

UAHuntsville Travel Guidelines

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**UAHuntsville Campus Implementation of
University of Alabama System Travel Guidelines
Effective March, 2009**

The Board of Trustees of The University of Alabama Board Rule 413, Travel Guidelines, is the official guidelines for The University of Alabama in Huntsville. The following are campus specific guidelines. Copies of Board Rule 413 may be obtained from the Office of the Vice President for Finance and Administration upon request, or may be found on the internet at <http://www.uasystem.ua.edu/board/2007%20Combined%20Board%20Manual.pdf>

GENERAL TRAVEL POLICIES

It is the policy of the University to reimburse its employees who travel at the request of the University for reasonable and necessary expenses incurred while traveling on authorized University business. The implementation of this policy is reflected in the spirit of the guidelines set forth below and in Board Rule 413. In this regard, these guidelines are not intended to replace the good judgment of those responsible for their execution. Circumstances and differences in responsibilities may dictate exceptions. In such cases, appropriate action should be characterized by prudence and a responsibility to safeguard public funds.

These guidelines do not preclude more restrictive internal approval procedures which department heads, deans, etc. may choose to implement internally and monitor themselves for their own accounts.

1. Official Station

The official station of an employee is the office and/or campus to which an employee is normally assigned. Transportation costs between an individual's domicile and official station are not allowed. The reimbursable mileage between UAH and the Huntsville Airport is 10 miles each way.

2. Travel Vouchers

All travel expenses must be submitted on an approved travel voucher form after completion of the trip. Receipts and other documentation of the total costs of the trip must be submitted along with the travel voucher. Only actual and necessary expenses of official travel are reimbursed. The travel voucher must be signed on the line marked "Signature of Traveler" by the employee who traveled.

All travel must be by the most economical route practical and any person traveling by another route, without adequate justification, must assume any additional expense incurred. Where for the traveler's personal convenience there is interruption of travel or deviation from the direct route, the travel allowance may not exceed that which would have been incurred on uninterrupted travel.

When personal travel is combined with business travel, a clear separation must be made between business and personal travel. The traveler should do a cost comparison when combining business and personal travel.

3. Prompt Submission

If the travel voucher is submitted more than sixty (60) days after the completion of travel, the reimbursement is considered taxable income to the traveler unless a reasonable justification for an exception is presented. Tax withholding will be made from a subsequent salary check. Federal tax regulations require that substantiation of reimbursable expense be made within a reasonable period. Under the IRS safe-harbor rule, that period is sixty (60) days.

Examples of reasonable exceptions include, but are not limited to:

- Extended personal illness
- Death in the family
- Travel outside of country for an unexpected period of time
- Unforeseen circumstances, which must be explained

Forgetting to file for reimbursement or losing the voucher in a desk are not reasonable exceptions.

4. Documentation of Costs

Receipts should be obtained whenever possible for any travel expenses, but are required for all registration fees, air fare, rail and bus fares, hotel bills, rental vehicles, taxi fares, emergency repairs, gasoline and oil purchases for state-owned vehicles, and for any other expense greater than \$75.

If an original is lost, a copy of the receipt must be obtained from the airline, hotel, or the travel agent. The University may consider accepting the following documents:

- Credit card charge slip
- Credit card statement
- Cancelled check, including reverse side
- Bank statement

Conference registration fees paid are reimbursable following the conference by documenting the expense registration along with the travel voucher. Documentation must include information listing any meals included in the registration fee. When speaking at a conference for which there is no registration fee; documentation must be provided to prove attendance, such as an attendance roster or a formal agenda showing the traveler's name as a speaker.

5. Approval of Travel Reimbursement

All travel to be reimbursed by UAH must be approved on a Travel Authorization form in advance by the appropriate Vice President or designee. The traveler's immediate supervisor must sign travel expense vouchers. Employees may not approve their own reimbursement.

Each Travel Authorization and the associated Travel Voucher should specify clearly the purpose of the trip. The trip purpose should explain all activities associated with the trip. To classify the purpose as a discussion, research or a visit is insufficient to comply with appropriate regulations.

Deans and directors may establish additional reimbursement approval policies and procedures for accounts for which they are responsible, as long as such policies are documented.

6. Contract and Grant Travel Reimbursement

Travel charged to a contract or grant should follow the guidelines set forth by this policy unless the funding agency imposes greater restrictions. The terms of a particular contract or grant should be referred to for guidance concerning allowable expenditures and/or travel approval requirements. The Office of Sponsored Programs should be contacted when there is a question pertaining to a particular contract or grant.

