



2. Employee Travel: Effective July 1, 2014 – December 31, 2014

Policy Statement

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Introduction

In accordance with the Official Code of Georgia Annotated Section 50-5B-5, the state accounting officer in cooperation with the Office of Planning and Budget is authorized to and shall adopt rules and regulations governing in-state and out-of-state travel and travel reimbursement that promote economy and efficiency in state government which treat employees fairly and equitably. Under the direction of the State Accounting Office and the Office of Planning and Budget, the University of Georgia has adopted these travel regulations effective July 1, 2014.

Each employee required to travel in the performance of official duties and entitled to authorized reimbursement for expenses incurred shall have prior authorization from his/her department head or other designated official for the purpose of his travel. For in-state travel each department is responsible for maintaining the approval record of employees authorized to travel. It is not necessary to prepare a travel authority request or obtain prior travel authority above the department level for in-state

travel. Official travel to points outside the State, but within fifty miles of the state border, will be construed as in-state travel.

In the case of out-of-state travel, it is necessary to obtain prior approval from the appropriate dean, director, or other unit head and fiscal review by the Travel and Encumbrance Section of the University Business Office. Out-of-state travel by a dean or director requires the prior approval of the appropriate vice president. A vice president's out-of-state travel should have prior approval by the Senior Vice President or the President's Office. Travel outside of the continental limits of the United States must be approved first by the appropriate vice president and then by the Office of International Education. No out-of-state travel is to take place, and no claim for reimbursement will be processed without proper authorization as outlined above. Any travel authority submitted after travel has occurred will need to be accompanied by a letter of justification indicating that proper procedures will be followed in the future.

The impact of travelers with medical conditions while on state travel should be considered on a case-by-case basis. Compliance with the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) is mandatory. Each department has the authority to provide reasonable accommodations during state travel for travelers with disabilities. All state employees are to be afforded equal opportunity to perform travel for official state business even if the travel costs for disabled travelers will exceed what would normally be most economical for the state.

Travel funding that is encumbered and not spent before June 30 will result in the funding going into a liability account. Departments now have the option for travel that is completed by the end of the first quarter of the next fiscal year (September 30) to be encumbered from current fiscal year funding. Travel authorities for travel occurring between July 1 and September 30 should clearly indicate which fiscal year funding should come from.

The University of Georgia does not provide travel advances. Employees traveling on University business should pay for their expenses and seek reimbursement. Special arrangements may be made through the Bursar's office to facilitate Studies Abroad Programs and group travel in some circumstances.

The preferred method for submitting travel authorizations is via the E-Travel component of the Electronic Check Request System at:

<https://webapps.ais.uga.edu/PCFA/index.jsp>

Web versions of the travel authority for employee and non-employee travel can be found online at:

http://www.busfin.uga.edu/accounts_payable/travel_encumb.html

These forms must be printed and routed for signatures.

Note: The non-employee Request for Authority to Travel is a printable format only. No online data entry is available.

The University maintains an accountable plan for travel reimbursement. By complying with the IRS rules for an accountable plan, travel reimbursements are not taxable income. The State Accounting Office requires that all travel reimbursements must be filed within forty-five (45) days of the completion of the travel event. Requests for reimbursement filed in excess of forty-five (45) days after completion of the trip must be accompanied by a letter or justification. Requests filed for reimbursement in excess of sixty (60) days after completion of the trip should be included on the IRS form W2 as taxable income.

2.0.1.0 Meals and Incidental Travel Expenses

Generally, meals are reimbursable on a per diem basis (not actual expenses) for overnight business travel outside the traveler's official station. Per diem expenses do not require receipts.

Domestic travel per diem rates only include the cost of meal expenses and not incidental expenses. Incidental expenses include: fees and tips given to porters, baggage carriers, hotel staff, and staff on ships. Incidental expenses may be reimbursed separately at actual cost as they are excluded from the per diem allowance for domestic

travel. Out-of-state per diem rates follow appropriate GSA per diem rates. These rates, as well as a breakdown by meal, can be found on the GSA's website.

For international travel, per diem rates include both the cost of meals and incidental expenses.

Employees on official business attending luncheon or dinner meetings are entitled to receive reimbursement for actual costs incurred, provided that:

- The luncheon or dinner meeting is planned in advance and includes persons not employed by the University of Georgia
- The meal is an integral part of the meeting.
- The meal is served at the same establishment that hosts the meeting
- The purpose of the meeting is to discuss business and the nature of the business is stated on the travel expense report.

Guidelines for employee group meals and non-employee group meals are covered in the University of Georgia's Food and Related Business Entertainment Policy.

2.0.1.1 Meal Expenses Not Associated With Overnight Travel in Georgia

Employees who travel more than 50 miles from home and headquarters on a work assignment, and are away for more than twelve (12) hours may receive 100% of the total days per diem rate, even when there is no overnight lodging.

The meal per diem rates for travel within Georgia are as follows:

Breakfast: \$6.00

Lunch: \$7.00

Dinner: \$15.00

In some areas of Georgia, employees may experience high costs that cause the employee to exceed the general meal limits. In recognition of this fact, certain areas have been designated *high cost areas*. High cost areas are limited to the following counties: Chatham, Cobb, DeKalb, Fulton, Glynn, and Richmond counties.

The following per diem rates apply to high cost area meal reimbursements:

Breakfast: \$7.00

Lunch: \$9.00

Dinner: \$20.00

Taxes and tips are allowable expenses; however, they should be included in the total expense for the meal.

Employees are considered traveling in high cost areas of Georgia when their official responsibilities must be performed at a location in the high cost area.

2.0.1.2 Meal Expenses Associated With Overnight Travel (General Rule)

Employees traveling overnight may be reimbursed for the daily per diem cost of meals within the maximum limits established in these travel regulations. Employees traveling overnight are generally eligible for per diem amounts designed to cover the cost of three (3) meals per day for all days on travel status *other than* the day of departure and the day of return. Travelers are eligible for 75 percent of the total per diem rate on the first and last day of travel.

