

Tennessee Technological University
Policy No. 506



**General and Group
Travel Policies**

Effective Date: July 1, 2017

Policy No.: 506

Policy Name: General and Group Travel Policies

I. Purpose

This policy sets forth appropriate reimbursement rates and guidelines for all expenses incurred on official business travel for Tennessee Tech. Provisions of this policy also may apply to individuals other than employees who are authorized to travel at Tennessee Tech expense. Specific provisions of the policy also address the travel of Board members. Authorization for travel will not be granted and expenses will not be reimbursed unless the travel is made and reimbursement claimed in accordance with this policy and any approved exceptions hereto.

All travel must be consistent with the educational, research, and professional needs of Tennessee Tech. Employees must conduct all travel with integrity, in compliance with applicable laws, policies, and procedures, and in a manner that excludes considerations of personal advantage. Employees must exercise good judgment and conduct all aspects of travel in a cost-efficient manner.

II. Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years or whenever circumstances require review, whichever is earlier, by the Associate Vice President for Business and Fiscal Affairs in consultation with the Vice President for Planning and Finance, with recommendations for revision presented to the Administrative Council, University Assembly, and the Board of Trustees.

III. Definitions

Clerical and Support Employee: for purposes of this policy, employees who are not faculty and who are classified under the Fair Labor Standards Act as non-exempt.

IV. Policy

- A.** Authorization for general travel will not be granted and expenses will not be reimbursed unless the travel is made and reimbursement claimed in accordance with this policy, as may be amended from time to time. Reimbursement for travel expenses shall be limited to expenses incurred upon travel authorized in advance in accordance with Section B.
 - 1.** Travel which may be authorized, and pursuant to which expenses may be reimbursed, shall be limited to the following:
 - a.** Travel which is necessary for the proper execution of official Tennessee Tech business, or in justifiable pursuit of Tennessee Tech's educational and research objectives; or

- b.** Travel to meetings and conferences of a professional nature which will increase the attending employee's usefulness to Tennessee Tech.
- 2.** Travel shall not include, and no reimbursement for expenses shall be made for, transportation in connection with an employee's official station of employment. The employee's "official station" is his/her regular area of employment activity, e.g., office headquarters, campus, or designated location of an employee established in the field.
 - a.** The official station of an employee shall be designated by the appointing authority.
 - b.** It is normally expected that the official station is that location at which the employee spends greater than 50% of his/her working time.
 - c.** For an employee required to be on call (as determined by his/her job description), either overnight or on weekends, the official station of the employee while on call becomes his/her residence, or the location at which the employee receives the call. Reimbursable mileage begins at the location at which the employee receives the call.
 - d.** In the event an employee is temporarily reassigned to a work location other than the usual official station, that location shall become the employee's official station. The employee will not be eligible for reimbursement unless the employee can demonstrate that commuting to the temporary location results in additional expense over the cost of the commute to the usual official station.
- 3.** The employee is considered to be on official travel status (and, as such, eligible for reimbursement of travel expenses) at the time of departure from the employee's official station or residence, whichever is applicable, for the purpose of traveling on Tennessee Tech business.
 - a.** Expenses for meals will be allowed when overnight travel is required outside the county of the employee's official station or residence.
 - b.** En route lodging will be allowed for only one day each way on trips of long duration.
 - c.** Expenses for lodging will only be allowed in cases where the approved and most direct or expeditious mode of travel will require more than ten (10) hours of continuous travel for trips of long duration.
 - d.** The lodging expense will not be considered en route lodging if it does not add an additional day of lodging expense. For example: An employee has a 9:00 a.m. meeting in Atlanta, GA. Assume the employee needs to work a full day prior to the trip. It would be less expensive and more convenient to drive rather than fly.

The employee leaves the night before and drives to within two hours of Atlanta. Then the employee spends the night, continues the drive the next morning, and arrives for the 9:00 a.m. meeting. This will be reimbursed but is not considered en route lodging as it did not add an additional day of lodging expense to the normal travel expenses.