The Office of Sponsored Programs must approve all travel authorizations in advance of trip.

Travel reimbursement from contract and grant funds require a travel voucher signed by the principal investigator responsible for the contract or grant account.

The University's federal contract and grant funds may not, by federal law, be used to make reimbursements for business entertainment incurred during official travel.

7. Telephone and Facsimile

Expenses for necessary official telephone and facsimile services are allowable. Whenever possible, telephone calls to an activity's central office shall be made direct dial. Personal calls are unallowable.

8. Laundry Services

Employees in travel stature for more than seven (7) days are eligible for up to \$25 of laundry service every seven (7) days. Only actual laundry expenses are reimbursable, and receipts are required.

9. Travel during Sabbatical Leave

Travel expenses during a sabbatical may be reimbursed if they are connected to University duties. Prior approval is required.

10. Travel Advances

UAH does not advance funds for travel expenses to its employees.

11. Multiple Reimbursement

The University will not reimburse an employee for expenses being funded by another organization. No employee may ask the University to prepay any expenses that the employee expects to be reimbursed by a third party.

12. Prohibited Expenses

Non-reimbursable expenses include but are not limited to the following:

- Alcoholic beverages and taxes
- Clothing or toiletry items
- Commuting between home and campus
- Airline club membership
- Expenses related to vacation or personal days taken before, during, or after a business trip
- Collision (CDW) or loss damage (LDW) on rental cars except for foreign travel
- Loss or theft of airline tickets
- Loss or theft of personal funds or property
- Lost baggage
- Luggage and briefcases
- Magazines, newspapers, personal reading materials
- Medical expenses while traveling
- Personal entertainment charges such as movies, spa/health clubs, sightseeing tours, golf outings, etc.
- Personal grooming services
- Pet care
- Saunas, massages
- Shoe shines
- Souvenirs or personal gifts
- Travel accident insurance premiums
- Parking tickets or other traffic fines
- Tobacco products
- Personal travel insurance
- Spouse/family travel expenses except as stated in the spouse/family section
- Safe charges
- Keys locked in personal vehicle or towing of a personal automobile used for University business

13. Special Travel Requirements

Special travel requirements that are not covered by the above policies require an explanation in writing to the Accounting and Financial Reporting office (SKH 230). Requirements must be approved prior to travel in order to be eligible for reimbursement.

14. Accounting for Savings by Early Arrival

If an employee chooses to arrive early for a conference or meeting to take advantage of reduced airfare, the employee must reconcile the standard coach/economy airfare with the reduced airfare, the additional hotel and meal expenses, and any other expenses that were incurred because of early arrival. This reconciliation should be submitted with the travel voucher.

15. Trip Cancellation

The University will reimburse an employee for nonrefundable expenses when cancellation of a trip is necessary due to conflicting University business, or an illness or death in the employee's family.

16. Travel Time

En-route expenses are limited to one day each way.

TRANSPORTATION

1. Travel Route

For official University travel, employees should use the most economical route available. Mileage is calculated from the employee's official work station. If official travel begins at home and it is closer to the destination, mileage is calculated from home.

2. Interrupted Travel

If there is an interruption of travel or deviation from the direct route, the reimbursement allowed will not exceed that which would have been allowed if the travel was not interrupted. Any deviation must be explained in writing and attached to the travel voucher so that the correct amount of reimbursement can be determined.

3. Taxis and Other Ground Transportation

The University may reimburse ground transportation and related expenses such as shuttle bus (between airport and hotel), taxi, bus, subway, train, and parking. Limousine services are only allowed when justified business reasons preclude the use of more economical modes of transportation. Care should be given to use the lowest cost transportation. Original receipts are required.

4. Air Travel

All UAH staff, faculty, student, and University visitors traveling on official business are expected to travel at the lowest available airfare. Employees should plan well in advance to obtain the most economical airfare available. Only coach/economy fares are reimbursable unless warranted by a medical condition approved by the traveler's physician. A traveler with a physician-approved medical condition may be reimbursed business class fare, but not first class. The physician approval must be submitted with the travel voucher.

Tickets may be purchased by the traveler or through the Office of Procurement Services. Official airline ticket stubs must be attached to the travel form even though the University prepaid the tickets.

The costs of ticket life insurance and ticket cancellation insurance are not reimbursable.

Reimbursement for tickets cannot be made until after the trip has been completed.

Travel by private plane on official University business must be approved by the appropriate Vice President. Use of private planes should be limited to those situations for

which air travel is justified and where commercial service is either not available between departure and destination points and cannot accommodate necessary time schedules.

