



## Angelo State University Operating Policy and Procedure

### **OP 70.01: Travel Guidelines & Definitions**

**DATE:** August 6, 2019

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this Operating Policy and Procedure (OP) is to set forth legislative travel regulations from the General Appropriations Acts of the Texas Legislature and the policies of Angelo State University (ASU).

**REVIEW:** This OP will be reviewed in October every five years, or as needed, by the purchasing and travel supervisor and executive director of contracts and materials management with recommended revisions forwarded through the vice president for finance and administration to the president by November 15 of the same year.

### **POLICY/PROCEDURE**

#### **1. Authority**

The following rules were developed under the authority of the [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](#).

#### **2. General Policies**

- a. Employees shall make off-campus trips only after obtaining approval from the appropriate designated administrative official(s) in accordance with established procedures.
- b. Employee travel must not interfere with the employee's primary academic or administrative responsibilities, and the travel must contribute to the mission of the university.
- c. ASU may reimburse an employee for travel expenses up to one day before and one day after official business begins to ensure traveler attendance at an event if approved by the appropriate designated administrative official. Exceptions may be granted when additional travel days are required to qualify for discount airfares or when travel to the duty point reasonably requires more than one day.
- d. A state agency may reimburse a travel expense incurred by another agency's employee if approved in advance and the employee incurred the expense while providing services to the reimbursing agency.

#### **3. Definitions**

- a. *Cancellation Charge* - A fee, charge, or payment that a provider of travel services assesses or retains because of the cancellation or change of a travel reservation or other travel plan. For

example, a non-refundable purchase of an airline ticket becomes a cancellation charge when the ticket becomes unusable because of changed travel plans.

- b. *Commercial Lodging Establishment* - A motel, hotel, inn, apartment, house, or similar entity that furnishes lodging to the public for pay. A person or establishment that provides lodging for pay that the comptroller determines to have a sufficient number of the characteristics of a commercial lodging establishment for the purposes of the [Travel Regulations Act](#).
- c. *Commercial Transportation Company* - A company or individual that transports people or goods at a cost.
- d. *Contiguous United States* - The District of Columbia plus the 48 mainland U.S. states. Alaska and Hawaii are the only states not included.
- e. *Designated Headquarters* - The area within the boundaries in which the employee's place of employment is located. If the place of employment is located in an unincorporated area, then the designated headquarters is the area within a five-mile radius of the place of employment. If an incorporated municipality or an unincorporated area is completely surrounded by the incorporated municipality in which an employee's place of employment is located, then the employee's designated headquarters includes the surrounded municipality or area.
- f. *Duty Point* - The destination other than a place of employment an employee travels to conduct state business. If the destination is outside the employee's designated headquarters, then the duty point is either the incorporated municipality in which the destination is located or the unincorporated area within a five-mile radius of the destination.
- g. *Expense Report* - Chrome River's method of allowing travelers to group and organize business-related expenses incurred on official travel
- h. *Gratuity/Tip* - Something given voluntarily or beyond obligation, usually in response to or in anticipation of a service.
- i. *Incidental Expense* - An expense incurred while traveling on official state business. The term includes such expenses as a mandatory insurance or service charge, and an applicable tax, and a resort tax, except it does not include a tax based on the cost of a meal or State of Texas tax. Expenses for meals, lodging, or transportation, personal expenses, tips and gratuities are not incidental expenses.
- j. *International (Foreign) Travel* – Travel outside the United States, including U.S. possessions, Canada, and Mexico. Prior approval by the provost is required. Employees must follow ASU Operating Policy 70.07 and the [US Department of State per diem rates](#) when seeking reimbursement for international travel.
- k. *Lease* – A contract with a term of at least one month that gives the lessee possession and use of property or equipment while the lessor retains ownership.
- l. *Lodging Expense* - A charge imposed by a provider of lodging as consideration for providing the lodging. The term does not include money paid as a donation, gratuity, or tip to the establishment.

