TRAVEL REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES
SAVANNAH STATE UNIVERSITY
OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR BUSINESS & FINANCE

Revised

This document is a publication of the Office of Business & Finance. Its’ purpose is to outline the official travel regulations and procedures in effect for Savannah State University in accordance with the laws of the State of Georgia and the policies and procedures of Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia.

1. GENERAL

Board of Regents Travel Regulation provisions:

Each employee required to travel in the performance of official duties and entitled to reimbursement for expenses incurred shall have prior authorization from the department head or other designated official for the performance of travel.

Approval may be in the form of a standing travel authorization in the case of individuals required to travel on a regular or continuous basis, or a specific travel authorization in the case of those individuals who are required to make occasional trips. A specific authorization is required for each out-of-state trip.

Each specific authorization should include the itinerary, an estimate of the cost of travel, mode of transportation, and the purpose of travel. The original authorization must be attached to the travel expense report.

A. Meals

Reimbursement claims for meals are to be reported on travel statements approved by the Board of Regents. The date and amount for each meal claimed must be listed on this form. An individual taking annual leave while away from headquarters on official business is not entitled to reimbursement for meals during the period of leave. Reimbursement for meals within a 30-mile radius (or the county) of a person’s home office or residence is not allowed, unless the travel destination exceeds 30 miles. Out-of-state travel expenses for meals may exceed the following limits for travel within the state, but they should be reasonable and any unusual amounts must be justified.

Reimbursement will be made for actual costs of meals within certain limits. Expenses for three meals at a rate of not more than $28.00 per day, including taxes and tips are allowed. Charges for three meals in excess of $28.00 per day must be explained on the travel expense statement. In normal circumstances it is expected that dinner should cost more than lunch, and lunch more than
breakfast. Tips should be included in the price of each meal.

1. Meal Expenses Associated with Overnight Travel

Employees traveling overnight may be reimbursed for the actual cost of meals, within the maximum limits established in these travel regulations. Limits are based on the length of day that an employee is officially on travel status.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Meals Reimbursed</th>
<th>Meals Reimbursed</th>
<th>Maximum Allowable Expense (1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 meals per day</td>
<td>breakfast/lunch/dinner</td>
<td>$28.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 meals per day</td>
<td>breakfast/lunch</td>
<td>$13.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>breakfast/dinner</td>
<td>$21.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lunch/dinner</td>
<td>$22.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 meal per day</td>
<td>breakfast</td>
<td>$6.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lunch</td>
<td>$7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dinner</td>
<td>$15.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) Taxes and Tips are allowable expenses, however, they should be included in the total expense for the meal.

Generally, employees who travel overnight should not be reimbursed for three full meals on the day of departure or return. The following guidelines apply to reimbursement of meal expenses for these days:

Employees may only be reimbursed for the meals purchased while officially on travel status. (For example, if an employee departs at 3:00 p.m., the employee should not claim breakfast or lunch expenses for the day of departure.)

Employees may be reimbursed for meal expenses incurred within the 30-mile radius, provided the travel destination is more than 30 miles.

Employees who depart for an overnight trip prior to 6:30 a.m. are entitled to reimbursement for
breakfast expenses, provided an expense was incurred.

Employees who return from an overnight trip later than 7:30 p.m. are entitled to reimbursement for dinner expenses, provided the expense was incurred.

Employees traveling outside Georgia should make every effort to remain within the meal limits described in these travel regulations. However, employees may experience some high cost areas which cause the employee to exceed the authorized meal expenses. Meal expenses associated with travel to high cost areas should be approved prior to the trip and may not exceed 125% of the in state rate.

2. Meal Expenses Not Associated With Overnight Travel

Employees who are required to travel for their job and do not stay overnight may be reimbursed for certain meal expenses under the following situations:

Employees acting as an official representative for their institution may be reimbursed for meals which are an integral part of a scheduled official meeting. Reimbursement is only authorized, however, if the meeting is with persons outside the employee’s department and if the meeting continues during the meal and the meal is consumed at the meeting site. No reimbursement will be made if the meal is eaten away from the premises of the meeting site.