4. The limitations on travel expenses contained herein are maximum amounts above which reimbursement shall not be made. Employees are expected to be as conservative as possible in incurring travel expenses.
5. Reimbursement for travel expenses shall only be allowed for actual expenses incurred, subject to the maximum limitations shown on the General Reimbursement Rate Addendum.
 - a. Receipts must accompany claims for reimbursement for all expenses exceeding the amount cited on the General Reimbursement Rate Addendum.
 - b. Receipts are not required for meals reimbursed by per diem rates, taxi fares, tolls, and ferry fees.
 - c. Lodging receipts are required and must itemize room charges and taxes. No expenses shall be reimbursed until after travel has been completed.
6. Internet travel sites such as Expedia, Travelocity, or Kayak can be utilized to purchase single travel services such as an airline ticket. Internet travel sites cannot be used to purchase a package of more than one travel service. Purchases of travel packages that combine services such as lodging, airline, or vehicle rentals are not allowed. These package deals do not usually provide sufficient itemized pricing for each service purchased and therefore do not allow for proper comparison to rates per U. S. General Services Administration for federal employees within the continental United States ([CONUS](#)) or conference rates as required by policy.
7. Tennessee Tech issued credit cards (Procurement cards) may be used for the advance payment of registration fees, airline tickets, and baggage fees. Tennessee Tech procurement cards must not be used for advance payments of hotel and expenditures while in a state of travel.

B. Authorization of Travel

- 1.** The President or his/her designee shall have authority to approve travel by employees or students of Tennessee Tech. Each employee should consult with his/her administrative officer for the appropriate department's or division's approval procedures.
- 2. In State Travel**
 - a.** All employees should obtain prior authorization for in state travel by the employee's appropriate approving authority, except as noted in item b. below. Authorization may be verbal, written, or electronic.
 - b.** Written authorization may not be necessary for in state travel where the expected expenses will not be substantial, or when there is no advance notice of the circumstances necessitating the travel, and such travel is approved orally by the appropriate approving authority.
 - c.** Employees whose employment requires frequent in state travel may obtain blanket authorization in writing for such travel.
- 3. Out of State Travel**
 - a.** All employees must obtain prior written authorization for out of state travel, which must be approved by the employee's appropriate approving authority.
 - b.** The authorization must show the name of the person traveling, purpose of the trip, destinations, date of departure and return, mode of transportation, estimated expenses, and availability of funds.
 - c.** If, in the normal course of official business, the employee must routinely travel into another state and back in the same day, such travel will be considered in-state travel and shall be subject to the in-state travel provisions. This exception applies for trips which do not exceed 50 miles into another state.
 - d.** Employees whose employment requires frequent out-of-state travel may obtain blanket authorization in writing for such travel.
- 4. All Other Travel**
 - a.** Authorization for travel by an employee to Alaska, Hawaii, and all out-of-country travel shall be subject to approval by the President (or designee).
 - b.** Authorization for travel to Alaska, Hawaii, and all out-of-country travel by the president shall be subject to approval by the Tennessee Tech Board of Trustees.

C. Transportation

1. General

- a.** All travel must be by the most direct or expeditious route possible and any employee who travels by an indirect route must bear any extra expense occasioned thereby.
- b.** When work is performed by an employee in route to or from the official station, reimbursable mileage is computed by deducting the employee's normal commuting mileage from the actual mileage driven in performing the work in route to or from the official station. For example, if an employee normally commutes 10 miles (20 miles round trip), and performs work on the way home from the official station which results in 12 miles driven, the mileage reimbursement will be for 2 miles only, as that is the amount of mileage in excess of the employee's normal commute. In no instance shall mileage claimed for reimbursement exceed actual miles traveled.

2. Mode of Transportation

- a.** Transportation for employees traveling singly should be by common carrier (air, train, or bus) whenever practical.
- b.** The use of air travel is recommended when time is an important factor or when the trip is so long that other methods of travel would increase the subsistence expense.
- c.** Automobile transportation may be used to save time when common carrier transportation cannot be satisfactorily scheduled, or to reduce expenses when two or more employees are making the trip.
- d.** Reimbursement for personal vehicle use may be claimed at the lesser of the standard mileage rate or comparable cost of commercial transportation including taxi fares and/or limousine charges.

3. Common Carrier Travel

- a.** When travel is by common carrier, the fare must not exceed the standard coach fare charged the general public, and advantage must be taken of round trip rates when available.
- b.** The employee's copy of the ticket, or an acceptable receipt, must be submitted for reimbursement of common carrier expenses.

