

**Louisiana Tech University  
Office of the Comptroller  
Frequently Asked Travel Questions**

## **TRAVEL REGULATIONS**

1. Does Louisiana Tech University have its own travel regulations?  
The State of Louisiana travel regulations (PPM 49) apply to all state agencies. As stated in University Policy 5401, Louisiana Tech University is required to comply with the State of Louisiana travel regulations promulgated by the State Division of Administration.
  
2. Where can I find the State of Louisiana travel regulations?  
The State of Louisiana travel regulations (PPM 49) are located in the annual Louisiana Travel Guide. This guide is updated annually and is located on the Office of State Purchasing and Travel website at <http://www.doa.louisiana.gov/osp/travel>. The current Travel Guide is located at <http://www.doa.louisiana.gov/osp/travel/TRAVELPOLICY/2013-2014TRAVELGUIDE.PDF>. The link is also located on the Office of the Comptroller webpage at <http://www.ltadm.latech.edu/comptrol/>.
  
3. Is there a travel-sized version of the Louisiana Travel Guide?  
The pocket-size travel guide is also located on the Office of State Purchasing and Travel website at <http://www.doa.louisiana.gov/osp/travel>. The current year's pocket-size travel guide is located at <http://www.doa.louisiana.gov/osp/travel/travelpolicy/pocketguide.pdf>.

## **TRAVEL AUTHORIZATIONS (TA)**

4. When should a travel authorization (TA) be processed?  
A TA should be processed for employees, students, prospective employees, visitors, and other travelers that are traveling for University business. The TA must be processed and approved prior to incurring any travel expenses and departure. Airfares, conference registration fees, and other expenses should not be incurred until the approved TA is returned to the department.
  
5. What information is required on a TA?
  - The date of request, dates of trip, name of traveler(s), destination, account to be charged, and estimated total cost
  - Special permissions including rental vehicle, personal vehicle (limited to 99 miles reimbursement except for students), motor pool vehicle, weekend travel, 50% overage on lodging
  - Attach alphabetized list of travelers or participants for large groups
  - Process amended TA or memo if travelers, dates, or account numbers change
  - If the TA is for international travel, a memo to be approved by the President should be attached. The memo should include the purpose of the trip, funding source, and estimated travel costs.

6. How do I make an amendment to the TA?  
An amendment should be processed on University letterhead and include the department head's signature, the TA number, and any changes requested (travel dates, travelers' names, account to be charged, amount, etc.) A copy of the TA must be attached to the memo.
7. Does the person listed on the Travel Expense Account always need to be listed on the TA?  
Yes, unless the individual requesting reimbursement is not the traveler and is only paying for the traveler's expenses. Examples of exceptions include an employee paying the expenses of a guest speaker, prospective employee, or athletic student recruit.

## **AIRFARE**

8. Am I required to purchase my airfare through the state contracted travel agency?  
All travelers are required to purchase commercial airline tickets through the state contracted travel agency (currently Short's Travel Management). This requirement is mandatory unless approval is granted from the Office of State Travel. See next question for information concerning exceptions.
9. How do I request an exception to the requirement to purchase airfare through the state contracted travel agency?  
If a traveler seeks approval to purchase an airfare outside the state contracted travel agency, the request must be submitted to the Office of the Comptroller, **not directly to Office of State Travel or the Division of Administration**. The Office of the Comptroller will review the request and determine whether to recommend approval to the Office of State Travel. The request should be submitted on a memo signed by the employee. Quotes from the state contracted travel agency and the alternative agency (other travel agency or online travel site) must be attached. These quotes must be comparable quotes with same dates and destinations. Any request must result in significant savings to the University or result in better travel times or shortened layovers (usually for international travel).
10. Am I required to purchase the lowest price ticket?  
Travelers are required to purchase the "best value" ticket which is usually the lowest logical (nonrefundable) fare. Airfares will not be reimbursed in excess of the lowest logical airfare when it has been determined to be the best value. If there is a likelihood that the itinerary could be changed or be cancelled, the "best value" ticket may be a refundable ticket, due to the costs associated with changing a non-refundable ticket. If a traveler chooses a higher cost ticket due to required travel times or the likelihood of cancellation, the reason should be documented. The Office of the Comptroller is responsible for monitoring airfare costs and may be required to provide a justification for a higher priced fare to the Office of State Travel.
11. When should I purchase my airfare?  
Airfare should not be purchased until after the travel authorization has been approved. Airfare should be purchased at least ten to fourteen days in advance of the travel date when possible to ensure the lowest fares are available.

