

Augusta University

Policy Library

Travel Expense Policy

Policy Manager: Finance Division

POLICY STATEMENT

Travel is routinely required in support of Augusta University's statewide mission. The Augusta University Travel Office strives to reimburse allowable expenses for approved travel in support of university activities in a timely and complete manner. In order to fulfill this objective, it is essential that travelers comply with the sequence of procedures and the documentation deadlines described in this policy and with the guidelines provided by the AU Travel Office. The intent of this policy is to highlight key requirements from the State of Georgia, the Board of Regents, and Augusta University in order to clarify the responsibilities of the traveler and approver.

As a unit of the University System of Georgia (USG), Augusta University (AU) is subject to the State Travel Policy administered by the State Accounting Office as well as the provisions for travel contained within the Board of Regents (BOR) Policy Manual and the USG Business Procedures Manual. Additionally, AU has specific requirements for faculty and staff travel and non-employee travel as detailed in this policy.

Deviation from the directives provided in this policy could result in delayed or denied reimbursement for expenses.

AU assumes no obligation to provide reimbursement for expenses that do not comply with the principles of this policy, and intentional non-compliance and/or fraudulent behavior may result in disciplinary action and/or referral to law enforcement agencies.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. **Pre-Approval:** Travel on behalf of Augusta University requires permission from an authorized supervisor as well as an authorized budget approver. All travel is expected to be approved in advance. Augusta University may not be able to reimburse travel expenses that are not pre-approved.
2. **Reimbursement:** Augusta University will comply with the IRS accountability plan and may reimburse employees for reasonable and necessary expenses incurred while on official university business, subject to the limitations set forth in the State of Georgia travel and procurement policies and the University System of Georgia travel policies and business procedures. Employees cannot be reimbursed for expenses that they did not actually incur (e.g. any vouchers, coupons, frequent flyer miles, gift cards, credits, etc.). AU does not reimburse for travel to and from the employee/s primary campus and their home location.
3. **Approved Expenses:** Employees may be reimbursed for expenses such as lodging, transportation, meals, and incidentals. A detailed expense report, including receipts, should be submitted within 45 days but no later than 60 days.

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4. **Unapproved Expenses:** Expenses that are not reasonable and necessary or that are not in compliance with State of Georgia and University System of Georgia policies will not be reimbursed.
5. **Air Travel:** Employees traveling by air must use the most direct and economical route. First-class travel is not allowed unless it meets the specific requirements of the USG Business Procedures Manual travel guidance.
6. **Ground Transportation:** Employees must use the most economical and efficient mode of transportation, taking into consideration the distance traveled, time constraints, and safety considerations. Personal vehicle usage will be reimbursed based on the policies and standard mileage rates set by the State of Georgia. Note that vehicle rentals are subject to mandatory statewide contracts.
7. **Lodging:** Employees must secure lodging that is reasonable, safe, and economically advantageous to the university. Employees are expected to choose the most economical lodging option that meets the needs of their travel and location. Note that state policy prohibits reimbursement for lodging reserved through vacation market rental marketplaces such as private residences, Air BnB, HomeAway, VRBO, etc.
8. **Meals:** Employees may be reimbursed for reasonable and necessary meals incurred while on official university business, subject to the per diem rates set by the State of Georgia.
9. **Incidentals:** Incidental expenses, such as telephone and internet, may be reimbursed if they are reasonable and necessary for conducting official university business.
10. **Responsibility for Compliance:** Employees, including travelers and approvers, are responsible for compliance with this policy and for ensuring that all travel expenses are reasonable, necessary, and properly documented. Delegating the ability to submit or approve expenses does not delegate the traveler’s responsibility to the designee. It is the traveler’s responsibility to ensure that all submitted details are accurate and representative of actual activity in support of AU business.
11. **Inquiries:** Questions regarding this policy should be directed to the AU Travel Office.

AFFECTED STAKEHOLDERS

Indicate all entities and persons within the Enterprise that are affected by this policy:

- Alumni Faculty Graduate Students Health Professional Students
- Staff Undergraduate Students Vendors/Contractors Visitors
- Other:

PROCESS & PROCEDURES

Employee Travel – Authorization for AU faculty and staff to travel on behalf of AU and approval of travel expenses must be processed by authorized individuals through the Peoplesoft Travel and Expense module.

Subordinate employees may not approve supervisors' travel. In situations where this is unavoidable, an alternate plan must be approved in writing by the EVP for the respective unit in advance of the travel, and every effort should be made to develop a plan that does not rely on approval from those in a direct line of report.

Travelers are required to submit a travel plan for supervisory and budgetary approval in advance of travel, and to submit expense documentation as detailed in AU Travel Office Guidelines. Although the Travel and Expense module may allow users within a department to submit or approve travel for others in their department, authorization to do so must be approved and documented in advance by authorized departmental officials. Unauthorized submission or approval is not permitted under any circumstances.

Non-employee Travel – Non-employees, including students and official guests travelling on official AU business are subject to the same travel expense allowances and limits as AU employees. Non-employees seeking reimbursement for travel expenses are also subject to the same documentation requirements and deadlines as AU employees. Authorized employees in the department sponsoring the non-employee travel must submit the travel plan and expense documentation as described above for employee travel.

REFERENCES & SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- [State Travel Policy – sao.georgia.gov/travel/state-travel-policy](http://sao.georgia.gov/travel/state-travel-policy)
- [Board of Regents Policy Manual – usg.edu/policymanual](http://usg.edu/policymanual)
 - [Section 7.6, Travel – usg.edu/policymanual/section7/C466](http://usg.edu/policymanual/section7/C466)
- [University System of Georgia Business Procedures Manual – usg.edu/business_procedures_manual](http://usg.edu/business_procedures_manual)
 - [Section 4, Travel – usg.edu/business_procedures_manual/section4](http://usg.edu/business_procedures_manual/section4)
- [AU Travel Office Guidelines](#)

RELATED POLICIES

- [International Travel Policy](#)
- [Procurement of Goods and Services Policy](#)

APPROVED BY:

Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, Augusta University
Date: 3/19/2024

President, Augusta University

Date: 3/19/2024