Day of Departure and Return:

Travelers are eligible for 75 percent of the total per diem rate on the first and last day of travel. For example, if the per diem rate allows a \$28 total reimbursement, \$21.00 $[(\$28 \times .75) = \$21]$ would be allowable on a travel departure or return day.

For trips involving multiple travel destinations, base the reduction on the per diem in effect for where the night was spent as follows:

Departure Day: Where you spend the night

Return Day: Where you spent the night before returning to home base.

When meals are provided at no cost in conjunction with travel events on a travel departure or return day, the full meals per diem reimbursement rate is reduced by the full amount of the appropriate meals before the 75% proration. For example, if the per diem allows a \$28 total reimbursement, and lunch was provided at no cost on a travel departure day or return day, the total allowable reimbursement for that day would be \$15.75 $[\$28 - \$7 \text{ lunch} = \$21 \times 75\% = \$15.75]$.

2.0.1.3 Meal Expenses Associated with Overnight Travel Outside of Georgia

Employees are considered traveling outside of Georgia when their official responsibilities must be performed at an out-of-state location. Employees who are working in Georgia but spending the night in lodging in another state are not traveling outside of Georgia.

Out-of-state meal per diem rates follow the appropriate GSA per diem rates. These rates can be located on the GSA website at <http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem>. The GSA per diem rates include both the cost of meals and incidental expenses. Incidental expenses are not included in the per diem rate for domestic travel as they are reimbursed separately at actual cost.

The breakdown by meal for GSA per diem amounts may be found at the following internet address:

<http://www.gsa.gov/mie>.

The federal government has also established meal per diem rates for foreign travel. The internet address for this information is as follows:

http://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=184&menu_id=78

Per diem rates for international travel include both the cost of meals and incidental expenses. Travelers are eligible for 75% of the total per diem on the day of departure and day of return.

Per diem rates associated with travel to high cost out-of-state areas should be approved by the department head or his/her designee prior to the trip, in order that the employee might plan meals accordingly. In addition, any meal expenses that exceed the maximum federal per diem rate should be explained and justified on the travel expense statement.

Employees traveling overnight are generally eligible for per diem amounts designed to cover all days on travel status **other than** the day of departure and the day of return. Travelers are eligible for 75 percent of the total per diem rate on the first and last day of travel.

2.0.1.4 Meals included in Conference Registrations, etc.

If any meal is included as part of the cost of a conference registration, etc., such meal(s) should not be considered eligible in the calculation of per diem and an employee may not receive per diem for the normally eligible number of meals. For example, if conference registration includes breakfast and lunch, the employee will only receive per diem

for the dinner meal. Because most conferences, etc. accommodate a variety of dietary needs/restrictions, employees are expected to participate in such meals.

In rare circumstances, an employee may be unable to participate in a conference meal. In such a case, the employee may request the per diem amount associated with the meal purchased in lieu of that provided. If requesting such reimbursement, a receipt documenting the meal purchase must be attached to the travel expense statement, and a justification for the meal purchase must be indicated on the statement. If a meal is offered as part of a conference and the traveler has medical restrictions, the traveler should make every effort to have the conference facilitate his/her needs by the deadline specified by the conference. If the conference does not honor the request, the traveler is not required to deduct the applicable meal allowance from the per diem. However, the traveler must include a note or other documentation with the Travel Expense Reimbursement form documenting this information.

2.0.2.0 Lodging

Employees who travel more than 50 miles from their home, office, residence, or headquarters may be reimbursed for lodging expenses associated with overnight travel. Written pre-approval must be obtained when lodging is required within this 50 mile radius. The approval must be submitted with the traveler's receipts when requesting reimbursement. Reimbursement may be made for actual lodging expenses based on reasonable rates as determined by the circumstances of the trip. All lodging claims must be documented by receipts and must be at a business that offers lodging to the general public such as a hotel or motel and not at a private residence.

Employees traveling overnight are responsible for ensuring the most reasonable lodging rates are obtained. Travelers should select the least expensive option available taking into consideration proximity to the business destination and personal safety.

Upgraded accommodations that are an additional charge are not allowed. A complimentary upgrade should be noted on the travel expense statement.

It is expected that reservations will be made in advance whenever practical, that minimum rate accommodations available will be utilized, that "deluxe" hotels and motels will be avoided, and that corporate/government rates will be obtained whenever possible. Many hotels and motels grant these rates upon request to state employees who show identification.

Travelers should not book non-refundable rates or rates that require a deposit unless required by conference lodging. It is the traveler or arranger's responsibility to understand the cancellation rules of the room confirmed. No-show charges and penalties will not be reimbursed when the traveler does not cancel reservations within the allotted time. Non-refundable rates cannot be changed or cancelled; therefore, the traveler is accepting the risk of a non-reimbursable cancellation fee.

In a case where all efforts have been taken, and a fee is still charged, an explanation must be provided when submitting the traveler's expense report in order for the fee to be reimbursed.

On occasion, sponsored conferences, trade shows, and other functions require personnel to work at the event. Off-site employee retreats will require groups of employees to be present at an off-site location. In many cases, the employees involved in these activities reside or work less than 50 miles from the scheduled event site. Department heads are authorized to approve overnight travel for such persons who are engaged in activities as described above, provided the affected employees are required to conduct business activities at the site the following day. In addition to lodging, affected employees may be reimbursed for meals and mileage.

It should be noted that this provision only applies to conferences and sponsored events that occur. This provision does not authorize persons to claim travel reimbursement for activities that are part of their normal responsibilities.

2.0.2.1 Sharing Lodging

When a room is shared with other state employees on travel status, reimbursement will be calculated on a prorated share of the total cost. A state employee on travel status, if accompanied by someone, who is not a state employee on travel status, would be entitled to reimbursement at a single room rate. (Single room rate should be noted on the paid receipt provided by the hotel or motel.)

2.0.2.2 Taxes Associated with Lodging Expenses

Section 48-13-51 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated states that Georgia state officials or employees traveling on official business should not be charged **county or municipal excise tax** ("hotel/motel" or "occupancy" tax) on lodging regardless of the payment method being used. This optional excise tax is normally 3% but can be as much as 6% in some locations. University employees requesting an exemption of county or municipal excise tax should provide a written notification form to the Georgia hotel or motel operator involved. This form is for their tax records to document the exemption.