- c.** Baggage fees will be allowed when necessary. A receipt is required for reimbursement.
- d.** Charges for trip insurance are not reimbursable. The State of Tennessee is self-insured and does not purchase separate insurance, and therefore will not reimburse for insurance purchases made for trips.

4. Chartered Aircraft

- a.** Generally, faculty and staff (including group travel and athletics) whose duties require travel will use commercial ground and air carriers or an institutional automobile. However, a chartered aircraft may be used if time and/or distance preclude ground travel or if a commercial air service is either unavailable or does not meet the needs of the traveler(s).
- b.** The president shall assign the following duties to a responsible official:
 - i.** Reviewing and approving requests for charter air services;
 - ii.** Scheduling charter flights; and
 - iii.** Informing those who request charter flights of the charter company's policy on canceling scheduled flights.
- c.** Charter services will be utilized only when it can be shown that the charter does not exceed the sum of all traveling costs by commercial carrier (e.g. transportation, meals, and lodging) or that circumstances necessitate travel when no other means is available.
- d.** The charter company must provide the institution with an original, itemized invoice showing the beginning and ending dates of the charter, the origin and destination of each flight, and the names of passengers on each flight.

5. Automobile Travel

- a.** When travel by automobile is appropriate, employees may use Tennessee Tech owned automobiles whenever available and feasible. However, Tennessee Tech owned vehicles should be used only on official business.
 - i.** When transportation is by a Tennessee Tech owned automobile, tolls, parking, gasoline, and storage expenses are allowable.
 - ii.** When using Tennessee Tech owned automobiles, employees will be furnished with courtesy cards for purchase of gasoline, oil, and other automobile services, and such expenses should not be claimed by employees as travel expenses.

- iii.** Emergency out-of-pocket expenses, such as towing or emergency repairs, will be reimbursed but must be accompanied by proper receipt identifying the automobile and itemizing the services. Such expenditures must be of an emergency nature when immediate service is required and access to a state facility is not possible.
 - iv.** Major repairs should be approved by campus officials prior to work being performed. Such expenditures are allowed but should be filed for reimbursement separately.
- b. Personally-Owned Automobiles**
- i.** Mileage reimbursement rates are determined by the State of Tennessee Department of Finance and Administration and can be found on the [General Reimbursement Schedule](#) in the State's Comprehensive Travel Regulations.
 - ii.** The authorized mileage allowance includes all operating expenses such as gas, oil, and repairs precluding any separate claim for such items.
 - iii.** Employees may use reputable websites to determine point-to-point and/or vicinity mileage.
 - iv.** Procedures for calculating mileage are based on the fact that Tennessee Tech is prohibited from reimbursing employees for normal commuting mileage.
 - v.** If an employee begins or ends a trip at his/her official station, reimbursable mileage will be the mileage from the official station to the destination.
 - vi.** If work is performed by an employee in route to or from the official station, reimbursable mileage is computed by deducting the employee's normal commuting mileage from the actual mileage driven.
 - vii.** If an employee begins or ends a trip at a personal residence without stopping at the employee's official station, reimbursable mileage will be the lesser of the mileage from the employee's residence to the work destination or from the official station to the work destination.
 - viii.** On weekends and holidays, the employee may typically be reimbursed for actual mileage from his/her residence to the destination. If an employee travels between destinations without returning to his/her official station or his/her residence, reimbursable mileage is the actual mileage between those destinations.
 - ix.** The travel claim must indicate the employee's itinerary and must show the official business mileage. Business mileage as indicated by the official state map or reputable websites, such as Rand McNally, for out of state routes will be regarded as official. Vicinity mileage must be reported on a separate line and not included with point to point mileage. Only mileage on official business may be claimed.

x. Necessary charges for hotel and airport parking will be allowed.

6. Limousine and Taxi Service

a. When travel is by common carrier, reasonable limousine and taxi fares will be allowed for necessary transportation.

b. Bus or limousine service to and from airports will be used when available and practical.

c. After arrival at destination, necessary taxi fares for traveling between hotels or lodging and meeting or conference will be allowed.

d. No receipt is required for reimbursement of reasonable taxi fares.