Travel by privately-owned aircrafts is authorized only if the owner of the aircraft is insured under a policy of liability insurance providing coverage for third-party bodily injury and property damage.

Reimbursement for the use of privately owned aircrafts will be at the current mileage rate for in-state travel and the out-of-state rate will be at the coach/economy rate. If commercial airline is unavailable at an airport, reimbursement will be in accordance with state regulations for private vehicle travel.

5. Rail Travel

The University will reimburse the cost of train fare not to exceed the cost of coach airfare. Attach the original receipt for the rail fares and the passenger copy of the ticket with travel voucher.

6. Documentation of Prepaid Airfare and Rail Fare

The passenger copy of the ticket must always be submitted with the travel voucher. This is required whether the employee or the University purchased the ticket. Boarding passes should also be submitted with the travel voucher.

7. Local (Auto) Transportation

Employees may be reimbursed for local personal mileage at the authorized per-mile rate. Employees should be approved in advance by the appropriate Vice President.

For frequent local travel, claims should not be submitted on a per-trip basis. Instead, employees who make frequent local trips should keep a mileage log and submit claims at appropriate intervals. The interval claims must be less than sixty (60) days to comply with IRS regulations treating reimbursements after sixty (60) days as taxable income subject to withholding.

Reimbursement must include the date, destination and reason for the trip along with the recorded mileage.

Under normal circumstances, employees will not be reimbursed for intra-campus travel when a personal vehicle is used. If extenuating circumstances exist, documentation of these circumstances should be submitted to the appropriate Vice President for approval. If the Vice President approves, a copy of the approval should be attached to the In-State Travel Voucher.

8. University Motor Pool Transportation

University-owned vehicles may be used for official travel. The vehicles are available on a first-come, first-served basis to properly licensed adults who are employed by or enrolled in the University. Contact the motor pool to reserve a vehicle.

A gasoline credit card is provided to buy fuel for University vehicles when they are operating on official business. It is prohibited to use a University card to buy fuel for privately owned vehicles.

9. Privately-Owned Automobile Transportation

Travel by private vehicle is allowed when authorized on the Travel Authorization form. Mileage in lieu of actual transportation expenses may be reimbursed per mile in accordance with State regulations. The traveler will be required to pay all operating expenses of the vehicle including fuel, repairs and insurance.

The University makes reimbursements for the round-trip mileage between an employee's base and destination. The mileage between an employee's residence and official travel station is not reimbursable. If an indirect route is used, mileage as indicated in the Rand McNally atlas or MapQuest will be considered official.

The University does not assume liability for damage to personal automobile used on University business and does not assume liability for deductibles or any other uninsured loss to the vehicle.

Parking and/or toll charges incurred are reimbursable when University or private vehicles are used for official business. The University will not reimburse for parking fines or moving violations or for expenses incurred because of lost keys or keys locked in vehicles.

When two or more passengers travel in one private vehicle on official University business, only one employee may claim reimbursement for mileage.

Reimbursement for mileage of any kind can not exceed the coach/economy airfare to the destination plus airport transportation costs. When traveling by private vehicle you must provide a comparison between the cost to drive and the cost to fly. The cost to drive includes, mileage, lodging, meals, tolls and parking to and from the destination. The cost to fly includes airfare, mileage and reasonable travel expenses between campus and airport and airport to hotel in the destination city. The airfare should be based on coach fare with at least a 14 day lead time. The University will reimburse the lesser of the cost to fly or drive. Include the calculations to support the necessary documentation.

10. Rental Vehicles

The University will reimburse the traveler for the cost of renting a compact or medium size car and automobile related expenses if use of the rental vehicle is the most economical mode of transportation. Full size cars or vans are allowed for groups (employees or students) when traveling on official University business. The University will not reimburse for luxury automobiles or upgrades unless there is no additional charge.

Before renting a vehicle, the traveler should consider shuttle services and taxis, particularly for transportation between the airport and lodging.

If a rental vehicle is needed from the Huntsville vicinity, the employee must contact Procurement Services to rent the vehicle, in order to provide for liability coverage.

In the event that the use of a rental vehicle is necessary at the traveler's destination, it must be rented in the name of the University and the traveler so both the driver and the vehicle are covered by the University's liability insurance. The University's liability insurance includes a rider providing comprehensive and collision for vehicles rented at destination only. A Certificate of Insurance is available from Business Services.

The University will not reimburse for an additional driver unless he/she is an employee of the University traveling on official University business.

The University will not reimburse for navigational aids.

