



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER EL PASO

Operating Policy and Procedure

HSCEP OP: 79.06, Reimbursement of Travel Expenses

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso (TTUHSC El Paso) Operating Policy and Procedure (HSCEP OP) is to establish the procedure reimbursement of travel expenses for TTUHSC El Paso employees.

REVIEW: This HSCEP OP will be reviewed on December 1 of every odd-numbered year by the director of payment services, with recommendations for revisions submitted to the chief financial officer or designee by December 15.

GENERAL PROVISIONS:

This HSCEP OP outlines the travel reimbursement rules and regulations for TTUHSC El Paso employees. All official travel must be for the use and benefit of the institution's mission. It is the policy to follow guidelines as set forth by the State in [Textravel](#) (a web-based resource designed by the State of Texas) and the General Appropriations Act (GAA) Article IX Part 5, except for items specifically regulated in this HSCEP OP. [Textravel](#) should be consulted for items not specifically covered by this HSCEP OP. It may be found in the Travel Section of the TTUHSC El Paso [Chrome River Resources](#) site.

1. Objectives.

- Reimbursement of travel expenses incurred by a state employee to conduct official state business may be obtained by submitting a Travel Expense Report through the Chrome River System.
- All travel regulations set forth in [Textravel](#) are to be followed for all travel regardless of funding source with the exception of limits specific to each fund group or as specified by a school or department. Each institution may establish regulations more specific than those required by the State.
- The Payment Services Director has the authority to make exceptions to this policy that are essential for the university's continued operation and do not violate any federal or state law.

2. Responsibilities of the Traveler.

- The traveler, before the trip, should submit a travel Pre-Approval in Chrome River, the online travel system. The travel Pre-Approval will notify the Approver selected and the fund manager. The travel Pre-Approval will encumber the funds to be used when the employee is reimbursed upon completion of their trip.
- Upon trip completion, the traveler must submit a travel expense report containing supporting documentation. The travel expense report is required to be submitted to the Travel Services Offices within thirty (30) days of the last date of travel for which the reimbursement is being requested. When travel advances have been issued, the travel expense reports should be submitted with 15 days (See [OP 79.05](#)). The trip's encumbrance will automatically expire 75 days after trip end date without prior notice to the traveler or the department preparer.
- The traveler should ensure that each travel arrangement is the most cost-effective considering all relevant circumstances regardless of funding source.
- A state employee is responsible for knowing the travel rules and procedures as they apply to state law as set forth in [Textravel](#), account restrictions, and institutional travel policies prior to traveling. The department is responsible for communicating sufficient information to each traveler in order to

comply with institutional travel policies prior to the trip. If unsure of institutional policies, the traveler and/or department must seek assistance from the Travel Services Office.

- A state employee may not seek reimbursement for travel expenses that the employee has not actually incurred and should reasonably know are not reimbursable. If an employee receives free transportation or lodging in exchange for points or other non-monetary credits or rewards, they have not incurred an expense for reimbursement purposes.
- A state agency may not seek to reimburse a state employee for expenses incurred on behalf of a private individual or another state employee except for individuals in the custody or care of the state or as specifically provided in [Texttravel](#).
- A state employee shall immediately reimburse the state for an overpayment. An overpayment is an employee's receipt of a reimbursement that exceeds:
 - (1) the limits established by law or identified in [Texttravel](#) or
 - (2) the amount of travel expenses incurred.
- In accordance with IRS regulations, any travel voucher received in the Travel Office that is over 60 days from the trip end date will be taxable to the traveler. The Travel System will calculate based on the trip end date and the taxable expense will be reported to Payroll.
- The traveler is to pay all of his/her single share of expenses while traveling and seek reimbursement on a travel expense report. This includes lodging accommodations shared by employees.
- Direct billing to departments for employee expenses of airfare, rental car, hotel, or other related travel charges is prohibited.
- The university cannot reimburse an employee if the employee is on hold in the Texas Comptroller's Texas Identification Number System (TINS) until the hold has been released. Possible reasons an employee may be on hold include defaulting on a student loan, being indebted to the state or a state agency, being delinquent on state tax, not paying child support, or owing a reimbursement for unemployment taxes.

