

**SRSU Policy: Travel Regulations**

**SRSU Policy ID: APM 3.01**

**Policy Reviewed by: Director of Accounting Services**

**Approval Authority: Vice President for Finance and Operations**

**Approval Date: February 27, 2018**

**Next Review Date: February 27, 2023**

Sul Ross State University recognizes the value of professional meetings and conferences for faculty and staff, the necessity for faculty to travel to deliver instruction, and the educational benefits provided for students through a variety of travel including but not limited to field trips, performing tours, and intercollegiate athletic trips. Travel for these purposes is encouraged within the framework of available funds. Most departments have travel budgets to accommodate professional and educational travel.

All travel by faculty and staff, as well as all travel by University sponsored groups on official business, must be approved in advance by their supervisors and division Vice President. All out of state or out of country travel must also be approved in advance by the President.

In planning and approving travel requests, consideration must not only be given to the resources of the University, but to adequate arrangements for handling those duties which will need to be performed during the absence of the faculty or staff member; i.e., conduct of classes, etc.

All SRSU travelers on official State Business are required to use the travel contracts established by the General Services Commission unless an approved exception applies.

A list of state contracts and approved exceptions can be found at <http://www.window.state.tx.us/procurement/prog/stmp/>.

**Lodging**

SRSU travelers may be reimbursed for lodging expenses incurred on a day that the traveler conducts University business outside of his or her headquarters. Travelers are expected to choose reasonably priced lodging with a single occupancy rate. Reservations should be made through one of the State Travel Management hotel contracts, unless the traveler meets one of the state contract exceptions. A list of participating hotels that offer state rates can be found at [http://portal.cpa.state.tx.us/hotel/hotel\\_directory/map.cfm?fy=2012](http://portal.cpa.state.tx.us/hotel/hotel_directory/map.cfm?fy=2012)

Travelers may opt to have the hotel direct bill the University by using the purchase order process.

**Criteria for Reimbursement of Lodging Expenses**

- Must be a commercial lodging establishment
- Must be outside of designated headquarters and for an overnight stay
- Must be only for the traveler's own actual lodging expense (i.e. each traveler

must pay his/her own expense unless blanket reservation for multiple travelers are paid using a purchase order, travel agent etc.)

- Receipts must be legible and original with the logo and name of the commercial lodging establishment, the name of the traveler, the single room rate, and daily and itemized charges. Receipts must still be obtained as evidence of actual expenses even if the traveler is not paying out-of-pocket (i.e. a purchase order, travel agent, etc. was used). The traveler must sign and certify all receipts as being original and issued by the indicated hotel.
- Maximum rates will be based on the location of the lodging establishment, not the duty point

### **Maximum Reimbursement Rates**

Travelers will be reimbursed for actual hotel expenses not to exceed U. S. General Services Administration (GSA) allowable rates for in-state and out-of-state travel. Specific GSA maximum lodging rates are assigned to designated primary destinations within each state.

Rates may vary between GSA primary destinations and even within the same primary destination based on seasonal adjustments. For cities and counties not listed as primary destinations, the standard state rate maximum lodging reimbursement rate will be the maximum rate. U.S.

GSA rates are updated annually on October 1<sup>st</sup>. A link to the GSA website can be found on the SRSU Accounting Services' Web site at <http://www.sulross.edu/page/911/accounting-services>.

For foreign travel, including Mexico and Canada, travelers will be reimbursed for actual lodging expenses not to exceed the U.S. Department of State (DOS) allowable rates. The DOS website can be found at <http://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per diem.asp>.

For areas not listed, refer to the country's "Other" per diem rate. U.S. DOS rates are updated frequently.

Account managers may apply more conservative allowable lodging rates according to available budgets or internal department rules. Account managers must notify the traveler of the department's more conservative reimbursement rates upon approval if time, and prior to departure on state business.

### **Excess Lodging**

Travelers may be reimbursed for lodging in excess of the maximum GSA reimbursement allowable rate with pre-approval from the appropriate Vice President and President. Forms to request higher lodging rates may be found on the SRSU Accounting Services' website.

### **Direct Billing**

Lodging expenses may be direct billed from the hotel to the University through the use of a purchase order. Lodging maximum rates are still in effect.

## **Hotel Occupancy Taxes**

State employees are exempt from the State of Texas Hotel Occupancy Taxes when traveling on official state business and must present the applicable tax exemption form to the lodging establishment at check-in. Texas State Hotel Occupancy Taxes inadvertently paid by the state employee are not reimbursable. All other required taxes (county, city, municipal, out-of-state) or fees are reimbursable.

## **Exceptions**

- Lodging expenses incurred the night before official business begins and the night after official business ends may be reimbursed if the expenses are necessary to qualify for discount airfare or if travel to or from duty point reasonably requires more than one day.
- Cancellation charges or “no show” fees may be reimbursable if the charges are incurred for an official business reason, natural disaster, illness or personal emergency. A justification statement approved in writing by the account manager is required with the travel reimbursement form.
- Shared lodging between travelers is reimbursable to one of the travelers if it does not exceed the maximum reimbursement rate. If the room rate exceeds the maximum reimbursement rate, either excess lodging approval is required for one traveler to be reimbursed, or the cost must be split between the two or more travelers and individual requests for reimbursements must be submitted. Individual certified and signed receipts showing the travelers’ pro-rate of the split costs will be required for each reimbursement.
- For a faculty or staff sponsor traveling with a student group, refer to Student Group Travel Procedures for policies regarding group travel reimbursement.