Employees may be reimbursed for a noon meal not associated with overnight lodging if the meal is a scheduled part of an intra-institutional meeting or training session (i.e., the meeting or training session continues during lunch and the employees do not leave the premises of the meeting site). Reimbursement is only authorized, however, if the meeting or training session was previously approved by the department head, equalled or exceeded six hours in length, and was held more than 30 miles from the employee’s office. Reimbursement for the meal expenses may be documented by a copy of the formal written agenda.

Employees may be reimbursed for noon meals that are part of a required registration fee.

Employees, who are more than 30 miles away from home or headquarters on a work assignment and are away for more than 13 hours may be reimbursed for meals even when there is no overnight lodging. In this situation, employees are entitled to reimbursement for the noon meal. In addition, employees who depart prior to 6:30 a.m. are entitled to reimbursement for breakfast expenses, and employees who return later than 7:30 p.m. are entitled to reimbursement for dinner expenses.

Employees who are more than 30 miles away from home or headquarters on a work assignment and depart prior to 6:30 a.m. are entitled to reimbursement for breakfast expenses, even when there is no overnight lodging.
Employees claiming reimbursement in any of these circumstances must remain within the authorized meal limits. Expenses that exceed the authorized amounts should be explained on the travel expense statement. Individuals responsible for approving travel expenses should review these explanations to determine whether the higher costs are justified and allowed.

3. Meal Expenses Incurred While Taking Leave

Employees who take annual leave while on travel status may not be reimbursed for meal expenses incurred during the period of leave.

4. Required Documentation of Meal Expenses

All meal expenses must be itemized on the employee travel expense statement indicating the date and the actual cost of each meal. Taxes and tips are also reimbursable; however, they should be included in the total meal cost subject to the authorized limits. Receipts for meals are not required.

B. LODGING


Employees who travel more than 30 miles (and outside the county) of their home office, residence, or headquarters may be reimbursed for lodging expenses associated with overnight travel.

Employees will be reimbursed for the actual lodging expenses, provided the expenses are reasonable.

2. Responsibilities of Employee

Employees traveling overnight are responsible for ensuring the most reasonable lodging rates are obtained. To accomplish this, employees should:

Make reservations in advance, whenever practical,

Utilize minimum rate accommodations,

Avoid the "deluxe" hotels and motels, and

Obtain corporate/government rates, whenever possible

The State Purchasing Section of the Department of Administrative Services (DOAS), General Services Division provides a listing of hotel/motel special rates for state employees traveling on official business. Employees should refer to this listing when planning overnight lodging. Copies of
this listing are located in the Business Services. Office and are available to employees who are making travel arrangements.

3. Lodging Associated with a Meeting or Seminar

Employees who stay at a hotel/motel that is holding a scheduled meeting or seminar may incur lodging expenses that exceed the rates generally considered reasonable. The higher cost may be justified in order to avoid excessive transportation costs between a lower cost hotel/motel and the location of the meeting.

4. Authorization for Lodging Within the 30 Mile Radius

On occasions institutions are required to sponsor conferences, trade shows, and other functions which require personnel to work at the event. In many cases, the persons planning and coordinating the event reside or work less than 30 miles from the scheduled meeting site. The President is authorized to approve overnight travel for such persons who are coordinating institutional sponsored events, provided the affected employees are required to begin work within 9 hours of completing the previous days’ activities. In addition to mileage, affected employees may be reimbursed for meals and lodging in accordance with the provisions of the Travel Regulations.

Institutions are required to keep records of all persons authorized for travel status under this provision. Such records must be maintained in a central file and must include the names of all persons approved for travel under this provision, the dates of the event, the purpose of the event, the responsibilities of the individuals approved for travel status, and the written and signed authorization of the President. Authorization for such travel must be done in advance of the scheduled event.

It should be noted that this provision only applies to conferences and other institutional sponsored events. This provision does not authorize persons to claim travel reimbursement for activities that are part of their normal responsibilities. In addition, this provision would not apply for persons who are required to attend evening meetings as part of their normal responsibilities.

