



## Statewide Travel Regulations Supplement

Area:	Accounts Payable	Number:	
Applies to:	University Faculty and Staff	Issued:	April 1, 2013
Sources:	State Accounting Office <a href="http://sao.georgia.gov/state-travel-policy">http://sao.georgia.gov/state-travel-policy</a>	Revised:	
Policy Owner:	Vice-President for Finance & Operations	Reviewed:	June 25, 2018
		Page(s):	5

### I. Purpose:

The Georgia Statewide Travel Regulations apply to all institutions in the Board of Regents system and are issued by the State Accounting Office and the Office of Planning and Budget. The Statewide Travel Regulations are based on industry best practices and meet the requirements of an Internal Revenue Service accountable plan. Travel is defined as being away from the general or local area of the employee's home campus. Employee's home campus is defined as the campus location where the majority of work time is spent. When determination of home campus is questionable the Division's Vice President will make the final determination.

Adherence to State Policy is required; this policy is provided as supplemental information to clarify areas of the State Policy that may be vague or unclear. Please also reference the Frequently Asked Questions for further clarification. When the USG Business Procedures Manual (BPM) related to travel are more stringent than State Travel Policy, the requirements of the USG BPM must be met. This supplement provides any such differences.

Georgia Southern faculty, staff, and students traveling on institution business should be familiar with the Statewide Travel Regulations located at: <http://sao.georgia.gov/state-travel-policy>

(Note: the University System does not use TTE so readers can disregard all references to TTE.)

### II. Policy Statement:

Business Purpose of Trip (Reference – Statewide Travel Regulations Section “General Provisions”

Each traveler and approver is charged with the responsibility for determining the available resources, and the justification for the need and the method of travel. The University reimburses travelers for reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in connection with approved travel on behalf of the State. A necessary expense is one for which there exists a clear business purpose and is within the travel expense policy limitations.

The specific business purpose of the trip should be clearly stated on the travel expense statement. The business purpose should include information such as:

- Persons involved

- Business topics covered
- Brief explanation of duties performed

Travel from employee's home campus to various campus locations of Georgia Southern University to conduct university business is considered a valid business purpose for application of the State Travel Policy. (See definition of home campus in Purpose section of this policy)

Travel Approval and Authorization (Reference – Statewide Travel Regulations “Section 3: Lodging” and “Appendix B: International Travel”)

State Travel regulations for domestic travel do not require a travel authorization unless traveler is lodging within 50 miles of the home institution.

International travel requires that the Request for Authority to Travel on Official University Business form be submitted and approved by the appropriate Budget Manager, and Provost or Vice-President in advance of the travel. This form must be submitted with the Travel Expense Statement, unless an advance or prepayment is requested, in which case the form should be attached to the advance or prepayment request before being submitted to Accounts Payable. International travel for faculty must be approved by the Provost. International travel for non-faculty must be approved by the appropriate Vice-President.

Meal Per Diem During Non-Overnight Travel (Reference – Statewide Travel Regulations Section 4.5 “Meals and Incidental Travel Expenses”)

The Statewide Travel Policy 4.5 allows for meal per diem during non-overnight travel when employees travel more than 50 miles from their residence and primary workstation on a work assignment AND are away for more than twelve (12) hours. However, the USG **does not** provide meal per diem during non-overnight travel due to the IRS taxable compensation implications.

Travel Advances (Reference – Statewide Travel Regulations Section 6.3 “Travel Advances”)

University employees are expected to utilize personal funds for business travel and then submit a request for reimbursement. Travel advances will only be authorized in very limited circumstances, such as for un-expected business trips, or for consecutive business trips.

All travel advances must be approved by the traveler's supervisor, by the budget manager (if this is not also the supervisor), and the dean/director.

Because it is recognized that students often do not have credit cards for travel, the University will provide travel advances for Georgia Southern University students in the following circumstances:

- GSU students who are employed by the University and are traveling as part of their job duties.
- GSU students who are not employees, but will incur travel expense while providing a service to the institution such as presenting research papers at or attending a professional conference as a representative of the institution.

In the case of employees traveling with teams/groups of students, the use of the University purchase card is encouraged to pay for the students' travel expenses, and the employees are expected to pay their own travel expenses and submit a request for reimbursement. In certain situations, in an effort

to make traveling more efficient, travel advances will be authorized for employees traveling with teams/groups of students.

A traveler must reconcile outstanding advances before a new one will be issued, except when another trip begins within five working days of the previous trip.

Any unused portion of an advance must be returned to the Cashier's Office as soon as possible, but no later than 45 calendar days after the completion of the trip. A copy of the Cashier's Office receipt, deposit transmittal form, and back-up documentation must be submitted to Accounts Payable with the expense statement.

Travelers with outstanding advances on the 46<sup>th</sup> day after the trip's completion will be contacted via e-mail by Accounts Payable. If the completed travel expense statement has not been received in Accounts Payable after five additional days, the traveler's Budget Manager will be contacted.