7. Car Rentals at Destination

a. Charges for automobile rental shall be allowed whenever it is more economical than alternative methods of transportation or it is the only practical means of transportation.

b. Charges for insurance for rented automobiles are not reimbursable. The State of Tennessee is self-insured and does not purchase separate insurance, and therefore will not reimburse for insurance purchases made for rental vehicles.

c. Employees should refuel before returning vehicles when possible.

8. Tolls and Ferry Fees

a. Reasonable tolls and ferry fees will be allowed when necessary.

b. No receipt is required for reimbursement of tolls and ferry fees.

9. Daily Parking Fees

a. Employees required to utilize commercial parking facilities in the daily performance of duties, or while on travel status, will be allowed reimbursement for actual costs.

b. Receipt is required if the fee exceeds the maximum indicated per day (see General Reimbursement Rate Addendum).

- 10.** Unnecessary meals and lodging expenses which are occasioned by the use of an automobile for reasons of the employee's personal convenience, or which are due to travel by an indirect route, will not be allowed.
- 11.** If travel is by common carrier, the employee will be reimbursed for expenses in traveling to and from the common carrier including related parking expenses. Receipts must be furnished on airport and hotel parking exceeding maximum parking allowance in General Reimbursement Rate Addendum.

D. Lodging

- 1.** Lodging expenses incurred within the state while on authorized travel will be reimbursable to the maximum shown on the General Reimbursement Rate Addendum.
- 2. Out of State Lodging**
 - a.** Lodging expenses incurred out of the state while on authorized travel will be reimbursable to the maximum shown on the General Reimbursement Rate Addendum.
 - b.** The maximum reimbursement rates for out-of-state travel are the same as those maintained by CONUS. The [CONUS](#) list, available on the General Services Administration web site, contains a standard reimbursement rate for lodging and meals and incidentals, and several pages of exceptions. Most destinations for out-of-state travel fall within the list of exceptions.
 - c.** En route lodging will be allowed for only one day each way on trips of long duration. En route lodging will only be allowed in cases when the approved and most direct or expeditious mode of travel will require more than ten (10) hours of continuous travel.
- 3.** Lodging expenses incurred while out of the country will be reimbursed at actual expenses with receipts.
- 4. Additional Lodging Expenses**
 - a.** Sales taxes on lodging costs will be reimbursable.
 - b.** Higher rates for lodging at the location of a convention or conference will be allowed, without special approval, up to the amount indicated in the convention or conference brochure or conference website when attached to the travel claim.
 - c.** Any exceptions must be approved by the President.

5. Shared Lodging

- a. In the event of double occupancy for state employees on official travel, both employees should attach an explanation to his/her travel claim detailing dates and other employees with whom the room was shared. The receipt for the entire amount should be submitted with both claims.
- b. The lodging cost may be claimed by the employee who incurred the cost, or one half the double occupancy charge may be allowable for each employee.
- c. If a room is shared with other than a state employee, actual cost subject to the maximum in the General Reimbursement Rate Addendum will be allowed.

E. Meals

1. In-State and Out-of-State Meals

- a. Meals while on authorized travel will be reimbursed, subject to the meal allowance provided on the General Reimbursement Rate Addendum.
- b. The maximum per diem rates include a fixed allowance for meals and for incidental expenses (M&I).
- c. The M&I rate, or fraction thereof, is payable to the traveler without itemization of expenses or receipts.
- d. Incidentals are intended to include miscellaneous costs associated with travel such as tips for baggage handling, phone calls home, etc.
- e. The M&I rates for out-of-state travels are the same as those for federal employees, and are available on the General Services Administration's web site. As with lodging, there is a standard rate for the continental United States ([CONUS](#)), and a list of exceptions.
- f. Reimbursement for meals and incidentals for the day of departure shall be three-fourths of the appropriate M&I rate (either the in-state rate or [CONUS](#) rate for out-of-state travel) at the rate prescribed for the lodging location.
- g. Reimbursement for M&I for the day of return shall be three-fourths of the M&I rate applicable to the preceding calendar day.
- h. The CONUS [M&I Breakdown](#) should be used to determine the single meal allowance and the three-fourths calculation, when appropriate.

4. Receipts for appropriate expenses must be submitted with the claim for reimbursement.
5. Expenses for books, supplies, postage, and other items that do not constitute actual traveling expenses should not be included in the claim form.
6. Claims for reimbursement for travel expenses should be submitted no later than thirty (30) days after completion of the travel.
7. Complete travel claims and requisitions in accordance with the [Procedures Manual for Completing Travel Claims and Requisitions](#).