## **Meals & Incidental Expenses**

### **Meals:**

Travelers will be reimbursed for actual meal expenses incurred not to exceed the U.S. GSA maximum allowable rates for primary destinations listed. For in-state travel, locations not listed have a rate not to exceed the State of Texas maximum. For out-of-state travel, the maximum rate for locations not listed is the standard U.S. GSA M&IE per diem.

For foreign travel, travelers will be reimbursed for actual expenses not to exceed the U.S. DOS allowable rates.

## **Criteria for Reimbursement**

- Must have an overnight stay outside of designated headquarters
- Requires receipts, travelers must request reimbursement for no more than their actual expenses.

### **Reducing meal reimbursement rate to increase lodging rate**

A state employee may claim less than the maximum meal reimbursement allowable rate for a duty point and use the amount of the reduction to increase the maximum lodging reimbursement rate for the duty point. This is allowable for in-state and out-of-state travel.

### **Gratuities**

Tips or gratuities paid in conjunction with meal expenses are generally not reimbursable, however, please see page 16 of this policy for allowable reimbursement of gratuities. A “mandatory” service charge may only be reimbursed if the service charge is imposed by an establishment and cannot be refused by the customer.

<https://fmx.cpa.state.tx.us/fmx/travel/texttravel/meallodg/meals/prohibited.php>

### **Alcoholic beverages**

A state agency may not reimburse a state employee for the purchase of an alcoholic beverage unless the employee is a peace officer who purchased the beverage as evidence for an administrative or criminal case.

### **Personal Incidental Expenses**

Business incidental expenses, such as parking and tolls, are reimbursable provided original signed and certified receipts are included with the reimbursement voucher.

### **Exceptions**

For a faculty or staff sponsor traveling with a student group, refer to Student Group Travel Procedures for policies regarding group travel reimbursement.

### **Mileage for Use of Personal Vehicle**

The current mileage rate reimbursed by the University is found on the SRSU Accounting Services’ website and travelers should be aware this rate may not be the same as the State of Texas maximum rate. The current rate applies to any mileage reimbursement request regardless of funding source.

Calculate your mileage using the University Mapping Service or with an odometer reading. The reimbursement rate is directly tied to the dates of travel.

Faculty traveling to teach a class in another city must record the time of departure and the time arrived back to duty point on their reimbursement voucher.

## **Basic Information**

- The mileage rate is intended to account for all actual automobile expenses such as fuel and lubrication, towing charges, repairs, replacements, tires, depreciation, insurance, etc. These and other automobile expenses will not be reimbursed when a personally owned vehicle is used.
- Parking and toll expenses will be reimbursed when properly documented on the travel reimbursement. Receipts are the accepted primary form of documentation.
- When two or more persons on University business share a personally owned vehicle, only the traveler providing the vehicle may claim a reimbursement for mileage.
- Persons traveling to the same destination on approximately the same dates to conduct similar business should make arrangements to travel together in one vehicle. Even if arrangements to travel together in one vehicle cannot be made, normally only one person for each four travelers traveling to the same destination on the same dates can accrue automobile expenses unless prior approval is received from the Vice President for Finance and Operations.
- Expenses for travel between the traveler's residence and headquarters (commuting expense) are not reimbursable.

## **Transportation Allowance Out-of-State Travel**

If a person is traveling in his/her personal vehicle, mileage should be first calculated using the University Mapping Service. The above mileage figure must be compared to the amount of the next lowest available airline rate below first class transportation, plus the actual meals and other expenses necessary to complete such a flight, if the travel is to points served by commercial airlines. The State will allow the employee to claim whichever of the two figures is lower.

In complying with this regulation, the following guidelines are to be used to estimate the allowance due to out-of-state travelers using their personal vehicles while on a University business related trip.

- (1) Meal reimbursement shall be determined by the use of an airline schedule which would have sufficed for the performance of the official business
- (2) Expenses of transportation to airfield from points where commercial air transportation is not available shall be in addition to the cost of the next lowest airline fare below first class; i.e., from Alpine to Midland/Odessa air terminal. For RCG employees, i.e. from Del Rio, Eagle Pass, Uvalde and Castroville to San Antonio terminal.
- (3) Because of the distance to the nearest airfield from Alpine, employees of Sul Ross State University-Alpine normally find regular mileage charges the lower of the two rates, except in extremely long trips. If an employee finds that the "airfare

plus per diem and mileage to airport” is lower, contact the Accounting Services’ Office for instructions to include special notations on the travel form. This includes RGC employees as well traveling to San Antonio airport.