12. Will I be reimbursed for airfare penalties associated with itinerary changes or cancellations?

The University will reimburse the traveler for airfare and/or penalties incurred for a change in plans or cancellation when the change or cancellation is required by the University or other unavoidable situations such as weather conditions. Justification for the change or cancellation fee must be attached to the travel expense account. Any penalty resulting from a change or cancellation required by the University must be approved by the traveler's appropriate supervisor (department head, dean, and or vice president) and the Office of the Comptroller.

13. How do I pay for airfare purchases?

The traveler must purchase the airfare with a personal credit/debit card or a University issued travel card (See Question No. 39). The University's CBA account may be used to purchase airfare for student group travel or recruiting travel. If the use of the CBA account is requested, contact the Office of the Comptroller prior to the booking of the airfare.

14. What should I do with an unused ticket?

The University is required to monitor unused tickets and will notify an employee if an unused ticket is expiring soon. However, if the unused ticket is in the name of a non-employee, it is often difficult for the Office of the Comptroller to identify the department that purchased the airfare. Travelers or the employee that arranged the travel for a non-employee are responsible for ensuring that an unused ticket is considered when planning future travel arrangements. If the current ticketholder cannot use a ticket, some airlines have a policy which allows for a name change to another employee at the University.

## **MOTOR VEHICLE TRAVEL**

### **Personal Vehicle**

15. Am I permitted to drive my personal vehicle for university-related travel?

A traveler may drive their personal vehicle for university-related travel; however, the reimbursement is limited to **99 miles per round trip** in a personal vehicle. To be reimbursed, an employer or student driver must have completed Driver Safety Training (See Question No. 23).

16. Are there any exceptions to the 99 mile reimbursement limitation for travel in a personal vehicle?

Effective July 1, 2013, an exemption to the 99 miles limitation has been granted for students only. Students who are traveling on a grant, scholarship, or any other occasion where use of the personal vehicle is the best and/or only method of transportation available may receive actual mileage reimbursement.

17. May I request an exemption to the 99 mile reimbursement limitation?

An exemption request to the 99 mile reimbursement limitation must be attached to the travel authorization or submitted directly to the Assistant Vice President for Finance and Comptroller for review. This exemption request should include an explanation of the type of travel and the reason that the traveler cannot utilize a state or rental vehicle. The Assistant Vice President for Finance and Comptroller will review the request and submit it to the Commission of Administration for approval. A department is not permitted to directly request an exemption from the Commissioner of Administration.

18. What is the amount of the mileage allowance?

The mileage allowance is currently 51 cents per mile. The traveler will be reimbursed up to 99 miles round trip unless an exemption to the 99 mile limitation has been granted (See Questions No. 16 and 17).

19. How is mileage computed?

Mileage is computed by one of the following options:

- Odometer readings included on the travel expense account form, or
- Website mileage calculator. The traveler is required to print the page indicating the mileage calculation and attach it to the travel expense account.

### **Rental Vehicle**

20. Am I required to use Enterprise for in-state vehicle rentals?

The use of Enterprise is mandatory for all rentals initiating in the state of Louisiana. The Enterprise Rent-A-Car Mandatory In-State Vehicle Rental Prices are located on page 33 of the Louisiana Travel Guide. (<http://www.doa.louisiana.gov/osp/travel/TRAVELPOLICY/2013-2014TRAVELGUIDE.PDF> )

21. Who are the authorized vendors for out-of-state vehicle rentals?

The State of Louisiana's contracts for out-of-state vehicle rental are mandatory. The contracted vendors are Enterprise, National, and Hertz. One of these three vendors must be used for out-of-state vehicle rentals initiating outside the state of Louisiana. The rental prices for the out-of-state contracted vendors are located on pages 34 through 37 of the Louisiana Travel Guide (<http://www.doa.louisiana.gov/osp/travel/TRAVELPOLICY/2013-2014TRAVELGUIDE.PDF> )

22. If I use a rental vehicle, what reimbursements are allowed?

Only compact or intermediate model is reimbursable. (Exceptions: non-availability is documented or vehicle will be used to transport more than 2 persons)

Detailed receipts required for gasoline (receipt must state the number of gallons and price per gallon)

Only regular unleaded gasoline or diesel when applicable

Pre-paid fuel options are not allowed

Insurance coverage is not reimbursable (unless traveling outside the United States)

Driver Safety Training is required (See Question No. 23).