- m. *Meal Expense* - The cost of a meal plus any tax that is based on the meal's cost. The term does not include a tip, a gratuity, or a mandatory service charge paid or imposed in conjunction with a meal.
- n. *Non-working Hours* - All hours in a calendar day, except working hours.
- o. *Official Travel* –Travel of Angelo State University employees approved by the university to conduct official state business.
- p. *Official Travel Status* – The time between leaving designated headquarters for official travel and returning to designated headquarters from official travel. Includes time period an employee is away from their place of employment for official travel that is longer than four (4) hours.
- q. *Pre-Approval* Chrome River's method of allowing travelers to acquire pre-authorization for expenses related to travel that require prior approval before being incurred.
- r. *Prospective State Employee* - An individual who a state agency is considering for employment. The term includes an employee of a state agency who is considered for employment by another state agency.
- s. *Rented or Public Conveyance* - A motor vehicle, train, boat, bicycle, or aircraft that an employee rents or pays a fare to use for a period of less than one month.
- t. *Resort Fee* - A mandatory fee that a guest may be required to pay at a commercial lodging establishment in addition to the daily room rate. The fee is typically charged to all guests for the right to access various amenities at a hotel such as swimming pools, exercise facilities, daily newspaper delivery, printing of boarding passes and local telephone calls. May also be called a facility fee, a destination fee, an amenity fee, or a resort charge.
- u. *State Employee* - An individual employed by a [state agency](#), including a [key official](#). The term also includes prospective state employees.
- v. *State Travel Card* – A charge card contracted by the state used by the employee to charge university business-related travel expenses. A state travel card is issued in the name of the individual employee, who is responsible for payment of all charges.
- w. *Travel Expense* - Transportation, meal, lodging, or incidental expenses incurred while traveling on official travel.
- x. *Travel Voucher* – The official document of State of Texas Comptroller's of Public Accounts to reimburse a state employee for travel expenses incurred during the discharge of official state business when using state [appropriated funds](#).
- y. *Work Day* - A day on which an employee is regularly required to conduct state business.
- z. *Working Hours* - The hours during which an employee is regularly scheduled to conduct official state business.

#### **4. Responsibility of Agency and Employee**

- a. Agency Responsibility

- (1) A state agency, like ASU, may pay or reimburse a travel expense only if the purpose of the travel clearly involves official state business and the travel is consistent with the university's legal authority. The travel expense report must explain the nature of the official state business conducted and specify the benefit that ASU gained from the travel.
- (2) ASU 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 (Per Texas Government Code Section 660.007). To **reduce** travel costs, ASU shall use interactive television, videoconference technology, and telephone conferences whenever possible.

ASU shall also follow the travel requirements set forth in:

- (a) [2 CFR Part 220](#).
- (b) [49 U.S.C. 40118](#)
- (c) [Internal Revenue Code §§1.62-2](#)
- (d) The Comptroller of Public Accounts (CPA) [Textravel website](#).

b. Employee Responsibility

- (1) A state employee shall ensure that her/his travel complies with applicable state and federal laws, [Textravel](#), and any policies adopted by ASU. Failure to comply will result in a delayed payment or reimbursement or a rejection of the employee's travel expense report. (ASU's failure or inability to instruct a state employee does not excuse or justify the employee's failure to comply with applicable laws or rules.)
- (2) Employees can view the [ASU Travel Office](#) website for information on travel guidelines and helpful hints.
- (3) Travelers are responsible for compliance with state and university record retention requirements.
- (4) On the Pre-Approval (PA), travelers must include a benefit statement that provides a clear business purpose for the trip and how the trip benefits ASU.
- (5) If attending a conference, the full name of the organization must be included (no abbreviations or acronyms). If state appropriated funds are used, employee must be able to provide proof of attendance. For example: a copy of their name badge or an email from the organization thanking them for their attendance.
- (6) Coordination of travel must occur when two or more state employees employed by the same state agency travel on the same dates with the same itinerary to conduct the same official state business.
- (7) An employee shall pay all of his/her *single* share of expenses while traveling.
- (8) An employee may receive reimbursement only for his/her own expenditures. Reimbursements for expenditures incurred by other individuals are not allowed.