## **Rental Cars**

The rental car company(s) under a contract with the State must be used unless one of the following exceptions applies:

- Part of Group - travel is undertaken as part of a group for which reservations must be made through a specified source to obtain a specified rate of service.
- Contractor not time efficient - contract travel vendor cannot provide services in time period required to accomplish the purpose of the travel.
- Contractor not available - a contract travel vendor’s services are not available in a location that will reasonably allow the business requirements of the state traveler to be fulfilled.
- Contractor sold out - a contract vendor is unable to provide the required services because it is sold out or does not offer services in the city being visited. (This exception also applies if the contractor does not have the type of service that the state traveler requires, such as a specific type of vehicle.)
- Non-contract rental car lower total cost - alternative rental car arrangements can be made at a lower total cost than the contract rental car companies. For rental cars, total costs include the base rate, loss/damage waiver protection, mileage charge, surcharges and cost for comparable liability insurance protection.
- Disabled traveler/Transporting person in Custody/Medical - travel is undertaken by persons with disabilities; by persons transporting prisoners or other persons in the custody of the State; or in a medical emergency. (This exception would cover, among other things, the need to use a non-contract rental car vendor to acquire needed hand controls.)
- Security/ Safety risk - use of contract travel vendors is perceived by the state traveler to present a security, safety, or health risk to the state traveler. This would cover, for example:

- A. The traveler’s use of a non-contract rental car if they perceive the contract vendor to be in an unsafe neighborhood or have an undesirable clientele.
- B. The use of a non-contract vendor if a nonsmoking rental vehicle is required and not available or not available from the contract vendor.
- C. Total costs include the base rate, loss/damage waiver protection, mileage charge, applicable taxes, surcharges, and cost for comparable liability insurance protection.

The current State rental car contracts are with Avis and Enterprise. The Avis card number is F999-756. The Enterprise number is TX-756. Sul Ross State University cards may be obtained from the Accounting Services’ Office in Alpine or from the Business Services Department for RGC. When making your rental car reservations, the State of Texas contracted rate must be

asked for and the appropriate number must be used. Please note that the State Contracted Rates include provisions for loss/damage waiver protection. There should be no extra charge for this protection if one of the contracted agencies is used.

## **Airfare**

The University prefers the following two methods be used for the purchase of airline tickets for official business:

- The Central Billed Airfare (CBA) account through the State travel agent.
- The use of a SRSU State issued travel card.

Airline tickets purchased by other methods will not be reimbursed unless approved in advance by the Director of Accounting Services..

The Central Billed Airfare (CBA) account is available to purchase airfare for SRSU employees traveling on official state business. When the State has an airline contract fare between two city pairs, the airline that has the contract must be given preference when making reservations to travel between those cities. A list of contract State of Texas airlines and applicable city pairs can be found at <http://www.window.state.tx.us/procurement/prog/stmp/stmp-airline-contract/>, the State Travel Management Program website. Additionally, travel agents can locate the contract fare and airline by the fare basis code of “YCATX” or “QCATX.”

The contracted airline’s State of Texas contract fare must be used unless the airline has a lower fare available to the general public that will fit the traveler’s requirements. Please be aware that non-state contract fares may have penalties or fees not applicable to state contracts. When using a travel agency, airline tickets must be purchased using the state agency central billing account (CBA). The travel agency will require a copy of the approved (at least at the department level) “Application for Travel on Official State Business,” before the ticket is purchased and released to the individual.

A faxed copy of the approved application will be acceptable. Otherwise, the employee will be required to pay out of pocket and then seek reimbursement.

Matched Fares - Matched “State of Texas” fares on other airlines may not be used at the discretion of the traveler. If there is no contract between the city pairs to be traveled, the lowest airfare that fits the traveler’s business requirement must be used.

## **Cancellations**

If an employee purchases a non-refundable airline ticket outside the contract travel agency and thus uses a personal credit card, the employee will NOT be reimbursed for cancellations that are not refunded.

If the employee goes through the state travel agency, reimbursement will depend on the type of ticket purchased (refundable and/or non-refundable). If the employee purchases a refundable ticket through the travel agency with a state travel credit card, the travel agency

will give the University a credit and the employee has one year to use the credit towards another airline ticket. Applicable travel agency handling fee is non-refundable.

### **University Vehicles**

The University maintains a small fleet of vehicles for use by employees in conducting official State business. The General Appropriations Act specifically states that “no employee of any State Agency shall use any State-owned automobile except on official business of the State, and such employees are expressly prohibited from using such automobile in connection with any political campaign or any personal or recreational activity.” Any person who drives a University vehicle weighing one ton or less (station wagon or minibus) carrying two or more passengers must have a Class “C” license. Any employee desiring to drive a University vehicle must first be cleared and approved by the Physical Plant.

### **Unauthorized Passengers**

All trips involving University vehicles are for official state business only. Spouses, children or friends may generally not travel in University vehicles unless otherwise approved by the University President on a case by case basis.

### **Liability Insurance**

The University carries automobile liability insurance on University vehicle drivers and passengers. Student employees may only drive University vehicles if accompanied by a full-time faculty or staff member.

An exception to this rule may be made for graduate teaching or research assistants, provided they are at least 21 years of age and have the permission of the Department Chair to drive a University vehicle unaccompanied by a full-time faculty or staff member. Students who are not employed by the University are not insured under the policy and are not authorized to drive University-owned vehicles.

Employees driving University-owned vehicles should be familiar with information concerning employee liability under the Texas Civil Practice and Remedies Code.