Employees are required to pay any state/local sales and use taxes.

Employees are required to submit a copy of the hotel/motel tax-exemption form when they register at a hotel/motel. This form is located online at:

http://www.busfin.uga.edu/forms/excise_exempt.pdf.

This exemption does not apply to employees staying at an out-of-state hotel/motel. Employees should be able to provide proper identification to document their employment as a state or local government employee. If the hotel refuses to accept the form at check-in, the employee should attempt to resolve the issue with hotel management before checking out at the end of their stay. If the matter is not resolved by check out, the employee should pay the tax, and the employee should explain the payment of the tax as an unusual expense on their travel statement.

The University of Georgia is authorized to reimburse the employee for the hotel/motel tax if the employee provides the following information: employee name, date(s) of lodging, name, address, phone number of hotel, and documentation from the hotel/motel of their refusal to omit the excise tax. The University will forward this information to the State Accounting Office.

If lodging is direct-billed to the University of Georgia the hotel/motel should not collect any taxes associated with the lodging expenses.

2.0.2.3 Resort and Other Fees

Some hotels include a charge for this or other fees. These are not tax exempt fees and should be reimbursed as an eligible lodging expense.

2.0.3.0 Transportation

2.0.3.1 Vehicles and Common Carrier

Use of common carrier such as a bus, taxi, or train will be left to the discretion of the unit head responsible for authorizing travel. An employee is only authorized to use his or her personally-owned vehicle, when: 1) it is the least expensive option and no temporary fleet vehicles are available OR 2) 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. This approval should be retained in the traveler's home department.

Transportation outside the state (within fifty miles of the State border will be considered in-state) will be by common carrier unless specific authorization is received prior to the trip for the use of a personally owned vehicle. If authorization is received for out-of-state travel, reimbursement therefore may not exceed the common carrier rate

between the two points traveled, and meals and lodging en route may not be claimed for reimbursement during the days which the traveler would not be en route if travel was by common carrier.

Reimbursement for transportation expenses incurred by use of personally owned vehicles will be at a rate consistent with the United States General Services Administration (GSA) for federal employees. UGA Faculty and Staff are responsible for determining the appropriate reimbursement rate and documentation relating to the use of the appropriate rate should be retained for audit purposes. (Information regarding UGA vehicle rental pool is available at the following link: <http://www.busfin.uga.edu/manual/index.html>) These reimbursement rates will be updated only upon notification from the State Accounting Office.

When it is determined that a personal motor vehicle is the most advantageous form of travel, the employee will be reimbursed for business miles traveled as follows:

Automobile \$0.56 per mile for travel on or after January 1, 2014

\$0.565 per mile for travel January 1, 2013 - December 31, 2013

\$0.555 per mile for travel April 17, 2012 - December 31, 2012

\$0.51 per mile for travel January 1, 2011-April 16, 2012

\$0.50 per mile for travel January 1, 2010-December 31, 2010

\$0.55 per mile for travel January 1, 2009-December 31, 2009

Motorcycle \$0.53 per mile on or after January 1, 2014

\$0.535 per mile January 1, 2013 - December 31, 2013

\$0.525 per mile April 17, 2012 - December 31, 2012

\$0.48 per mile January 1, 2011-April 16, 2012

\$0.47 per mile January 1, 2010-December 31, 2010

Aircraft \$1.31 per mile on or after January 1, 2014

\$1.33 per mile January 1, 2013 - December 31, 2013

\$1.31 per mile April 17, 2012 - December 31, 2012

If a government-owned vehicle or a rental vehicle is determined to be the most advantageous mode of travel, but a personal motor vehicle is used, the employee will be reimbursed at \$0.235 per mile. For January 1, 2013 - December 31, 2013, the rate was \$0.24 per mile.

State owned vehicles may not be used to drive to and from an employee's residence or parked overnight at an employee's residence without prior written approval by the Dean of the College or Director of the unit concerned.

While driving your personal vehicle on State business, the State provides full liability coverage and personal immunity for the employee for damages and injuries the employee may cause to others. It does not, however, provide coverage for the damages to your personal vehicle.

Cost of repairs to a vehicle, whether or not they result from the traveler's acts, are not reimbursable.

Under no circumstances will the State reimburse parking fines or moving violations.

2.0.3.2 Determination of Business Miles Traveled

Employees may be reimbursed for the mileage incurred from the point of departure to the travel destination. If an employee departs from headquarters, mileage is calculated from headquarters to the destination point. If an employee departs from his/her residence, mileage is calculated from the residence to the destination point, **with a reduction** for normal one-way commuting miles. For the return trip, if an employee returns to the headquarters, mileage is calculated based on the distance to headquarters. If an employee returns to his/her residence, mileage is calculated based on the distance to the residence, **with a reduction** for normal one-way commuting miles. The direction of the meeting or temporary work station from the employee's residence is not factored into the reimbursement.

Exceptions:

- The initial point of departure on weekends or holidays should be the individual's actual point of departure.
- If an employee does not regularly travel to an office (headquarters) outside of his/her residence (i.e. residence is headquarters), the requirement to deduct normal commuting miles does not apply. Note: This exception does not apply to those operating under the State telework policy.

Employees may also be reimbursed for business miles traveled as follows:

- Miles traveled to pick up additional passengers
- Miles traveled to obtain meals for which employee is eligible for reimbursement
- Miles traveled to multiple work sites

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.

Actual odometer readings are not reported on the travel expense statement. To calculate mileage, travelers may use MapQuest, Google Maps, GPS devices, or personal odometer readings, whichever is most appropriate for the circumstances. Personal use miles should be excluded in determining the mileage for which reimbursement may be made. Normal commute miles should be deducted when applicable. 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.

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 should be provided when possible; if not, a written explanation should be made on the expense statement.

2.0.3.3 Travel by Rented or Public Transportation

State employees are encouraged to travel by state-owned or personal vehicles when feasible and cost-effective. However, when commercial transportation is necessary, employees may be reimbursed for the expenses incurred. Employees will be reimbursed for actual expenses incurred, provided the appropriate steps were taken to obtain the lowest possible fare or cost.