H. Travel Advances

1. Normally travel expenses should be paid when incurred by an employee, with reimbursement made to the employee for actual expenses upon proper submission of a claim for travel expenses. Advances to employees for anticipated travel expenses may be made under the circumstances hereinafter described as permanent and temporary travel advances. Travel advances for Clerical and Support employees are approved by their immediate supervisor. Travel advances for exempt employees must be approved by the President or his/her designee.
2. Permanent Travel Advances
 - a. When an employee has blanket travel authorization, and is expected to travel the major portion of each month, the employee may be placed upon permanent travel status.
 - b. Upon determination of the employee's estimated monthly expenses, if such expenses exceed \$100, the employee may be provided with a single advance in an amount sufficient to cover such expenses for one month, provided such amount may not exceed the semi-monthly salary of the employee.
 - c. Subsequent to the initial advance, the employee shall submit appropriate claims and be reimbursed as heretofore provided, with any unused portion of the advance to be returned upon termination of the employee's permanent travel status.
3. Temporary Travel Advances
 - a. When temporary travel is authorized for an employee, the employee may receive an advance, provided a request for the advance, including estimated expenses, is submitted to the appropriate approving authority with the request for written authorization for the travel, and is approved.

- b.** An amount equal to 80% of the estimated out of pocket expenditures will be allowed as an advance, however, no advance less than \$100 will be made.
- c.** Students traveling under individual authorizations or an employee traveling with a student or students who is responsible for disbursing all funds for the trip may be advanced 100% of the amount of the authorization.

4. Payroll Deduction Authorization

- a.** Each employee receiving a permanent or temporary travel advance for the first time must sign a payroll deduction authorization form which will allow Tennessee Tech to recover the advance from any salary owed the employee in the event of termination of employment or failure to submit a travel claim.
- b.** This deduction from payroll should be used as a last resort only in the event all other efforts to collect the advance have failed.

5. Expense Claim

- a.** Upon return, the employee should submit an expense claim detailing his/her actual expenditures. This claim should show the total expenses incurred. The advanced amount should be subtracted from this total. The excess expenses will be reimbursed to the employee.
- b.** No advance should exceed actual expenses. If this does happen, however, the excess should be returned by the employee to the business office for deposit as a credit against the original advance with proper distribution being made of the actual expenses incurred.
- c.** In the latter instance, the expense account claim should be forwarded to the business office with notification to file it with the advance request.

6. Non-business Expenses

- a.** You are eligible for reimbursement of travel expenses if your trip was entirely business related.
- b.** If your trip was primarily for business and, while at your business destination, you extended your stay, made a personal side trip, or had other personal activities, you can obtain reimbursement for only your business related travel expenses.
- c.** These expenses include the travel costs of getting to and from your business destination but do not include additional lodging, parking, and per diem for the days not required for the business travel.

- d.** Additional days are not considered business related unless they are necessary to provide rest or sleep required for you to properly perform your duties.

I. Athletic and Other Student Group Travel

1. Athletic Recruiting

- a.** If a staff member has a "courtesy vehicle" due to his/her association with Tennessee Tech, the maximum rate allowed will be the rate allowed under these policies, less the portion of the IRS business standard mileage rate treated as depreciation.
- b.** The following are subject to prior approval by the president or designee:
 - i.** Blanket travel authorization for scouting or recruiting; and
 - ii.** The travel of visitors and guests at institutional expense for any occasion related to recruiting.
- c.** The actual cost of guest meals may be claimed when incurred by a staff member for recruiting purposes. Such claims must be submitted in appropriate detail. Receipts are required.
- d.** Student Recruits
 - i.** Staff members are responsible for compliance with pertinent NCAA and conference rules regarding student recruits.
 - ii.** Lodging in campus facilities may be arranged if space is available. If campus space is not available, arrangements may be made for lodging in local motels/hotels, and, with the approval of the athletic director or designee, may be charged to the athletic department.
 - iii.** If available, the use of campus dining services should be arranged and costs may be charged to the athletic department. If necessary, staff members will be reimbursed at cost for off-campus meals, with reasonable and customary gratuities allowed. Receipts must accompany claims.
 - iv.** Transportation may be arranged through a local travel service and charged to the athletic department with the approval of the athletic director or designee. Automobile mileage may be reimbursed to a student recruit at the maximum rate allowed under this policy and procedures for the use of a personal vehicle.
 - v.** Entertainment expenses may be reimbursed at cost within NCAA and conference rules.

