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**LAMAR UNIVERSITY**  
**MANUAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**SECTION: Financial Services**

**MAPP 05.05.05**

**AREA: Procurement and Payment Services**

<b>Time Frames for Travel Authorization and Reimbursement</b>
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**I. POLICY**

- A. Lamar University (LU) follows an orderly, transparent process for University-sponsored travel. As part of this process, authorization prior to travel is required before any employee may engage in University travel and before an employee may be reimbursed for completed travel.
- B. This policy establishes time frames or deadlines by which LU employees must submit required documentation and approvals/signatures to receive authorization or reimbursement for University travel.

**II. PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

- A. This policy applies to all LU employees who engage in University-sponsored travel.
- B. The University has established these time frames to (1) allow sufficient time for employees to receive final authorization to travel, (2) enable account managers to ensure there is adequate funding for a trip, (3) provide enough time to encumber travel funds, and (4) allow sufficient time to process cash advances and reimbursements.
- C. This policy falls under the authority of applicable Texas statutes and regulations, including, but not limited to, the Texas State University System (TSUS) Rules & Regulations, Chapter III, Paragraph 6.12, Travel Guidelines; Texas Government Code, Chapter 660, Travel Expenses; and Texas Administrative Code, Title 34, Part 1, Chapter 5, Funds Management (Fiscal Affairs).

**III. DEFINITIONS**

- A. **Accountable Plans and Nonaccountable Plans.** IRS rules govern travel, gift, and car expenses as they relate to the reporting of taxable income. Travel reimbursements paid under an Accountable Plan, as defined by the IRS, are not reported as income while reimbursements that fall under a Nonaccountable Plan are combined with an employee's wages and salary and reported in box 1 of Form W-2. For more information, consult Section V.I of this policy and [IRS Publication 463](#).
- B. **Request to Travel.** LU form that must be completed, submitted, and approved/signed before University travel may take place. Once the Request to Travel is approved, the LU employee is authorized to travel, and funds are encumbered to cover the cost of travel.

- C. **Travel Voucher.** State of Texas form that must be completed, submitted, and approved/signed before an LU employee can be reimbursed for University travel.
- D. **University-Sponsored Travel or University Travel.** Travel whose purpose is official University business and from which the University benefits. These purposes include, but are not limited to representing LU in various professional organizations, serving various segments of society; gathering information to improve instruction, research, or other University functions; formally presenting research before learned societies; and recruiting staff, faculty, and in-state students. In general, travel meeting these criteria qualifies for travel authorization, unless reasons exist that would cause the University to deny authorization.

#### IV. POLICY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. **President.** As LU's chief administrator, the President has final authority to approve or deny LU employees' Requests to Travel. Per MAPP 05.01.06 (Delegation of Authority), the President may delegate this approval and signature authority to one or more University administrators/supervisors, who are named in the Delegation of Travel Authorization. [Note. In keeping with TSUS Travel Guidelines (TSUS R&R, Chapter III, Paragraph 6.12), in certain cases the President's travel and reimbursements require pre-approval by the TSUS Chancellor.]
- B. **Delegation of Travel Authorization.** Authorization to approve travel is provided under the Delegation of Authority policy (MAPP 05.01.06).
- C. **LU Employees.** University employees are responsible for ensuring that travel policies and regulations are followed, including policies and regulations regarding travel authorization and reimbursement, and that all information relevant to travel is presented accurately and truthfully.
- D. **LU Travel Office.** Campus office tasked with administering University travel. The Travel Office's tasks include distributing information about travel to LU employees, answering employees' questions about the process, and managing and auditing the travel process (forms, authorization, advances, reimbursement).

#### V. TIME FRAMES: TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION & REIMBURSEMENT

- A. Employees must submit a completed Request to Travel form, with the appropriate back-up documentation and approval signatures, at least 30 days prior to travel.
- B. For foreign travel, a completed Request to Travel, with the appropriate back-up documentation and approval signatures, must be submitted to the University President or designee (Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs or Vice President for Finance and Operations) 45 days prior to travel.
- C. Employees must request a cash advance at least two (2) weeks prior to travel. Cash advances are requested on the Request to Travel form and only allowed for group travel or under special circumstances.
- D. Travel Vouchers, with appropriate back-up documentation and approval signatures, must be submitted to the Travel Office no later than 30 days from the last date of University-sponsored travel.

- E. If a cash advance has been received, an employee must submit a Travel Voucher, with the appropriate back-up documentation and approval signatures, within the 30-day time frame or be subject to payroll deduction for the funds advanced. Cash advances will be deducted from any travel reimbursement due the employee.
- F. Travel Vouchers may not be reimbursed if the vouchers, with appropriate back-up documentation and approval signatures, are submitted after the 30-day deadline. After this deadline, the Department Head must provide justification regarding the reason for the delay and the Travel Voucher and supporting documentation must be reviewed by the Associate Vice President for Financial Services or the Vice President for Finance and Operations. They may approve, deny, or modify the voucher (i.e., reimburse a lesser amount) or process the reimbursement as “nonaccountable” at their discretion. The decision of the Associate Vice President for Financial Services or the Vice President for Finance and Operations in this matter is final and no appeals will be granted.
- G. Fiscal year-end processing may impact these time frames. Should travel occur in August, please process Travel Vouchers as promptly as possible upon return given the fiscal year-end of August 31.
- H. Reimbursements under Accountable Plans must contain adequately accounted for expenses within a reasonable period of time. To prevent travel reimbursements from having to be treated as “nonaccountable” and ultimately reported and included in box 1 of Form W-2 along with an employee’s wages and salary, it is imperative that expenses are accounted for in a timely manner (30 days).
- I. Different policies and regulations may apply to travel funded through contracts, grants, gifts, or other funding sources. If the contract, grant, gift, or other funding source does not specify time frames, the time frames in this policy will apply.
- J. Exceptions to these policies may be made on a case-by-case basis and must be reviewed and approved by the Associate Vice President for Financial Services or the Vice President for Finance and Operations.

**VI. REVIEW AND RESPONSIBILITY**

Responsible Party: Vice President for Finance and Operations

Review Schedule: Every three years on or before September 1

**VII. APPROVAL**

Jeremy C. Alltop	02/25/2022
Vice President for Finance and Operations	Date
Dr. Jaime R. Taylor	02/25/2022
President	Date

## REVISION LOG

Revision Number	Date	Description of Changes
1	02/21/2022	Initial version created.
	02/25/2022	Version approved by President.