TRAVEL OFFICE

Travel Policies & Procedures
MISSION & LOCATION

Mission: The function of the Travel Office is to serve and support ASU faculty and staff while providing assistance and guidance regarding all travel policies and procedures. We are responsible for ensuring strict adherence to all State of Texas and ASU operating guidelines. Our goal is to expedite all travel reimbursements as quickly and accurately as possible.

Location and contact: The Travel Office is located in the Administration Building, 2601 W. Avenue N, Room 110, San Angelo, Texas 76909. Hours of operation are 8:00a.m. to 12:00pm, 1:00pm to 5:00p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding University holidays. You may also reach us by phone at (325) 942-2725 or email TravelOffice@angelo.edu.
OVERVIEW

• SUCCESSFUL TRAVEL PLANNING
  – Required Travel Forms
  – Necessary Memos
  – Price Quotes and Per Diem Rates

• BOOKING TRAVEL
  – Conserving Funds
  – Planning Ahead
  – Business Travel Account

• SUMMARY OF OPERATING POLICIES/PROCEDURES

• HELPFUL TRAVEL TOOLS
SUCCESSFUL TRAVEL PLANNING
Required Forms

The approval process for official travel is activated by the submission of the Travel Authorization Request (TAR) form.

- Successful travel planning begins with the thorough completion of this form.

- The purpose of the TAR is to indicate to Purchasing the amount of expected travel expenses to be encumbered and from what funding source the expenses are to be paid.

- The TAR is also used to indicate which travel expenses are to be “pre-paid” using either the Business Travel Account (BTA for Airfare, Hotels, and Rental Cars) or an Online Purchase Requisition (for registration expenses).

- For student travel, the TAR is used to request travel advances.
Required Forms

In addition to the TAR, the following forms must be completed for employee travel:

- Travel Expense Log
- Travel Management Compliance Certification (State funds only)

For prospective employees, the following forms must be completed:

- Authorization Request for Payment of Travel Expenses for Prospective Employee
- Travel Expense Log
- Travel Management Compliance Certification (State funds only)
Required Forms

In addition to the TAR, the following forms must be completed for student travel:

- Student/Group Travel Form
- Student/Group Travel List
- Student Activity Release Form
- Student Travel Expense Report
- Driver Approval Request

For international travel, employees and students must also complete the following form:

- Affirmation, Waiver and Liability Release
Necessary Memos

The following memos should be completed on the memo attachment page of the TAR (page 3) and received by the Travel Office prior to travel:

• Multiple Traveler Justification (if more than one employee within the same department is traveling to the same destination; must state the reason if they are unable to travel together). OP 70.02

• Hotel Overage (must list the maximum allowed rate, actual rate, Local account to pay the overage from, and reason the overage is necessary). OP 70.04

• Advisor Not Accompanying Student Group (should state the reason the advisor is not able to accompany the student(s); requires VP approval). OP 70.09
Price Quotes and Per Diem Rates

When planning travel you can contact the Travel Office for price quotes or help with estimated expenses.

• **Airfare** – Travelers can contact Horizons Travel 325-658-2468 to make flight reservations. They can also visit the American Airlines website or other online travel resources to receive a flight estimate. Please note for BTA purchases airfare cannot be purchased by the Travel Office until the approved TAR is received.

• **Per Diem Rates** - Agencies must use the federal rates provided by the General Services Administration for both in-state and out-of-state travel within the contiguous United States. OP 70.04
  – For in-state travel, if a duty point is not specifically listed the Standard Rate shown at the top of the chart must be used.
  – For out-of-state travel, if a duty point is not specifically listed the Standard Rate shown at the top of the chart must be used.
BOOKING TRAVEL
Conserving Funds

The University shall minimize the amount of travel expenses paid or reimbursed by making sure that each travel arrangement, including meals, lodging, transportation, and incidental expenses, is the most cost-effective considering all relevant circumstances. To reduce travel costs, the university shall use interactive television, videoconference technology, and telephone conferences whenever possible. *Gov’t Code Sec. 660.007 and OP 70.01*

To provide timely and efficient travel services and generate cost savings to state agencies, the State of Texas legislation requires that the Texas Procurement and Support Services (TPASS) contract with travel vendors.

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. *Gov’t Code Sec. 660.044 and OP 70.04*
Planning Ahead

In an effort to assist in conservation of funds, it is important to plan your travel as far in advance as possible.

