

Air Transportation

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Policy Owner: Accounts Payable

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Policy Statement:

Employees traveling on official business by air carrier should travel in the most cost-effective manner and utilize the lowest possible coach fares consistent with their scheduling requirements.

Procedures:

Airline Contracts

Georgia Tech has contracts with air carriers for employees travelling on official business on behalf of the Institute. These contracts offer special rates that can only be accessed via the Institute's Travel Management Company. The rates may be used by employees traveling on official state business. Independent contractors and non-employee students, guests, and visitors may also use the contract if they are traveling on Institute business. Please refer to the Travel web page located on the Procurement and Business Services website (procurement.gatech.edu) for further details. You may also send an email to travel.ask@business.gatech.edu.

Restrictions on Class

Business and first class tickets are not reimbursable for domestic flights with the exception of travel to Alaska and Hawaii. Business Class airfare using state funds or other fund types (unless specifically restricted), is only permissible for international flights with appropriate travel authority approvals. First Class travel is only permitted, if approved, in the following circumstances:

1. There is no other space available on the needed flight (supporting documentation from a travel agency must be included with the travel reimbursement request).
2. A licensed medical practitioner certifies that because of a person's mental or physical condition, specific air travel arrangements are required. ***It is the responsibility of institution officials to obtain necessary medical certifications for any employee that requires special air travel arrangements due to a medical condition. Information should also be obtained specifying the expected length of time such condition would have an impact on travel needs. Supporting documentation must be retained within the department.***
3. The Commissioner of Public Safety certifies that specific air travel arrangements are necessary for security reasons.

4. Overseas foreign travel- with appropriate approval and funding; see First/Business Class Airfare - International Travel section below.

These exceptions should be approved in advance and noted in the “comments” section of the expense report.

If free upgrades/frequent flier miles are used for an upgrade, this should also be noted in the “comments” section of the expense report.

Airline Frequent Flyer Programs

Employees may retain loyalty and frequent flyer program benefits. However, participation in these programs must not influence flight selection which would result in incremental cost to the Institute beyond the lowest available airfare, as defined in this policy. The Institute does not reimburse for the value of any rewards or benefits used by employees from loyalty programs.

First / Business Class Airfare - International Travel

In certain circumstances, Georgia Tech Foundation funds, Georgia Tech Research Corporation funds, Georgia Tech Applied Research Corporation funds or sponsored funds may permit reimbursement or direct payment of first/business class airfare for International travel that is not reimbursable with State funds.

GT Foundation

Business class airfare for international flights that are pre-approved by the appropriate unit officer in accordance with Georgia Tech travel authorization policy may be processed through the Institute (Accounts Payable) from Foundation funds available to the school or department. An expense report is used for reimbursement with appropriate receipts and approvals. Direct billing is available through the Institute’s Travel Management Company.

Direct reimbursement from GTF funds through the Georgia Tech Foundation will only be allowed and approved in exceptional circumstances, and must be approved by the President, Executive Vice President for Administration and Finance, or Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs.

GTRC/ GTARC

Business class airfare for international flights that are pre-approved by the appropriate unit officer in accordance with Georgia Tech travel authorization policy may be processed directly through the Institute (Accounts Payable) using GTRC, GTARC funds or sponsored projects, if these funds specifically allow the use of business class airfare for international travel. Direct billing is available through the Institute’s Travel Management Company.

Payment of Airfare

Travel expenses are reimbursed upon completion of the trip and submission of an approved expense report. Airfare can be direct billed to the Institute through the existing program with the Institute’s Travel Management Company. In either case, an itinerary showing the dates of travel, seat assignment, method of payment, including purchase price and receipt must be presented

when submitting an expense report. Airfare reimbursements involving study abroad, student group travel and extended research/employment assignments may be reimbursed prior to the trip under certain circumstances. Requests to be reimbursed prior to the trip must include the following documentation:

- Explanation for using a travel agency other than the Institute's Travel Management Company; and
- Price quotes from Travel Incorporated and the travel agency from which the tickets were purchased.

Direct Billing of Airfare for Employees

The Institute has an agreement with the Travel Management Company to arrange for the prepayment of air travel for faculty and staff. Approval to direct bill must be obtained prior to ordering any airline ticket through the Institute's Travel Management Company. Applicable forms that need to be completed may be located on the forms webpage of the Procurement & Business Services website at http://www.procurement.gatech.edu/travel_forms.php

Please refer to the Travel web page located on the Procurement and Business Services website (procurement.gatech.edu) for further details. You may also send an email to travel.ask@business.gatech.edu.

Direct Billing of Airfare for Students / Visitors

The direct billing of air fare is available for official guests, visitors, students, and independent contractors who travel on behalf of the Institute. The department is to contact the Institute's Travel Management Company to make the travel arrangements for the direct billing. Approval to travel must be obtained prior to ordering any airline ticket. Please refer to the Travel web page located on the Procurement and Business Services website for further details. You may also send an email to travel.ask@business.gatech.edu.

Refunds

Refunds for airline tickets must not be accepted by employees unless they have personally paid for the tickets. Refunds for tickets issued by the Institute's Travel Management Company and charged to the Institute must be refunded directly to Georgia Tech. A credit will be applied to the original department's account used to purchase the ticket. If a sponsor reimburses the traveler for an airline ticket, after the traveler has been reimbursed by Georgia Tech, the traveler must write a personal check (made payable to Georgia Tech) in the amount of the ticket reimbursement and send it along with a copy of the expense report summary sheet to Accounts Payable, Mail Code 0253. AP will deposit the funds back into the appropriate department account.

Private Aircraft

The use of aircraft owned, rented, or operated by a traveler on Institute business is strongly discouraged. If it is determined that the use of this type of aircraft is advantageous to the Institute, an explanation must be noted in the comments section of the expense report. The use of private aircraft is subject to prior approval by the Dean, Director, or Department Head and must be specifically noted on the Travel Authorization Form. In the comments section of the Employee Travel Expense Report, the employee should add the following comment "traveled by

private aircraft; registration number NXXXX; mileage calculated from the official highway map”.

Transportation expenses for the use of private aircraft will be at the mileage reimbursement rate determined by the U. S General Services Administration (GSA). Mileage rates are only changed upon notification from the State Accounting Office/Office of Planning and Budgets. New rates are not applied based solely on GSA updates.

Lodging and meal expenses en route will not be reimbursed if the expenses are a direct result of the decision to take a personal aircraft, rather than commercial aircraft.

If a traveler opts to use a personal aircraft when use of commercial aircraft would be the most economical and cost effective for the Institute, the traveler will be reimbursed up to the value of the commercial airfare (lowest coach fare) as quoted by the Institute’s Travel Management Company.

Transaction Fees / Service Fees

The transaction or service fees associated with booking airfare are authorized items for travel reimbursement. Additionally, baggage fees, change fees, etc. associated with official business are reimbursable.

Fly America Act

All federally funded travel must comply with the U.S. “Fly America Act” (49 U.S.C. 40118). The Fly America Act mandates the use of U.S. flag carriers for federally funded international travel to / from the United States. This includes United States federal employees, their dependents, consultant, contractors, and others. See [Section 6.17 Foreign Travel](#) for additional information regarding the Fly America Act.