

Appendix K: Student Travel Policy for University-Organized or Sponsored Events

A. Policy Statement

It is the policy of The University of Texas at Austin to promote safe travel by students to and from certain events and activities covered by this policy.

B. Scope

This policy applies to the travel of enrolled undergraduate or graduate students to attend activities or events that are organized and/or sponsored by The University of Texas at Austin and occur more than twenty-five (25) miles from the University campus or an event that has a duration of 24 hours or more.

The types of activities and events covered by this policy include course-related field trips, Recreational Sports club trips, the activities of sponsored student organizations, and meetings of academic organizations where a student is officially representing the University.

The policy does not apply to travel undertaken by students to attend out of town athletic events, or to engage in student-teaching, internships, practicums, observations or research, unless the research is organized by a University employee.

C. Definitions

1. An **organized event** is one that is initiated, planned, and arranged by a member of the University's faculty or staff, or by the members of a sponsored student organization, and is approved by an appropriate administrator.
2. A **sponsored event** or activity is one that the University endorses by supporting it financially, or by sending students to participate in it as official representatives of the University.
3. An **enrolled student** is one who has been admitted to and is attending classes at the University.
4. An **appropriate administrator** is a dean, department chair, or director of an administrative unit, or their delegate.

D. Travel Authorization

In order to assure that the events or activities that involve student travel are within the course and scope of the University's mission, and that student safety issues have been addressed, travel undertaken pursuant to this policy must be authorized in advance by an appropriate administrator.

1. To request authorization, members of the faculty, staff or sponsored student organizations who organize activities covered by this policy must submit a completed Student Travel Request Authorization form, along with the required documents and information, to the appropriate administrator for approval. The request must be submitted at least five (5) business days in advance of travel to the activity or event.
2. The following information/documents must be submitted along with the Travel Authorization Request form:
 - a. A list of participants including their names and EID.
 - b. The name, phone number, and address of lodgings, if applicable.

- c. The date and time of the arrival and departure from lodgings, if applicable.
- d. The date and time of the departure and return to campus.
- e. The name and phone number for the responsible University employee(s) who will be available to the students at all time during the travel and activity.
- f. Copies of valid operators' licenses for any students who will operate vehicles.
- g. A schedule for the trip that includes travel, planned activities, meals, and sleep period(s). Organizations utilizing personal vehicles for travel must allow for travelers to have at least 6 hours of sleep before driving.

3. When leading group trips, faculty or staff must collect and take a copy of the following documents and information with them while on the trip:
 - a. A list of the names, phone numbers, and the name and number of an emergency contact for each participant;
 - b. Copies of valid operators' licenses for any participants who will operate vehicles; and
 - c. Copies of current medical insurance certificates or a copy of both sides of an insurance group membership card for each person who wishes to participate in the activity or event. Purchase of a reasonably priced, short-term special events policy can be arranged by Student Activities on behalf of students who do not have, or cannot verify, current medical coverage. Information concerning this coverage is available from Student Activities, (512) 471-3065.
- d. Completed and signed Release and Indemnification Agreements for each participant.
- e. Completed and signed Authorization for Medical Treatment forms for each participant.
4. Faculty who teach courses that involve frequent field trips can collect the following information from students at the beginning of each semester and keep it on file with the appropriate administrator for use throughout a semester:
 - Proof of current medical insurance
 - Completed and signed medical authorization forms
 - Completed and signed release and indemnification agreements (a single release and indemnification agreement may be used if a single description fits all the proposed trips)
 - Proof of a valid vehicle operator's license for students who will operate vehicles
5. One-time approval can be provided for multiple trips led by faculty or staff that involve the same locations and same participants.
6. The Travel Authorization Request, the Authorization for Medical Treatment, and the Release and Indemnification Agreement forms are available from the Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs or can be downloaded from the [Student Travel website](#).

E. Travel by Motor Vehicle

1. **Compliance with Laws and Policies**
 - a. Motor vehicles used for travel covered by this policy shall have a current proof of liability insurance card and a state inspection certification.
 - b. Travel undertaken by means of fifteen passenger vans must comply with the requirements of The University of Texas System's Business Procedure Memorandum 16.5.2.
2. **Vehicle Operator Requirements**
 - a. All students who will operate vehicles while engaged in travel covered by this policy must have a valid operator's license

and be trained as required by law to drive the vehicle that will be used.

- b. Operators shall comply with all laws, regulations and posted signs or directions regarding speed and traffic control.
- c. Operators shall take a mandatory 30-minute rest break every four hours.
- d. Operators shall drive no more than ten hours in any 24 hour period.
- e. Trips requiring more than 10 hours driving time to reach a point of destination shall require overnight lodging.
- f. A navigator shall be assigned for all trips scheduled to take more than two hours. The navigator must stay awake while on duty.

