

SUBJECT: Travel Policy  
NUMBER: 600  
ISSUED BY: Vice Chancellor for Finance & Operations  
DATE REVISED: March 26, 2013

This policy is in accordance with USC Policy Business and Finance 1.00, the full text of which is available at <http://www.sc.edu/policies/busf100.html>

I. Policy

- A. Travel is deemed to be official travel of the University when faculty and staff are away from the University for the purpose of conducting business of the University, attending professional meetings, special demonstration meetings, and other related meetings. Expenses related to the cost of relocating/ moving are not classified as travel (see University Policy BUSF 1.08). Students traveling as official representatives of the University and travel by sanctioned student organizations will be subject to the same policies and procedures as other University travelers. This policy is applicable to all travel, regardless of the source of funds used for reimbursement.
- B. A traveler on official business will exercise the same care in incurring expenses and accomplishing an assignment that a prudent person would exercise if traveling on personal business.
1. Excess costs, circuitous routes, delays or luxury accommodations unnecessary or unjustified in the performance of an assignment are not considered exercising prudence.
  2. Travel by commercial airlines will be in coach or tourist class except where exigencies require an exception.
  3. Transportation to and from business destinations will be by the most economical method. In calculating the most economical method, the travel time, and any resulting extra funds used for meals and lodging cost should be considered in addition to transportation costs.
- C. Reimbursement of travel and subsistence expenses of individuals will vary depending upon the circumstances and conditions, including the extent of benefit expected to accrue to the individual and the University, along with the competing demands on available funds. The expenditure of funds from sources other than general fund appropriations is subject to the same limitations and policies applicable to the expenditure of appropriated funds.

1. Each administrator shall determine the appropriateness of such travel and the extent to which the University is to participate in defraying travel and subsistence expenses. Such arrangements should be clearly indicated on the Travel Authorization form.
  2. Financial arrangements may vary, from token University participation in the costs, up to the maximum travel and subsistence allowance applicable to regular official travel.
  3. Maximum reimbursement - State law provides that faculty and staff, while traveling on the business of the University shall be allowed reimbursement for subsistence expenses incurred and paid. They shall, upon presentation of a paid receipt, be allowed reimbursement for actual expenses incurred for lodging up to a maximum of \$300.00 per night. Lodging expenses should be reasonable, taking into consideration location, purpose of travel or other extenuating circumstances. The employee shall be reimbursed for meal expenses not to exceed the maximum per day meal allowance. Meals that have been paid for as part of a conference registration will not normally be reimbursed.
- D. Travel reimbursements for employees will be made via direct deposit to an employee's bank account.
1. Employee travel reimbursements will be deposited into the bank account on file for payroll direct deposit. Employees should have a registered e-mail address on the VIP system to receive notification of deposit. See <http://vip.sc.edu>.
  2. Non-employees and students will be mailed a check for travel reimbursement.
- E. Travel reimbursements are processed bi-weekly via the accounting checkwrite process; the days are usually Monday and Wednesday. Holidays, closing schedule, and technical difficulties may alter this schedule. Prior to process the reimbursement, the Travel Authorization (TA) must be approved by department, Contract & Grant, or International Support, as applicable. Travel Reimbursement Vouchers (TRV), including TRVs for registration fees, take approximate ten (10) business days to process.

## II. Procedures

### A. Expense classification of Travel

52021 Non-USC Employee- Consultants, Lecturers, Other Expense category used only for travel associated with a person providing services for the University.

52022 Student Travel Expenses category used for student travel and student field trips.

52023 Employment Interview Travel Expense category used only for travel associated with visitation of a potential employee. It should not be used for travel expenses incurred by University personnel in pursuit of prospective employees,

52024 USC Employee Travel Domestic Expense category used for travel associated with (1) professional meetings, conventions or seminars, (2) negotiations on grants, contracts and other legal matters and (3) other travel not specifically covered elsewhere.

52025 USC Employee Travel Foreign Expense category used for travel that is not within the United States, Canada, or Puerto Rico.