POLICY/PROCEDURE:

I. General Policy.

- A. The required regulations specific for each fund group must be followed when preparing a travel expense report. If expenses are to be paid for one trip from both state and local funds, follow the regulations for each type of fund.
- B. The official dates of a meeting, event, or conference are to be included within the narrative which describes the purpose of the trip. Attach event or conference documentation that confirms the dates and location of the conference to the travel expense report.
- C. Travel on State-Appropriated funds (funds beginning with 10, 11, 12, 9D, 9E, 9F)- [The State Travel Management Program \(STMP\)](#) has updated the [Texas Admirative Code \(TAC\), Section 20.413](#), to require state travel credit cards to purchase contracted and non-contracted travel services. Travel services for airfare shall be charged to a state travel card. Travel services for lodging, rental vehicles, and other necessary travel shall be charged to state travel credit card when feasible.
- D. Travel on State-Appropriated funds (funds beginning with 10, 11, 12, 9D, 9E, 9F) must use [Hotel Engine](#) to book lodging. Hotel Engine is optional when traveling on local funds. State agency personnel that travel to Washington DC area for activities that involve obtaining or spending federal funds or that impact federal policies must inform the Office of State-Federal Relations (OSFR) about the trip (GAA Article IX §6.12). If an employee is traveling on state grant funds, they must fill out the

Report of State Agency Travel to Washington DC. The form is found on the OSFR website at <http://www.osfr.state.tx.us/travelform.asp>.

- E. Expense Reports and supporting documents submitted to the travel office for travel to Washington, D.C., will not be processed unless a printed copy of this form is attached.

II. Meals and Lodging.

A. General Policy

TTUHSC El Paso will reimburse meal and lodging expenses up to one day before the official business begins, lodging expenses the day the official business ends, and meal expenses up to one day after official business ends.

B. Meals Without an Overnight Travel

A state employee may be reimbursed for non-overnight meal expenses. The meal is only reimbursable if the employee is outside of his or her designated headquarters for at least six consecutive hours. Non-overnight meal reimbursements may not exceed \$36 according to the GAA, Article IX, Part 5, Section 5.05(b).

Employee reimbursement for the meals are taxable to the individual and will be reported as taxable wages on the employee's annual Form W-2. Payments of meal reimbursements to the employee should be processed through the [Employee One-Time Payment System \(EOPS\)](#). The other taxable benefit (OTB) earn code should be used and scanned copies of the receipts should be attached to the EOPS. The description field should note the travel application number and "travel without an overnight stay".

C. Meals and Lodging for Overnight Travel.

An employee may be reimbursed for the actual meals and lodging costs when the travel requires an overnight stay away from designated headquarters up to the limitations and specifications established specifically for each fund group [see (D) below] or as specified by the traveler's school or department. If traveling with state-appropriated funds or federal grants, the tips must be allocated to a local fund. Tips, if allowed, should not be separated from meal claimed on a travel expense report. Please note that the tax and tip amount should be adjusted when alcohol is included with the meal receipt. When lodging establishments or restaurants include a gratuity in the price, a voluntary additional tip is not reimbursable.

D. In-State and Out-of-State Travel When Using State Appropriated Funds or Federal Grant Funds.

- An employee must claim the actual expenses incurred for meals and lodging not to exceed the maximum allowable rate for that location. Travelers must use the federal rates provided by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) for both in-state and out-of-state travel. The GSA *Per Diem Rates* listing may be found in the [Chrome River Resources](#) site.
- Airfare must be charged to a state-issued credit card.
- Lodging must be booked via [Hotel Engine](#).
- For in-state and out-of-state destination cities and counties for which specific rates are not listed, the Standard Rates should be used.
- Meals and lodging reimbursement for travel to Alaska and Hawaii are limited to the rates set forth by the [U.S. Department of Defense](#).

- Meals and lodging reimbursement for travel outside the contiguous U.S. (other than Alaska and Hawaii) are limited to the rates set forth by the [U.S. Department of State](#).
- The traveler may reduce the meal expense reimbursement rate and use the amount of the reduction to increase the lodging reimbursement rate. This is allowable for in-state and out-of-state travel.
- Schools or departments may have specific policies regarding caps on travel reimbursements, which should be clearly stated on each travel expense report.