2.0.3.4 Commercial Air Transportation

Employees should utilize commercial air transportation when it is more cost effective and efficient to travel by air than by vehicle. Under such circumstances, state agencies may reimburse employees for expenses incurred for air travel, provided these expenses were approved prior to the date of travel. Employees who choose to travel by personal vehicle when air travel is more cost effective should only be reimbursed for the cost of the lowest available airfare to the specified destination.

Employees who require air travel should obtain the lowest available airfare to the specified destination, which may include the use of the internet, a travel agency, or airline services. Employees should use electronic ticketing to avoid any surcharge associated with hard copy tickets. Employees are strongly encouraged to use the lowest logical airfares.

The State Accounting Office has partnered with Concur and the travel management company, Travel Inc to offer state agencies discounted airfare rates. These discounted rates are **only** available to travelers booking within the Concur system. The Concur system can be accessed at <http://travel.uga.edu>. Travel Authorizations submitted for travel to be booked within Concur should identify "Travel Inc" as the Authorized Travel Agency.

Travelers should use penalty or non-refundable fares whenever feasible. These fares are typically lower in cost. If the flight is cancelled, the traveler will have an opportunity to reuse the ticket.

In the event there is a charge for checking luggage, the State will reimburse for a maximum of one (1) piece of checked luggage. In the event additional bag(s) are required, requests for reimbursement must include an associated explanation.

Travel agencies used for making travel arrangements should not be related to the employee making, authorizing, or approving the arrangements. The travel agencies should also not be related to the employee actually traveling. A related party would include any members of the employee family or any organizations in which the employee or his/her family members have a financial interest. The purpose for not using such travel agencies is to maintain the State integrity in financial matters. It is important that the actions of all State employees be above reproach.

For access to the University of Georgia Approved Travel Agencies, please access the following site:

http://www.busfin.uga.edu/accounts_payable/authorized_agencies.html

In general, it is the State policy that state officials or employees traveling by commercial air carrier travel in the most cost-effective manner and utilize the lowest possible coach fares. Officials or employees traveling by commercial air carrier will not be reimbursed for the portion of non-coach (first class, business class, etc.) airfare that exceeds the cost of the lowest, available fare on the same flight unless:

There is no other space available on the needed flight;

- A licensed medical practitioner certifies that because of a person's mental or physical condition, specific air travel arrangements are required; or
- The Commissioner of Public Safety certifies that specific air travel arrangements are necessary for security reasons.

It is the responsibility of the department to obtain necessary medical certifications for any employee that requires special air travel arrangements due to a medical condition. Departments should also obtain information specifying the expected length of time such condition would have an impact on travel needs and should maintain such information in a manner that would enable the auditors to readily determine who is subject to these special travel provisions.

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 be obligated to pay the penalties and charges.

The "Fly America Act" requires international flights to be U.S. carriers when available. Government contractors flying on federal sponsored funds must be in compliance with the "Fly America Act." The "Fly America Act" is available at: <http://www.tvlon.com/resources/FlyAct.html>

Additional information regarding the Fly America act can be found on the University's travel website at:

http://www.busfin.uga.edu/accounts_payable/fly_america.html

2.0.3.5 Upgrades to Non-Coach Travel

For purposes of conducting official state business, state officials or employees may negotiate or arrange for upgrades to business class for international travel regardless of the duration of flight. Pre-approval for the upgrade should be documented on the travel authorization form.

State officials or employees may, at any time, use personal frequent flyer miles or similar programs to upgrade to non-coach travel. In addition, nothing in this policy shall preclude a state official or employee from personally paying for an upgrade to non-coach travel.

Reimbursement of first class is prohibited.

2.0.3.6 Indemnification Received Due to Travel Inconveniences Imposed by Airlines

Occasions may arise when airlines overbook, change, delay or cancel flights, thereby imposing travel inconveniences on their passengers. In these instances, airlines often offer the impacted passengers indemnification for these inconveniences. Examples of indemnification that may be offered by an airline include vouchers for meals or lodging, upgrades to non-coach travel, and credits toward future flight costs. State employees are authorized to accept such indemnification if the travel inconvenience was imposed by the airline and there is no additional cost to the state.

2.0.3.7 Rental of Motor Vehicles

If a temporary fleet vehicle is not available, state employees must choose the least expensive option between a rental vehicle or mileage reimbursement for use of their personal vehicle. The State of Georgia has a mandatory statewide contract with specified car rental vendors. These vendors and rental information can be located on the University's travel website at:

http://www.busfin.uga.edu/accounts_payable/rental_cars.html

Car rentals should be used when it is determined that renting a car is the most economical form of transportation. To determine the most cost effective means of ground transportation, refer to the car rental cost calculator at <https://ssl.doas.state.ga.us/vehcostcomp>.

An employee will be reimbursed for actual authorized rental costs incurred for official transportation. No claim will be made, and no reimbursement paid, for mileage charges accrued as a result of, or for the portion of the flat daily charge ratably attributable to, unofficial transportation.

Approved car rental sizes are economy, compact, or intermediate (midsize). Other vehicle types require business-related justification. Vans may be rented when there are more than 4 travelers.

Employees traveling on State business in a rented motor vehicle are covered by the State's liability policy; therefore, liability coverage should be declined when renting a motor vehicle.

Loss Damage Waiver/Collision Damage Waiver (LDW/CDW) insurance is included in the statewide contract at no additional cost. When traveling to destinations outside the Continental U.S. (OCONUS) with the exception of Canada, the State Risk Management Department recommends that travelers accept collision insurance. If an employee rents outside of the statewide contract when the contract provider is not available, then they should purchase the additional coverage that addresses loss or damage to the rental unit. Contact the DOAS Risk Management Services Department regarding any questions related to rental car insurance coverage.

In the event of an accident while driving a rental vehicle, contact the Risk Management Office at 1-877-656-7475 and the appropriate car rental vendor for claims handling.

NOTE: The State liability policy is only in effect while the employee is using the rented vehicle for official State business. For this reason, personal use of the vehicle, including allowing friends or family members to ride in a State rented vehicle, is prohibited.

