

TRAVEL

Objective:

To determine if the department/unit administers travel in accordance with institutional and UHS policies and procedures.

Potential Impact:

Results in travel costs exceeding allowable limits, reimbursement of personal expenses, financial loss for the institution, and negative publicity

Helpful Tools:

- UH System Administrative Memorandum:
 - [03.A.03 – Business Travel](#)
 - [Record Retention Schedule](#)
 - [03.H.01 – Financial Record Retention](#)
- UH – Downtown Policy Statement:
 - [Administration - 01.A.08 – Travel Policy](#)
- UHD Website:
 - [Travel Office](#)
 - 713-221-2700
 - Room S970

Contacts:

Jennifer Feil
feiljen@uhd.edu
713-221-2700
Room S970

Denise Bland
blandd@uhd.edu
713-221-8608
Room S970

Cynthia Conner
connerc@uhd.edu
713-221-8614
Room S970

Tedra Alexander
taylor@uhd.edu
713-221-5511
Room S970

Frequently Observed Weaknesses/Deficiencies:

- Failure to utilize appropriate travel authorizations (Travel Request)
- Lack of prior and appropriate approval on travel documents
- Allowing traveler to approve his/her own Travel Request (TR)
- Failure to obtain appropriate foreign travel approval
- Incorrect Cost Center on TR
- Not utilizing the Travel Office to make and pay for Airline and Hotel arrangements
- Charging travel expense such as airline tickets, prior to approval
- Failure to obtain original signatures on travel documents (use of signature stamps)
- Allowing personnel other than the traveler to sign travel documents
- Untimely submission of Travel Information Requests (TIRs), TRs and Travel Vouchers
- Poor estimations of travel expenses on TRs
- Incomplete supporting documentation for travel

- Approval dates missing on TRs and/or Travel Vouchers.
- Unallowable expenses included on Travel Voucher.

Best Business Practices:

1. Designate an individual in the department/unit to coordinate travel processing and reimbursements. This individual should review all travel documents for errors and compliance with institutional policies and procedures prior to forwarding to Travel department for reimbursement.
2. Ensure employees are familiar with the Travel department's policies and procedures.
3. Exercise reasonable and prudent care with travel funds. Travelers are entitled to reimbursement for reasonable, necessary, and allowable expenses incurred.
4. The TR should be approved in advance by the department/unit head. Ultimate responsibility and accountability for appropriateness of expenditures rests with the unit head and cannot be delegated.
5. For zero cost travel, a copy of the approved TR must be on file in the traveler's department for 18 months after completion of the trip.
6. Utilize a standing travel authorization (Blanket TR) in the case of individuals required to travel locally on a regular or continuous basis. Renew the authorization annually.
7. TR signature authority may be delegated in writing by the department chair or unit head. This delegation must be on file with the Travel department. (Note: If signature authority is granted to the individual with reconciliation responsibilities, the reconciliation should be approved by the department chair/unit head.)
8. The unit head's travel should be authorized by his direct report. (Note: Approval attests to the business necessity of the travel and that arrangements are reasonable in nature and amount. This includes grant and state-funded travel.)
9. Ensure foreign travel is submitted for appropriate approval.
10. Ensure TRs and/or Travel Vouchers are dated when approved (department chair, dean, provost, if applicable).
11. Ensure that costs on TRs are closely estimated.
12. Obtain original signatures of travelers and approvers and do not utilize signature stamps.
13. Ensure that an employee does not approve his/her own TRs.
14. Ensure Travel Vouchers are completed in a timely manner and submitted to the Travel department upon return from travel. Travel Vouchers should be completed within 30 days of return from travel.
15. Review Travel Vouchers carefully to ensure personal expenditures are not reimbursed.
16. Compare the TR and Travel Voucher to ensure agreement of travel information.
17. Ensure all required supporting original receipts and documentation accompany TRs and/or Travel Vouchers prior to submission to the Travel department.
18. Encourage all travelers to update personal bank information in PASS to ensure travel reimbursements can be wired to the travelers' accounts.
19. For perspective faculty and employees travel, submit documents in the same manner as for employees.

AREA

This questionnaire is designed so that “no” answers indicate that an internal control weakness may exist and the procedure/process may need to be examined in greater detail. **Comments should be provided for “No” answers.** When such weaknesses are identified, a change in the process may be necessary OR a control may need to be put into place to address the weakness. The appropriate UHD contact office (as outlined in the self-assessment text) may be contacted for assistance with identified weaknesses.

Self-Assessment of Internal Controls for Contracts	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
Does the department/unit have an individual(s) responsible for coordination and oversight of travel processes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are employees familiar with institutional and UHS travel policies and procedures?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Does your unit have a process in place to ensure timely review and approval of TRs and/or Travel Vouchers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Is the approver of travel always at least one level above the traveler (No self-approved travel)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are Blanket TRs utilized as needed for local travel?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Is necessary information and all original receipts included in travel documentation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Does the traveler sign the TRs and Travel Vouchers as they are submitted?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Does careful review of TRs and Travel Vouchers preclude reimbursement of personal travel?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you follow the institution’s policy regarding penalties and charges for airline cancellations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Is foreign travel routed through the correct approval process (department chair, dean, provost, President if to other than Canada or Mexico)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are Travel Vouchers completed promptly upon return from travel?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are travel estimates reasonably derived?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Does management complete, approve, and internally maintain zero cost TRs for insurance purposes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are financial reconciliations and supporting documents retained for the appropriate time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

period as prescribed by UHS policies?				
---------------------------------------	--	--	--	--

This is a living document and will be updated as revisions are necessary. Periodically, you may want to check for updates and revisions. We welcome any questions and feedback regarding the information contained in this tool including any comments regarding how this may be more useful and effective.