, the employee may be reimbursed for all airfare charges relating to the business trip.
- (3) The following information must be included on the receipt or itinerary on internet airfare:
 - Name of the employee and airline,
 - Ticket number,
 - Class of transportation,
 - Travel dates,

- Amount of the airfare and taxes
- Origin and destination of each flight.
- Proof of payment

- (4) Federal taxes on airfare are reimbursable.
- (5) Frequent flyer miles that are earned as the result of a business trip should be used for business purposes.
- (6) An employee may be reimbursed for the cost of a buy one, get one free promotion. However, the amount of reimbursement is limited to the charges shown on the ticket with the employee's name.
- (7) When an employee stays extra days at a duty point to qualify for a discount airfare, the employee may be reimbursed for the travel expenses incurred, if the additional expenses plus the discount airfare are less than or equal to the average coach airfare. It must be in the best interest of the university to allow the employee to be absent for the extra days. The extra days may occur before or after the official state business.

b. Rental of Motor Vehicles

- (1) An employee may be reimbursed for the actual cost of renting a motor vehicle. The amount of reimbursement is limited to the state contracted rates unless a valid exemption is claimed:
 - (a) For employee travel, the personal accident insurance should not be purchased as it is not reimbursable; however, it is a requirement for students traveling in rental vehicles who are not university employees.
 - (b) If an employee does not use a contracted agency and declines the loss damage waiver, the university will not be responsible for damages in the case of an accident. The employee or his/her personal automobile insurance carrier will be responsible for any damages incurred.
 - (c) 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. Please note that some locations of the contracted rental companies may not honor the State of Texas contract.
 - (d) When an employee uses a rental vehicle for both personal business and state business, only the portion attributable to state business may be reimbursed. Rental expenses may not be reimbursed, if the rental was necessary only because the employee combined personal and state business.
- (2) An original and complete receipt must accompany the travel expense log. The receipt must show the starting and ending dates of the rental, specify the names of the motor vehicle rental company and the renter, and itemize the expenses incurred.
- (3) When two or more employees share a rental vehicle, only the employee who paid the cost of renting the vehicle may be reimbursed. The other employee may not be reimbursed for any costs associated with renting the vehicle.

- (4) Gasoline purchased for a rental vehicle may be reimbursed. Original itemized receipts for fuel purchases must accompany the travel voucher.
 - (5) Charges for liability insurance supplements, safe trip insurance and personal effects insurance are not reimbursable. The charge for an additional driver is reimbursable only if it is for another state employee. A collision damage waiver or a loss damage waiver is reimbursable, unless the waiver is included in the contracted rental rates.
- c. Travel by Mass Transit, Taxi or Limousine
- (1) An employee may be reimbursed for the actual cost of transportation by bus, subway, other mode of mass transit, or taxi. An employee may not be reimbursed for the cost of transportation by a person who is not a commercial transportation company.
 - (2) If two or more employees share a taxi, only the employee who paid for the taxi may be reimbursed for that expense. The other employees may be reimbursed only for the charges imposed on an individual-by-individual basis.
 - (3) An employee may be reimbursed for the actual cost of transportation by limousine only if it was the least costly transportation available, considering all relevant circumstances. Attach a written justification to the travel expense log.
 - (4) Receipts are not required for travel by bus, subway, other modes of mass transit, or taxi. However, individual trips must be itemized on the travel expense log, showing the date, fare and destination for each trip. If public transportation is used for travel between cities, receipts are required. If receipts are not available, the destination must be stated on the travel expense log.

10. Reimbursement for Internet Reservations

- a. Internet airfare, rental vehicle, or hotel reservations may be purchased if employees use their state travel corporate card or a personal credit card.
- b. Internet service fees associated with reserving airfare, hotel, or rental vehicles are reimbursable only if there is an overall cost savings to the university. However, state taxes are not reimbursable and the tax rate will be deducted from the traveler's reimbursement. Travelers must provide an itemized receipt of charges incurred.
- c. Reimbursement for these expenditures will be made upon the completion of the trip and the submission of the travel expense log.
- d. For hotel reservations booked and paid for in advance using an online booking agent, the travelers must provide "proof of stay" from the hotel itself and an itemized receipt from the internet vendor in order to be reimbursed.
- e. Purchasing internet tickets months in advance of a trip could result in personal liability for the credit card bill until such time as the appropriate reimbursement is requested and paid.

11. Registration Fees

- a. An employee may be reimbursed for registration fees for official business conferences and seminars if the employee charged the registration fee to his/her state travel card or paid the fee from personal funds. There should be a direct relationship between the duties performed by the employee and the type of conference he/she attended.
- b. A receipt indicating the amount for registration fees must accompany the travel expense log. Meals included in the registration fees must be deducted from the daily meal expenses. Entertainment or other personal expense items included in the registration fee are not reimbursable. All registration fees not previously paid or claimed should be included on the travel expense log.
- c. Supervisors and/or financial managers shall make every effort to ensure attendance at any seminar or conference that has been paid in advance. Cancellation charges for “no shows” because of personal reasons other than illness or emergencies are not reimbursable. One state employee may replace another employee at a conference if the attending employee attaches a statement showing the circumstances with the receipt.
- d. Registration fees payments may not be made more than six (6) weeks in advance of the seminar or conference unless the cost savings is considerable to the university or if there is a limited capacity for attendance.

12. Special Provisions / Incidental Expenses

For a list of special provisions and incidental expenses, refer to the [Travel Office](#) website.

Attachment A: [Travel Expense Log](#)

Attachment B: [Travel Authorization Request Form](#)