

QUESTION AND ANSWERS

5.7.3 TRAVEL POLICIES FOR NON-EMPLOYEES / STUDENTS

5.7.3-01 Who is considered a “non-employee”?

Anyone who is not employed by the University but is on official state or university business whose expense is paid for by the University and subject to state and university regulations.

5.7.3-02 Who is considered a “student”?

Anyone who is registered as a student with the University during the period of travel.

5.7.3-03 Can a student be reimbursed for non-employee travel from state funds?

If such travel is for a service/benefit to the state within the “Official State Business” rule and the purpose for which state funds are provided to the university, such travel may be paid from state funds and may be reimbursed to the same extent as are state employees. Such travel requires a written agreement between the student and department head as to the travel commitment and service/benefit to the University.

5.7.3-04 What approvals are required to authorize non-employee student travel reimbursements?

The department head must approve the “Non-Employee Travel Authorization Form” prior to the planned travel and the department employee assigned administrative responsibility over the non-employee’s travel shall approve the reimbursement request.

5.7.3-05 What constitutes a benefit within the “Official State Business” rule?

“Official State Business” is defined in the State Budget Manual as occurring “when the state employee or other person is traveling to attend approved job related training and/or work on behalf of, officially represent, or provide a state service upon the state’s request.”

Non-employee student travel that may benefit state supported operations include travel for the purpose: of enhancing the visibility of university state supported programs to its peers, and future or current customers; of exchanging information and knowledge relevant to improving state funded program services; of enhancing skills relevant

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to improving volunteer services that support state funded programs; and other similar activities that relate to services supported by the state. Examples include: (1) a student volunteer recruiter attending a fair to publicize and attract students to the university, (2) a student in a biological services program asked by the college to work on a project on the Outer Banks, (3) a graduate or under-graduate student asked by the college to represent the university at a conference for the purpose of enhancing program services, and (4) a student that pays a special fee for travel to conferences that is deposited into state funds. When documenting the agreement between the non-employee student and the department head, the service provided and the state funded purpose must be clearly described and supported.

5.7.3-06 What are some examples of activity that is not within the “Official State Business” rule?

Activities such as participating in events/programs sponsored by student activity funds, athletic program funds, student auxiliary program funds, activities sponsored by contributions and/or fund raising activity funds, or activities that constitute a personal benefit to the student are not considered “Official State Business”. However, such activities may be paid from non-state funds if provided for in and authorized by a specific trust fund authority. Examples of such student travel may include: (1) a student residence advisor that is not paid a salary but is sent to a conference related to residence life matters, (2) a student in the university choir that travels to perform as part of the university choir, (3) a student cheer leader traveling with the basketball team to cheer lead at a sporting event, (4) a student softball team player traveling with the team to participate in a sporting event, or (5) a student traveling to a foreign country as part of a university sponsored study aboard program. Student travel expenses for such activities must be paid by the benefiting non-state funded program/activity.

5.7.3-07 What constitutes a personal benefit to the student?

A personal benefit occurs when there is no requirement to provide services. Such transactions include financial assistance to students for institutional costs, living allowances, educational related travel expenses, and study abroad programs. Examples of educational related travel may include: (1) traveling to meet a course requirement, (2) attending a conference or meeting without documented justification/agreement of the business services to be provided, (3) traveling to discuss information related to a students academic project

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with little or no benefit to the University, (4) travel assistance specifically authorized by a grant or scholarship. Student travel having little or no benefit to the university may be considered financial aid expense and must be communicated to the Student Financial Aid Office for their consideration.

Travel expenses that are a personal benefit to the student may not be charged to state funds unless specifically authorized by legislation or legally directed for such purposes. An example, state funds would be allowable when educational travel is included in a student fee that is approved by the Board of Governors and deposited into state funds for expenditure.

5.7.3-08 Can the department head designate someone to sign for him/her and/or in his/her absence?

Only the department head can authorize non-employee student travel. In cases where the department head is unavailable for a period of time, the official responsible during that time for department operations may sign as the department head.

5.7.3-09 If the student is employed and is split funded between state funds and contract funds, can the travel reimbursement be 100% from state funds?

Travel reimbursement to students that are for purposes related to the position must be paid from the same sources that pay the employee's salary. If the salary were split, the travel would be split as well.

5.7.3-10 If the student is employed but the travel is for purposes not related to the position can the travel be paid from the fund(s) paying the student's salary?

Travel reimbursement to students must be made from the fund(s) that benefit from the service provided by the student. In the case where an employed student is authorized by a department head to travel for a non-employee related purpose, the rules for non-employee student travel would apply.

5.7.3-11 If the student is employed on a grant and the grant won't allow the travel reimbursement, do we have to use discretionary funding?

If sufficient funding for travel expenses is not available from the salary source, then other funds available for such service benefit may be used; such as, overhead funds, gift funds, discretionary funds. State

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funds may not be used for activity associated with a grant unless specifically authorized by the State.

- 5.7.3-12 If a non-employee student is traveling with a group of students, does each student in the group have to complete and have approved a separate non-employee travel authorization form?

The department and students traveling in a group may document the travel authorization using a single form. When doing this the departments must attached a list of the students traveling in the group with their signatures under a statement that refers to the specific information regarding (1) what the travel is for and the related service/benefit to the University and (2) the travel commitment to the student. The approval by the department head would be made on the single “Non-Employee Travel Authorization Form” with the attached information referenced on the form.

- 5.7.3-13 If a non-employee student is a frequent traveler, such as an athlete, does the student have to complete and have approved a separate non-employee travel authorization form for each trip?

Students traveling on a frequent basis such as an athlete may obtain a time limited blanket authorization from the department head in lieu of separate travel authorization forms. When doing this, the department must provide for the specifics as required by the non-employee travel authorization form and with the time limitation signed by the department head. Student travel paid for from state funds should not be for students traveling on a frequent basis and therefore, a separate non-employee travel authorization form is required when state funds are expended.

- 5.7.3-14 Will the interpretation of the student travel policy as provided for in the DDD letter issued February 5, 2008 apply equally all over campus?

Yes, the DDD letter issued on February 5, 2008 provides for the official interpretation of the student travel policy as promulgated by the Office of State Budget and Management. In addition it extends the use of the “Non-Employee Travel Authorization Form” to all non-employee student travel regardless of funding source.

- 5.7.3-15 Are the procedures outlined in the DDD letter issued February 5, 2008 regarding student travel and the use of the “Non-Employee Travel Authorization Form” mandatory for all departments?

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Yes, the DDD letter issued on February 5, 2008 including the use of the “Non-Employee Travel Authorization Form” is mandatory for all departments.

- 5.7.3-16 The excel workbook for the “Non-Employee Travel Authorization Form” has a tab for “Travel Advance-Reimbursement”, what is this tab for and is it required to be used?

The additional worksheet under the tab “Travel Advance-Reimbursement” provides for the required forms when a travel advance is requested and approved for a non-employee or student. This new electronic form provides a university standard for the required reconciliation of the travel advance to the actual travel expenditures. It is required to be used as a part of implementing the “Non-Employee Travel Authorization Form”. While the form was designed to be intuitive, questions regarding how to use the form should be directed to the [Travel Audit Supervisor](#) in the University Controller’s Office.

- 5.7.3-17 May the workbook for the “Non-Employee Travel Authorization Form” including the tab for “Travel Advance-Reimbursement” be used to document an employee’s travel authorization and travel advance request and reconciliation?

The “Non-Employee Travel Authorization Form” is only for non-employee travel. However, a similar form is available on the [University Controller’s Office web site](#) for employee use. This form should be used when employees are traveling out of country and/or requesting travel advances. See the University [PRR on travel advances](#) for more information on when travel advances are available.

- 5.7.3-18 What account codes do you use for recording travel expenses for students?

For students that are eligible and receive a travel advance, the “Travel Advance and Reconciliation Form” will automate the calculation of the transaction amount by account code. Students that are traveling as non-employees use the following account codes:

53141 – for transportation expenses

53144 - for subsistence and other travel expenses

Students that are traveling as employees of the university should use the same expense account codes as are used for employee travel.