### **Driver Safety Training Program**

23. Am I required to participate in the Driver Safety Training Program?

All employees and students must have completed the Driver Safety Training Program to be reimbursed for any vehicle-related expenses (personally-owned, state-owned, or rental vehicles). Information regarding this requirement is located on the Office of Environmental Health and Safety's webpage at <http://www.ltadm.latech.edu/envirosafety/safety-driver.htm>.

24. How can I verify that my driver safety training is current?

The lists of faculty/staff and student certified drivers are located on the Office of Environmental Health and Safety's webpage at <http://www.ltadm.latech.edu/envirosafety/safety-driver.htm>.

## Hold Harmless Agreement

### 25. When is a Hold Harmless Agreement required?

All non-official state employees riding in a vehicle owned or rented by the University must sign a Hold Harmless Agreement. This agreement is located at on the Office of State Travel Website at <http://www.doa.louisiana.gov/osp/travel/forms/holdharmlessagrmt.pdf> or accessed through links on the webpages of the Office of the Comptroller and the Office of Environmental Health and Safety.

## **LODGING**

### 26. What are the allowable routine lodging allowances?

Routine lodging (all lodging except conference lodging) will be reimbursed at the allowable tier rate, plus tax and any mandatory surcharge. The allowances for each tier are located on pages 25 and 26 of the Louisiana Travel Guide.

(<http://www.doa.louisiana.gov/osp/travel/TRAVELPOLICY/2013-2014TRAVELGUIDE.PDF> ) An itemized hotel receipt is required for reimbursement.

### 27. Can I request a higher reimbursement than the state's routine lodging allowance?

On a case-by-case basis, the University has the authority to reimburse routine lodging at up to 50% over the allowable tier rate. To request an exception to the allowance, the following information must be provided:

- Include a request for 50% overage on the travel authorization (See Question No. 5) and
- Include the following statement in the remarks section of the travel expense account: ***"I made a reasonable attempt to secure the state/best rate in obtaining lodging in compliance with PPM 49 Section 1506. B. 1."*** The traveler should maintain documentation in their files that an attempt was made to receive the best rate.

### 28. What is the allowable conference lodging allowance?

The traveler may be reimbursed the actual lodging rate, plus tax and any other mandatory surcharge when staying at the designated conference hotel. If there are multiple designated conference hotels, the conference hotel with the lowest rate should be used, if available.

**Documentation that the hotel is the conference hotel is required** (conference brochure, email, conference agenda, or equivalent required) and must be attached to the traveler's travel expense account. An itemized hotel receipt is required for reimbursement.

### 29. If the conference hotel is not available, will I be reimbursed at the conference hotel rate?

In the event the designated conference hotel(s) have no room availability, the travelers may be reimbursed the actual cost, not to exceed the conference lodging rate, for other hotels located in the immediate vicinity of the conference hotel. Documentation of "no availability" is required. This documentation may include an email from the conference or the hotel or a printout from the online hotel reservation system stating that no rooms are available.

### 30. How do I obtain a hotel tax exemption form?

When traveling in the state of Louisiana, the traveler should always attempt to use a tax exempt form for their hotel lodging. The signed hotel tax exemption form is located on the University's website at <http://www.ltadm.latech.edu/Forms/hoteltaxexempt.pdf>.

31. What is Hotel Planner?

Individuals and groups traveling on official state business may utilize a web-based State of Louisiana Hotel Booking Portal located at <http://louisiana.hotelplanner.com> to book hotels for in-state, out-of-state, and international travel. This service is optional, not mandatory.

## MEALS

32. What are the allowable meal allowances?

Meals will be reimbursed at the allowable tier rate located on pages 25 and 26 of the Louisiana Travel Guide. Times of departure and return determine the traveler's meal eligibility. These times are located on page 23 of the Louisiana Travel Guide.

(<http://www.doa.louisiana.gov/osp/travel/TRAVELPOLICY/2013-2014TRAVELGUIDE.PDF> )

33. Are receipts required for meal reimbursement?

Receipts are not required for reimbursement of the routine meal allowance. However, travelers attending a conference are required to provide a conference agenda that indicates meals provided by the conference (See Question No. 35).

34. Will I be reimbursed meals for single day travel?

No, meals are not eligible for reimbursement for single day travel and Louisiana Tech University does not grant exceptions to this regulation. This means that a traveler will not be reimbursed for meals when there is no overnight stay.

## OTHER QUESTIONS

35. Why must I provide an agenda of the conference I attended?

The Office of the Comptroller staff reviews the contents of the agenda to determine the name of the "official hotel" of the conference and to verify that the hotel used by the traveler was the conference hotel. The conference agenda is also used to determine which meals were included in the conference registration fee. If a meal is included as part of the conference, the traveler cannot receive additional reimbursement for that meal.