Other types of insurance on rental vehicles (such as personal effects or supplemental liability coverage) are considered to be a personal expense and will not be reimbursed.

Car rental expenses will only be reimbursed when pre-authorized on the travel authorization form.

It is recommended that comprehensive insurance be purchased when foreign travel is involved.

Collision (CDW) or loss damage (LDW) on rental cars will not be reimbursed, except for foreign travel.

Any personal portion of the cost of the rental car must be subtracted from the rental bill before requesting reimbursement.

11. Accident Procedures

In the event you have an automobile accident while traveling on University business, please consult the Business Services Manual of Policies and Procedures.

IN-STATE TRAVEL

1. Travel Authorization

A Travel Authorization form is required for all reimbursable in-state travel on contracts and grants.

2. Per Diem

Reimbursement for travel within the state is at per diem rates as established by State regulations. The per diem includes all charges for meals, lodging, gratuities, and laundry where allowable. The current per diem regulations are:

- No travel allowance will be paid for a trip of less than six hours.

- For a trip from six to twelve hours, a meal allowance of \$11.25 will be paid.
- For a trip in excess of twelve hours, the traveler will be paid \$30, which is the meal allowance plus one-fourth of the prevailing per diem.
- For an overnight trip, \$75.00 per day will be paid.
- When a traveler has been stationed at the same place for two consecutive months, the per diem will drop to \$56.25 per day.

If an employee does not wish to receive the per diem (in full or partial) he/she must state in writing that they voluntarily forfeit the per diem due them.

3. Privately Owned Vehicles

Travel by private vehicle within the State is authorized. Mileage in lieu of actual transportation expenses may be reimbursed per mile in accordance with State regulations.

4. Receipts

Receipts should be obtained whenever possible for any travel expenses, but are required for all registration fees, air fare, rail and bus fare, emergency repairs, gasoline and oil purchases for state owned vehicles, and for any other expense greater than \$75.

Employees who are working in Alabama but spending the night out-of-state are considered to be traveling in-state.

OUT-OF-STATE TRAVEL

1. Travel Authorization

Authority and responsibility for approving travel by employees must be approved in advance by the appropriate Vice President or designee. Additionally, all contracts and grants must be approved by the Office of Sponsored Programs. The purpose of the trip must be adequately described. Single words such as meeting, research or conference would not be adequate. If there are multiple destinations involved during the travel, an itinerary and purpose for each location should be specified.

2. Out-of-State Travel Vouchers

Requests for reimbursement for out-of-state employee travel must be submitted on an out-of-state travel voucher. Travel vouchers must be filed within sixty (60) days of travel. Travel reimbursements submitted subsequent to sixty (60) days after the completion of the trip will be treated as income subject to withholding according to federal tax regulations. Withholding will be taken from a subsequent salary check.

Receipts and other documentation of the total costs of the trip (including any prepaid expenses) must be submitted along with the travel voucher. Documentation must include information detailing meals included in a registration fee. This might be the conference registration information or the daily meeting schedule. Any expenses paid by a third party should be noted on the travel voucher.

It is not permissible to include expenses paid on behalf of others in an employee's travel reimbursement voucher. Each traveler must report his/her own expenses.

3. Lodging

Accommodations should be prudently planned, so that the best interests of the University are served at the most reasonable cost. Anyone traveling on University business is expected to exercise the same economy that a practical person would exercise when traveling on personal business.

Hotel expenses should be broken down on a per day basis. The amount should include the room charge plus any applicable room taxes and should not include any telephone, meal, or parking expenses. The University cannot reimburse expenses for movie rentals. An itemized receipt from the hotel must be attached to the travel voucher. A credit card receipt or a receipt from a travel agency is not acceptable.

If two employees share a hotel room, each employee should record half (1/2) of the cost on his/her voucher. The employee who paid for the room should attach the original receipt to his/her voucher. The other employee should attach a copy of the hotel receipt with an explanation that a room was shared and that the original receipt is with the other employee's travel voucher. If a non-employee shares a room, the employee can only be reimbursed the single room rate.

4. Meals

Reimbursement for meal expenditures may not exceed an average of \$40 per day for the total duration of the trip for travel within the United States (i.e. if trip elapsed over 5 days then total meals should not exceed \$200). All meals should be listed separately based on actual cost.

Expenses for meals incurred on travel outside the United States shall be reimbursed at actual and reasonable amounts.

In the event meals are included in conference registration fees, the employee attending the conference cannot request meal reimbursement for those provided.

During partial days of travel, reimbursements for meals will be made according to the following departure/arrival times:

Day of departure from Huntsville

Breakfast will be reimbursed if departure is before 7:00 a.m.