5. Sharing Lodging

When employees on travel status share a room, reimbursement will be calculated on a prorated share of the total cost. A separate receipt in the name of each employee must be presented for reimbursement. The employees should have the hotel/motel split the bill and prepare a folio for each traveler. Reimbursement
will be made at the single room rate when someone who is not a state employee accompanies a state employee on travel status.

6. Exemption of County and Municipal Excise Tax

Section 48-13-51 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated exempts Georgia state and local government officials and employees, who are traveling on official business, from paying the county or municipal excise tax on lodging. This optional excise tax is normally 3%, but can be as much as 6% in some locations. State employees are still required to pay sales tax associated with lodging expenses. Sales taxes are reimbursable expenses.

Employees are required to submit a copy of the tax-exempt card when they register at a hotel/motel. This exemption does not apply to employees staying at an out-of-state hotel/motel. Employees who are on travel status may obtain a copy of this card from the Office of the Vice President for Business and Finance prior to departure on their trip.

7. Lodging Expenses Incurred While Taking Leave

Employees who take annual leave while on travel status may not be reimbursed for lodging expenses incurred during the period of leave.

8. Required Documentation of Lodging Expenses

Daily lodging expenses, including applicable taxes, must be itemized on the employee travel expense statement. Employees requesting reimbursement for lodging expenses are required to submit original receipts with their expense statement. When employees share a room, the travelers should have the bill split by the hotel/motel and individual folios prepared for each employee. In addition, any expenses that exceed what is generally considered reasonable must be explained on the travel expense statement.

C. TRANSPORTATION

General

Use of common carrier or a private aircraft will be left to the discretion of the institutional personnel responsible for authorizing travel. A traveler will be authorized to choose between a personal vehicle, a common carrier or private aircraft.

Only after a careful analysis of the distance, timeliness, and overall cost factors of a trip have been considered. Reimbursement for the most economical mode of
transportation, consistent with the purpose of the travel, will be authorized.

The initial point of departure during an employee’s normal workweek shall be the individual’s residence or headquarters, whichever is nearest to the destination point. The initial point of departure on weekends or holidays, however, should be the individual’s actual point of departure. Reimbursement will not be allowed for expenses other than those incurred by the employee in travel status; payments to friends or other individuals will not be allowed. When possible, employees should attempt to travel together to the same destination in one vehicle.

1. **Vehicles**

1. Reimbursement for transportation expenses incurred by the use of personally owned vehicles will be at the rate per mile as provided by law for actual miles traveled in the performance of official duties. The current rate is 25 cents per mile. Actual odometer readings will be reported; however, personal mileage will be excluded in determining the mileage for which reimbursement may be made. Claims exceeding mileage computed by the most direct route from the point of departure to destination (due to field visits, picking up passengers, etc.) must be explained on the travel expense statement.

2. The authorized mileage rate is to include the normal expenses incurred in the operation of a personal vehicle. In addition, parking and toll expenses will be paid for official travel in personal or state vehicles. (Low-cost long-term parking or automobile storage should be used.) A receipt must be provided for parking and the date and location of toll charges must be listed on the expense statement.

3. Use of commercially leased vehicles will be left to the discretion of institutional personnel responsible for authorizing travel. Prior approval must be obtained before renting a vehicle. All requests for rental vehicles, including estimated cost must be itemized on the Request for Authority to Travel. Commercially leased vehicles should be obtained from the state contracted rental agency according to the conditions of the state contract that is available in the Office of Business Services. Employees will be reimbursed for costs associated with official use of such vehicles.

4. Employees traveling in state vehicles should purchase fuel at state owned facilities when feasible.

5. Employees sharing a ride with another state employee using either a state or personal vehicle, and not claiming reimbursement for mileage should indicate in the automobile mileage record section of the expense statement the name of the person with whom they rode and the dates of the trips.

2. **Common Carriers**

Transportation by common carrier will be by scheduled plane or rail. Accommodations for air travel should be made through the state contracted commercial airlines according to the conditions of the state contract. Use of the contract is mandatory where the city-pair listing shown in the contract is for non-
stop flights. However, if a lower fare can be obtained from another carrier, the airline offering the lower fare may be used provided the state contracted airline is offered the opportunity to meet the lower fare. Documentation for reimbursement includes ticket stubs, receipts, or other documented evidence of expenditures.