## B. Travel Authorization

1. Individuals traveling on University business should do so only after submitting an approved Travel Authorization form to the Business Office. Individuals traveling on University business for which they will not be reimbursed do not have to file an authorization.
2. Authorizations for travel by:
  - a. faculty and professional staff are to be approved by the department head, chair, Vice Chancellor, or designee as appropriate.
  - b. academic department heads, chairs, and directors are to be approved by the appropriate Vice Chancellor or designee as appropriate.
  - c. Vice Chancellors, CIO, and Athletic Director are to be approved by the Chancellor.
  - d. the Chancellor are to be approved by the President.
  - e. students are to be approved by the director of student life, Vice Chancellor of Student Development, Chancellor, or designee as appropriate.
3. If the travel reimbursement is to be paid from funds of more than one department, all departments must approve the authorization.
4. Approved Travel Authorization forms are to be forwarded to the Business Office immediately, at which time it will be reviewed for available funds and

sent to Columbia to be committed against the account.

5. Individuals who do repetitive travel for a fixed period of time, i.e., one semester or more, should file a “blanket” Travel Authorization for the estimated cost for the entire period. The Travel Reimbursement voucher(s) under an approved “blanket” Travel Authorization should be forwarded to the Business Office through the appropriate departmental approval.

#### C. Group Travel

1. Employee Travel – Domestic and Foreign – To comply with State reporting requirements, a separate Travel Authorization must be prepared for each individual in the group.
2. Student Travel – More than one individual may travel under one Travel Authorization. However, one person must be designated responsible for the funds. This person must account for all expenditures of the group and will be reimbursed by the submission of a Travel Reimbursement voucher. If such an arrangement is not desirable, a separate Travel Authorization must be submitted for each traveler.

#### D. Method of Transportation

The method of transportation used by individuals will be the most practical and economical, with due consideration given to the time involved, extra meals, lodging costs, and the mission to be accomplished.

1. Travel under 500 miles round trip, insofar as it is practical, shall be by State owned vehicle or rental vehicle.
2. Travel in excess of 500 miles round trip should be by common carrier and preferable by air carrier if a savings in time and cost exists. Travel over 500 miles round trip by private or State vehicle should not normally occur unless for extenuating circumstances.

#### E. Procurement of Common Carrier Tickets

If a common carrier is to be used, the individual should contact Island Travel [(843) 525-0777].

1. The individual must furnish the Travel Authorization number, shown on the authorization form, to the travel agent. A Travel Authorization should be completed and approved prior to the order being placed. The travel agency will

then bill the University directly.

2. If a ticket is purchased by an employee via any method other than an approved travel agency (i.e. Internet), the original passenger receipt should be attached to the Travel Reimbursement voucher. For an E-ticket, the traveler should include with the reimbursement voucher a printed copy of the confirmation and itinerary; or request a passenger receipt at the airline gate. Service fees charged on tickets for Faculty/ Staff and Students by non-approved Travel agencies are not reimbursable.

#### F. Special Rates

1. Air Travel – Often the airlines offer reduced rates on tickets, especially tickets for foreign travel, which could result in substantial savings to a University department. To take advantage of the reduced rates, travel plans must be made well in advance of the trip. It is strongly suggested that as it becomes apparent a trip will take place, contact should be made with Island Travel to discuss reduced rate possibilities. Travelers should select air carriers based on costs and time criteria, not on whether frequent flyer premiums are given. Employees should ensure that frequent flyer premiums earned while traveling on University business be used to reduce the costs of subsequent business travel whenever possible.
2. Hotels, Motels – Some hotels and motels may give a special rate to University and State employees. Inquiries regarding these discounts should be made, and advantage taken of the lower rates, whenever offered. Some examples are: Hilton, Hyatt, Marriott, and Howard Johnson's.  
SC Hotel/Motel Government Rates Web site:  
<http://procurement.sc.gov/PS/general/PS-general-reference-room.phtm> (Click on Hotel Motel State directory.)
3. Car Rental – The University has a contract with Enterprise Leasing for car rentals. In addition, discounts may be given to University and State employees for using Alamo, Budget, Hertz, and Avis. Inquiries regarding these discounts should be made prior to the trip.