Also, be aware that Travel Authorization Request (TAR) forms that require additional levels of approval (i.e. out-of-state/international) may experience delays during the signature process.

When airfare is involved, the Travel Office will purchase your airfare once the approved TAR has been received and funds have been approved by Purchasing. Prices tend to increase closer to the departure date.

Any “pre-paid” expenses will not be authorized for purchase until the approved TAR and necessary documentation has been received (i.e. Registration, Hotel/Rental Car, Airfare).
Business Travel Account

The Business Travel Account (BTA) is designed to assist qualified individuals who wish to have airfare, hotel, and/or rental vehicle charged directly to the university. The BTA is available to employees who have been denied state travel credit cards, student groups and prospective employees. *OP 70.03*

Please indicate on the TAR which charges are to be “pre-paid”.

- **Airfare** – Set up flight reservations through Horizons Travel.
- **Hotel** – Traveler will make initial hotel reservation using personal/travel card and attach confirmation to TAR. BTA will only pay room charge and applicable taxes. All other incidentals should be put on personal card.
- **Rental Car** – Travel Office will make Enterprise car reservation.

Students traveling with proper authorization may also use the BTA. *OP 70.09*
Travelers and employees accountable for student travel are responsible for understanding the following:

- 70.01 Travel Guidelines
- 70.02 Authorization for Official Travel
- 70.03 Business Travel Account
- 70.04 Reimbursement of Travel Expenses
- 70.06 Travel by Prospective Employees
- 70.07 International Travel
- 70.08 Use of the State Corporate Travel Card
- 70.09 Student Travel
OP 70.01-Travel Guidelines

• Travel expense log should be submitted for reimbursement no later than 60 days after the ending date of travel;

• Due to IRS regulations and the Safe Harbor rules, expenses that are submitted 60-90 days after the ending date of travel for reimbursement will require an attached explanation as to the reason(s) for the lateness. Will also require additional levels of approval and may even run the risk of being disallowed entirely or reported as taxable income to the payee;

• Travel expenses submitted later than 90 days after the ending date of travel will not be processed and funds will be unencumbered.
OP 70.02 - Authorization for Official Travel

• Traveler must have an approved Travel Authorization Request (TAR) form;

• 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 or more during the normal working period, whether or not there is a cost to the university;

• All international travel must be approved in advance by the appropriate vice president, regardless of the funding source.
If the trip is not entirely funded by the university or is extended for personal travel, the employee must provide a check payment to the credit card agency for the additional amount not charged to the BTA at the time of the reservation;

The Travel Office recommends that an employee carry a credit card or cash in case a hotel refuses to allow prepaid charging for the full amount due;

If an employee cannot travel, contact the Travel Office immediately. Only the Travel Office may cancel travel reservations made through the BTA.
OP 70.04 - Reimbursement of Travel Expenses

- Travel must be in compliance with applicable state law, the travel allowance guide, and ASU operating policies.
- A state employee shall immediately reimburse the state for an overpayment. Failure to do so will result in future travel being suspended until the overpayment has been returned;
- No reimbursement for meals if state business does not require an overnight stay; PLEASE Note that “per diem” is based on actual expenses. Can only claim what they actually spent on meals not to exceed the maximum allowed rate.
- If an employee travels to more than one duty point on the same day, then the maximum meal or lodging reimbursement for the day is equal to the highest of the maximum rates for the duty points visited.
A state agency may pay or reimburse a state employee for a cancellation charge if:

- A cancellation or change may be reimbursed by the agency only if the charge is incurred for a business related reason or because of illness, adverse weather conditions or a natural disaster;

- The travel expense log must state the business-related reason for the cancellation. Attach proof of the paid cancellation charge and if applicable, original airline ticket;

- A state agency 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.
OP 70.04 - Reimbursement of Travel Expenses

- Commercial airlines:

  - The reimbursement for commercial air transportation may not exceed the cost of the lowest available airfare available;

  - When an employee combines business and personal air travel, the reimbursement may not exceed the amount of airfare that would have been charged had they not included personal travel;

  - Internet airfare tickets may be purchased, if the travel is being reimbursed using local funds. NOTE: traveler is responsible for all charges/fees related to the airfare purchased on the internet.
OP 70.04 - Reimbursement of Travel Expenses