3. **Safety Requirements for Both Operators and Passengers**

- a. **Seat Belts.** Occupants of motor vehicles shall use seat belts or other approved safety restraint devices required by law or regulation at all times when the vehicle is in operation.
- b. **Alcohol and Illegal Substances.** Occupants of motor vehicles shall not possess, consume, or transport any alcoholic beverages or illegal substances.
- c. **Passenger Capacity.** The total number of passengers in any vehicle at any time it is in operation shall not exceed the manufacturer's recommended capacity, or the number specified by University policy, or federal or state law or regulations, whichever is lowest.

4. **Travel by Rental Vehicle**

Rentals of vehicles to use for travel to activities or events covered by this policy are governed by the following guidelines:

a. **Vehicle Reservations**

The University is a participant in the State Travel Management Program, which has negotiated favorable vehicle rental rates with a number of car rental companies. While use of one of the University's travel agencies is not required, doing so will help assure that: 1) vehicles are rented pursuant to the State Travel Management plan whenever possible; 2) that vehicle rental agreements are valid; and 3) that necessary insurance coverage has been purchased. Information concerning those agencies is available from the University [Travel Management Services](#) website.

b. **Payment of Costs for Rental Vehicles**

Vehicle rental charges can be a) billed centrally to University Travel Management Services; or b) billed directly to those Departments or Divisions that have uniquely numbered accounts with state contract car rental companies. If the rental costs are to be centrally billed, it will be necessary for the driver to obtain a voucher from the University's Travel Management Services prior to picking up the rental vehicle.

If necessary, personal credit cards may be used to rent vehicles for travel covered by this policy, and cardholders will be reimbursed for appropriate and approved costs. If rentals are from companies that are not under the state contract, the reimbursement amount will be limited to that which would have been incurred for equivalent state contract rentals.

F. **Insurance Coverage**

1. **Rentals from companies participating in the State Travel Management Program.**

Loss/Damage Waiver and Primary Liability insurance coverage are automatically included in the rates charged by companies participating in the State Travel Management Program. That protection does not cover injuries to persons or possessions inside a rental vehicle. Therefore,

it is suggested that the personal injury insurance protection and the personal effects insurance protection offered by rental companies be purchased for student travel covered by this policy, particularly if there will be numerous passengers in the vehicle. The cost of the extended coverage is reimbursable only from funds held in 18, 19, 26, 29, and 30 accounts.

2. **Rentals from non-state contract rental companies.**

If no state contract cars are available and it is necessary to rent vehicles from non-contract companies, then both the Loss/Damage Waiver and Primary Liability Coverage must be purchased unless the rental is charged to a University issued Diner's Club card. It is suggested that the personal injury insurance protection and the personal effects insurance protection offered by rental companies be purchased for student travel covered by this policy, particularly if there will be numerous passengers in the vehicle. The cost of the extended coverage is reimbursable only from funds held in 18, 19, 26, 29 and 30 accounts.

3. **Travel by Means of a Vehicle Owned or Leased Long-Term by the University**

In addition to complying with the general rules set out above, travel by means of a vehicle that is owned or leased long-term (for a period of more than one year) by the University must comply with the following requirements:

a. **Proof of Insurance, Inspection, and Safety Devices**

Vehicles used for travel activity covered by this policy must:

1. Have a current proof of liability insurance card;
2. Have a valid state inspection sticker;
3. Have all devices or equipment required by federal or state law or regulations and any applicable UT System policy; and
4. Comply with any other applicable federal or state law or regulation and any applicable UT System policy.

b. **Service and Maintenance**

A University-owned or long-term leased vehicle used for student travel under this policy must be subject to scheduled periodic service and maintenance by qualified persons and comply with all applicable requirements of any UT System policy.

c. **Employee Operators**

All operators of vehicles described in this section shall be on the payroll of The University of Texas at Austin. All operators must have a valid license for the operation of a particular vehicle; must be authorized to operate the vehicle in accordance with UT System policy; and have a current BMDRIV rating on file. Human Resources or the Controller's Office can be contacted for information on how employees may obtain a rating.

4. **Travel by Privately Owned Vehicles**

The use of personal vehicles by students for travel to events covered by this policy is strongly discouraged.

- a. When requesting authorization for travel that involves the use of personally owned vehicles, the requestor, in addition to submitting the information described in Part D.2., shall also submit a copy of a current liability insurance certificate for any vehicle to be used for the proposed travel.
- b. The persons responsible for the proposed activity and travel shall inform students who will drive their privately owned vehicles that their personal liability insurance policy will be

looked to first to cover any liability that may result from the use of the vehicle for the proposed travel.

5. Volunteer Drivers and Passengers

Non-student/non-employee drivers and passengers who accompany students on travel covered by this policy must sign the Release and Indemnification and the Authorization for Medical Treatment forms prior to the trip. Forms can be downloaded at the [Student Travel website](#).

For assistance: Questions regarding this policy should be directed to the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs.

Source: Texas Education Agency Code 51.494; UT System Regental Student Travel Policy

Previously HOP 12.B.2

Policy Website: *Handbook of Operating Procedures*, 9-1420