Travel Procedures for RTF Faculty and Staff

These procedures apply to faculty traveling beyond 25 miles of the UT Austin Campus.

GENERAL

For an overview of the University’s travel procedures, go to the Handbook Of Business Procedures Travel Section. In addition, the College has specific policies regarding the following.

PRIOR APPROVAL

All travel on behalf of the University and College requires prior approval. Travelers should complete the appropriate forms as listed in travel procedures and obtain proper authorizations through their departments/units before travel begins. Download and complete attachment titled “Request for RTF Travel”. Faculty must contact Lee Sparks AT LEAST 30 days in advance for most destinations (or 45 days in advance for international travel to a Restricted Region).

We understand you may not be able to plan this far head and we will work with you. However, be aware that deadlines for requesting Faculty Travel Grants or International Travel to Restricted Regions are firm and they are out of our control.

Faculty and staff should submit a Request for Travel for any trips for which you may be reimbursed as well as any time taken during regular business hours (Monday – Friday, 8 am – 5 pm) if this time is not reflected on one’s timesheet as absent. RTF Faculty and staff may contact Lee Sparks for assistance. Please submit your faculty travel request form at least a week prior to your department date. Due to UT Accounting rules, we cannot reimburse travel expenses if we did not set up the traveler prior to the first day of travel. Essentially, we have to know in advance if you're going to travel.

If you fail to submit a Request for Travel prior to your trip and later identify funds for reimbursement to you, RTF staff will be unable to reimburse you. It is best to err on the side of caution by always submitting a Request for Travel if the trip is related to your job or your research (even if it falls outside the regular work week).

All Requests for Travel should be submitted as far in advance as possible. In particular, you should submit to RTF staff your Faculty Travel Grant requests and International travel requests at least one month prior to the travel. Faculty Travel grants must be received by the Faculty Travel Grant Office, along with the required documentation, at least two weeks in advance; when prompted on the application for a departmental eid, use SPARKSLE so the routing is correct. Please allow department staff adequate preparation time to process the electronic request and obtain all the necessary approvals. International requests require additional approvals and research by department staff. Please submit these requests at least one month in advance of travel.

RTF "Request for Travel Authorization (RTA)" Travel Form: https://utexas.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_416DsCkzSqj1x3L

For Faculty Travel Grant information see https://gradschool.utexas.edu/faculty/faculty-travel-grants

For International Travel to a Restricted Region: Faculty Travel Intl Restricted Regions.pdf

Penalty for travel without approval: You will not be reimbursed.

ALL TRAVEL MUST BE APPROVED IN ADVANCE BY THE DEPARTMENT CHAIR (THE DEPARTMENT CHAIR’S TRAVEL IS APPROVED IN ADVANCE BY THE DEAN). NOBODY IS ALLOWED TO APPROVE THEIR OWN TRAVEL – REGARDLESS OF FUNDING. THIS IS A UNIVERSITY RULE.

When do you need an RTA (Request for Travel) - in advance of your travel?

- Is any of your travel direct billed or reimbursed thru UT? If yes, you need an RTA.
- Are you booking airfare thru the Concur website or Anthony Travel? If yes, you need an RTA.
- Are you missing any classes? If yes, you need an RTA.
- Will you be absent from Austin during regular UT operational hours: Monday – Friday 8 am – 5 pm? If yes, you need an RTA.
- Is the purpose of your travel academic-related? If yes, you need an RTA.

Let's review.

- You’re traveling to present a paper or screen a film and you’re booking your airfare thru Anthony Travel. YES, you need an RTA.
- You’re traveling to a weekend conference and you’re leaving at noon on Friday to return Monday by 2 pm. You don’t have class on Mondays or Fridays. YES, you still need an RTA.
• You're traveling to speak at another university on Thursday and they are paying for everything. UT is paying nothing. You are not missing any classes. YES, you still need an RTA.
• You are traveling over the winter break to a conference in France. UT is closed. YES, you still need an RTA and you need to register with International SOS in case you have an emergency.
• You're traveling to see family over the winter break. This is strictly and only personal travel. Classes are over. NO, you do NOT need an RTA.

We're not trying to invade your private life. It is the University's business to know when you travel:
• If you are away from Austin during regular UT operating hours (Monday – Friday, 8 am – 5 pm).
• It enables us to reach you or to assist your students, if necessary.
• It enables office staff to provide for your travel arrangements or reimbursements if you are using UT funds for your travel.
• It verifies that you are traveling on official University business, in the event of an accident. (including worker's comp claims)
• t verifies that any classes missed are adequately covered or made up.
• It enables staff to schedule a meeting that involves you, obtain signatures from you, etc.
• It keeps us in compliance with UT rules.

PARKING

Reimbursement for parking at Austin Bergstrom International Airport (ABIA) is permitted at the remote parking lot per day maximum rate. The University of Texas at Austin and Airport Fast Park (AFP) have an agreement that provides a discounted parking rate for UT Austin business travelers departing from ABIA. Travelers can enroll in the frequent parker program at Airport Fast Park. If you do not have a Frequent Park Card, please access the website and complete the short application form. A Frequent Park Card and member packet will be mailed to you within a few days.