Employees requiring the use of commercially leased vehicles will be reimbursed for gasoline purchases associated with the business use of such vehicle, provided appropriate receipts are included. Travelers must decline optional fuel offerings provided by rental agencies. The University provides for reimbursement of auto rentals in travel between points away from traveler's residence where a personally owned vehicle cannot be used, or where commercial transportation is not available, is more expensive, or is not feasible. A receipt for a vehicle rental should be forwarded as an attachment to the Travel Expense Statement requesting reimbursement after the travel. The amount of the expense should be entered on the back side of the Travel Expense Statement under "Common Carrier/Taxi/Shuttle."

Transportation by common carrier will be by scheduled plane, rail, or bus. Reimbursement will be made upon presentation of ticket stub, receipt, or other documentary evidence of expenditure.

2.0.3.8 Travel by Railroad, Mass Transportation, Taxi, or Airport Vans

Employees may be reimbursed for the actual cost of rail transportation, provided the appropriate personnel authorized the travel expense in advance. Employees traveling by rail are encouraged to obtain the lowest possible fare. There is not a statewide contract for transportation by rail.

Airport vans 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.

It is expected that airport van service will be utilized when available and when arrival or departure is during daylight hours. Although receipts are not necessary for such items of transportation, point-to-point explanation should be required for each such item reimbursed. Baggage handling services (portage) may be reimbursed when actually incurred in moving luggage into or out of lodging places and common carrier. (Taxi fares may not be reimbursed for more than common carrier charge between two cities or towns.)

Employees traveling in state vehicles should purchase fuel at state owned facilities when feasible. All such purchases should be made with a state credit card.

2.0.3.9 Required Documentation of Transportation Expenses

All travel by rented or public transportation must be recorded on the employee travel expense statement. Employees requesting reimbursement must submit receipts for travel by commercial air carrier or railroad and for the cost of rented vehicles, including the cost of gasoline purchased.

Although receipts are recommended, employees are not required to submit receipts for travel by mass transportation, taxi, or airport vans. However, a point-to-point explanation is required for each item reimbursed. All transportation expenses should be itemized on the employee travel expense statement.

2.0.4.0 Miscellaneous Expenses

2.0.4.1 Registration Fees

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 or copy of check showing payment. 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.

2.0.4.2 Visa/Passport Fees

When travel required by an employer necessitates the use of a passport and/or visa, and the employee does not currently possess such a valid document(s), the related visa/passport fee is eligible for reimbursement when documented by receipt and approved by the unit head.

2.0.4.3 Unallowable Expenses

The following expenses are not reimbursable unless specific legal authority has been established:

- Airline, car, and card membership dues and club fees; travel upgrade fees (air, rail, car)
- Alcoholic beverages
- Childcare costs
- Clothing and toiletry items
- Commuting between home and workplace
- Country club dues
- Expenses related to vacation or personal days taken before, during or after a business trip
- Haircuts and personal grooming
- Loss Damage Insurance when State agency is available and another auto agency is utilized
- Loss or theft of petty cash money or airline tickets
- Laundry (allowable when overnight travel exceeds seven (7) consecutive days)
- Loss or theft of personal funds or property
- Lost baggage
- Luggage or briefcases
- Medical expenses while traveling
- Min-bar charges
- Movies
- No-show/Cancellation fees or fees related to hotel late check-out (unless business or weather related)
- Personal reading materials (magazines, newspapers, etc.)
- Personal vehicle maintenance
- Personal entertainment
- Personal pet care
- Recreational expenses
- Saunas, massages
- Shoe shines
- Souvenirs or personal gifts
- Traffic citations (moving violations), parking tickets, court fees and other fines
- Travel accident insurance premiums
- Valet services for parking, when self-parking options are available
- Theater
- Entertainment
- Bank charges for domestic ATM withdrawals

2.0.5.0 Additional Provisions

For in-state and out-of-state trips that combine personal travel with state business travel, reimbursement will not exceed the amount of what it would have cost the state if the traveler did not combine personal travel with business

travel. Combining University travel with personal travel does not in and of itself provide justification for using a private vehicle rather than a state-owned vehicle.

For out-of-state trips between points where scheduled airline service is available and where travelers are combining official state travel with a holiday, weekend trip, vacation or other personal travel, payment will be based on the cost of round-trip coach airfare and the meal and lodging per diems to which personnel would have been entitled while traveling by air or by the least expensive reasonable means of travel.

2.0.6.0 Required Documentation of Travel Expenses

Employees requesting reimbursement for travel expenses are required to submit their claim to authorized personnel on the employee travel expense statement.

The travel expense statement for travel can be found online at:

https://emer.uosp.uga.edu/accounts_payable/travel_expense_login.cfm

Requests for reimbursement should include the following information:

- Per diem rates for meals, documentation of actual costs for lodging, mileage, transportation, and miscellaneous expenses.
- Explanation of any expenses which exceed the established limits and of any unusual expenses;
- Explanation of the purpose for the trip; and
- Description of the type(s) of transportation used.

Employees are required to sign their travel expense statement, attesting that the information presented on the form is accurate. The statement must be approved by the appropriate person in the traveler's unit. Employees who provide false information are subject to criminal penalty of a felony for false statements, which is subject to punishment by fine of not more than \$1,000 or by imprisonment for not less than one nor more than five years.