- (9) A state employee may not seek payment or reimbursement of a travel expense that the employee knows or reasonably should know is not reimbursable or payable.
- (10) 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.
- (11) Per Texas Penal Code Section 39.02 (d), a discount or award given for travel, such as frequent flyer miles, rental car or hotel discounts, or food coupons, are not things of value belonging to the government due to the administrative difficulty and cost involved in recapturing the discount or award for a governmental entity. Travelers are responsible for providing airlines, travel agencies, and other travel vendors with their information to obtain such miles, discounts, or coupons.
- (12) Employees must promptly reimburse ASU when travel reimbursements exceed allowable amounts and/or amounts actually incurred. An example of overpayment would include: a reimbursement that exceeds the amount the employee may receive under applicable law, *Textravel*, ASU's policies, or the amount of travel expenses actually incurred. Failure to reimburse the state for an overpayment or claiming reimbursement for travel expenses the employee did not incur may result in future travel being suspended or discipline up to and including termination.
- (13) It is the employee's responsibility to verify if they are on hold with TPIS and resolve the hold prior to traveling and incurring travel related expenses. ASU is unable to reimburse an employee if the employee is on hold in the Texas Comptroller's Texas Payee Information System (TPIS) until the hold is released. (Note: Possible reasons an employee may be on hold include being in default on a student loan, indebted to the state or a state agency, delinquent on state tax, not paying child support, or owing a reimbursement for unemployment taxes.)

## **5. Eligibility of Funds for Travel Purposes**

- a. Prior to submitting a Pre-Approval (PA), please check the Chart of Accounts under the Budget and Finance Section of Rampport to ensure correct fund and organization combination; then please verify funding is available.
- b. Employees traveling on official business may be reimbursed for travel expenses paid from grant funds, but are expected to comply with provisions of the grant, university policy, and any state and/or federal regulations.

## **6. Contracted Travel Vendors**

To provide timely and efficient travel services and generate cost savings to state agencies, the State of Texas legislation requires that the [State Travel Management Program \(STMP\)](#) contract with travel vendors-Please see OP 70.02(2) for more information.

- a. Airfare
- b. Lodging
- c. Rental cars

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Names and rates of current contracted travel vendors for airfare, lodging and rental cars are available on the [ASU Travel Office](#) or [STMP](#) websites.

## 7. Fly America Act

The Fly America Act mandates the use of U.S. flag air carriers when travelling internationally on **federal funds**. The Fly America Act Waiver Checklist (attachment) must be used by departments to determine and document whether air travel qualifies for a waiver of these restrictions. The completed checklist must accompany all travel vouchers for trips outside the contiguous United States using federal funds. In the event it is determined that the appropriate air carrier was not used, the expense may be denied or must be transferred to non-sponsored or non-state appropriated funds.

## 8. Employees with Disabilities

Disabled employees may be reimbursed for attendant care expenses for travel. The attendant's travel expenses are subject to the same rules as employee.

An explanation outlining the disability and the need for any additional accommodating expenses must be attached to the travel expense report.

## 9. Travel to Washington D.C.

ASU employees who travel to Washington, D.C. on state-appropriated funds **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, Section 6.12)**. Contact the Travel Office for additional information. Lobbying activities are not allowed on federal funds.

If an employee is traveling on state-appropriated funds (and lobbying), he/she must also complete the State-Funded Travel to DC Form, email the form to [OSFR@gov.texas.gov](mailto:OSFR@gov.texas.gov) and submit (a copy) with his/her travel voucher. The form is available at [https://gov.texas.gov/organization/osfr/state\\_funded\\_dc\\_travel](https://gov.texas.gov/organization/osfr/state_funded_dc_travel)

## 10. Reimbursement Time Limit

Please make every effort to submit your travel expense report for reimbursement as soon as possible after incurring the expenses in order to ensure that the designated funds are utilized and reimbursement occurs within the appropriate reporting period. (See policy 70.04 2f).

*Attachment:* [Fly America Act Waiver Checklist](#)