AIRFARE

You may either purchase your flights on your own and request reimbursement. If you select this method, you must provide us with your Itinerary and proof of purchase.

OR

You may contact Anthony Travel, Inc. or use the Concur website.

The travel agency we use is Anthony Travel. Our primary travel agent is Casimera Shapiro:

Anthony Travel, Inc.
7320 N. Mopac Expwy, Ste 402
Austin, Tx 78731
800-684-2044 – extn 8481
512-617-8486- Direct

Email: CasimeraShapiro@anthonytravel.com

If you email or call Casimera or anyone else at Anthony Travel with your flight needs, you will be asked for a Document ID number and/or credit card number. The Document ID number is your RTA. Lee will provide this to you.

OR

You can arrange your travel thru the Concur website. The Concur site is a lot like Expedia or Travelocity except that is strictly for the University of Texas System. You have to register before you can use the site - log in with your UT EID using the following link:

https://www.utexas.edu/travel/concur/

Once registered, you can log in directly to the Concur website: https://www.concursolutions.com/

You should designate Lee Sparks as your department administrator to view your travel bookings. His EID is SPARKSLE.

BAGGAGE

For an airline which charges for the first bag checked, the University allows reimbursement at the standard rate. Extra weight charges will not be reimbursed. Charges for a second bag will only be reimbursed if the bag contains UT equipment necessary for the purpose for which the individual is traveling. This excludes computer equipment (such as laptops) which should not be checked. UT Baggage Policy. Talk with Eric or Gloria if you have a problem.
RENTAL CAR

Reimbursement for cars rented for use in the Austin area is not allowed. Rental vehicles at your travel destination are reimbursable but require itemized receipts and explanation for rental. ONLY the following rental car agencies are reimbursable: Avis/Budget, Enterprise/National and Hertz.

MILEAGE

Reimbursement for travel to and from ABIA is allowed. Travelers should submit a printed MapQuest map or direction listing which includes point to point mileage. In general, reimbursement for mileage due to work within Travis County is not allowed.

TAXIS

Reimbursements for taxis are allowed. Receipts are required for taxi fares from one city to another. Receipts or a detailed log are acceptable for taxi fares within a single city. An acceptable log includes date, from/to information, and amount paid.

MEALS

Meals are not reimbursed without an overnight stay. The RTF Department will reimburse up to $51 per day. If traveler wishes to be reimbursed at a higher rate, traveler must provide itemized receipts (receipts for all meals) and a justification for the added expenditure. Per diem reimbursed on state funds can only be reimbursed to the maximum allowed. (See GG1 screen for amounts.)

OFFICIAL OCCASIONS/MEETINGS

Occasionally, the purpose of travel necessitates holding a meeting or other entertainment function. All policies related to the official occasion forms and entertainment apply.

TELEPHONE OR INTERNET CHARGES

Telephone and internet charges are only reimbursed if you can demonstrate they were essential for official University business. Itemized receipts are required.

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

International travel requires Steve Reese’s approval, on behalf of the Office of the Dean – College of Communication. Gloria will obtain this permission for you and alert you to any problems. Travel to “non-concern” countries is routine at this time but this extra step is required. For international travel, you may request an International SOS card from Gloria. This concierge type service provides help in the event of a medical, dental, or evacuation emergency while abroad. You should register your trip with International SOS and the U.S. State Department (STEP):

- http://www.utexas.edu/travel/international_assistance.php
- https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/

Verify with your medical insurance carrier if you are covered while traveling abroad. If you are not, you should purchase additional insurance.

Check the entry/exit information on the U.S. State Department’s website for passport and visa requirements. Many countries require passports remain valid for months after the travel ends, a minimum number of blank pages in traveler’s passport, and a visa.


Travel to Restricted countries is more difficult and RTF discourages it. However, if you have a need to travel to a restricted country, you must meet with Gloria to discuss your travel plans and purpose; they will help you with the required forms but have no control on whether your travel will be approved or denied. Travel requests to restricted countries require approval by the Department Chair, a Dean’s Office designee (in our case Steve Reese), and the University’s International Oversight Committee.

Travel to Restricted Regions

You should routinely monitor the following website for any Travel Warnings specific to your destination(s):

- http://travel.state.gov/

Additional Travel Resources are available at the U.T. Travel Management website:

International Travel with University equipment (in particular film gear) requires a Carnet for the equipment as well as Ocean Cargo insurance. The cost to obtain a Carnet and the additional equipment insurance is borne by the traveler. A copy of the Carnet must be submitted to Equipment Check Out (Linda Cavage) prior to your checkout and a list of all equipment traveling must be submitted to Administrative Staff (Gloria Holder) so the additional insurance can be purchased.


FUNDING

All reimbursements made must be within your designated department allocation or you must have other available funds (research or professorship support).

REIMBURSABLE VS NON-REIMBURSABLE EXPENSES:


We realize this seems a bit bureaucratic but The University has these bureaucratic rules in place for both your protection and the protection of The Department. We appreciate your understanding and solicit your cooperation so we can continue to make your travel reimbursements as painless and prompt as possible.

After your travel ends, you must submit itemized receipts for all expenses you wish to claim for reimbursement.

This includes:

- Airfare
- Lodging
- Ground transportation from one city/town to another
- Taxis
- Trains
- Buses
- Parking
- Conference Registration

The only charges for which itemized receipts are not required include:

- Meals – per diem of $41/day for any destination
- Ground transportation within a single city/town

You must submit all receipts within 30 days of your ending travel date, sooner if possible. The Safe Harbor Act limits the timeframe we have to reimburse any expense to you — if you wait too long to submit your receipts, the reimbursement will either be denied or subject to Federal Withholding Tax. The easy way to avoid Safe Harbor Act repercussions is to submit your receipts promptly.

You can leave them in Lee Sparks' mailbox or give them to him directly. Lee will notify you when reimbursement paperwork is ready for your signature. Once signed, you should see your reimbursement within approximately ten days.

TRAVEL WITH FILM PRODUCTION EQUIPMENT

1. If you are traveling further than 25 miles from the U.T. Austin campus WITH RTF PRODUCTION EQUIPMENT notify Linda Cavage or Hector Gonzales in Equipment Check Out IN WRITING. If you are traveling outside the 25 mile radius OR on an aircraft the MINIMUM notice is TEN (10) days in advance of your proposed checkout date. Please see #6 for international travel.

If you are traveling by vehicle within the contiguous United States and are not crossing over a large body of water (Lake Michigan for example) while doing so, additional insurance is not required.

2. IF you are traveling over a large body of water, NO MATER WHERE THAT BODY OF WATER IS, let RTF Staff determine if you need Ocean Cargo insurance. If you do, this must be requested no later than TEN (10) days in advance of your proposed checkout date. If traveling within the continental U.S. OR NO later than THIRTY (30) days in advance of your proposed checkout date if traveling outside the continental U.S.. You can expect to pay additional insurance premiums with this form. The amount of additional insurance premiums will depend on the dollar value of the equipment you are taking with you.

3. Are there any other forms I might need? Eric or Gloria will advise you once you have submitted your Request for Travel.

4. All travel must be pre-approved by the Department Chair &/or traveler's supervisor. You will be notified if there is a problem with your travel being approved.

5. Penalty for travel without approval:
You will not be reimbursed.
You will owe RTF for any equipment that is seized when you enter or exit a country without a valid Carnet (or if you did not follow Carnet procedures).

6. International travel is allowed but additional approvals are required.

- You must identify ALL locations, destinations, and any country that you travel to or through, and provide an equipment list a MINIMUM of THIRTY (30) days in advance of your checkout date.
- For international travel, you may request an International SOS card from Gloria. This concierge type service provides help in the event of a medical, dental, or evacuation emergency while abroad.
- If your travel is to a Restricted Region, you should wait for approval before you purchase your airfare. You should submit your request at least 45 days in advance of your date of departure from Austin.
- If you are taking production equipment, your travel MUST BE APPROVED and all required documents must be received BEFORE EQUIPMENT CAN BE CHECKED OUT. International travel MAY require a Carnet; depending on which countries you travel to or through. You must obtain the Carnet BEFORE you checkout equipment. In order to get the Carnet, you will need specific information from Equipment Checkout (serial numbers of equipment for example), so you must decide on your equipment before you obtain the Carnet.

What is a Carnet and why do you need one?

1. Carnets are international customs documents that simplify customs procedures for the temporary importation of various types of goods.
   There are two types of Carnets:
2. ATA Carnets ease the temporary importation of commercial samples (CS), professional equipment (PE), and goods for exhibitions and fairs (EF). They facilitate international business by avoiding extensive customs procedures, eliminating payment of duties and value-added taxes (minimum 20% in Europe, 27% in China), and replacing the purchase of temporary import bonds.
3. TECRO/AIT Carnets, used between the U.S. and Taiwan only, appear similar to, and serve the same function as the ATA Carnet. TECRO/AIT Carnets result from a bilateral agreement between the US and Taiwan, covering only commercial samples (CS), and professional equipment (PE).
4. Carnets save time, effort, and money. They:
5. May be used for unlimited exits from and entries into the U.S. and foreign countries (Carnets are valid for one year).
6. Are accepted in over 75 countries and territories,
   - ****Eliminate value-added taxes (VAT), duties, and the posting of security normally required at the time of importation,
   - ****Simplify customs procedures. Carnets allow a temporary exporter to use a single document for all customs transactions, make arrangements in advance, and at a predetermined cost,
   - ****Facilitate reentry into the U.S. by eliminating the need to register the goods with U.S. Customs at the time of departure.
   - Items marked with **** are why RTF requires Carnets.

INDIVIDUALS are responsible for obtaining their Carnets in advance, paying for the Carnet, and following Carnet protocol. There are serious financial consequences for not following Carnet protocols, so pay attention to their instructions.

Which countries are Carnet countries? Because this list is subject to change without notice at any time, check here http://www.uscib.org/index.asp?documentID=1843

How much does a Carnet cost?
The cost is based on the dollar value of the equipment AND how soon you need to receive your Carnet.