Penalties and charges resulting from the cancellation of airline reservations (or other travel reservations) shall be the institution’s obligation if the employee’s travel has been approved in advance and the cancellation or change is made at the direction of and for the convenience of the institution. If the cancellation or change is made for the personal benefit of the employee, it shall be the employee’s obligation to pay the penalties and charges. However, in the event of accidents, serious illness, or death within the employee’s immediate family, or other critical circumstances beyond the control of the employee, the institution will pay the penalties and charges.

When traveling by common carrier to conduct official State business, employees traveling to their destination earlier than necessary and/or delaying their return to avail the institution of reduced transportation rates may be reimbursed for additional travel days. The amount saved in transportation costs due to the early and/or delayed travel must be greater than the amount expended in salary and additional subsistence for the traveler. Prior written approval of the Vice President for the particular area in conjunction with the approval of the Vice President for Business and Finance is required.

Limousine or taxi service will be reimbursed between the individual’s departure point and the common carrier’s departure point, between the common carrier’s arrival point and the individual’s lodging or meeting place; and between the lodging and meeting places if at different locations. Baggage handling service (porterage) may be reimbursed when actually incurred in moving luggage into or out of lodging places and common carrier.

3. Private Aircraft

Reimbursement for the usage of private aircraft will be at the rate per mile as provided by law for automobiles for the most direct route from the employee’s residence or headquarters to the destination point(s), whichever is nearer.

Employees riding in a private aircraft and not claiming reimbursement must include in the automobile mileage record section the mode of travel, the person with whom they rode and the dates of the trips.

D. MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSE

Registration fees required for participation in workshops, seminars or conferences which an employee is directed and/or authorized to attend will be allowed when supported by a paid receipt. Any part of a registration fee applicable to meals will be reported as meal expense and not as a registration fee if the costs can be separately identified.

Expenses for official telephone and telegraph messages, which must be paid by the traveler, are allowable. Postage expense incurred relative to travel will be allowed.

Reasonable expenses for stationery, supplies, and stenographic or duplicating services may be allowed. Any such claims should be accompanied by a written
explanation and invoice. Claims for laundry, valet service, theatre, entertainment, and alcoholic beverages will not be reimbursed.

PROCESSING TRAVEL FORMS

In this section are examples of completed forms and detailed instructions on how to process each form. Failure to properly complete or submit these documents may delay the processing or decrease the amount of your reimbursement.

REQUEST FOR AUTHORITY TO TRAVEL ON OFFICIAL COLLEGE BUSINESS FORM

Remember this form must be completed and approved by all parties prior to your trip. The original form must be attached to the travel expense statement prior to submission for reimbursement.

1. Enter Traveler’s Name
2. Enter Social Security Number of Traveler
3. Nature of Official Business – Include the name of the workshop or purpose of the trip
4. Amount of This Request – Total amount of trip.
5. Department – Name of the Department to Charge.
6. Account Name and Number to be Charged – Account Number and Object Code to be used. If several object codes, list separately and include amount to be charged to each.
7. Date(s) to be Absent from campus and address while absent – Include here dates of travel and location of meeting or hotel.
8. Plans for duties while away - Person(s) responsible for your duties in your absence.
9. Estimated Cost – Include cost for meals, lodging, transportation, tolls, parking, tips, and registration fees if paid by traveller.
10. Mode of Travel – Personal vehicle, State vehicle, air, etc.
11. Date – Date of preparation of form.
12. Signature – Traveler’s signature.
13. Approved – Signature of next higher budgetary level and Budget Office for verification of available funds.

STATE OF GEORGIA EXEMPTION OF THE LOCAL HOTEL/MOTEL EXCISE TAX CARD

This card must be used when lodging in the state of Georgia. The traveler will not be reimbursed for occupancy taxes incurred in hotels/motels accepting this form.

1. Signature of Official or Employee – Signature of employee
2. Date – Date form is completed
3. Printed or Typed Name of Official or Employee – Printed Name of Employee
4. Date(s) of Lodging – Dates of hotel stay.

UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF GEORGIA TRAVEL EXPENSE STATEMENT

Travelers must prepare and submit an approved Travel Expense Statement with all original supporting documentation required by the travel regulations before reimbursement can be made. A completed package will include a properly filled out copy of this form along with the original travel authorization form, a letter of invitation or complete agenda when provided, and all receipts for gas charges if driving state or rental vehicle. Original receipts must also be attached for parking fees, lodging bills, telephone charges, taxis, limousines, rental cars, airfare, train fare, etc. In instances where receipts are required, the original receipt must be submitted for
reimbursement. Photostatic copies are not an acceptable form of receipt. Any unusual expenses, or those exceeding the originally approved amount must be approved by the appropriate Department Head before reimbursement may be made.

Since the Request for Authority to Travel is only an estimate, the Department Head's signature on the Travel Expense Statement constitutes approval for the Vice President of Business and Finance to reimburse for all amounts claimed subject to audit rules. If the Department Head limits the reimbursement for budgetary or other reasons, the maximum amount to reimburse should be annotated on the Travel Expense Statement prior to approval for payment.

Requests for reimbursement are audited to assure compliance with the travel regulations prepared by Savannah State University in compliance with the regulations set forth by the State of Georgia and the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia.

The attached sample Travel Expense Statement has numbers in each of the fields. The following legend is an explanation of the data that goes into the appropriate numbered field on the sample form.

1. Name – name of traveler.
3. Title – title of traveler.
4. Department – department name of the traveler.
5. Institution - "SSU".
6. Residence - home address of traveler.
7. Travel Date From – date of departure to destination.
8. Travel Date To – date of return from destination.
9. Date – day and month of travel.
10. Time - Departed/Arrived – list times for each day separately on both the day of departure and return from destination.
11. Points/Locations visited – itemize the locations visited.
12. Meals – list the actual amounts spent for each meal under the appropriate heading, even if they exceed the per diem rate of $28.00. Tips for meals are to be included in this section.
13. Lodging- list the amount spent for each day of lodging, including taxes. Original lodging receipt in travelers name must be attached.
15. Total Meals – Put totals for breakfasts, lunches and dinners in appropriate column.
16. Total Lodging – Place total of all lodging charges in column above.
17. Total Meals & Lodging – add cost of expenses for all meals & lodging.
18. Explain any unusual amounts for subsistence – use this section to explain unusual amounts for meals and lodging.
19. State Use Mileage – include here the total miles from item 41 on the back of the form for mileage when utilizing your personal vehicle.
20. Authorized Mileage Rate – mileage rate is .25 per mile.
22. Common Carrier, Taxi/Limousine – include here the total from item 46 on the back of form for airline, train fare, taxi and limousine service.
23. Total of items in 17, 21, and 22.
24. Miscellaneous Expenses – include here the total from item 50 on the back of the form paid for tips for baggage, telephone and fax charges, taxi and limousine service.
25. Total of items 23 and 24.
26. Approved - Signature of Department Head approving the expense statement as submitted but is subject to audit for limits and appropriate charges. Should the Department Head wish to limit the reimbursement to a specific amount, he should so state that along with his approval for the specific amount.
27. Signature – signature of traveler affirming the oath above.
28. Date – date form was completed.
29. State License Number of Car – license number of the vehicle used.
30. Period Ending - Last Date of Travel included in this Statement
31. Date of Travel
32. From: Points Visited - Starting Point of That Days’ Travel - list all points visited during the day.
33. To: - Ending Point of Day’s Travel.
34. Starting Odometer Reading
35. Ending Odometer Reading
36. Equals line 35 minus line 34.
37. Personal Use - daily miles traveled that were not state mileage.
38. State Use – equals line 36 minus line 37.
39. Total miles traveled -Total of miles traveled.
40. Total miles traveled - Total Personal Use mileage
41. Total miles traveled - Total of state use miles
42. Purpose of the Trip - Explain purpose of trip
43. Date Common Carrier Was Used.
44. Type of Carrier and Location.
45. Amount of Expenses for Carrier.
46. Total Amount Paid for Common Carrier – this is transferred to item 22 on the front of form.
47. Date of Miscellaneous Expense.
48. Description of Miscellaneous Expense Incurred.
49. Amount of Miscellaneous Expense.
50. Total Amount of Miscellaneous Expense – this is transferred to line 24 on front of form

