
SECTION 8

TRAVEL PROCEDURES

The practices and procedures regarding travel by Athens State University employees have been developed in accordance with Alabama law and Internal Revenue Service regulations and guidelines. These policies cover University employees, students and others who travel on approved, official University business.

A. Transportation

Athens State University has vehicles available in the motor pool for official travel essential to the operation of the institution. The use of rental cars must be justified and approved prior to the travel.

Drivers of all owned, hired, or borrowed vehicles used in the everyday operation of Athens State University on official school business approved by the President must have a valid Alabama driver's license and have an acceptable driving record.

The accident and arrest record of such drivers, which is on file at the State Department of Public Safety, is subject to review and approval by the President or designee. Disapproval of such driver experience records shall constitute adequate grounds for transfer to non-driving duty or dismissal.

B. Scheduling of Vehicles

Faculty and staff members may schedule the use of institutional vehicles for authorized and approved institutional business by calling the Security office during regular business hours. Keys to all vehicles and reservation sheets are located in the Security office. The motor pool is located in the parking lots on the east and west sides of the ASU Security Office. Prior to scheduling a vehicle, faculty or staff must be assigned a unique driver personal identification number (PIN) used for the fueling of vehicles, complete driver safety training and undergo a motor vehicle records check. This PIN number is issued by either the Security Office or Business Office. Faculty and staff are responsible for confirming or obtaining a PIN number prior to scheduling a vehicle. ***Only Athens State employees may drive University owned vehicles.***

Under certain circumstances, higher priority institutional needs may cause the use of a vehicle to be delayed or canceled. When considering priority of usage, favorable consideration will be given to those individuals traveling the greatest distance.

The person using the vehicle is responsible for returning the vehicle in good condition, (remove all trash and personal items, etc.). No smoking is allowed in University owned vehicles and no animals are to be transported. All vehicle maintenance issues and malfunctions should be reported to the Security Office immediately. Vehicles should be promptly returned to the motor pool parking lot with at least 1/2 tank of gas. Keys and gas receipts must be returned to either the Security Office, or the Security Office drop box.

C. Credit Cards

Athens State University uses WEX Fuel cards for all University vehicles on institutional business. These cards are located inside the vehicle (usually in the glove compartment). Each vehicle has a unique credit card, and it cannot be used without a personal identification number (PIN). PINs may be given to approved faculty and staff by the Security Office or Business Office. WEX Fuel cards are accepted at most major gas stations. The WEX Connect app may be downloaded to a smart phone. This will navigate to the nearest gas station that will accept the credit card. Lost or stolen cards must be reported immediately to the Business Office. Individuals are responsible for misuse of University owned credit cards. Receipts for fuel purchases should be turned in to the Security Office when the car is returned.

D. In-State Travel

The President is authorized to approve in-state travel for institution employees or students traveling on institution-related activities. Reimbursement shall be made in accordance with applicable state laws. The President has delegated approval to all Vice Presidents and/or their designees.

Travel expense statements should be submitted promptly for budgetary reasons. With the exception of fiscal year end travel claims (see below), the University considers two months from date of travel to be reasonable time for employees to submit travel reimbursement claims. Travel reimbursement claims received by the Office of Financial Affairs after two months may be disallowed.

Employees traveling on grant funded programs must properly report and submit statements on or before the end of the particular program's grant year.

For all programs, August and September travel reimbursements should be received prior to the end of the first full week of October.

In-state travel reimbursement claim forms are available on the Office of Financial Affairs webpage.

The following rules and regulations govern in-state travel:

- If the travel is for attending a convention, conference, seminar or other meeting of a state or national organization of which the University or the individual IS a dues paying member, all actual and necessary expenses in addition to actual expenses for transportation shall be reimbursed. If lodging other than the conference host hotel is used the maximum amount of reimbursement will be the lesser of actual expenses or the host hotel rate per night for single accommodations. The reimbursement procedures for Out-of-State Travel (Section E) will apply.
- For all other in-state travel including travel to meetings of an organization of which the University or individual is NOT a dues paying member, per-diem allowance is used in lieu of subsistence.

No travel allowance shall be paid for a trip of less than six hours duration. For travel which does not require an overnight stay, the traveler shall be paid a meal allowance of \$12.75 for a trip from 6 to 12 hours duration; and an allowance of \$34 for more than 12 hours but not overnight. Pursuant to Memorandum 2007-FIS-215 dated December 7, 2007, partial day per diem payments are considered income and are subject to federal, state, FICA and Medicare taxes.