36. When persons travel to Ruston, should their travel be considered In-State or Out-of-State?

All recruits, game officials, and guest speakers traveling to Ruston, should be considered In-State Travel because the expenses happen in Ruston.

37. Would it help to number the people listed on a trip roster or rooming list for group travel?

Yes, for example, if the travel expense account includes a claim for a meal for 21 people and there are 20 people plus the bus driver numbered on your roster, this additional information speeds up the review process for the Office of the Comptroller.

38. How is suburb determined for lodging and meal reimbursement?

A suburb is an immediate or adjacent location (overflow of the city) which is within approximately **30 miles** of the higher cost area. If a location is determined to be a suburb, the lodging and meals will be reimbursed at the tier rate of the higher cost city.

39. Can I apply for a state liability travel card?

The University participates in the State of Louisiana State Liability Travel Card Program. The State Liability Travel Card ("Travel Card") is a VISA account issued by the Bank of America for the State of Louisiana. The Travel Card may be used by Louisiana Tech University employees to purchase specific, high-cost travel expenses, incurred during travel for official state business. Cards will be distributed only to frequent travelers based on the request of their Dean or Vice President. Policy 5410 - State Liability Travel Card Policy is located in the University's online policies and procedures at <http://www.latech.edu/administration/policies-and-procedures/5410.php>.

40. Do the travel regulations apply to all university accounts?

The state travel regulations apply to reimbursement from all university accounts including operating, grant, gift, auxiliary, student-fee funded accounts, and endowed chairs and professorships funds.

41. Do the state regulations apply to athletic travel?

The state travel regulations apply to routine and conference travel for athletics personnel. Athletic team travel and recruiting travel for teams must comply with the separate University of Louisiana System Athletic Travel Policy. Athletic personnel should contact the Athletic Business Office for a copy of this policy.

42. May I request reimbursement for prepaid expenses prior to travel?

Yes, prepaid expenses may be reimbursed on a travel expense account prior to travel. Allowable prepaid expenses include airfare, conference registration, and prepaid lodging (if required by hotel and an itemized invoice is available). Other expenses should be submitted for reimbursement after the travel has occurred.

43. When should a travel expense account be submitted?

The travel expense account should be submitted immediately upon return from the travel. Travel reimbursements must be requested and recorded during the fiscal year the travel occurred. The Office of the Comptroller may deny requests for travel expenses incurred during a previous fiscal year.

44. When will I receive my travel reimbursement?

Depending on the signatures required by a college/division and University Research (for grant accounts), it may be several days before the Comptroller's Office receives the travel expense account. A reimbursement check is typically issued within eight to ten working days of the receipt of the travel expense account by the Office of the Comptroller. Delays can result from incomplete documentation, failure to respond promptly to a request from the Office of the Comptroller, and during peak reimbursement request times such as December and June.

45. If my TA is approved, why are some charges disallowed on my travel expense account?

Approval of the TA indicates that the permission to travel has been granted by the appropriate departments and that there are available funds for the charge code indicated on the TA. However, all reimbursements must be in compliance with the State of Louisiana travel regulations (PPM 49) (See Question No. 1). There are many reasons that a travel expense account reimbursement may be reduced. The most common reasons for the deductions include the booking of an airfare outside the contracted travel agency; non-compliance with the Driver

Safety Program; lodging over the allowed rates; unallowable meals claimed; mileage over 99 miles in a personal vehicle; total cost exceeding departmental limitation on TA; missing itemized receipts for lodging, vehicle rental, and gasoline; and failure to submit a conference agenda.

46. What can I do to avoid a delay in my travel reimbursement?

- Explain and document all unusual transactions such as:
  - One-way vehicle rentals
  - Special meals – attach a Supplemental Meal Form
  - Explanation for non-conference lodging when attending a conference
  - Number of travelers in hotel room
  - Airline charges for additional baggage (conference presentation materials, equipment, etc.)
  - Airfare penalties
- When receipts are required by travel regulations, original itemized receipts, not copies, should be submitted.
- Contact the Office of the Comptroller for assistance:
  - Ask questions before you travel
  - Contact us before booking airfare outside of Short's Travel Management (See Question No. 9)
  - Respond quickly to our requests for information
  - Contact us about the state liability travel card for new employees if needed (Dean approval required) (See Question No. 39)
- Know the travel regulations before you travel