

HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER HANDBOOK OF OPERATING PROCEDURES

Chapter 6	Fiscal Policies and Procedures	Effective:	May 2000
Section 6.2	Travel Policies and Procedures	Revised:	September 2008
Policy 6.2.13	Purchase of Airline Tickets for Official Visitors	Responsibility	Assistant Vice President for Business Affairs

PURCHASE OF AIRLINE TICKETS FOR OFFICIAL VISITORS

Policy

Official visitors may make reservations and purchase airline tickets from the source of their choice and then seek reimbursement for all allowable expenses from the University. However, if a Health Science Center department wishes to centrally charge the ticket to the University's account and thus be able to take advantage of any applicable state contract airfare, they may do so by using the University's Business Travel Account (BTA). State of Texas contract airfares may be purchased only through University contract travel agencies with a state issued centrally billed credit card account.

Business Travel Account (BTA)

1. The Business Travel Account (BTA) provides a billing method for prepaid, centralized airline ticket charges for incoming official visitors whose travel is paid from Health Science Center funds. The Health Science Center uses this service exclusively through the contract travel agency.
2. Use of the BTA is not mandatory. The BTA is available to departments because it (1) saves the Health Science Center money in ticket costs and (2) provides a service to incoming official travelers.
3. Travelers covered by the BTA are: (1) faculty recruits; (2) consultants and official visitors, including official foreign visitors; (3) official visitors traveling in a group in conjunction with continuing education course activities; and (4) new faculty as they prepare to settle in San Antonio. Health Science Center employees are NOT covered by the BTA, but should purchase airline tickets through University Paid Travel (UPT) or a state issued credit card account (see the *Handbook of Operating Procedures* (HOP), [Section 6.2.12](#), "Purchase of Airline Tickets").
4. All segments of the air itinerary must qualify for University payment, i.e., no air travel with side trips for personal use or use paid by other organizations may be charged to the BTA.

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Use of the Business Travel Account (BTA)

1. The department completes all applicable lines on the [Prior Approval](#) (payment request form for approval of payments to consultants or for services performed by persons other than employees). The department then obtains in Section III an authorized signature for the departmental account being charged and the signature of the Chair or Director. "BTA Used" must be checked "YES".
2. The department then (1) faxes the [Prior Approval](#) to the contract travel agency for ticketing of the reservation; and (2) retains a copy for its files; and (3) sends the original to the Executive Vice President for Business Affairs for the additional required signature in Section III.
3. The Executive Vice President's Office signs the form and sends the original to the Accounting Office.
4. The Accounting Office retains a copy for reconciling the credit card bill and the original is returned to the originating department for later submission with the visitor's reimbursement voucher for meals, lodging, fees, etc.
5. After faxing the [Prior Approval](#) in number 2 above, the department calls its reservationist at the contract travel agency as appropriate, and tells the reservationist either (1) that they are making the reservations for an incoming traveler and that travel costs should be charged to the BTA or (2) that the incoming traveler will be calling the agency directly to make reservations and that travel costs for this individual should be charged to the BTA. The agency has a national "800" number so there is no telephone cost to the traveler.
6. Prior to confirming the reservations and charging the BTA, the agency reservationist verifies that the reservations are consistent with the provisions on the [Prior Approval](#) which has been previously faxed to the agency by the department in number 2 above.
7. Once the reservations are made by either the department or the traveler, the agency prepares the electronic tickets and delivers a confirmation to the department by either fax or e-mail.

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8. The Accounting Office reconciles the state issued central bill credit card account to the Prior Approval forms that are received by the Accounting Office.
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