- For travel requiring an overnight stay, the traveler shall be paid a per diem allowance for each full day or fraction thereof for the duration of the trip. For travel that only requires a single overnight stay the rate will be \$85 per day. An overnight stay would represent 2 per diem units, $\$85 \times 2 = \170 . Travel that requires a stay of two or more nights the rate will be \$100 per day. Under normal circumstances overnight per diem will not be paid for locations within a 60-mile radius of the Athens State Campus. In extenuating circumstances, the President may approve a waiver to this procedure in advance of the travel.
- Conference registration fees can be requested to be paid prior to travel by submitting a purchase order request for the registration through the normal purchase order process.
- Documentation providing proof of attendance must be included. This might be the conference/meeting registration confirmation, the daily meeting agenda, or name tag. **This should be attached to the reimbursement packet to ensure prompt reimbursement.**
- Reimbursement at a set rate per mile will be made to employees traveling by private car at state expense. This rate is established by the Internal Revenue Service.
- When, for traveler's personal convenience or through the taking of leave, there is an interruption of travel or deviation from the direct route, the per diem in lieu of subsistence allowed will not exceed that which would have been incurred on uninterrupted travel by the most economical usually traveled route.
- Under no circumstances will per diem be allowed for an employee at the official station or base.
- For employees traveling in private automobiles, a current Google Map or similar document must be attached to receive reimbursement for mileage. If travel involves more than one city, indicate route taken, for example, Montgomery – Tuscaloosa – Birmingham. Record all vicinity mileage as such and, if it exceeds 20 miles on any day, indicate major points of travel covered.
- When the payment of cash is necessary for miscellaneous expenditures on expense accounts, receipts will be required as follows:
 - Operating expenses of state-owned automobiles, such as gasoline, oil, etc.
 - Repairs or expenses of state-owned automobiles. Receipts must be

itemized.

- Postage in excess of a set dollar limit.
 - Shipments, freight or express.
 - Tolls for tunnels and bridges.
 - Miscellaneous emergency expenditures.
 - Transportation fares showing tax has been reduced.
 - Registration fees.
- Receipts will not be required for meals and lodging; however, it would be wise to keep lodging receipts in your personal files; or if you desire, they may be attached to your travel claim.
 - Tips will not be reimbursed unless unusual in nature and explained.
 - Receipts will not be required when the disclosure of the identity of the traveler would be detrimental to the State's interest.
 - Storing privately owned vehicles is a reimbursable item of expense when the traveler is on official business for the State. Receipts are required.

E. Out-of-State/In-State Dues Paying Member/Student Travel

The President is authorized to approve out-of-state travel for institution employees or students traveling on institution-related activities. Reimbursements shall be made in accordance with applicable state laws. Out-of-state travel approval forms are available on the Office of Financial Affairs webpage. Requests for In-State Dues Paying Member Travel must have proof of membership attached and Student Travel requests should be accompanied by the appropriate student travel forms.

Upon receiving approval from the President for out-of-state travel, a copy of the approval form should be retained by the traveler and the original approved copy should be forwarded to the Office of Financial Affairs. A purchase order will be generated and emailed to the traveler. A copy of the purchase order should be submitted with the travel reimbursement form upon completion of the travel.

Travel reimbursement claims should be submitted upon completion of the travel in a timely manner for budgetary purposes so that expenditures are recorded in the same year that they are budgeted. As stated for in-state travel, the University considers two months from date of travel to be reasonable time for employees to submit travel reimbursement claims, except for claims for August and September of each fiscal year.

Employees traveling on grant funded programs must properly report and submit statements on or before the end of the particular program's grant year.

For all programs, travel reimbursement claims for August and September must be received by the end of the first full week of October.

The out-of-state reimbursement claim form is available on Office of Financial Affairs webpage.

Institutional travel outside the State of Alabama is reimbursed differently than in-state travel.

- Actual costs for commercial transportation and hotel accommodations are reimbursed in total and detailed receipts should be attached. The University does not reimburse fees for the use of travel booking sites such as Travelocity, Priceline, Resevationdesk.com, Expedia, etc. The use of these sites is discouraged for University travel due to complexity in receiving a detailed receipt.

Air Transportation – As per state guidelines only economy/coach fares are allowable when traveling on commercial airline for official University business. First Class or Business Class fares are not allowable. Upgrades and/or any extras or personal choices are not covered by the University. Examples include but are not limited to Preferred/Choice seats, Early Boarding, Stand-by boarding, trip insurance, etc.

Lodging costs are reimbursed at single rate only and reimbursement for internet access is not allowed. If the employee chooses accommodations other than the preferred accommodations provided for the conference, meeting, etc., the reimbursement made will not exceed the amount required for the preferred accommodations.

- Meals are reimbursed in one of two ways and travelers must determine which method of reimbursement for meals is to be used: actual or per diem. Using both on the same travel form is not allowed.
 - Actual costs for meals may be reimbursed if total of daily meals exceed \$59; however, the traveler **must** provide itemized receipts for all meals that indicate what was purchased, date, name and location of the restaurant, and the number of persons served. Meals are to be necessary and reasonable for the location and individuals will not be reimbursed for alcoholic beverages.
 - The traveler may submit meal expenses of up to \$59 per day without receipts using the daily per diem per meals as follows \$14 for breakfast, \$18 for lunch, and \$27 for dinner. If meals are provided to the employee, the \$59 per diem allowance is reduced by the applicable amount for each meal provided. Breakfast will only be allowed if travel begins at 6:00 a.m. or before, and a dinner meal will be allowed only if the traveler returns to base after 6:00 p.m.
- Mileage will be paid for travelers that use their personal vehicle, when a State vehicle is not available. Reimbursement will be made at the rate set by the Internal Revenue Service. This includes travel from base to airport.
- Receipts are required on out-of-state travel for the following:
 - Motel/hotel lodging
 - Registration fees

- Meals that exceed \$59 per day
 - Operating expenses, such as gasoline or emergency repairs
 - Copy services, etc.
 - Parking fees, taxi fees, and miscellaneous expenses.
- A copy of the purchase order generated from the travel request **must be attached to the reimbursement packet to ensure prompt reimbursement.**
 - Documentation providing proof of attendance must be included. This might be the conference/meeting registration confirmation, the daily meeting agenda, or name tag. **This should be attached to the reimbursement packet to ensure prompt reimbursement.**

Out-of-state travel approval forms are estimates only. Sources of funds must be identified on the approval form. If the source of funds is not specifically identified or are partially identified on the approval form, employees will only be reimbursed based on the amount specifically identified. All other expenses will be paid out-of-pocket by the employee incurring the travel costs.

F. International Travel

Travel is considered international when it occurs anywhere outside the United States or its territories.

Travel Claim Forms - Request for reimbursement for international employee travel should be submitted on the reimbursement form for Out-of-State travel expenses. All costs listed on the travel claim must be recorded in U. S. currency and the exchange rate stated on the claim form.

Currency exchange fees may be claimed only when you are required to convert to/from U. S. currency. You may not claim reimbursement for losses due to currency conversion.

Request for reimbursement for travel expenses must be filed on the reimbursement form for Out-of-State travel expenses form within two months of travel. Receipts and other documentation of the total cost of the trip must be submitted along with the travel reimbursement form. Documentation must include information detailing meals included in the registration fee. This might be the conference registration information or the daily meetings schedule. Any expenses paid by a third party should be noted on the form.

Travel Approval - Before using federal contract or grant funds to travel internationally, employees must gain prior approval from the sponsoring or granting agency unless originally approved in the contract or grant.

Actual lodging expenses will be reimbursed but must be determined to be reasonable and pre-approved. Meals and incidental expenses will be reimbursed at the current federal M&IE rate for the destination. Receipts are not required. The U. S. Department Office of Allowances publishes foreign per diem rates for

lodging and M&EI. Current rates may be viewed at the following website address: http://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=184&menu_id=78.

Reimbursement for insurance for international travel or medical coverage must have prior approval from the Vice President over the traveler's area. All other guidelines governing Out-of-State travel also govern international travel.

The University does not reimburse fees for the use of travel booking sites such as Travelocity, Priceline, Resevationdesk.com, Expedia, etc. The use of these sites is discouraged for University travel due to complexity in receiving a detailed receipt.

G. Non-Employee Travel

Those individuals and companies that have contracted with the University to provide professional services as defined by IRS regulations are independent contractors (IC). If the agreement with the IC provides for a fee plus travel expenses, reimbursement is made in accordance with the contract signed by the parties but may not exceed the limits stated in the Out-of-State travel section.

H. Student and Recognized Student Organization Travel

Student travel must be conducted in accordance with the [Student Travel](#) policy. All reimbursement for Student Travel will follow the guidelines set forth for Employee Travel in section E: Out-of-State Travel. Employees accompanying students will be governed by the normal In-State and Out-of-State travel guidelines.

I. Candidate Interview Expense Travel

Approval at the Dean/Director level or above must be obtained to permit payment of expenses incurred in connection with interviewing applicants for University positions classified as exempt. All job interview candidates must conform to transportation, meal and lodging guidelines listed below. The following should be considered to ensure that allowing reimbursement is in the best interest of the University:

- Job market supply and demand for skills of the prospective employees
- Incentive for prospective candidates to interview for the position with or without reimbursement
- Other reasons unique to the college or school

Consideration may be given to partial reimbursement, but all candidates must be given the same reimbursement consideration. Reimbursement for travel expenses of spouses of finalists for Vice President level positions and above may be authorized. There are occasions when employees are required to interview applicants during the meal period. Reimbursement for the cost of such meals including tip is allowable. Itemized receipts are required and no alcoholic beverages will be reimbursed. The candidate's name and title of the unfilled position and explanation for holding the interview over the meal period must be provided.

Guidelines for Candidate Travel Reimbursement

Description	Reimbursement Policy
Airfare	Actual cost (coach/business class only)
Hotel	Actual cost per day (2-night maximum)
Mileage	Mileage rate allowed by the Internal Revenue Code for income taxes in accordance with state statute
Auto rental	Actual cost up to \$40 per day (2 days maximum)
Parking	Actual cost up to \$20 per day (2 days maximum)
Food	Actual cost up to \$50 per day (2 days maximum, Itemized Receipts required, No alcoholic beverages will be reimbursed)
Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Receipts are required</u> for each type of travel reimbursement • <u>Total</u> expenses for any candidate will not exceed \$1,000 per interview. This limit may be waived at the discretion of the university president. • Travel expenses will not be paid to interviewees living within a 75-mile radius of the university campus. • No reimbursement may be made to an applicant who has been offered the position and declined.