### **Vehicle Request**

Approval for an employee to use a University vehicle on official business is handled through the “Request for Use of University Vehicle” form. This form is available on the Physical Plant website at <http://www.sulross.edu/section/2246/physical-plant>). It should be noted that University vehicles are usually booked for student trips at the beginning of each semester and are not always available for other uses. It is suggested that an employee requesting the use of a vehicle for out-of-town travel check with the Physical Plant Office or Business Services Department for RGC, prior to submitting the Application for Travel form in order to know if a



University vehicle will be available or if a private vehicle will be required. For detailed information on vehicle request procedure see Exhibit 1.

### **Travel Reimbursements for Guest Speakers**

The accounting services department requires a copy of the written contract which supports the expenses to be reimbursed for speakers. Expenses may include lodging, meals, and other business incidental expenses not to exceed the State of Texas maximum. A purchase requisition must be completed for speakers that are non-state employees.

If restricted funds are the source of payment, a copy of the signed endowment / excellence agreement indicating that the expenditure is allowed must be submitted to the accounting services department.

### **Travel Agency**

As an institution of higher education, SRSU is exempt from mandatory participation in the State contracted travel agency program. However, for those employees desiring to use one of the contracted agencies, names and locations of the contracted travel agencies can be found on the State Travel Management Program website at <http://www.window.state.tx.us/procurement/prog/stmp/>.

Travel agencies are located in Odessa and El Paso, Texas. Employees making reservations through the travel agency must notify the agency of their desired departure location.

### **Travel Approval Process**

Approval for any employee to travel on official State business is handled through the form “Application for Travel on Official State Business”, and can be found on the SRSU Accounting Services’ website, <http://www.sulross.edu/page/911/accounting-services>.

The form requires an estimate of anticipated expenses for the requested trip as well as an indication that a request for reimbursement of those expenses will be filed. These forms are available on the Accounting Services’ website under “Travel”.

The Travel Approval Process can also be prepared online, by completing the Banner Requisition Entry form – FPAREQN for departments approved by the Accounting Services’ Office.

## **Application for Travel on Official State Business Form**

Preparation of the form should include:

- The date the application is prepared.
- Name of the person requesting leave.
- The destination.
- Departure date from headquarters.
- Date returning to duties.
- Brief explanation of the purpose of the trip. Do not use abbreviations when referring to organizations or organizational meetings. Include a breakdown of reimbursement by category such as Actual Cost of Lodging, Meals, Mileage, other reimbursable expenses, University Vehicle, and Airfare. See Sections above for rates.
- List Fund Number, Organization, Program, Activity (FOPA) to be charged for travel expenses.
- List names of known persons applying for travel to the same destination on approximately the same dates to conduct similar business. Arrangements should be made to travel together in one vehicle. Even if arrangements to travel together in one vehicle cannot be made, normally only one person for each four travelers traveling to the same destination on the same dates can accrue automobile expenses, unless prior approval is received from the Vice President for Finance and Operations whether they are personal expenses to be reimbursed, or expenses that are incurred through the use of a University vehicle charged to a department.

This does not preclude each traveler from receiving other reimbursements.

- If a faculty member will be away from scheduled classes, the class number(s), time of class meeting(s), and the arrangements suggested in his/her absence should be noted on the form.

After the form has been prepared, the person requesting leave should sign the form and submit for approval by the Department Chair/Supervisor, the School Dean/Director, the Accounting Services Office, and the appropriate Vice President. All applications for travel by Vice Presidents must be approved by the President. The approved forms will be turned in to the Business Services Department for processing at RGC.

After the form has been processed, a copy will be returned to the department for the person requesting leave, and the original will be retained by the Accounting Services' Office.

**The application should be submitted at least seven days in advance of departure date.** If time is short, it is suggested that the form be walked through the process.

In the case of out-of-state, out-of-country or Washington DC travel, the application must also be signed by the President.

## **Blanket Travel Applications**

Travelers who will be conducting a series of trips over a known period of time for the same business purpose may complete one “Application for Travel on Official State Business” to cover all the trips. However, all other travel requirements listed in this policy are applied on a trip-by trip basis (i.e. a travel voucher is due 10 business days after each specific trip, travel advances are issued for a specific trip only, reservations to use University vehicles must be done for each trip, etc.).

## **Travel Advances**

The University may approve a cash advance for employees making out-of-town trips which extend overnight. Advances are limited to 70% of the amount of estimated travel expenses, excluding any expenses for University-owned vehicles or airfare charged to the CBA; state the amount of requested advance on the “Application for Travel on Official State Business.”

Employees must meet the following criteria in order to qualify for a Travel Advance.

- Must be a full time or part time employee.
- Must not have a travel advance balance due.
- Must complete the State of Texas Travel Voucher within 10 working days after the trip.
- The employee must sign a *Promissory Note on Travel Advance* and submit this note along with the check request for the advance. This form establishes the employee’s obligation to repay the advance and lists consequences for non-payment. See Exhibit 2.

Travel advances for other *student group travel* are not subject to the 70 % limitation but must be justified on a case by case basis. Any other requests for exceptions to this limitation must be approved by the Executive Committee.