• Registration fees:

  ➢ An employee may be reimbursed for registration fees for official business conferences and seminars. Receipt must be attached to travel expense log;

  ➢ Cancellation charges for “no shows” because of personal reasons 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;

  ➢ Registration fees payments may not be made more than six (6) weeks in advance, unless the cost savings is considerable to the University or if there is a limited capacity for attendance.
OP 70.04 - Reimbursement of Travel Expenses

• Special Provisions:

Reimbursable incidental expenses:
- Documentation & justification is required:
  - Phone calls, Internet charges, postage, facsimile, and notary fees for official business;
  - Copies made by the employee that are required by the agency;
  - Charges to exchange U.S. currency for foreign currency and vice versa;

Non-reimbursable incidental expenses:
- Any expense that does not relate to official state business;
- Excess baggage charges for personal belongings and locker rental;
- Personal expenses, such as the rental or purchase of a video tape for personal entertainment, an alcoholic beverage, dry cleaning or laundry, or kennel expenses for a pet.

See OP for more examples of reimbursable and non-reimbursable expenses.
OP 70.06 - Travel by Prospective Employees

• Reimbursement for travel expenses:

  ➢ Prospective state employees are to be reimbursed in the same manner as ASU employees, except that they may not receive a travel advance;

  ➢ Prospective employees are not exempt from hotel occupancy taxes;

  ➢ Must follow the same travel guidelines and operating policies as ASU employees;

  ➢ Reimbursement for travel expenses will be mailed to the prospective employee’s address after visiting ASU.
OP 70.07 - International Travel

• Approval and reimbursement of expenses:

- The TAR must be to the President’s Office at least six (6) weeks prior to departure;

- International travel is not typically funded with state appropriated funds, however where it is appropriated, a memo justifying the use of state funds is required;

- Contracts and Grants – May require additional approval;

- Passports are required for international air travel;

- Reimbursement for travel expenditures should follow the same guideline set forth in OP 70.04.
OP 70.08 - Use of the State Corporate Travel Card

• Only charges for State of Texas business related expenses;

• Upon termination of employment, the state travel card should be returned to the Travel;

• Retail charges should be made only in connection with travel on state business – limit of $500;

• ASU will review expenditures activity on all accounts. If any charges appear to be unrelated to official “State of Texas” travel business, the employee will be notified by letter from the Travel Office. After, three letters of notification, the Travel Office will report these finding to the Vice President of Finance and Administration.

• Employees declined acceptance for a state travel card may utilize the BTA for airfare, hotel and rental car (see OP 70.03).
OP 70.09 - Student Travel

- An employee must be accountable for out-of-town trips for students and ensure that all travel documents are completed prior to travel;

- Students traveling to professional conferences to present their research are not required to have an employee accompany them;

- Cash advances will be given only to the employee accountable for the student travel and expenses. An approved TAR must be received by the Travel Office at least five (5) working days prior to the trip;

- After the trip, the accountable employee must complete a Student Travel Expense Report within fifteen (15) days and attach all required documentation.
HELPFUL TRAVEL TOOLS
The Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts created Textravel to provide information on state travel laws and rules to state agencies and institutions of higher education. Textravel is based on Texas Government Code Chapter 660, General Appropriations Act, Article IX, Part 5, and Texas Administrative Code, Title 34, Part 1, Chapter 5, Subchapter C, Section 5.22.

This web resource is designed to be an easy reference for state agencies and their employees. Links to applicable laws and rules are included.

~VERY User-friendly - Helpful with all aspects of travel~
This website is a relatively new development for the Travel Office. Our intention was to create a source for travelers (employees and students) to help with the planning and payment of travel-related services.

The Travel Office also has a Travel Channel on Ram Port located within the Work Life tab.

Your input is welcome, so please let us know if you are having trouble using one of the sites or if there is information you cannot find or would like added to the site.

~Helpful tool for all ASU travelers~
The State Travel Management Program (STMP) at the Comptroller’s office ensures that state agencies use taxpayer dollars more efficiently by helping them manage their travel expenditures by providing discounted travel services through vendor contracts and monitoring state travel activity.

Whether you are the traveler or a travel coordinator, this web site will provide you with valuable resources and information to make the most effective use of your travel budget.

~Provides helpful information regarding vendor contracts~
THANK YOU!

QUESTIONS????