Submission of Travel Expense Statements (Reference – Statewide Travel Regulations Section 7.2 “Expense Reimbursement Timing”)

Employees should submit expense reports within 10 days of the completion of the trip, but no later than 45 calendar days following return. Travel expense statements submitted after 45 days require a documented reason for delay such as medical leave, consecutive business trips extending past 45 days or other manager approved qualifying circumstance. Statements submitted after 45 days require the applicable Vice-President's approval. Reimbursement will not be made if submitted more than one year after completion date of travel.

Role of the Approver (Reference – Statewide Travel Regulations Section “General Provisions”)

Budget Managers or alternates must be aware of the General Provisions section of the Statewide Travel Regulations, particularly the part titled “Role of the Approver.” Approvers in the submission process are held equally accountable for all expenditures, along with the traveler. Under no circumstances should an individual approve their own expense report. If the traveler and the Budget Manager is the same individual, then their immediate supervisor should approve the travel expense statement.

Upon granting approval of expense submissions, approvers are certifying:

- Appropriateness of the travel purpose and expense
- Reasonableness of the travel amount
- Availability of funds
- Compliance with funding agency regulations and State reimbursement policies
- Completeness of documentation and accuracy

In addition, it is the responsibility of the traveler and the approver to determine the most cost-effective method of transportation. Among the factors to be considered should be length of travel time, employee's salary, cost of operation of a vehicle, cost and availability of common carrier services, etc. It is the traveler's and the approver's responsibility to determine that the lowest logical airfare has been selected.

Use of Personal Vehicles for Travel (Reference – Statewide Travel Regulations Section 2 “Ground Transportation and Car Rental”)

### *Travel between various campus locations*

Employees traveling between their primary home campus location and another Georgia Southern University campus location are encouraged to travel in a university vehicle. However, if a university vehicle is not available or not an efficient use of university resources, the employee may be reimbursed at the tier 1 mileage reimbursement rate for use of their personal vehicle. Because round trip mileage between campus locations is not likely to exceed the 150 mile limit, employees are not required to provide cost comparison documentation.

Mileage traveled by university employees between their residence and primary campus location are considered commuting miles and are not eligible for reimbursement.

### *Travel external to campus locations*

To determine the most cost-effective means of ground transportation, refer to the car rental cost calculator form on the Enterprise Car Rental link under Faculty and Staff Services on your MyGeorgiaSouthern page. Consideration of pick-up and drop-off times for rental vehicles should be used when completing the calculator form. This form is a tool for comparing costs and is not required to be submitted with the Travel Expense Statement.

The State of Georgia has a mandatory statewide contract with specified car rental vendors. The current in-state vendor is Enterprise; the airport vendor is Hertz. If it is determined that renting a car is the least expensive mode of transportation, use the Enterprise Car Rental link under Faculty and Staff Services on your MyGeorgiaSouthern page. The rental car may be scheduled using this link and the University will be billed for the cost.

A University employee is only authorized to use his or her personally-owned vehicle, when: it is the least expensive option and no University-owned vehicles are available, the employee is traveling within 150 miles roundtrip OR, the supervisor determines in writing that use of the least expensive option is clearly not efficient. Travelers should secure supervisory authorization for use of a personally-owned vehicle in advance of such use. If requirements are met, Tier 1 mileage reimbursement is allowed.

If a University vehicle is available, and its use is determined to be the most advantageous form of travel to the state, OR if it is determined that a rental vehicle is the recommended method of travel, but a personal motor vehicle is used, the employee will be reimbursed for business miles based on the Tier 2 mileage rate.

If more than one employee is attending a meeting, conference, etc., carpooling is encouraged.

Airfare (Reference – Georgia Statewide Travel Regulations Section “General Provisions” and University System of Georgia Business Procedure Manual 4.6)

Common carrier shall be used for out-of-state travel unless it is documented that utilization of another method of travel is more cost-effective or practical. This documentation must be included with the travel expense statement before reimbursement can be processed.

The University System of Georgia Business Procedure Manual section 4.6 prohibits first class travel unless the exceptions outlined in this section are met. Please note this restriction must be applied even though the State Travel Policy allows first class travel accommodations.

Travel plans should be made as far in advance as possible once travel dates have been confirmed. To obtain discounted rates, flights should be booked at least 14 days in advance. It is understood that the recommendation in State Policy to book travel plans 14 days in advance is not practical for travel related to bringing job interview candidates to campus. Business purpose of *job interview travel* is sufficient explanation in this situation.

**III. Exclusions: N/A**

**IV. Procedures:**

- Complete and sign the [Travel Expense Statement](#) for reimbursement of allowable travel expenses.
- Forward approved form to Accounts Payable via inter-campus mail at P.O. Box 8128.