Employees are also required to submit receipts for the following expenses:

- Meals purchased in lieu of those provided at conference/training
- Lodging
- Airline or Railroad Fares
- Rental of Motor Vehicles
- Gasoline purchased for Rental Vehicles (if over \$25)
- Supplies
- Registration Fees
- Laundry Services (when travel exceeds 7 days)
- Visa/Passport Fees

Receipts for parking, tolls, mass transit/taxi/airport vans, and communications expenses are recommended. However, if receipts are not available, employees are required to include an explanation of the expense on the travel expense statement. **Receipts for meals are not required, except as noted above.**

Reason for policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to the University of Georgia for payment of expenses in an efficient, cost effective manner resulting in the best value for the State. The University will follow the travel rules of the State Accounting Office and comply with all Internal Revenue Service regulations. The University maintains an accountable plan for travel reimbursement. By complying with the IRS rules for an accountable plan, travel reimbursements are not taxable income. The State Accounting Office requires that all travel reimbursements must be filed within forty-five (45) days of the completion of the travel event. Requests for reimbursement filed in excess of forty-five (45) days after completion of the trip must be accompanied by a letter or justification. Requests filed for

reimbursement in excess of sixty (60) days after completion of the trip should be included on the IRS form W2 as taxable income

Procedures

Prior to traveling on an out-of-state trip, the traveler should initiate a travel authority within the electronic check request and travel authority system. The travel authorization will move through the various approval levels that have been pre-determined for the funding source. Once the authorization has been approved by Accounts Payable, funding will be encumbered for the trip. If airfare is being direct billed to UGA, the travel agency will be allowed to bill only after the travel authorization has been approved by Accounts Payable.

For in-state or out-of-state travel, travelers should complete a travel expense statement at the conclusion of travel. The travel expense statement and applicable receipts as documented by this policy should be provided to the approver for review and approval. Once the expense statement and receipts have been verified and payment is in order, a check request should be initiated within the electronic check request and travel authorization system. The check request will move through the various approval levels that have been pre-determined for the funding source.

Forms/Instructions

Travel Expense Statement

Electronic Check Request and Travel Authorization System-employees should utilize this system to submit a travel authorization prior to traveling.

Hotel/Motel Excise Tax Exemption Certification

Additional contacts

Westley Bargo, Out-of-state travel reimbursements

Scott Bonifield, Instate Travel Reimbursements

Policy definitions

Accountability: Employees are responsible for accounting for their travel expenses accurately. All staff will ensure travel is conducted in the most efficient and cost effective manner.

Agency: Any department, board, commission, or other organizational unit of government that is subject to these travel regulations.

Commercial Transportation: Any entity that offers transportation of people or goods to the public for pay.

Commuting Miles: The miles traveled on a regular (usually daily) basis from an employee's residence to the location most frequently associated with work performed outside of that residence (generally headquarters). This should be a standard distance that does not change from one reimbursement request to the next.

County or Municipal Excise Tax: The local taxes charged by hotel/motels for lodging, also referred to as "hotel/motel" or "occupancy" tax. This tax is separate from the state sales tax.

Employee Travel Expense Statement: The accounting document used as the basis to reimburse a state employee for travel expenses incurred while on official business.

Federal Per Diem Rate: The maximum allowance for expenses for federal employees who are on travel status. The available rates only include locations within the continental United States. Separate per diem limits have been established for non-contiguous U.S. and foreign travel.

Guest Travelers: Travelers who are not employed by the State of Georgia.

High Cost Area: Areas within Georgia within which meal expenses may be reimbursed at a higher amount than the limits that otherwise apply to travel within Georgia. High cost areas within Georgia are limited to the following counties: Chatham, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, DeKalb, Fayette, Fulton, Glynn, Gwinnett, and Richmond counties.

Lodging: A hotel, motel, inn, apartment, or similar entity that furnishes lodging to the public for pay.

Miscellaneous Travel Expense: A necessary and reasonable expense incurred by a state employee while traveling on official business. This term does not apply to meals, lodging, mileage, or transportation costs.

Government Owned Vehicles: A state agency owned vehicle.

Official Station: The physical work location an employee is permanently assigned.

Out-of-State Travel: When an employee travels from a point of origin within Georgia to a point of destination within another state and returns. Out-of-state travel rates are used for all travel with a destination outside the state of Georgia.

Personal Motor Vehicle: A motor vehicle that is owned or leased for personal use by an employee. Personal motor vehicles include automobiles, aircraft, and motorcycles.

Per Diem Allowance: Refers to the maximum food allowance for which employees can be reimbursed per day. The amount is not a reimbursement of actual expenses incurred. Receipts are not required for meal per diem amounts.

Point of Departure: The beginning location used to calculate state-use miles traveled in a personal motor vehicle.

State Fund Sources: All revenue types for a State agency.

Travel Exception: Written authorization for travel reimbursement of expenses generally not allowed under the Statewide Travel Regulations.

Travel Expenses: Meal, lodging, mileage, transportation, parking, and miscellaneous.

Travel Status: An individual is on travel status from the time they start from and return to their official (primary) work station. The primary work station may be a physical location (i.e. building) for some employees and it may be a district or geographic location for others.

Responsibilities

Responsible University Senior Administrator: Vice President for Finance & Administration

Responsible University Administrator: Associate Vice President for Finance Division

Policy Owner: Accounts Payable

Policy Contact: Jennifer Dunlap

Phone Number: (706) 542-2786

Traveler Responsibilities: Travelers are expected to exercise good stewardship of funds when traveling on official business. Any expenditure disallowed by UGA is the responsibility of the employee. Travelers must always obtain receipts except when meal per diem travel allowances are claimed. Not all receipts must be submitted with a travel expense report, but may be requested for verification or audit. Travel expense reports may be selected for audit at any time and all required receipts must be retained by the traveler for three years after the travel date if not attached to the travel expense report.

Supervisor/Approver Responsibilities: By approving travel expenses, the approver is attesting that he/she has thoroughly reviewed each transaction and the supporting documentation, and has verified that all transactions are allowable expenses. The approver is the “check” in the expense reporting process to identify potential or actual errors in expense reporting. The approver role should be assigned to an individual who can judge the business appropriateness of each expenditure. The approver must verify that the correct funding sources are charged, in keeping with proper fiscal stewardship. Under no circumstances should an individual approve his/her own expense submission.

Record Retention

For expenditures processed with grant funding, all documentation should be retained for the life of the grant plus seven (7) years.

Documentation of expenses charged to a University Purchasing card may include applications, master monthly billing statements, individual card holders’ statements, billing summaries, printouts including vendor analysis by code, number of charges and stores, use summaries and related correspondence. Documentation must be retained for seven (7) years.

For all other expenditure types, records may include but are not limited to: check requests, purchase orders, invoices, journal vouchers, departmental requisitions, justifications of purchases, payment authorizations, reports of receipt of goods or services, and related documentation and correspondence. Retention is five (5) years. Reference O.C.G.A. 11-2-725.