Lunch will be reimbursed if departure is before 11:00 a.m.

Dinner will be reimbursed if departure is before 5:00 p.m.

Day of arrival in Huntsville

Breakfast will be reimbursed if arrival is after 8:00 a.m.

Lunch will be reimbursed if arrival is after 1:00 p.m.

Dinner will be reimbursed if arrival is after 7:00 p.m.

5. Gratuities

Tips to waiters, taxi drivers, and/or housekeepers are allowable when deemed by administration to be reasonable and necessary. Gratuities claimed as travel expenses should be consistent with levels of generally accepted, taking into account geographical location, types of services provided, and any special circumstances.

6. Baggage Handling:

Reasonable expense for baggage handling services is allowable for delivery to or from a common carrier and delivery to or from a lodging accommodation.

COMBINED OUT-OF-STATE AND IN-STATE TRAVEL

1. Travel Vouchers

When an employee's official University travel consists of both in-state and out-of-state business, and the length of business conducted in-state is longer than six (6) hours, an in-state travel voucher should be submitted along with an out-of-state travel voucher.

When the in-state business requires less than six (6) hours to conduct, all expenses will be reimbursed as out-of-state travel and should be submitted on an out-of-state travel voucher.

When in-state business requires six (6) hours or more to conduct, the University reimburses the in-state portion of travel expenses according to the in-state guidelines.

Out-of-state travel expenses will be reimbursed beginning at the last point of official business within state.

Travel vouchers must be filed within sixty (60) days of travel. Receipts, conference agendas, and other documentation of the total costs of the trip (including any prepaid expenses) must be submitted along with the travel voucher. Any expenses paid by a third party should be noted on the travel voucher.

INTERNATIONAL TAVEL

International travel consists of travel to any destination outside of the United States and its possessions, territories and entities. Procedures for international travel are the same as for travel within the United States, with the following exceptions:

1. Conversion Rate

An employee may exchange currency several times during a trip at different rates; however, one exchange rate can be used for all travel conversions. The conversion rate must be shown on the travel voucher.

2. Federally Funded Airfare

Persons traveling under federally funded accounts (cost share and contracts & grants funds/orgs) should be aware of and adhere to U.S. Flag Carrier Regulations (FAR 47.4).

3. Meals

Expenses for meals incurred on travel outside the United States shall be reimbursed at actual and reasonable amounts.

4. Rental Vehicles

When renting a vehicle in a foreign country, it is recommended that all local, statutory and optional coverage, including collision damage insurance, be purchased.

INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR

Those individuals and companies that have contracts with the University to provide professional services, as defined by the IRS regulations, are independent contractors (IC).

If the agreement with the IC provides for a fee plus travel expenses, reimbursement is made according to the contract signed by the parties but may not exceed the limits stated in the out-of-state travel policies.

PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYEES

1. Miscellaneous Disbursement Voucher

Requests for reimbursement for the travel expenses of prospective employees must be submitted on a miscellaneous voucher.

A letter should be addressed to the visitor prior to departure informing the traveler of the necessity of obtaining receipts for *all expenditures* and keeping a record of trip expenses. Reimbursement will be in accordance with University of Alabama in Huntsville travel policy. This letter should be attached to the miscellaneous voucher.

2. Transportation

Prospective employees will be reimbursed for a rental vehicle when required.

3. Lodging

Lodging expenses for prospective employees will be reimbursed for the actual cost of a single occupancy rate. Travel for the spouse of a candidate may also be authorized for the employment interview. Double occupancy room rate will apply when interviewee and spouse are invited.

4. Meals

Prospective employees will be reimbursed for the actual cost of their meals up to \$40 a day.

5. Miscellaneous Expenses

The miscellaneous travel expenses of prospective employees will be reimbursed according to the out-of-state travel guidelines. Please refer to the listing of prohibited expenses.

6. Reimbursement for Prospective Employee Travel

Reimbursement for expenses incurred by prospective employee travel requires an itemized record of the actual cost of transportation, lodging, meals and miscellaneous expenses to be included. Itemized folio receipts for lodging and original receipts for all other expenses should be submitted with the miscellaneous voucher.

When a spouse of a prospective employee is authorized to travel, the traveling expenses incurred by the spouse are reimbursed. The University does not reimburse travel expenses of other family members.

SPOUSE/FAMILY TRAVEL

1. Approval for Payment

As a general rule, the University does not reimburse employees for travel expenses incurred by their spouses or other family members. However, in some cases approval may be granted to pay these expenses from a foundation account.