

AYSPS Travel Policy

General

- The governing document for the university and AYSPPS travel requirements is the State of Georgia Statewide Travel Policy (STP) last updated as of July 1, 2013. A copy of the travel regulation can be accessed through: [State Travel Policy | State Accounting Office](#). Look for “Statewide Travel Policy”. Or, you can access the STP at the GSU Finance and Accounting Services website: [Finance Toolkit - Travel & Food - State of Georgia Travel Regulations Updated 7/1/13](#).
- All business managers, Spectrum initiators and approvers, and other personnel responsible for processing and being reimbursed for travel related expenses should read and become thoroughly familiar with the provisions of the Statewide Travel Regulations.
- This policy is only meant to highlight key provisions contained in the travel regulations and not to replace them.

Applicability

- The Statewide Travel Policies and Procedures apply to all university/AYSPS employees and all GSU fund sources to include Fund Code 10XXX, 15000, and 20XXX activities to include residual funds and chair project accounts.
- The Statewide Travel Policies and Procedures does not apply to the GSU Foundation which has issued its own guidelines in the document “Georgia State University Foundation, Inc Expenditure Policy amended November 2006” which can be found at this website: [GSU Foundation Expenditure Policy](#).

Approval Process

- All employees must have prior authorization before commencing travel by their supervisor and the budget authority of the department or center. Prior approval and budget authority is achieved by inputting the estimated travel expense into Panther Mart as a Travel Authorization transaction where it will enter workflow and be approved by the department/center’s first approver and the College Financial Officer and then proceed to the Office of Disbursements. Employees cannot be reimbursed for travel related expenses without being in an approved travel status. It is inappropriate to reimburse employee travel expenses using the Payment Request form.
- After returning from travel, employees should promptly settle their travel expenses by completing a Travel Expense Statement (TES) form within 10 business days. The TES form is available at the university Finance and Accounting Services website: <http://tools.finance.gsu.edu/> in Forms. When

completing the TES form, it is important that travelers specify the “purpose of the trip” in the space provided on the form.

- Department chairs and center directors will designate in writing the Panther Mart and Travel Expense Statement approval and budget authorities within their own areas. Under no circumstance, however, should an employee approve their own or their supervisors Travel Expense Statement.
- Department chair, center director, and the Associate Dean Travel Expense Statements will be approved by the College Financial Officer in the Dean’s Office. The Dean’s travel expenses will be approved by the Provost Office.
- Please note that 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.

Travel Entitlements

- Lodging
 - Employees must travel at least 50 miles from both primary work site and residence to qualify for lodging reimbursement.
 - Employees will be reimbursed for the actual lodging expense, provided the expenses are reasonable. The applicable federal lodging rates should only be used as a guide in determining reasonableness. Employees are responsible, however, for accomplishing the following steps to insure lodging costs are held to a minimum:
 - Whenever practical, make reservations in advance,
 - Utilize minimum rate accommodations,
 - Avoid the use of deluxe hotels, and
 - Obtain government rates, whenever possible.
 - Employees who are required to register and stay at a hotel which is holding a scheduled meeting or seminar may incur lodging expenses that exceed reasonable rates. Likewise, if a non-State funding agent provides for lodging allowances that exceed reasonable rates, the higher rates are acceptable.
 - It is required, however, that travelers using deluxe or unreasonably expensive hotels annotate their Travel Expense Statements with an explanation why more reasonable accommodations were unavoidable.
 - Employees traveling within the State of Georgia are exempt from county or municipal excise taxes for lodging. To receive exemption, complete the Hotel Tax Exempt form at the university Finance and Accounting Services-Forms website: <http://tools.finance.gsu.edu/> and present the form when checking into the hotel.

- Meals
 - Employees traveling overnight are generally authorized reimbursement for eligible meals at the prevailing per diem rate not to exceed the maximum rates established on the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) website, [Meal Allowance Schedule](#) other than the day of departure and the day of return.
 - Travelers are eligible for 75% of the total per diem rate on the first and last day of travel.
 - Note that the STP meal reimbursement rates within the State of Georgia are different than the amount allowed by federal schedules. Employees traveling outside of the State of Georgia may receive per diem up to the federal per diem rate at your location. If any meal is included as a part of the cost of conference registration, such meals should not be considered eligible for per diem.
 - Employees can also be reimbursed for meals that are not associated with overnight travel within strict guidelines. Generally, such situations require the employee to travel to a scheduled meeting or training session more than 50 miles from their home AND office and are away for 13 hours may receive per diem even though there is no overnight lodging.
 - Employees are not authorized reimbursement for meals purchased during lunch or dinner meetings in which the meal and meeting are one and the same.
 - Contracted meals with vendors for employee and non-employee conferences and meetings are only permitted if specifically authorized by the funding agent.
 - Federal per diem rates are available at: <http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem>
 - Breakdown by meal rate for federal per diem is available at: <http://www.gsa.gov/mic>
 - Foreign per diem rates are available at: <http://www.state.gov>
 - Click “Travel” and “Foreign PD rates”
- Transportation
 - The STP requires employees to use the most cost-effective coach fares when using commercial air travel. Costs exceeding coach airfares (first class and business class) will not be reimbursed to the traveler unless a non-State funding agent allows reimbursement for higher airfares. When practical, employees should check the rates available on the statewide contract for lower costs.

- Employees can be reimbursed at the current rate of \$0.565 per mile as of January 1, 2013 for using their personal vehicle in the conduct of official travel business. When traveling for business purposes away from headquarters a mileage reduction for an employee's normal commute is required before mileage can be determined for reimbursement. [Mileage Reimbursement Rates Policy](#)
- Other Entitlements
 - Employees may be reimbursed for official telephone, taxi, baggage handling, general supply, and duplicating services incurred in the performance of work related projects while in a travel status. Such expenses must be documented on the Travel Expense Statement. Registration reimbursements should be processed using the Payment Request form charging the expense to account code 727101 instead of 640100. Laundry services are reimbursable for travelers that have more than seven consecutive overnight lodging days for business travel.
 - The following expenses are not reimbursable:
 - Tipping for hotel concierge or maid service
 - Valet services for parking
 - Entertainment or alcoholic beverages
 - Employees can be reimbursed for local parking and mileage expenses when required to attend official meetings not within walking distance of the office. To be reimbursed, the employee must be in a travel status but can accumulate these expenses on a monthly basis before submitting a Travel Expense Statement.
- Documentation
 - Documentation in the form of receipts or invoices is required for lodging, airfare, and rented vehicle. Receipts for parking, taxi, highway tolls are recommended. However, if receipts for these miscellaneous expenses are not available, employees are required to include an explanation of the expense on the travel expense statement. In any case of an expense \$25 or greater, a receipt is required.
 - Receipts for meals are not required. However, the actual cost, date, location of each meal consumed should be itemized on the Travel Expense Statement. Mileage reimbursement for the use of a personal vehicle should show the actual odometer reading from the point of departure to the destination.
- Additional Notes
 - Reconciliation of Prior Travel Estimate and Actual Expenses. The Office of Disbursements will automatically reconcile and adjust any differences between the initial estimated travel expense and the actual expenses

recorded on the Travel Expense Statement. Each department and center should validate actual recorded travel expenses during their monthly expenditure reviews.

- Travelers should submit all expenses for reimbursement and reconciliation within 10 days of the completion of the event or trip but **no later than 45 calendar days**. If more than 90 days has passed, a memo explaining reasons for delay in submission is required.
- After reading the STP, if you have additional questions, please refer them to the College Financial Officer (3-0006) or the university Travel administrator in the Office of Disbursements (3-3054).

Date: August 16, 2013