2. Travel

- a.** Institution officials and guests of the institution that accompany the team or student groups on trips must be approved in advance by the President or designee.
- b.** In all cases, team and group transportation will be arranged through established institutional procedures, and travel itineraries are to be arranged in advance.
 - i.** Documentation must be maintained in the athletic or other appropriate departments or offices indicating that various cost alternatives have been explored before making all arrangements and reservations.
 - ii.** However, if such arrangements are made by Tennessee Tech's purchasing office, that office should maintain the appropriate documentation.
- c.** A roster of all individuals on a particular trip must be included with the itinerary documentation for proper accounting and auditing purposes and filed with the travel claim.
- d.** A travel advance in the amount of 100% of the estimated trip expenses may be allowed. One person from the athletic department or coach staff member who is familiar with the travel regulations will be responsible for the advance and all bills connected with team or group travel.
- e.** Receipts are required for all team or group travel expenses.
- f.** Actual lodging expenses will be reimbursed.
 - i.** Documentation must be maintained in the athletic department or other appropriate department or office indicating that various cost alternatives have been explored before making all arrangements and reservations.
 - ii.** However, if such arrangements are made by the institution's purchasing office, that office should maintain the appropriate documentation.
- g.** Miscellaneous expenses, such as movies while on trips, must be supported by receipts.
- h.** Telephone calls by staff members for business purposes may be claimed with documentation
- i.** Individual meals associated with team or group travel will follow this policy.
- j.** All team or group meals and snacks will be reimbursed at actual cost.

- i.** Gratuities not to exceed reasonable and customary rates are allowed.
- ii.** Appropriate documentation and receipts are required.
- k.** All travel claims and requisitions for team or group travel must be approved in writing by the appropriate approving authority.
- 3.** Faculty who lead student group travel (abroad or domestic) must follow all requirements found in TTU Policy 215 (Faculty-led Domestic Trips) and TTU Policy 290 (Faculty-Led Study Abroad Short-Term Programs)

J. Exceptions

- 1.** The President shall have the authority to grant exceptions to any part or all of the provisions of this policy when deemed appropriate and necessary; however, any exception directly affecting the President must be approved by the Chair of the Board of Trustees. Two areas of standing exceptions to the travel policy are provided. The first exception applies only to the President and Tennessee Tech employees traveling in the company of the President. The second exception applies to members of the Tennessee Tech Board of Trustees.
- 2.** The first exception related to the President corresponds with Exception Number Three of the State's Comprehensive Travel Regulations. Special rates for this exception are found in the following addendum titled Special Rates Under Exception One. All provisions of Sections A through H of this policy shall be applicable unless superseded by the following.
 - a.** Transportation: First class travel on common carrier shall be allowable at the option of the above designated persons when accompanying others not employed by Tennessee Tech who are traveling in first class accommodations.
 - b.** Charges for automobile rental shall be allowed whenever it is more economical than alternative methods of transportation or whenever it is the only practical means of transportation.
- 3.** The second exception - members of the Board of Trustees shall be reimbursed for travel in the performance of their official duties in accordance with applicable provisions of the general policy unless superseded by the following, which corresponds with Exception Number Four of the State's Comprehensive Travel Regulations, provided that necessary approvals shall be made by the President. Members of the Board of Trustees shall be reimbursed by Tennessee Tech for all allowable travel expenses upon submission of a Travel Expense Claim Form and appropriate receipts. Special rates for this exception are found in the following addendum under the title Special Rates Under Exception Two.

V. Interpretation

The Vice President for Planning and Finance or his/her designee has the final authority to interpret the terms of this policy.

VI. Citation of Authority for Policy

T.C.A. § 49-8-203(a)(1)(C); Tennessee Department of Finance and Administration: Policy 8 – Comprehensive Travel Regulations

Approved by:

Administrative Council: February 22, 2017

University Assembly: April 4, 2017

Board of Trustees: June 15, 2017