#### G. Procurement of a State or Rental Vehicle for Travel

1. If a state vehicle or rental vehicle is to be used, the traveler must have the appropriate driving record information on file with Vehicle Management. To provide the information and reserve a vehicle, contact the Vehicle Manager at extension 8145 [(843) 208-8145]. Charges for the use of the vehicle will be

made directly to the appropriate University account.

2. In the event no state vehicle is available, the traveler is encouraged to rent a vehicle from Enterprise. The individual must furnish the Travel Authorization number to the agent. Enterprise will bill the University directly. To reserve a vehicle, the individual should contact Enterprise at [(843) 706-2660].

#### H. Use of a Private Vehicle

##### I. Reimbursement

A travel reimbursement voucher (TRV) needs to be properly completed and signed by the traveler attesting that the expenses incurred were valid. In rare cases where the traveler is not able to sign the TRV, written documentation must be provided designating another individual to complete and sign the TRV. Written documentation must accompany each individual TRV explaining why the traveler is unable to sign. The TRV may be signed by the Chancellor or the appropriate Vice Chancellor, CIO, or Athletic Director.

##### 1. Meals

- a. In-State/ Out of State Meals – When traveling, meals will be based on time of departure and time of return up to the maximum allowance shown below. Receipts are not required.

Departure Time	Return Time	State of SC	Out of State
Before 6:30 AM	After 11:00 AM	\$6.00	\$7.00
Before 11:00 AM	After 1:30 PM	\$7.00	\$9.00
Before 5:15 PM	After 8:30 PM	\$12.00	\$16.00

- b. One-Day Meals – If an individual on one-day travel (out-of-state) receives reimbursements for meals, this amount is considered income and will be reported on a W-2 form. **One-day meal reimbursements are prohibited for in-state travel.**
- c. Non-employee Meals (i.e. interviewee, consultant, speaker, etc) – Meals for guests are reimbursed at the meal rates as listed above. Only the meal for the non-employee is reimbursed through a TRV. Reimbursement for host/hostess meals should be processed via a DEV and follow procurement policies.
- d. Foreign Travel Meals – If receipts are not provided, only the maximum daily rate for meals as established by the Federal Government for travel in foreign areas can be claimed. When claiming reimbursement for actual

expenses of meals that exceed the daily rate, receipts are required. Note: the rates listed include an amount for incidental charges. This amount cannot be included in the meal reimbursement request (See breakdown at [http://aoprals.state.gove/content.asp?content\\_id=114&menu\\_id=92](http://aoprals.state.gove/content.asp?content_id=114&menu_id=92). Incidental expenses must be accounted for under "other expenses" on the TRV. See daily rates at [http://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per\\_diem.asp](http://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per_diem.asp).

## 2. Lodging

- a. Actual hotel/motel cost will be reimbursed not to exceed \$300.00 per day.
- b. Original itemized receipts for hotel or motel expenditures must be attached to the Travel Reimbursement voucher when the voucher is submitted for processing.
- c. Reimbursement will not be made for overnight accommodations within 50 miles of the traveler's official headquarters and/or place of residence.
- d. Generally, lodging is not prepaid. If the hotel requires prepayment, the University will reimburse the individual with a paid receipt. The University will prepay lodging to the hotel for student travel with an invoice.

## 3. Transportation Expenses

- a. Transportation will be paid in full at coach or tourist class rates.
- b. If a private vehicle is authorized the University will pay mileage or economy airfare, whichever is less. Reimbursement per mile includes all expenses of vehicle operation including insurance and repairs.
- c. The current rate of reimbursement is 53.5 cents/mile for travel under 500 miles round trip and 26.7 cents/mile for travel between the Historic Beaufort and Hilton Head Gateway campuses and to the Columbia campus when the individual chooses to drive a personal vehicle as opposed to renting a vehicle from Enterprise.
- d. According to the State Appropriation Act, mileage between an employee's home and his/her place of employment is not subject to reimbursement. Simply traveling to campus will not be reimbursed, regardless of which one. Reimbursement for travel between the Historic Beaufort and Hilton Head Gateway campuses will only be allowed where money exists in the departmental budget and in cases where the appropriate Vice Chancellor or Unit Head has determined that the employee's primary place of work (home office) is established on one campus and occasional meetings or other infrequent job requirements on the other campus require the employee to travel from their house to their home office and then to the other campus. The employee's presence must be required on both campuses on the same day. By signing a TRV requesting reimbursement between campuses the employee is affirming that they worked on both the Historic Beaufort and the Hilton Head Gateway campuses that day.