E. Prohibited Reimbursements.

- Meals or lodging expenses deemed lavish or extravagant by the travel office.
- Meals or lodging expenses incurred while traveling within the designated headquarters.
- Meal expenses for travel without an overnight stay away from headquarters (may be reimbursed by EOPS).
- Lodging expenses incurred at a location other than a commercial lodging establishment.
- Tips or gratuities on state-appropriated funds and state and federal grant funds.
- Alcoholic beverages on all funds.
- Lodging at a non-commercial establishment (e.g., an establishment that does not provide lodging to the public for pay, such as a relative's residence).

F. Sharing Lodging.

- When two or more employees share lodging, each employee must submit a travel expense report for his/her share of the actual lodging expense. The reimbursement to each employee may not exceed the applicable maximum lodging reimbursement rate.
- Each traveler must obtain a lodging receipt with his/her name on the receipt or show other proof of payment, such as a charge card receipt, a credit card billing, a cancelled check, and a memo from the person named on the receipt.

G. Additional Lodging Requirements

- Lodging receipts are always required with the travel expense report. The lodging receipt must include the name and address of the commercial lodging establishment, the employee's name, the single room rate, and daily itemizations of the lodging charges. The receipt must indicate a zero balance.
- For travel within the state of Texas, TTUHSC El Paso employee (state employee of an institution of higher education) traveling on official state business within Texas is exempt from paying the state hotel occupancy tax but not from paying the county or local hotel occupancy tax. The exemption is claimed by providing a properly completed Texas Hotel Occupancy Tax Exemption Certificate to the establishment. An employee may not be reimbursed for state hotel occupancy taxes if the employee fails to present a properly completed exemption certificate to the establishment (Attachment A).
- When claiming lodging expenses for a vacation home rental such as Airbnb, Homeaway, or Vrbo, and service or cleaning fee should be factored into the lodging expense, not the hotel tax.

H. Receipt Requirements.

- Itemized receipts are required for all travel expenses submitted for reimbursement. The payment method should be included.
- Lodging receipts issued by a commercial lodging establishment are required. The name of the employee, the single room rate and a daily itemization of the lodging charges must be included on the receipt. The receipt must have detail showing paid status with a zero balance.
- Actual itemized meal receipts showing payment method are required by TTUHSC El Paso. Lost or missing meal receipts may be reimbursed up to \$10 per day. Receipts must be provided for reimbursements in excess of \$10 per day.
- If the receipt is unavailable, the supporting documentation must include the canceled check or credit card slip used to pay the meal or lodging expense, the credit card billing on which the meal or lodging charges appear or a copy of the receipt, check, slip or billing. A statement must be included declaring why the original receipt is not available and, if for a meal, a detail of items consumed must be included. The traveler should include a statement for lost meal receipts confirming if alcohol was included.

I. Hotel Occupancy Taxes.

- A TTUHSC El Paso employee traveling on official state business within Texas is exempt from paying the state hotel occupancy tax but not from paying the county or local hotel occupancy tax. The exemption is claimed by providing a properly completed *Texas Hotel Occupancy Tax Exemption Certificate* to the establishment. An employee may not be reimbursed for state hotel occupancy taxes if the employee fails to present a properly completed exemption certificate to the establishment (Attachment A).
- If the hotel refuses to accept the exemption form, notify the Travel Services Office of the issue. The Travel Services Office will notify the Texas Procurement and Support Services (TPASS) of the problem.
- An employee may be reimbursed for all mandatory hotel taxes and fees when traveling outside Texas at the maximum allowable hotel rate.
- Reimbursable hotel tax claims on state appropriated or restricted funds may not exceed the percentage of taxes charged each day, multiplied by the GSA rate for the location. A local fund will be required for any overages.
- Hotel taxes are not classified as a lodging expense for the purpose of determining the maximum daily reimbursement. It is considered an incidental expense.
- Prospective employees and non-employees (speakers, participants and/or students) are not exempt from any hotel taxes. If the lodging invoice/folio is billed directly to TTUHSC El Paso, the State hotel occupancy tax is exempt.