When advance funds for travel are needed to defray an employee’s expenses as explained above, a Travel Advance Check Request form should be submitted to the Accounting Services’ Office. These forms are available on the Accounting Services’ website at <http://www.sulross.edu/page/911/accountingservices>.

## **Travel Advance-form**

- Include date the request is made
- The name of the payee and signature
- Amount requested
- Date check is needed
- Amount requested
- Obtain supervisory signature
- Signature indicating a promise to repay

The travel request, accompanied by a copy of the approved travel application and the original signed *Promissory Note on Travel Advance*, should be presented to the Accounting Services' Office or RGC Business Services Department at least 5 working days prior to the date needed. The traveler must repay the entire amount of the advance at the time the travel reimbursement is processed. If a planned trip is canceled, any advances must be repaid immediately.

### **Return from Trip Procedures**

Within 10 working days after returning from the trip, a **State of Texas Travel Voucher Form** must be completed, signed by employee submitting the travel voucher, and the appropriate account manager or supervisor. The State of Texas Travel Voucher Form can be found on the Accounting Services' Office website, <http://www.sulross.edu/page/911/accounting-services>.

Travel vouchers submitted 60 days or later following the trip will not be accepted unless approved by the appropriate Vice President.

Any outstanding travel advances will be deducted from the reimbursement due the employee and a check or direct deposit for the difference will be provided to the employee. If the reimbursement is less than the outstanding travel advance amount, the employee must immediately repay the difference.

### **State of Texas Travel Voucher Form –Preparation Guide (front)-Instructions**

- “1.” Archive reference number - leave blank.
- “2.” Agency number - enter 756.
- “3.” Agency name - enter Sul Ross State University. “4.” Current document number - leave blank.
- “5.” Effective date - leave blank.
- “6.” DOC date - leave blank.
- “7.” DOC agency - leave blank.
- “8.” Document amount - leave blank.
- “9.” Pay to - enter name and address of person to be paid on the travel voucher.
- “10.” Title - enter title of individual to be paid on the travel voucher. “11.” Designated headquarters - enter Alpine, TX or one of the three RGC sites.

- “12.” Payee identification number - enter the payee identification number used by the State Comptroller’s Office for each employee. The number is available from the Human Resources Office or the Accounting Services’ Office if not known by the employee.
- “13.” Agency use - enter the extension number to call when the check is ready; the account number to be used; and the account name.
- “14.” 001, 002, 003, 004, 005 - leave blank.
- “15.” Service dates - enter inclusive dates of travel.
- “16.” Description - enter description of travel. (i.e., “Travel to Austin, TX”)
- “17.” Distribution - enter authorized expenses for travel. Include personal car mileage if applicable.
- “18.” Certification - claimant should sign and date the travel voucher when completed. The appropriate account manager or supervisor’ signature is required on all travel vouchers.
- “19.” Contact name - leave blank.
- “20.” Entered by - leave blank.
- “21.” Approved - leave blank.
- “22.” Approved - leave blank.

### **Supporting Data (Reverse Side)**

Employee must complete the IN-STATE or OUT-OF-STATE SECTION, whichever is appropriate, and the RECORD OF TRANSPORTATION AND DUTIES PERFORMED.

An individual entry must be made for each day of travel claimed.

#### **IN-STATE PER DIEM**

"a" LEAVE HEADQUARTERS - enter the date, hour, minute, and indicate a.m. (A)/p.m. (P) that trip was started.

"b" ARRIVE HEADQUARTERS - enter the date, hour, minute, and indicate a.m. (A)/p.m. (P) that trip was completed.

"c" PARTIAL PER DIEM IS NO LONGER REIMBURSED

"d" MEALS NOT TO EXCEED - enter actual cost of meals for each day, not to exceed maximum (receipts required).

"e" ACTUAL LODGING NOT TO EXCEED - enter total dollars claimed for actual lodging. (In-State) - employees may be reimbursed for the actual cost of lodging not to maximum per day. The actual lodging receipt is required. Employees are exempt from paying the Texas Hotel Occupancy Tax.

"f" TOTAL NOT TO EXCEED - enter total of columns "d" and "e." "k"

TOTAL Meals and Lodging - enter total expenses itemized in column "f".

(Out-of-State "m-x") - please follow the same instructions for Out- of-State travel as outlined for In-State travel. The sections to record the expenses are the same.

Leave ACTUAL EXPENSES SCHEDULE blank. ("g-I", "l", "s- u", and "x")

"y" RECORD OF TRANSPORTATION AND DUTIES PERFORMED - enter, by date, the travel made and the duties performed at each destination. Include sufficient detail to provide a complete understanding of duties and why the trip was of benefit to the University.

If necessary, a continuation sheet may be added. It must conform to the format of this section.

Calculation of Per Diem - No Lodging Secured

Sul Ross State University does not provide reimbursement for partial per diem on trips not requiring an overnight stay.

### **Other Reimbursable Travel Expenses**

An employee may receive reimbursement for other travel expenses incurred in the performance of official duties. These may include telephone calls (official business only), cashier's check or money order fees, parking fees, toll charges, and gasoline purchases for either State-owned or rented vehicles, as well as air, train, or bus fare (receipts are required for all).

An employee may receive reimbursement for registration fees for official business conferences. Meals and other personal expense items included in registration fees are not reimbursable as per diem.

The state allows for its agencies to specify a travel expense payment or reimbursement rate that is less than the maximum rate allowed. In an effort to comply with the requirements to conserve funds, Sul Ross State University has adopted some polices more restrictive than those specified on the state website. In these cases, Sul Ross employees will follow the policies outlined on this website. Special circumstances will be reviewed by a member of the Executive Council and approved by them only.

## **Receipt Requirements**

If you are requesting meal reimbursement, you must have actual meal receipts; receipts must accompany a completed expense report in order to be reimbursed for authorized business travel expenses. If original receipts are not available, the following are receipt alternatives to support documentation; Credit card statement, or Copy of canceled check.

Certain expenses (i.e. parking, tolls or taxis) may not provide a receipt. If one of the above alternative documentations is not available, a written explanation which details the reason why a receipt was not available may be presented. Additional approvals may be required.

***Special Note: Without a receipt or alternative form of documentation, your reimbursement will be delayed or reduced. If you cannot obtain those receipts, You must list your meal purchases and estimate your cost and have the appropriate VP sign off your travel meals cost for reimbursement.***

## **Reimbursable expenses that require receipts:**

Transportation by airline, railroad, rental car, taxi, limo, ferry and ship (tip not to exceed 15% of the taxi/limo fare)

Lodging

Parking and tolls

Registration fees

Fuel for rental cars

Meals

Miscellaneous expenses (i.e.: long distance business calls, excess baggage fees)

## **Expenses not reimbursable:**

Alcoholic beverages

Tips in excess of 15%

Excess baggage charges

Expenses not related to official State business

Laundry or cleaning

Personal entertainment

Flight insurance

Early Bird Check In

Meals for non-overnight stay (partial daily reimbursement)

Losses caused by exchange rate fluctuation

\*State of Texas hotel occupancy tax  
Expenses incurred on behalf of another university employee  
Expenses related to the operation of a personal owned vehicle (this does not include parking or tolls)

***Special note: An employee can only be reimbursed for his or her own expenditures, not for expenditures incurred by other individuals. Exceptions for group travel, sports, field strips.***

**TIPS:** Tips will be reimbursed using local non-state accounts. The reimbursement of tips and gratuities incurred are for travel on official business. The amount of the reimbursement may not exceed 15 percent of the reimbursed amount (rounding to the nearest dollar is allowed). Amounts beyond the 15 percent threshold will be the responsibility of the traveler.

### **Currency Conversion Requirements for Foreign Travel**

Foreign, Canada and Mexico Travel Expenses. Travel expenses must be converted to U.S. dollars ([www.oanda.com](http://www.oanda.com)). The reimbursement request must specify the exchange rate used. Any deviation from the methodology above require documented approval from the respective Executive Cabinet Officer.

**Taxes** - State employees of Sul Ross State University are exempt from Texas state hotel occupancy taxes. A University employee traveler must present the hotel with a completed exemption certificate, available from the Sul Ross State University's Accounting Services Website <http://www.sulross.edu/page/911/accounting-services>. If a hotel refuses to honor the certificate, the traveler will be reimbursed for the tax, and the state comptroller should be notified of the hotel's refusal. Employees are not exempt from county or municipal hotel occupancy taxes. Employees are not exempt from all out-of-state taxes.

### **Receipt Requirements**

Original receipts must accompany a completed State of Texas Travel Voucher Form for expenses to be reimbursed. Each receipt must be certified (signed) as an original by the traveler.

Type of receipts required:

- Transportation by airline, railroad, rental car, taxi or limo, ship, ferry
- Parking and tolls
- Lodging
- Registration Fees
- Miscellaneous expenses (example: long distance business calls)
- Documentation from conference or seminar that verifies attendance



### **Travel Corporate Card Individually Billed**

University employees who make three or more business related trips per fiscal year are encouraged to apply for a State of Texas Travel Card. This card is required by the State Comptroller's State Travel Management Program and the State of Texas to assure that state contracts rates are available to state employees. Higher travel expenses will not be reimbursed if they result from failure to use a State of Texas Travel Card.

**Note:** The travel card is issued to Sul Ross State employees and is an individual liability card. Failure to make prompt payment to the credit card company may affect the employee's credit rating.

The Comptroller's Office and SRSU review transactions and balances on the Travel Cards for compliance with the Statewide Travel Charge Card Program. Employee's supervisors may be notified for compliance issues or outstanding balances. Individual corporate travel charge cards issued through the State of Texas are to be used for official state business travel expenses only.

New applications can be found at the SRSU Accounting Service's Office website.

### **Benefits**

- 100 % source of funding for Business Trip
- Additional proof of state employment
- Time saved - no need to apply for Travel Advance
- Itemized statement of all purchases
- No annual fees
- No minimum salary requirements

## **Athletic Team Travel**

Athletic team travel is governed by the existing procedures listed above, with the following exceptions:

Each coach will be required to complete the SRSU Citibank Card Use Agreement, before a university travel card is issued. (See Exhibit 3).

The agreement requires signatures from the applicant (coach), Athletic Director, appropriate Vice President and the President. The agreement outlines the travel policies, regulations, and penalties for using a State of Texas travel charge card.

Each coach will be required to use a “University Corporate Travel Card”. (No Cash Advances). The University Corporate Travel Card is institutional billed. The University will be responsible for paying credit card, upon receipt of travel voucher reimbursement. The travel voucher reimbursement procedures apply.

All expense items (including meals) claimed require certified, signed original receipts.

Unallowable travel expenses paid with the University credit card will be the coaches’ responsibility. Unallowable expenses must be paid back at the Cashier’s Office immediately upon receipt of notification from the Accounting Services’ Office staff.

Coaches are required to complete all travel documents outlined in the Travel Approval Process above. Application for Travel on Official State Business Form, the University Travel Credit Card Request Form for each trip requesting use of the University Travel Credit Card. (See Exhibit 4).

Before the university credit card form is approved, the Application for Travel must be completed, approved, and T # assigned.

The physical custody of the card is with the Accounting Services Department and must be returned to the Accounting Services Department on the next working day after the trip.

The university travel card is not to be used for non-travel expenditures. If other arrangements for the non-travel expenditures cannot be made, exceptions to the policy will require advance written supervisory approval.

### **Allowable Expenses:**

- Lodging – must be from a commercial lodging establishment.
- Meals- pertaining to trip
- Incidental expenses for team, such as bottle water, energy drinks, energy bars, fruit, ice, over the counter medicine, aspirin, cough syrup, etc.
- Parking fees
- Entrance fees

- Registration fee
- Airfare tickets
- Rental Car

### **Unallowable Expenses**

- Alcoholic beverages
- Equipment
- Clothing,
- Food for home games, card can only be used for out of town trips. (exception during holiday break) Card can be used with advance approval from the Accounting Services Office.

### **Documentation**

- For each transaction charged on the travel card, an original receipt must be submitted to the Accounting Services Office.
- Expenses without receipts will not be paid without the approval from the Vice President for External Affairs. If this approval is not received then the cardholder will be held responsible for the expense and further card privileges suspended until payment is made.

For other non-financial guidelines - see APM Chapter 4, Sec. 11.

### **Participant Travel on Sponsored Programs**

The University often receives awards to conduct projects that are funded by external sponsors. Some of these projects require students and other “participants” to travel on official project business. Student employees and non-employees are expected to follow the rules of the externally sponsored program and the rules contained in this policy.

Project Directors seeking exceptions to any University travel policies must work with the Grants Accounting Department to draft a policy for the specific program. The policy must be consistent with this policy and approved by the Vice President for Finance and Operations.

### **Request for Use of University Vehicle**

Approval for an employee to use a University vehicle on official business is handled through the "Request for Use of University Vehicle" form (see <http://www.sulross.edu/section/2246/physical-plant>). The form is available on the Physical Plant website. It should be noted that University vehicles are usually booked for student trips at the beginning of each semester and are not always available for other uses.

It is suggested that an employee requesting the use of a vehicle for out-of-town travel check with the Physical Plant Office or RGC Business Services Department prior to submitting the Application for Travel form in order to know if a University vehicle will be available or if a private vehicle will be required.

### **Vehicle Request Form**

- Preparation of the form should include the date the form is submitted
- Department requesting vehicle including names of driver(s)
- The type and number of vehicles required
- Date and Time needed
- Date and Time of return
- Brief Description of the purpose of the trip, destination, number of passengers, driver or drivers,
- Fund, Organization, Program (FOP) of department
- Sign and Date the form and submit in quadruplicate to department Chair, supervisor and school dean /director

The school Dean/Director should forward the form to the Physical Plant Office or RGC Business Services Department and a vehicle will be assigned, if available. After the form has been processed, the original copy (with assignment) will be returned to the person requesting vehicle(s) and copies will be retained by the Physical Plant Office or RGC Business Services Department and Motor Pool.

Vehicles, keys, mileage slips, and credit cards should be picked up at Physical Plant Office or RGC Business Services Department prior to departure during office hours. If a trip is to begin on Saturday, Sunday, or a holiday, these materials should be picked up on the last working day prior to the trip. After returning, these materials must be returned to the Physical Plant Office or RGC Business Services Department on the first business day.

Charges for University vehicles are based on actual mileage at the following rates (these rates are subject to change; please see the Physical Plant website for current rates):

Pick Up Trucks	50 cents per mile
Traverse (7 passenger)	35 cents per mile
Maxi van (10 passenger)	50 cents per mile
Lobo Bus (42 passenger)	\$1.25 per mile
Car	35 cents per mile

The University currently has contracted with US Bank Fleet for its gasoline requirements. Credit cards are provided to the driver of the vehicle for the purchase of gasoline during travel. Drivers are expected to purchase fuel at self- service pumps. The driver will retain the receipt for the gas purchased.

The receipt should be returned to the Physical Plant Office or RGC Business Services Department with the book and keys for the vehicle. Expenses incurred due to repairs during a trip in a University vehicle will not be charged to the department.

If mechanical problems occur on a trip, contact the Physical Plant Office or RGC Business Services Department for instructions or assistance during normal office hours. After office hours, the person responsible for the vehicle may authorize repairs in order to continue the trip. All expenses incurred for vehicle repairs will be reimbursed to the individual upon presentation of receipt or invoice.

Roadside Assistance is available by calling 1-800-987-6591.

Exhibit 1

**Promissory Note on Travel Advance**

1. **Contractual Promise to Pay Sum Certain.** FOR VALUE RECEIVED in the form of permission to travel to \_\_\_\_\_ on {Dates} \_\_\_\_\_ and a monetary Advance to support that travel, the undersigned ("Maker") unconditionally promises to pay to the order of Sul Ross State University ("Holder") at the University Cashier's Office, Room Number 205, Briscoe Administration Building, Alpine, Texas the principal sum of \$ \_\_\_\_\_, together with interest in arrears on the unpaid principal balance, from the date Maker receives his or her travel reimbursement from Holder, at the rate of \_\_\_\_\_ percent per annum.

2. **Time for Repayment.** Maker agrees to complete the State of Texas Travel Voucher within ten (10) days after conclusion of the travel and to repay this travel advance to Holder immediately upon receiving any reimbursement for the trip expenses.

If this Advance remains unpaid **thirty (30) days** after a reimbursement is processed or **thirty (30) days** after the end of the trip, whichever is later, this Note **shall be in Default and shall become immediately due and payable** in its entirety without demand or notice. The Maker expressly waives presentment, demand, notice, protest, and all other demands and notices in connection with this Note.

3. **Consequences of Failure to Repay.** If the Note is not paid as of the date the same becomes due and payable, the Maker shall pay (in addition to the sums specified in paragraph 1 above) to the Holder a late charge equal to \_\_\_\_\_ percent of the overdue payment as liquidated damages to defray costs of handling and administering the payment, and not as a penalty. Further, the Maker agrees to pay to the holder all collection costs, expenses and reasonable attorney's fees incurred in the collection of sums due and payable hereunder, whether through legal proceedings or otherwise, to the extent permitted by law.

4. **Reservation of Rights and Enforcement.** Failure of the Holder to exercise any right or option shall not constitute a waiver, nor shall it be a bar to Holder's exercise of any right or option at any future time. Nor shall any right or option stated herein limit the Holder's right to discipline and/or terminate the Maker's employment for having failed to pay his or her financial obligation to the Holder. If any provision of this Note is held to be invalid or unenforceable, the remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect. This Note shall be governed by the laws of the State of Texas, and venue shall lie in a court of appropriate jurisdiction in Travis County, Texas.

5. **Voluntary and Informed Signature.** Maker acknowledges that Maker has read this *Promissory Note on Travel Advance* and understands all of its terms; that no promises or representations have been made to Maker, other than as stated in this *Promissory Note on Travel Advance*; that Maker has had opportunity, prior to signature, to consult with Maker's own legal counsel or advisors and otherwise seek the advice of people whose opinion Maker values; and, Maker signs this *Promissory Note on Travel Advance* voluntarily and with full knowledge of its significance as a binding contract and otherwise, and acknowledges receipt of a completed copy of this instrument.

Signed this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Traveler's Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Traveler's Signature

**Exhibit 2**

**CITIBANK CARD USE AGREEMENT**

I agree that use of the Citibank Corporate Liability Charge Card, referred to as "the Card" below; will be governed by the following:

I understand the Card is to be used for State of Texas business travel charges only and is not for personal use. Use of the Card for charges other than official state business is a direct violation of the State's contract with Citibank, Ethics Commission Advisory Opinion No. 147, and the STMP's rule [1 TAC §125.9(a)] and, therefore, a misapplication of the state-issued Card. Further, I understand that any misuse will result in cancellation of the Card and will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

I will be responsible for all charges resulting from use of the Card and understand that I am responsible for turning in supporting documentation of charges in a timely manner and in an approved format. I understand I may be held personally liable for misuse of the card for undocumented charges.

I understand that once I receive the Card, I am ineligible for travel advances unless the establishments at the business destination do not accept the Card. Further, I understand that if my Card is suspended or canceled for misuse, I will not be eligible for travel advances for the duration of my employment at this state agency.

I understand that the President, appropriate Vice President and my direct supervisor will be notified in writing of any apparent misuse on my Card account. I also understand that any proven misuse of the card will be placed as a permanent notation in my personnel file with this state agency and I may be subject to further disciplinary action.

I understand that this signed agreement becomes legally binding and will become part of my personnel file with Sul Ross State University.

***I read and agree to the above-stated policies, regulations, and penalties for using a State of Texas travel charge card and agree to abide by them.***

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Applicant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Supervisor of Applicant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Applicant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Supervisor Applicant

**Exhibit 3**

**SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY  
TRAVEL CREDIT CARD REQUEST**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Card Holders Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date card is needed: \_\_\_\_\_

Trip: \_\_\_\_\_

T#: \_\_\_\_\_

I will be responsible for all charges resulting from use of the Card and understand that I am responsible for turning in the travel reimbursement voucher with supporting documentation of charges immediately following the trip; no longer than 5 days.

I understand I may be held personally liable for misuse of the card for undocumented charges

I will return the travel card the first working day after the trip.

I also certify that I have a signed Citibank card use agreement on file.

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Requestor

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Account Manager or Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_

Approved By Finance and Operation Office

\_\_\_\_\_

Approved by Accounting Department