Policy Appendices

[Travel Website](#)

[Electronic Check Request and Travel Authorization System](#)

[Enterprise Cost Comparison Tool](#)

FAQs

Where can I get a copy of the hotel/motel excise tax exemption certificate?

The hotel/motel excise tax exemption certificate can be located at http://www.busfin.uga.edu/forms/excise_exempt.pdf.

How do I know which taxes should be charged with my lodging expense?

Section 48-13-51 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated states that Georgia state officials or employees traveling on official business should not be charged **county or municipal excise tax** ("hotel/motel" or "occupancy" tax) on lodging. This optional excise tax is normally 3% but can be as much as 6% in some locations. University employees requesting an exemption of county or municipal excise tax should provide a written notification form to the Georgia hotel or motel operator involved. This form is for their tax records to document the exemption. Employees are required to pay any state/local sales and use taxes.

Employees are required to submit a copy of the hotel/motel tax-exemption form when they register at a hotel/motel. This form is located online at:

http://www.busfin.uga.edu/forms/excise_exempt.pdf.

This exemption does not apply to employees staying at an out-of-state hotel/motel. Employees should be able to provide proper identification to document their employment as a state or local government employee. If the hotel refuses to accept the form at check-in, the employee should attempt to resolve the issue with hotel management before checking out at the end of their stay. If the matter is not resolved by check out, the employee should pay the tax, and the employee should explain the payment of the tax as an unusual expense on their travel statement.

The University of Georgia is authorized to reimburse the employee for the hotel/motel tax if the employee provides the following information: employee name, date(s) of lodging, name, address, phone number of hotel, and documentation from the hotel/motel of their refusal to omit the excise tax. The University will forward this information to the State Accounting Office.

If lodging is direct-billed to the University of Georgia the hotel/motel should not collect any taxes associated with the lodging expenses.

What is the reimbursable mileage rate?

If a personal motor vehicle is the most advantageous form of travel:

\$0.56 per mile for travel on or after January 1, 2014

\$0.565 per mile for travel January 1, 2013 - December 31, 2013

\$0.555 per mile for travel April 17, 2012-December 31, 2012

\$0.51 per mile for travel January 1, 2011-April 16, 2012

\$0.50 per mile for travel January 1, 2010-December 31, 2010

\$0.55 per mile for travel January 1, 2009-December 31, 2009

How can I determine my business miles traveled?

Employees may be reimbursed for the mileage incurred from the point of departure to the travel destination. If an employee departs from headquarters, mileage is calculated from headquarters to the destination point. If an employee departs from their residence, mileage is calculated from the residence to the destination point, **with a reduction** for normal one-way commuting miles. For the return trip, if an employee returns to the headquarters, mileage is calculated based on the distance to headquarters. If an employee returns to his/her residence, mileage is calculated based on the distance to the residence, **with a reduction** for normal one-way commuting miles.

Here are a few examples:

- I. An employee's residence is in Duluth but he/she works in Atlanta. The employee's normal commute mileage is 60 miles roundtrip. The employee leaves in the morning from his/her residence to attend a meeting in Lawrenceville and returns home to Duluth. The total distance travelled is 40 miles roundtrip. The employee's business miles (40) are less than the normal round trip miles (60) so there is no reimbursement.
- II. Employee's normal commute is 30 miles one way. The employee traveled from home to his/her primary work station. That afternoon he/she traveled to a temporary work station in Cartersville which is 44 miles from the employee's primary work station. The employee returned home from the temporary work station which was a distance of 54 miles. The employee's business miles traveled are 68 miles (98 actual miles less 30 miles normal one way commute).
- III. Employee's normal commute is 15 miles one way. Employee travels from home past his/her primary work station on the way to a temporary work station for a total of 24 miles. At the end of the day, the employee drives home. The employee's business miles traveled are 18 miles (48 actual miles minus 30 round trip commuting miles.)
- IV. Employee's normal commute mileage is 15 miles one way. Employee leaves from home on Saturday and drives to his/her primary work station outside of his/her normal work schedule and returns to his/her residence at the close of the day. The employee's total business mileage is 30 miles. If travel occurs on a weekend or holiday outside of the normal work schedule, mileage is calculated from the point of departure with no deduction for normal commuting miles.
- V. An employee's residence is in Lilburn but he/she works at the Athens UGA campus. The employee's normal commute mileage is 49 miles. The employee leaves in the morning on a Tuesday from his/her residence to go to a conference in Atlanta. The conference location is 15 miles from his/her house. The total distance traveled is 30 miles roundtrip. The employee's business miles (30) are less than the normal round trip miles (98) so there is no reimbursement.

Exceptions:

- Employee departs on weekend or holiday-business miles do not have to be deducted.
- If an employee does not regularly travel to an office (headquarters) outside of his/her residence (i.e. residence is headquarters), the requirement to deduct normal commuting miles does not apply. Note: This exception does not apply to those operating under the States telework policy.

Employees may also be reimbursed for business miles traveled as follows:

- Miles traveled to pick up additional passengers
- Miles traveled to obtain for meals for which employee is eligible for reimbursement
- Miles traveled to multiple work sites

How can I have my business related airfare direct billed to UGA?

To have airfare direct billed to UGA, you must complete a travel authorization form and submit it to the UGA Accounts Payable Travel & Encumbrance office. The travel authority should be approved by the appropriate individuals within your department prior to submitting to Travel & Encumbrances. The authorized travel agency that you plan to use should be listed on the travel authority. For a complete list of approved travel agencies, please visit the UGA Travel Website at

www.busfin.uga.edu/accounts_payable/authorized_agencies.html

Travel authority copies should not be forwarded to any travel agency prior to approval from the Accounts Payable Travel & Encumbrance office. Once a travel authority has been approved, the appropriate travel agency will be able to check the status on our Travel Authority Status website and bill the ticket. **No tickets should be billed until the travel authority is approved by the Travel and Encumbrances section of Accounts Payable.**

Can airfare be submitted for reimbursement earlier than other expenses?