J. Packaged Travel Arrangements.

- When an employee purchases a package of at least two travel arrangements (i.e., meals, lodging, transportation, incidentals, and registration fees), each type is reimbursable only to the extent it would have been reimbursable had it not been included in the package. The receipt and travel expense report must separately state the cost of each type of travel arrangement. If the breakdown of the cost is not provided, the travel can only be reimbursed using non-state funds.

III. Transportation.

A. General.

A TTUHSC El Paso employee may be reimbursed for transportation charges incurred while conducting state business. The employee should select the most cost-effective method of transportation available. The employee must have a valid driver's license to claim any mileage reimbursement and it is their responsibility to properly claim the reimbursement.

The standard mileage rate is established each year by the Texas Legislature.

B. Mileage Incurred with Personal Vehicle.

- An employee may be reimbursed for the mileage incurred during the employee's use of a personally owned motor vehicle with the exception of those employees receiving a car allowance or an auto is provided by the institution. Mileage reimbursement covers all expenses associated with the operation of the vehicle except parking and tolls. The term "all expenses" includes damage to the employee's vehicle from any cause. The institution is not liable for the employee's insurance deductible or any other cost associated with an accident or vehicle damage.
- Employees who use their own vehicles while conducting university business should be made aware of the possibility of personal liability related to such use. Personal automobile insurance will be looked to first in the event of an accident.
- For travel greater than 100 miles to a location, the cost-effective method should be verified using the [Rental Vehicle vs Mileage Reimbursement Calculator](#). If the calculator form shows that it is more cost-effective to rent a car, the employee may still choose to drive a personal car, but will only be reimbursed no more than the estimated cost of renting a standard-size car (rental rate, fuel and other expenses). The reimbursement will cover all expenses associated with the operation of the vehicle except parking and tolls. The term "all expenses" includes damage to the employee's vehicle from any cause. The institution is not liable for the employee's insurance deductible or any other cost associated with an accident or vehicle damage. The worksheet must be completed and attached to the supporting documentation.
- All mileage must be itemized on a point-to-point basis and locations must be identified on the travel expense report. Point-to-point mileage may be documented by an employee's vehicle odometer reading or by the Mileage Calculator tool in the Chrome River System.
- Employees seeking reimbursement for trips taken while performing their assigned duties within their designated headquarters (i.e. clinics, affiliated hospitals and other in-state locations with approved outreach sites, etc.) and for which the trip is less than 100 miles, may summarize the trips and submit one travel expense report per month. The *Employee Mileage Record Form (Attachment B)* should be attached to the travel expense report or by using the Mileage Calculator in the Chrome River System.
- NOTE: The fiscal year-end reimbursement for local mileage trips with dates up to August 31 should be processed by the year-end deadline published by the Office of Business Affairs.
- An employee may be reimbursed for actual mileage between the employee's residence and the nearest airport.
- Reimbursement for mileage incurred by another person while transporting the employee between the employee's residence and the nearest airport is reimbursable but is limited to the cost of one trip to and from the airport in the employee's personal vehicle plus parking at the airport.

C. Rental Vehicles.

- The state maintains rental car agency contracts, which have damage insurance included. Contracted rental car agencies should be given priority.
- An employee may be reimbursed for the actual cost of renting a motor vehicle if the rate is under contract rate. Damage insurance is payable but only to the extent that the daily rate and insurance rate do not exceed the contracted daily rate. Charges for liability insurance supplements, personal accident insurance, safe trip insurance and personal effects insurance are not reimbursable. TTUHSC El Paso does not assume responsibility for damages to a rental vehicle.
- Rentals not under contract rate will be limited to no more than the same size car or contracted rate unless a valid exception applies (see HSCEP OP 79.01, Texas State Travel Management Program).
- When using a vehicle larger than a contracted "standard/full size" rental vehicle, documentation specifying the purpose of this usage should be attached to the travel expense report.