Individual Department Heads may require that the TRV first be submitted to them for their review before it is sent to the Business Office.

#### 4. Other Expenses

Any business expenses due to travel status other than those listed below should be itemized on the Travel Authorization form. If the charges are not listed, a memo of explanation and departmental approval must accompany the TRV. The following expenses may be reimbursed if receipts are furnished:

- a. Conference and Registration fees –If the conference/registration fee includes meals, additional reimbursement will only be made for those meals in extenuating circumstances..
- b. Taxi/limousine service, car rental
- c. Parking fees – Reimbursement of fines will not be made for moving or non-moving violations.
- d. Telephone, Telegraph, and Facsimile fees – One brief personal telephone call per night is allowable – reimbursable up to \$5.00 per day with the proper documentation. Personal calls should be listed separately from business calls on the reimbursement voucher.
- e. Drayage – Reimbursement will be made only when an employee flies into a major out-of-state city where there is no option concerning baggage or when the traveler has heavy excess equipment needed for business purposes.
- f. Toll/ gasoline charges

Note: The following expenses are non-reimbursable through travel –

- Gratuities
- Supplies
- Service fee for using non-approved Travel Agency
- USC Corporate Card transaction fee for ATM use
- Copying charges
- Membership dues

#### 5. Dependents Accompanying Employee

If a dependent accompanies an employee on an authorized business trip, only those expenses that can be directly attributed to the employee will be reimbursed.

#### 6. Foreign Exchange Rates

When claiming reimbursement for expenses that are in foreign currency, the Travel Reimbursement voucher should be completed in US dollars, and the rate of exchange should be documented.



## J. USC Corporate Card Program

Full time University employees who travel on University business and have an annual salary of over \$15,000 are eligible to receive a USC corporate card. This program is intended to provide employees with a means of financing their official University travel and offers many advantages to both the employee and the University.

The corporate card is to be used only for University business travel expenses and the cardholder is responsible for making payments directly to the credit card company. Applications for the corporate card are available through the Business Office.

## K. Travel Advance Funds

The University has a small travel advance fund for student travel from which up to 70 percent of the reimbursable subsistence, mileage and other expenses of a trip can be advanced. Applicable conditions are as follows:

### 1. Employees

Because of the availability of the USC corporate travel card, travel advances will not be made except under extenuating circumstances. A written request must be submitted to the Business Office, pending approval by Columbia's Financial Services. Under no circumstances will an advance be made to the holder of a USC corporate card.

### 2. Students

- a. An approved Travel Authorization must be on file.
- b. Approved projected personal expenses and private automobile use, totaling \$25 or more, must be scheduled for reimbursement to the person traveling.
- c. If more than one student is traveling on the same approved Travel Authorization, one student must be designated as custodian of the advance and required to complete the Travel Reimbursement voucher.
- d. The advance will be made to the traveler/ custodian in the form of a check which may be cashed before departure.
- e. The traveler should submit the Travel Reimbursement voucher within seven (7) business days of return.
- f. The amount of available advance funds is very limited. Persons who violate the above procedure will not be eligible for future travel advances.

## L. Change in Approved Travel Plans

1. Altered Plans

If travel plans are altered from those previously submitted and approved, either a memorandum or e-mail which outlines the changes, references the original Travel Authorization number and is approved by the authorizing official, or designee, OR a new Travel Authorization superseding the previously approved authorization must be submitted to the Business Office.

2. Canceled Plans

In order to cancel travel plans that were previously submitted and approved, a memorandum or e-mail noting the Travel Authorization number should be forwarded to the Business Office.