HSC OP: 79.05, Business Travel Account (BTA) Requests and Travel Advances

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Health Sciences Center Operating Policy and Procedure (HSC OP) is to establish the guidelines for corporate travel credit cards and the advancement of funds which may be used to cover a portion of official travel expenses.

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

POLICY/PROCEDURE:

1. Use of the Business Travel Account (BTA)
   a. A BTA request is designed to assist employees who do not qualify for a State Travel Credit Card, who were denied with the initial application for a state travel card, and do not have a personal credit card available to them to purchase an airline ticket. This request is handled through the Travel System when submitting the travel application (see HSC OP 79.02).
   b. Travel arranged by a Travel Agency using state funds must use the State of Texas contracted Travel Agencies National Travel Service or Short's Travel Management.
   c. An employee does not qualify for a BTA if the employee:
      • Is eligible for a state travel card but does not wish to apply for a card;
      • Has a state travel card but does not wish to use the card;
      • Has had a state travel card that was cancelled for non-payment or misuse;
   d. Use of the BTA to purchase airline tickets may be requested for prospective employees and speakers if this would reduce the cost of the airfare paid by the institution.
   e. Cancelled BTA airline tickets must be expensed to a local funding source. Departments are responsible to ensure cancelled BTA airline tickets are only used for future TTUHSC business travel, refunded by the BTA travel agency or reimbursed by the traveler.

2. Request for Travel Advances.
   a. TTUHSC may advance funds for travel expenses to an employee only if the expenses are incurred during travel that requires an overnight stay outside the employee’s designated headquarters. A person who is not an employee of TTUHSC, i.e., students, prospective employees, speakers, participants, may not receive a travel advance.
   b. Advances must be realistic relative to actual expenses that will be incurred. TTUHSC should be reimbursing the difference between the advance and actual expenses of the trip. Advances will be denied if after two trips, the employee is sending to the Travel Office checks for overpayment of an advance instead of the employee receiving reimbursement from TTUHSC for the remaining expenses of the trip.
   c. An employee does not qualify for an advance if the employee:
      • Is eligible for a state travel card but does not wish to apply for a card;
      • Has a state travel card but does not wish to use the card;
• Has had a state travel card that was cancelled for non-payment or misuse;
• Has an outstanding travel advance from a previous trip;
• Is on the State Comptroller’s Texas Payee Information System (TPIS) at the time of the advance. (NOTE: Reasons why an employee is on TPIS hold include being in default on a Texas Guarantee Student Loan, indebted to the state or a state agency, delinquent on state tax, not paying child support, or owing a reimbursement for unemployment taxes.)

d. Travel advances will also be issued to employees who have used their state corporate travel card or any personal credit card to purchase airline tickets or hotel deposits paid in advance and receive a billing statement from the credit card vendor prior to the actual travel date. Upon electronic submission of the travel application, a request for this advance must be included. Additional “proof of payment” requirements are necessary. A copy of the credit card/debit card bank statement or a cancelled check must be submitted to the Travel Office in order to receive the advance check. Retain your original airline ticket receipt for filing with your travel voucher.

e. A travel voucher must be received in the Travel Office no later than fifteen working days after the completion of the trip if the employee received a travel advance. Any one violating this time frame for more than two trips will be denied any requests for advances on future trips. Should extenuating circumstances arise, the Travel Services Office should be contacted immediately.

f. If the reimbursement voucher is not sufficient to repay the advance, claimants should send a check or money order for the amount of the difference. This check must be sent directly to the Travel Office with travel voucher number identified on the check.

g. If the voucher exceeds the original advance amount, a check will be issued to the individual for the balance of the reimbursement.

3. Registration Fees.

Registration fees that are required in advance must be paid directly to the vendor by using the Purchasing Card or the Direct Pay System. A travel advance is not used for this type of payment. If a fee is paid at the conference, reimbursement may be claimed on the travel voucher when claiming all other expenses.

4. Prepaid Hotel Deposits.

Advanced deposits required by hotels to hold a reservation for the traveler must be processed as a Prepaid Advance in the Travel System. The application must be submitted with the advance request and the pertinent information concerning the reservation must be sent to the travel office before the advance will be approved.