D. Commercial Air Transportation.

- An employee may be reimbursed for the actual cost of economy-class commercial air transportation between the employee's headquarters and duty point. Fully refundable tickets will be reimbursed, giving flexibility to change plans without penalty charges. Other options are purchasing a ticket in advance to the maximum extent possible prior to departure, use of advanced reservations programs, promotional price reductions, or any other method that achieves the lowest cost and maximum time efficiency.
- Receipts or itineraries must include the airline name, employee name, ticket number, travel dates, origin and destination (for each flight/leg), airfare amount, fare basis code, and proof of payment. If a flight credit is used, attach the receipt/itinerary for the original ticket.
- Change fees may be reimbursed if a clear business purpose is provided with the travel expense report. Change fees relating to personal reasons are not reimbursable.
- Baggage charges that are related to state business are reimbursable. First charge may be processed on state, federal or local funds. The second charge (for business purpose only) must be processed on local funds only. Excess baggage charges for personal belongings are not reimbursable. If fees are incurred for checking state-owned equipment, the fees are reimbursable.
- First-class airfare, preferred seating, and main cabin fees may be reimbursed if it was the only available airfare. A statement must be made explaining the circumstances for claiming first-class airfare.
- Employees may be reimbursed for expenses incurred while qualifying for discount airfares if the extra days at a duty point plus the discount airfare is less than the average coach airfare between the employee's designated headquarters and duty point (established and documented at the time of securing the reservation) and the employee can be absent from headquarters for the additional days.
- Cancelled flights may be allocated to a local funding source. Departments are responsible for ensuring the canceled airline ticket is used for future TTUHSC El Paso business travel or reimbursed by the traveler.

E. Coordinating Travel (Four-Per-Car Rule).

- When employees from the same agency travel on the same dates with the same itinerary, they must coordinate travel. Only one of the employees riding in the vehicle may be reimbursed for mileage to the duty point. Mileage incurred to meet at a location or pick up other employees may be reimbursed.

F. Parking and Tolls.

- Actual parking expenses may be reimbursed for personally owned, rented or leased vehicles. Itemization must be included on the expense report. Receipts are required.
- Airport parking expenses may be reimbursed up to the long-term parking rate charged at El Paso International Airport. If the long-term parking was not used the employee should include a statement on the expense report as to why the travel arrangement was the most effective, considering all relevant circumstances.
- Actual toll fee expenses may be reimbursed for personally owned, rented, or leased vehicles. Itemization must be included on the expense report. Receipts are required.

G. Railroad, Mass Transit, Taxi or Limousine.

- An employee may be reimbursed for the actual cost of transportation by bus, subway or other mode of mass transit or taxi. Limousine expenses may be reimbursed only if transportation by limousine was the lowest cost transportation available considering all relevant circumstances and a statement is made on the travel expense report.
- All these expenses must be itemized on the travel expense report by date on a trip-by-trip basis. If two or more employees share expenses, only one may be reimbursed unless a specific charge is imposed for additional passenger(s).
- An employee may be reimbursed for the actual cost of rail transportation. If the fare includes sleeping accommodations or meals, the reimbursement claims for meals or lodging expenses must be adjusted and claimed accordingly. Receipts are required.
- If an employee rents a vehicle, reimbursement for car service (i.e. Uber, taxi, etc.) is not allowed.

H. Private Aircraft.

- See [HSCEP OP 79.03](#) for specific procedures before piloting a personal or leased aircraft. The reimbursement rate is authorized in GAA Article IX§ 5.05 (a) or(b).
- There will be no travel approvals awarded after the first travel date for travel by private aircraft (i.e., no after-the-fact approvals).
- If the mode of transportation in a private aircraft has not been approved in advance by the proper dean or vice-president, then all travel expenses will be denied for the trip and the traveler will be charged with vacation time.

I. Transportation Receipt Requirements.

- Official receipts from commercial transportation companies are required.
- Receipts must include the airline name, employee name, flight itinerary, ticket number, travel dates, origin and destination (for each flight/leg), airfare amount, an itemization of the charges and the class of air travel, if applicable, along with proof of payment. Use of internet services does not waive any regulations for submitting receipts.

- If the receipt has been misplaced, a copy of the actual receipt must be obtained from the transportation company or the traveler will not be reimbursed. A statement must be included declaring why the original is not available.