If the person being reimbursed is a UGA employee, then yes, we can reimburse their airfare before the remainder of their expenses. A check request, referencing the applicable travel authorization number, should be submitted with proof of payment for the purchase of the airline ticket. If the person being reimbursed is not a UGA employee, airfare cannot be reimbursed in advance.

As an employee of UGA, can I accept indemnification offered by an airline?

Occasions may arise when airlines overbook, change, delay or cancel flights, thereby imposing travel inconveniences on their passengers. In these instances, airlines often offer the impacted passengers indemnification for these inconveniences. Examples of indemnification that may be offered by an airline include vouchers for meals or lodging, upgrades to non-coach travel, and credits toward future flight costs. State employees are authorized to accept such indemnification if the travel inconvenience was imposed by the airline and there is no additional cost to the state.

Can I use my frequent flier miles to upgrade to non-coach travel?

State officials or employees may, at any time, use personal frequent flyer miles or similar programs to upgrade to non-coach travel. In addition, nothing in this policy shall preclude a state official or employee from personally paying for an upgrade to non-coach travel.

What happens if I cancel my flight reservations?

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 be obligated to pay the penalties and charges.

Where can I find a list of the authorized travel agencies?

A complete list of authorized travel agencies can be found at

http://www.busfin.uga.edu/accounts_payable/travel.html

Is there a statewide contract for airfare?

On February 21, 2008, the Georgia Department of Administrative Services, State Purchasing Division (SPD) announced that the continuation of the City-Pair statewide contract would no longer be in the best interest of the state. The Statewide contract with AirTran expired on February 29, 2008 and was not renewed.

Currently, Delta is offering discounted rates to State travelers; however, these discounted rates are only accessible by creating travel reservations through Concur. The Concur system can be accessed at <http://travel.uga.edu>.

Does the University have a contract with a car rental agency?

For in-state automotive rentals, the contract is with co-suppliers, Enterprise Rent-A-Car and Hertz Rental. Either provider can be utilized for travel that originates in Georgia as long as it is not a rental that originates at an airport. If the rental is at Hartsfield-Jackson airport, Hertz must be used. Hertz is the official airport rental provider and should be used for any airport reservations domestically and internationally (when available.) For information to assist with the reservation process, please visit the UGA travel website at:

http://www.busfin.uga.edu/accounts_payable/rental_cars.html

Which expenses require original receipts to be included with the travel reimbursement?

Receipts are required with the travel expense report for the following expenses regardless of dollar amount:

- Airfare fares
- Hotel expenses
- Rental car expenses
- Breakfast, luncheon, or dinner meetings unless claiming a per diem
- Registration fees
- Visa/Passport fees

No expense will be approved if a required receipt is missing.

Receipts are not required for the following expenses if individual amounts are less than \$25:

- Gasoline purchased for rental vehicles
- Parking
- Tollway
- Mass Transit
- Taxi
- Airport vans

What information do I need to include when I file my travel reimbursement?

Travel reimbursement requests should be submitted via the Electronic Check Request System. Approved travel expense statements and applicable receipts as outlined in this policy should be attached. For out-of-state travel reimbursements, the travel authorization number should be referenced.

Can Visa/Passport fees be reimbursed?

When travel required by an employer necessitates the use of a passport and/or visa, and the employee does not currently possess such a valid document, the related passport/visa fee is eligible for reimbursement when documented by a receipt. When filing for reimbursement, the traveler should reference a travel authorization number for the trip.

What expenses are not allowed for reimbursement?

The following expenses are not reimbursable unless specific legal authority has been established:

- Airline, car, and card membership dues and club fees; travel upgrade fees (air, rail, car)
- Alcoholic beverages
- Childcare costs
- Clothing and toiletry items
- Commuting between home and workplace
- Country club dues
- Expenses related to vacation or personal days taken before, during or after a business trip
- Haircuts and personal grooming
- Loss Damage Insurance when State agency is available and another auto agency is utilized

- Loss or theft of petty cash money or airline tickets
- Laundry (allowable when overnight travel exceeds seven (7) consecutive days)
- Loss or theft of personal funds or property
- Lost baggage
- Luggage or briefcases
- Medical expenses while traveling
- Min-bar charges
- Movies
- No-show/Cancellation fees or fees related to hotel late check-out (unless business or weather related)
- Personal reading materials (magazines, newspapers, etc.)
- Personal vehicle maintenance
- Personal entertainment
- Personal pet care
- Recreational expenses
- Saunas, massages
- Shoe shines
- Souvenirs or personal gifts
- Traffic citations (moving violations), parking tickets, court fees and other fines
- Travel accident insurance premiums
- Valet services for parking, when self-parking options are available
- Theater
- Entertainment
- Bank charges for domestic ATM withdrawals

What are incidental expenses?

Incidental expenses are described as: A. fees and tips given to porters, baggage carriers, hotel staff, and staff on ships.

How can I find the GSA federal per diem rates?

The federal per diem rates for locations within the continental US are available at the following address:

<http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem>

The breakdown by meal for federal per diem amounts may be found at the following address:

<http://www.gsa.gov/mie>

When traveling within Georgia, what is the daily per diem rate for meals?

The standard meal per diem for travel within Georgia is \$28 a day (\$36 for high cost areas). Travelers on travel status for 12 hours or more with no overnight lodging are eligible for 100% of the per diem amount.

What are the Georgia high cost areas?

- Chatham
- Cobb
- DeKalb
- Fulton

- Glynn
- Richmond

Where can I find the per diem rates for international travel?

The federal per diem rates for foreign travel can be located at:

http://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=184&menu_id=78

How can I convert my expenses for foreign travel?

When a traveler incurs expenses in a foreign currency each expense should be converted to United States Dollars (USD). The following methods are acceptable:

- I. Credit card statement: If the expenses are charged, the credit card company will convert them to USD
- II. Conversion of charges via the internet for dates of travel. An acceptable site is: Oanda Converter. This site allows for built in exchange fees and specific dates.

[< Employee Travel: Effective January 1, 2015 - Present](#) | [Non-Employee Travel >](#)

Policy Dates

Effective Date:

Date Last Updated: 01/05/2018

Date of Last Review:

Date of Approval:

Previous Version of Policy: