HSC OP: 79.04, Foreign Travel

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Health Sciences Center Operating Policy and Procedure (HSC OP) is to establish the policies and procedures for granting approval of foreign travel when conducting university-related business.

REVIEW: This HSC OP will be reviewed on December 1 of each odd-numbered year (ONY) by the Managing Director of Procurement Services and the Office of Global Health, with recommendations for revisions forwarded to the Vice President and Chief Financial Officer by December 15.

POLICY/PROCEDURE:

1. Required Approvals.

Written prior approval from the President’s Office is required for all foreign travel, when conducting university-related business within one’s capacity as a faculty or staff member regardless of the source of funds being used, even if paid from personal or third-party funds. Written approval must be obtained prior to the start of the trip and prior to incurring any travel expenses. Travel to U.S. possessions does not require prior written approval. The Foreign Pre-Approval Form can be found at http://www.fiscal.ttuhsc.edu/paymentservices/travel/links.aspx.

2. Restricted Areas.

TTUHSC will not approve a request for travel to an Area (region) subject to the following advisories or warnings;

- U.S. Department of State travel advisory level 3 (Reconsider Travel) or 4 (Do Not Travel),
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Travel Health Notice of Warning Level 3 (Avoid Nonessential Travel)

Areas with these warning/advisory levels are considered Restricted under this Operating Policy. University-related travel to a Restricted Area is prohibited and will not be reimbursed by TTUHSC. Only in extenuating circumstances may approval be sought from the President’s Office for an exception to this prohibition. Such requests will be considered on an individual basis and may require demonstration of special efforts or restrictions to mitigate risk.

To determine the travel advisory level assigned by the U.S. Department of State, please visit the following website: https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html

To determine the travel health notice warning level by the CDC, please visit the following website: https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices

The employee should again review both the U.S. Department of State and the CDC’s website within two (2) days prior to departure to ascertain that the country does not meet the criteria for a Restricted Area. If the country status is changed to meet the criteria of a Restricted Area under this Operating Policy after the trip is booked, the employee must cancel the trip and seek a refund for any prepaid expenses (such as airline/hotel) in order to mitigate the loss of funds. If vendors refuse reimbursement of prepaid expenses and approval was obtained from the President’s Office prior to incurring costs, TTUHSC will issue reimbursement of cancellation charges on a local funding source.
only. Employees are responsible for ensuring they do not travel to Restricted Areas. TTUHSC has no obligation to reimburse any travel expense to a Restricted Area.

3. State Appropriated Funds.

Reimbursement for travel to foreign countries is not allowed on state appropriated funds.

4. Allowable Expenses.

Employees may be reimbursed actual expenses when traveling on university-related business to foreign countries. Original itemized receipts must be provided for lodging and when claiming actual expenses for meals. Employees can request per diem for meals when traveling on official business to foreign countries. Required documentation to be submitted with the travel voucher for foreign meal per diem is a screen shot from the U.S. Department of State website listing the allowable rate by location. Itemized meal receipts are not required when per diem is claimed.

Conservation of funds is encouraged. Departments and areas may set lower rates and vary them as they choose. Requiring receipts and reimbursing actual expenses is encouraged when possible.