IV. General Regulations.

A. Travel While on Personal Leave.

When an employee is required to travel to an official duty point while on personal leave, the reimbursement may not exceed the lesser of (1) the amount of the travel expenses incurred while traveling to the duty point, or (2) the amount of the travel expenses incurred from the employee's headquarters to the duty point.

Only a supervisor may authorize travel reimbursement for an employee to return to headquarters from personal or compensatory leave.

B. Medical Care of Traveling State Employees.

A state agency may reimburse the employee for travel expenses incurred while obtaining medical care if the expense is incurred outside the employee's designated headquarters while in official travel status.

C. Travel Expenses Incurred Returning to Headquarters Because of Illness or Personal Emergency.

A state agency may reimburse an employee for travel expenses incurred if returning to headquarters before official state business is completed due to illness or a personal emergency.

D. Attending Funerals.

A state agency may reimburse an employee for travel expenses incurred while attending the funeral of an individual who was a state employee, a board member, or a legislator if the agency determines that the employee's attendance is appropriate and paid to the extent of conducting official state business.

E. Cancellation.

A state agency may reimburse a state employee for a cancellation charge related to a transportation expense that was paid in advance to obtain lower rates and is incurred because the employee was unable to use the transportation because of an illness or a personal emergency which must be documented on the reimbursement expense report.

V. Registration Fees.

- A. All registration fees should be paid using the department purchasing card, which is the preferred payment method (see HSCEP OP 72.03, Direct Pay Expenditures, page 7, Section m). Payment requests in TechBuy using the direct pay form - TTUHSC El Paso Registration Fees may be used for processing the payment directly to the vendor if the purchasing card is not an option.
- B. If the registration fee is paid by the traveler prior to the trip, reimbursement may be submitted for reimbursement through the Direct Pay Employee Reimbursement Form. The department will need to ensure the employee attends the event. The employee may also be reimbursed on the travel expense report when claiming all other expenses. Meal expenses that are part of a registration fee will be reimbursed. Entertainment and other personal expenses are not reimbursable.
- C. If the employee requests reimbursement for a registration fee on the travel expense report, and it is after 60 days that the expense was paid or incurred, it is considered a taxable reimbursement and must be submitted through EOPS.

- D. Registration cancellation charges are reimbursable if a statement which includes the official business purpose for cancellation is documented. Cancellation charges incurred for personal reasons are not reimbursable.

VI. Recruitment of Students.

Reimbursements for travel expenses incurred while recruiting students outside Texas can only be reimbursed on local funds. (GAA, Article III Section 7-Special Provisions relating only to State Agencies of Higher Education).

VII. Incidental Expenses.

A. Reimbursable Expenses.

The following expenses are reimbursable if they are incurred for an official state business reason for which a statement is made on the travel expense report. Receipts are required.

- Fax and copy charges
- Freight charges to ship state-owned equipment or materials
- Gasoline charges for rental or state-owned vehicles
- Miscellaneous materials/books purchased at a conference
- Official telephone calls itemized by date, purpose and amount
- Passport/visa charges, departure taxes and inoculations for foreign travel
- Repair charges when a state-owned motor vehicle is unable to use fleet card
- Traveler's check charges only if required by the agency
- U.S. currency exchange charges for foreign currency and vice versa

B. Non-Reimbursable Expenses.

- Alcoholic beverages on all accounts
- Baggage charges (excess) for personal belongings
- Expenses that do not relate to official state business
- Flight upgrades that are not a requirement to travel
- Southwest "Business Select" flights which entail an extra fee for early boarding, extra Rapid Rewards credits and a complimentary cocktail
- Early Bird Check-in Fee
- Preferred seating fees
- Expenses that are related to the operation of a personally owned vehicle, excluding parking/toll fees
- Hotel occupancy tax when the employee does not claim the exemption
- International Health and Medical Evacuation (MEDEVAC) Insurance

- Kennel expense for a pet while on official travel
- Medical supplies (i.e., aspirin, flu medication, etc.)
- Personal expenses (i.e., dry cleaning/laundry, movie rentals, etc.)
- Tips or gratuities on all accounts except local funds
- Roadside Assistance or additional insurance fees added to vehicle rental
- Purchases made with gift cards