

# 2410 Travel Policy

**SECTION:** PURCHASING AND DISBURSEMENTS  
**EFFECTIVE:** JULY 1, 1985  
**REVISED:** MAY 1, 2007  
**RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** VPAF  
**APPROVAL:** VPAF

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this travel policy is to provide guidance for those traveling on GTU business. It is designed to ensure the best use of the GTU's resources; to encourage discretion as it relates to incurring costs when traveling on school business; to ensure compliance with applicable federal regulations and grant agreements; to ensure GTU employees have the support and resources necessary for their work; and to provide a clear and consistent understanding of the school's expectations pertaining to business travel.

This policy applies to any individual (faculty, staff or student) traveling on GTU business or using funds administered by GTU. Visiting scholars, students, and other non-school personnel traveling on GTU business may be reimbursed for reasonable travel related expenses in accordance with this policy.

Payments for reasonable travel-related expenses that are substantiated and made in accordance with this policy are not considered taxable income to the traveler.

This policy establishes basic guidelines and controls to be followed. Some departments may impose more restrictive controls than required by this policy.

## **POLICY**

An individual traveling on School business should neither gain nor lose personal funds as a result of that travel.

Travelers should spend school funds prudently, understand all travel-related policies, and obtain reimbursement for their business travel expenses on a timely basis. Business travel expenses will be paid by the school only if they are reasonable, necessary, and in accordance with this policy.

## **General Provisions**

### ***Reimbursement***

Travelers must submit personal reimbursement requests with required supporting documentation within 10 business days of incurring the expense or returning from the trip. Supporting documentation for purchases made with GTU provided credit or purchasing cards is submitted along with the request for payment of the credit card charges.

### ***Business Purpose***

A clear and complete business purpose must be documented for each and every trip. The purpose should include the dates of the trip and enough supporting documentation to assist the approver, and any subsequent reviewer, to validate the business need for the trip. For example, when

attending a conference or other event on GTU business, supporting documentation (such as the conference brochure, itinerary or letter of invite), listing the date(s) and purpose of the event, should be attached to the expense report.

### ***Restrictions for Travelers who are Not US Citizens or Permanent Residents***

Individuals who are not citizens or permanent residents of the United States are subject to specific rules regarding payments.

Please refer to the Policy 2301 Payments to Nonresidents Aliens and Foreign Entities to determine any payment restrictions and documentation requirements. Please review the restrictions prior to a trip.

### ***Travel funded by Federal Grants and Contracts***

Travel funded by **federally**-sponsored grants and contracts is generally subject to the Fly America Act which states that, with few exceptions, the air travel must be booked on an American Flag Carrier (e.g., United not Lufthansa, Delta not Air France). Certain expenditures (e.g., alcohol) are generally deemed to be “unallowable” expenses in accordance with federal cost principles. There may also be additional restrictions not specifically covered by this policy. Questions should be addressed to the Vice President for Administration and Finance.

### ***Travel funded by Other Grants and Contracts***

Travel funded by non-Federal sources must be approved by the grant or contract manager in accordance with the specific restrictions of the grant or contract. If in doubt regarding the allowable expenses for a grant or contract, contact the grant or contract manager. Unallowable expenses may still be reimbursed by the GTU, provided another source of funding is approved.

### ***Determine Whether Travel Is Classified as Domestic or International***

Domestic travel is defined as travel within and between any of the 50 United States, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, travel between the United States and Canada and within Canada.

International travel is any travel outside those specified above.

### ***Travel Advisories***

As a rule, travel to countries where a travel advisory has been issued by the State Department should not occur. Refer to information posted at: [http://travel.state.gov/travel/travel\\_1744.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/travel_1744.html).

### ***Exceptions to Travel Policy***

Exceptions to this policy must be approved in advance and in writing by the Vice President for Administration and Finance (for staff and consultants) or the Academic Dean (for faculty, students and visiting scholars). For exceptions to the Fly America Act, contact the Vice President for Administration and Finance.

## **Making Travel Reservations**

### ***Before Travel***

Individuals should make reservations as soon as their travel plans are known, so that they can obtain advance purchase discounts. When convenient, travelers may consider modifying an itinerary (e.g., staying over on a Saturday night) when such a change results in airfare savings

greater than the cost of the additional hotel and food expenses. Supporting documentation indicating savings should be attached to the expense report. If a travel itinerary is created to accommodate personal business, the traveler must pay the incremental cost resulting from such personal business and must clearly document the costs incurred, separating any personal expenses from school business expenses.

Travelers are expected to be prudent when selecting the appropriate type of transportation (i.e., air, rail, automobile, etc.) for their business trips. The type of transportation chosen should be the least costly, consistent with the itinerary and the particular business requirements of the trip.

### ***Online Booking***

Travelers are encouraged to take advantage the many online sites that facilitate finding the best connections and the lowest fares. Travelers may also take advantage of airline sites and travel agents, although these do not always provide the lowest fares. Some of these sites are listed below in [2410.8](#).

### ***Business Travelers Accompanied by Family Members and Other Companions***

The GTU does not provide reimbursement for travel and entertainment expenses of family members and other companions who accompany school employees on business trips.

This policy does not preclude family members and other companions from accompanying travelers on business trips provided that all travel, meals, entertainment and other costs resulting from their presence are clearly documented and borne personally by the GTU traveler or companion. In all instances, the conduct of GTU business shall be of primary importance during business travel.

There are a limited number of situations in which there is a bona fide business purpose for the presence of spouses, family members or other travel companions on school trips. Such situations are generally limited to the President and Vice Presidents when they are representing the school at fund raising events or hosting school business functions. These situations and requests for special exceptions should be approved in advance by the Vice President for Administration and Finance. Approved exceptions must be documented in writing on the expense report.

### ***Distinguished Visitors***

The GTU recognizes that certain invited guests may require upgraded travel arrangements. These arrangements will be an exception to policy and should be approved in advance by the Academic Dean (for faculty, students and visiting scholars) or by the Vice President for Administration and Finance (for staff and consultants). Approved exceptions must be documented in writing on the expense report.

### ***Consultants Traveling on GTU Business***

Consultants traveling on school business will be reimbursed for reasonable and necessary business expenses. Provisions for such reimbursements should be incorporated into the consulting agreement. If the provisions for reimbursement are not authorized by contractual agreement they must be approved in advance by the office managing the contract. For further information regarding consultants, refer to the policy on Consultants and Professional Service Agreements.

## **Policy Sections**

### **2410.1 Air Travel**

Travelers are expected to book the lowest available economy class airfare, consistent with business requirements.

Although no single source (travel agency or online booking tool) can claim to have the lowest fares 100% of the time, the GTU's preferred provider list provides the best overall value in most instances. Travelers are encouraged to take advantage of the services and discounts provided through GTU negotiated contracts and preferred providers. This list is available from the business office.

If a penalty is incurred due to a traveler violating airline ticketing rules, the traveler will be responsible for the additional cost; however, penalties for making changes to, or for not using, non-refundable tickets can be reimbursed if the penalty was unavoidable due to business reasons or if circumstances were beyond the traveler's control.

Whenever possible, make travel plans early enough to book flights at least fourteen days in advance. This will allow one to take advantage of special advance purchase fares.

Use e-tickets when they are available. Most airlines impose a fee for paper tickets and their related shipping costs.

#### ***Class of Air Service***

*Domestic travel* For domestic travel, use the lowest available economy class airfare that meets the needs of a business trip, consistent with business requirements. Travelers may upgrade the level of service at personal expense or by using their "frequent flyer" points.

*International Travel.* For international travel, use economy class for all flights under 5,000 miles (one-way). Travelers may upgrade the level of service at personal expense or by using their "frequent flyer" points. For flights at or over 5,000 miles (one-way), business class may be used if funds are available and authorized by the funding source.

Students must travel economy class regardless of duration or length of the flight.

#### ***Other Air Travel Items***

*Extenuating Circumstances/Exceptions* Sometimes, extenuating circumstances, such as a medical condition, may justify the use of business class for trips that are less than 5,000 miles (one-way). Approval must be obtained in advance and in writing by the Academic Dean (for faculty and visiting scholars) or by the Vice President for Administration and Finance (for staff and consultants). Approved exceptions must be documented on the expense report.

*Unused Tickets or Changes* When travel plans must be changed due to unforeseen circumstances, the traveler is responsible for notifying the business office as soon as possible, either seeking a refund (in cases where a refundable ticket was issued) or applying the unused ticket to the next business trip. Penalties incurred for changes to an airline ticket for business reasons or circumstances beyond the traveler's control are reimbursable.

Unused tickets cannot be used for personal travel.

*Charter and/or Private Aircraft* For the safety of travelers, the GTU does not allow flying on charter and /or private aircraft. The GTU assumes no liability for death, personal injury, or property damage in connection with charter/private aircraft travel.

*Frequent Flyer Programs and Upgrades* The GTU allows travelers to accrue their own frequent flier mileage for trips taken on school business. The GTU does not reimburse travelers for tickets purchased with frequent flyer miles.

Travelers may use their airline miles to upgrade as long as the airfare purchased is the lowest available economy class airfare; if the traveler chooses to purchase a more expensive airfare to obtain the upgrade, consistent with business requirements, the traveler must pay the difference between the lowest fare available and the fare purchased. The source of an upgrade must be noted on the expense report.

*Airline Club Memberships* The GTU does not pay dues for membership in airline clubs, except in situations where an extraordinary amount of business travel is required as an integral part of an employee's job responsibilities. Any requests must be approved in writing by the Vice President for Administration and Finance, prior to joining an airline club.

## **2410.2 Lodging**

Travelers should choose a reasonably priced hotel with a single occupancy rate using the GTU's preferred hotel rates whenever possible. For hotel reservations for GTU guests staying in Berkeley, a list of preferred hotels with is available from the Business Office.

For lodging outside of Berkeley, reservations should be made in a reasonably priced three or four star hotel, unless the traveler is attending a conference or other meeting where a hotel serves as the conference or meeting center.

The GTU reimburses actual hotel expenses.

*Lodging in Private Residence* Travelers who stay in a private residence at no cost to the traveler, while traveling on business will be reimbursed for a reasonable token of appreciation (not to exceed \$100 per trip) for the courtesy of staying with the host. Proper documentation must be provided with the expense report.

*Cancellations* If travel plans must be changed, the traveler should make every reasonable effort to cancel hotel reservations in advance, to avoid any penalties charged by the hotel. Penalties or cancellation fees incurred for changes to hotel reservations due to business reasons or circumstances beyond the traveler's control are reimbursable.

## **2410.3 Ground Transportation**

### **General**

Use the lowest cost ground transportation consistent with business needs. For example, many hotels offer free airport shuttles, which should be used whenever practical.

### **Rental Cars**

The GTU has negotiated discounts with preferred rental car agencies. These discounts are available through GTU's membership in the Educational and Institutional Cooperative Service.

Travelers should make reservations directly with one of the preferred rental car agencies listed below. Travelers should rent the most economical (compact or midsize) vehicle consistent with business needs and travel circumstances.

### **Insurance**

Please consult the GTU Vehicle Use Policy for further details on policies relating to the use of personal or rental vehicles and insurance.

*Domestic Rentals* Travelers should decline any additional insurance coverage offered by car rental companies; it is expensive and duplicates insurance already provided by the GTU and will not be reimbursed.

*International Rentals* Travelers should accept liability and damage insurance coverage offered by the car rental company. The cost will be reimbursed to the traveler.

*Who is covered* The GTU has automobile insurance that covers GTU employees, (including casual employees and post doctoral associates), and post doctoral fellows traveling on school business.

*Student Coverage* Students are not allowed to rent vehicles for school business, unless they are also regular employees of the GTU.

*Coverage of Consultants and Others* The GTU's automobile insurance coverage does not cover any outside consultants, independent contractors, vendors, visiting speakers or anyone else who is not an employee of the school. These individuals or the companies that they represent must provide \$1,000,000 of automobile liability and physical damage insurance to protect against accidents that can occur with the rental car while performing business for the GTU. This insurance can be provided via their own automobile insurance policy or by the companies that they represent or by purchasing the insurance from the rental car agency.

*Reporting an Accident* If a rental car accident occurs, travelers must submit a written accident report to the rental car company, local authorities as required, and the GTU's Business Office.

*Rental of 12 and 15 Passenger Vans* The GTU does not permit the rental of 12 and 15 passenger vans because of the possibility of serious accidents and injury to passengers.

*Use of Personal Automobiles* Employees may use their personal vehicles for business purposes. The use of a personal vehicle for GTU business will be reimbursed at the federal mileage allowance rate for business travel published by the Controller. This rate covers the cost of vehicle usage, including gasoline. In addition to this allowance, travelers will be reimbursed for tolls and reasonable parking fees.

*Authorized Use* Private vehicles may be used in the conduct of GTU business and activities only when such use is the most economic and efficient transportation option available and when such use is under specific direction of Institution supervisors. There is a limit on vehicle reimbursement of no more than the economy class airfare for a similar trip.

*Insurance* Private vehicles used on GTU business must be covered with the owner's insurance as required by law. The vehicle insurance policy need not be classified for commercial use, but if the

extent of the school business goes beyond incidental use, it shall be the responsibility of the employee to resolve the matter personally with his or her insurance company.

The insurance covering the private vehicle used on school business pays first and if that insurance is exhausted, the GTU insurance pays second to the extent of the policy. Deductible payments are the responsibility of the owner of the vehicle and are not reimbursable from school funds. Claims paid by private insurance for accidents occurring from the operation of privately owned vehicles on GTU business are not reimbursable from school funds or school insurance.

### ***Private Car Service***

The decision to use a private car service should be made by the individual traveler based on cost and business needs. A private sedan or town car service may be used when the cost is reasonable and consistent with business requirements. Use of a private stretch limousine should be limited to situations involving multiple passengers or exceptional circumstances, and must be documented on the expense report.

### ***Train Travel***

Travelers should book service on Amtrak or Acela trains consistent with their business needs. GTU policy allows business class service on Amtrak or the lowest class of service (i.e. business class) on the Acela.

## **2410.4 Business Meals and Entertainment**

*Individual Meals* Travelers will be reimbursed for reasonable actual meal expenses.

*Group Meals and Entertainment* In situations where an individual is entertaining one or more guests, reasonable meals and entertainment expenses will be reimbursed. Business meals and entertainment must be directly related to GTU business. The Internal Revenue Service requires all business meals and entertainment expenses to be properly documented. This includes the reason for the entertainment, the benefit expected to be derived as well as the name, title, and affiliation of the individual(s) being entertained.

For more information refer to Policy 3302 Business Meals, Entertainment, and Other Social Events.

## **2410.5 Other Reimbursable Travel Expenses**

The following additional expenses will be reimbursed if related to travel on GTU business:

- 1) Fees that are incurred in obtaining a visa or other special fees (e.g., the transaction fees associated with currency conversion).
- 2) Costs for vaccinations for international travel.
- 3) Reasonable telephone costs and internet charges incurred; however, GTU cell phones should be used instead of the hotel room telephone for direct dialing of long-distance calls if the traveler has one.
- 4) Laundry expenses when travel is for a period of seven or more consecutive days.

- 5) Tips and gratuities when reasonable and accepted as standard practice (i.e., restaurants, ground transportation, bellhops, and hotel housekeepers).
- 6) Personal expenses incurred while traveling on GTU business will not be reimbursed by the school (e.g., in-room movie rentals, in-room alcoholic beverages, lattes and other coffee and tea based beverages not part of a meal, babysitting, recreational activities, and issuance of passports or their renewals).

#### **2410.6 Payment Methods and Documentation**

*Personal Funds* If a personal credit card, check or cash is used, the traveler must submit an expense report seeking reimbursement only after completion of the trip.

*Receipts* For travel and entertainment expenses of \$25 or higher, original, detailed receipts must be provided to the departmental business office. An acceptable receipt is one that is printed on official letterhead or company stationary and that includes line item detail such as the date(s) and description of each expense. Generic or hand-written receipts on plain paper are not considered adequate forms of documentation and must be accompanied by additional supporting materials.

The GTU Controller has the discretion to require receipts for expenses under \$25 in situations he or she deems appropriate.

When a receipt does not have adequate information or is of poor quality, an additional proof of payment (such as a credit card statement or cancelled check) may be required to substantiate an expense.

*Travel Advances* The GTU issues travel advances only if the traveler does not possess a GTU issued credit card or when extended travel or unusual circumstances are involved.

#### **2410.7 Non Reimbursable Items**

The following items are not reimbursable by the GTU.

- 1) personal grooming services, such as barbers, hairdressers and shoe shines
- 2) beverages that are not part of a meal, such as purchases at coffee bars like Starbucks
- 3) car rental insurance for domestic travel
- 4) child care
- 5) corporate card delinquency fees or finance charges
- 6) memberships and dues in private clubs such as Airlines, wholesale clubs, Costco
- 7) frequent flyer and other similar award programs
- 8) gym fees if for activities outside the hotel
- 9) recreational fees, including massages and saunas
- 10) in-room movies and mini bar charges
- 11) laundry or valet service for travel of fewer than five days
- 12) lost baggage
- 13) loss or theft of cash advance money, airline tickets, personal funds or property
- 14) "no-show" charges for hotel and car service



- 15) personal parking tickets or traffic violations
- 16) personal automobile repairs
- 17) personal telephone charges
- 18) pet care
- 19) upgrades (air, hotel, car, train etc.)
- 20) issuance of passport or their renewals