FREQUENTLY ASKED TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT QUESTIONS
1. What is the rate of reimbursement for personally owned vehicles.
   State regulations authorize reimbursement at $.25 per mile for state use of personally owned vehicles. To be reimbursed, the actual odometer readings must be recorded on the back of the expense statement. This portion should be complete in detail indicating one-way trip readings with both departure and arrival points.
2. What is the maximum that I can be reimbursed for meals?
   Employees are reimbursed for the actual cost of meals up to the prescribed limits. The total daily meal allowance is currently $28.00. Tips are to be included in the price of each meal. Employees are to make every effort to remain within the meal limits. However, in certain high cost areas as defined by the Federal Per Diem schedule, an employee may be reimbursed up to 125% of the in state rate. For reimbursement in these areas, prior approval should be obtained as set forth in the travel regulations. Meal allowances are subject to the length of stay and arrival and departure times. Individual meal allowances are shown on page 2 of the travel regulations.
3. Where may I obtain a tax-exempt card?
State employees, while traveling on official business are exempt from paying the county or municipal excise tax on lodging in Georgia only. A copy of the tax-exempt card must be presented to the hotel/motel at the time of registration. This card can be obtained from the Office of the Vice President for Business and Finance. Employees will not be reimbursed the occupancy tax charges because they fail to present the exemption card upon registration.

4. What if the hotel does not honor the exemption card?
If the hotel does not honor the exemption, the employee should have the hotel employee sign the lodging receipt and include a telephone contact number. The Business Office will contact the hotel for assistance. With proper documentation from the hotel indicating it is not their policy to honor this exemption in Georgia, the employee will be reimbursed for these charges.

5. Is there a limit on the amount for tips?
Employees are encouraged to keep tips at a minimum. The usual gratuity rate of 15% is allowed for meals. Tips for the handling of one’s bags are reimbursed at a rate of no more than $1.00 per bag.

6. What information must be stated on the check request for payment to a consultant or candidate for employment?
The check request must include the person’s name, social security number, address, date(s) of services/attendance, purpose of charges and appropriate approval signatures. In the case of a consultant, the check request should be approved prior to the services being rendered. After the services have been rendered, a signed invoice from the consultant indicating dates of services, services to be performed and rate should be forwarded to the Accounts Payable Department. This invoice should also be signed and dated by an SSU employee indicating completion of services. In the case of an interviewee, a check request must be completed with the information obtained above, along with the position title, percentage of reimbursement and a statement indicating if the candidate was hired or not. A completed expense report signed by the candidate, along with the required receipts must be attached to the check request.

7. Are receipts required for taxis, telephone charges, tolls, etc?
Employees are required to attach a receipt for taxi services, telephone charges, and parking to be reimbursed for these charges. Tolls must be itemized on the back of the form with an explanation.
There will be no reimbursement for personal telephone calls. An explanation of all business telephone calls must be included on the back of the travel expense statement. This explanation should include the telephone number called and the name of the person you spoke with.

8. Can I be reimbursed for the expense of another staff member or a consultant’s meal on my travel form?
NO. The travel expense statement is an itemized list of all expenses incurred by the employee. Only the employee’s expenses are to be included on the expense statement. All other staff members should prepare individual documents for reimbursement. Reimbursement for a consultant’s meal should be requested via a check request form along with a copy of the receipt.

9. Who can override a decision to reduce my reimbursement?
All travel expense statements are audited based on the guidelines outlined in the Travel Regulations. During the audit process, the amounts will be altered for excess charges for meals, items requiring receipts when no receipt is attached, and inappropriate charges. If the employee disputes the reimbursement, he/she should first consult with the controller. After consultation with the controller, any unresolved items may be taken to the Vice President for Business and
Finance.