

**University of Houston-Downtown
Office of Student Activities & Events
Council of Finance
Student Travel Guidelines**

Approval for Travel

For student organizations, travel approval is a four-step approval process. The approval must be granted from the Council Finance Committee and the Director of Student Activities & Events. Travel funding is not approved until the Executive Director for Student Affairs and the Vice President for Administration have signed off on the State of Texas Travel Request (TR). Organizations should first work with the Council of Finance Advisor and the Council Finance Committee Chairperson to submit their funding request.

Timeframe for Submitting Travel Requests

Travel plans need to be made at least six weeks in advance.

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

Paying for the conference

The easiest way is to have UHD pre-register the conference for you with a UHD check. If a UHD check cannot be sent ahead of time, you can hand carry a check to the conference check-in. If this is not possible, the conference might accept a UHD purchase order. If these three steps do not work, you might have to pay for the conference yourself and be reimbursed by UHD.

Requirements for UHD student travel

A student traveling for a student organization must meet the minimum requirements for membership in a registered UHD student organization. All students traveling must be currently registered UHD students with a minimum UHD grade point average of 2.0. Students must also be in good standing with the University.

FOOD

Paying for meals when traveling

The university system is a reimbursement process. You will be responsible for paying for your own meals and the University will reimburse you for a pre-determined amount.

Per Diem

This is based on the city you are traveling to and how much the Council Finance Committee allocates for food. Per Diem rates may vary by city; some rates may be higher than others. You will be told your cost per day for food before you leave.

Meals already included in conference registration

Your meals per day will be pro-rated based on how many meals the conference registration covers.

Reimbursed for alcohol or tobacco purchases

The University will not reimburse you for alcohol and tobacco purchases.

Saving your food per diem for one day for use on another day

If your food allowance is for example \$30 per day, you can't spend \$20 one day and \$40 another day. The receipts must show the date and cost of each meal eaten.

Having one person in the group pay for everyone's meal

Each person traveling must pay for his or her own meals. Receipts must be broken down by each person and one person cannot pay for the group's meals.

University reimbursement of tax and gratuity of meals

The University will reimburse you for the tax and gratuity of meals. Be sure to turn in your receipts.

Reimbursement for lost receipts

You will not be reimbursed.

LODGING

Payment options for lodging

The best way is for prior arrangements to be made with UHD so that the hotel will directly bill UHD. If the hotel does not agree to this, the group traveling should check-in with a UHD check. If these two are not possible, the students traveling will have to pay cash or charge the rooms to their credit card and be reimbursed after they return to campus.

Deciding where to stay

The university expects students to stay in the conference site hotels even if it is more expensive than other hotels in the area. The primary reason for this is educational. You are there to learn. You will be better able to network and learn with other students staying at the conference. It's also safer since you will not have to travel to and from the conference. Thirdly, you won't have to spend additional costs on transportation to travel from the conference site to the hotel.

Number of people assigned to a room

This depends on the size and bedding accommodations of the room. In order to save money, at least two students will be assigned a room. If your group has students with disabilities, the hotel will need to know at the time of the reservation.

Assigning students to hotel rooms and regulations on co-ed rooms

For your own safety, the university will only assign students who are married to each other in the same room.

Long distance phone calls, room service, in-room movies and other charges to the room

The university will only pay for lodging and the taxes associated with the lodging. Additional charges are your responsibility.

TRANSPORTATION

Reimbursement procedures when driving personal cars to the conferences

You will be reimbursed for .28 cents per mile.

Gasoline reimbursement when driving personal cars to conferences

You will be reimbursed for .28 cents per mile regardless of how much gasoline you use. Be sure to keep all gasoline receipts.

Determining mileage

UHD computes your mileage based on the distance to and from the conference city and Houston. The distance is set by the state of Texas.

Additional mileage other than distance to and from conference city

You will only be reimbursed for mileage to and from Houston and the conference site.

Paying for you gasoline

You will have to pay for the gas out of your own pocket. Save the receipt and you will be reimbursed for the rental car gas when you return to campus.

Flight reservations

UHD works with the state-contracted travel agency. The Student Activities & Events Business Manager will work with you and the travel agency to find the best rates and times.

Transportation when arriving to your destination airport and getting to the hotel

You will have to spend your own money for ground transportation (airport shuttles, taxis) when you are at the conference city. UHD will only reimburse you for traveling to and from the airport.

Reimbursements when parking your car at Hobby or Intercontinental airport while at the conference

The University will not reimburse you for any fees associated with long-term airport parking. These fees are your responsibility.

****Please consult the Council of Finance Handbook for additional information on travel policies and procedures.**

EMERGENCIES

What to do if someone is hurt or injured traveling to the conference or while at the conference

The health and safety of the students is always the first priority. Medical attention for injured or sick students should be your immediate concern. Your first contact should be

your faculty/staff advisor. If your advisor is not traveling with you, someone in the group will need to contact him/her immediately. The highest-ranking student member of the organization traveling should have their advisor's office and home phone numbers. If the advisor cannot be reached, UHD Police can contact a member of the Student Activities & Events staff, or a Student Activities & Events staff member can be contacted directly at 713-221-8573.

Determining which hospital to go to

If it is a life-threatening situation, go to the nearest hospital. In the event of an automobile accident, the emergency personnel (police, firemen, etc.) should transport or direct the injured to the appropriate hospital. If it is not life threatening, the student's medical insurance company should direct you to the appropriate hospital or clinic.

Insurance coverage when driving your own personal car and are involved in an accident

The University will not pay for damage to personal vehicles or vehicles involved in the accident. Your personal insurance will be responsible for covering that damage.

What to do if you have an accident in your personal car

The first step is to insure the safety and well being of the students traveling. If anyone traveling is injured, the first priority is getting immediate medical attention.

Medical insurance coverage if you are injured or become ill while traveling

Medical insurance is your responsibility. The University is not responsible for your medical insurance coverage while traveling.

What to do if your personal car is disabled and cannot be driven

The university will explore the most reasonable options in order for you to complete the conference and return home.

Miscellaneous

Making arrangements with professors when traveling (attending conferences, competitions, etc.)

It is your responsibility to make arrangements with your teachers if you plan to miss class, tests or assignments while traveling. In many cases, your faculty/staff advisor may want to type up a letter for you to give to your teachers explaining the purpose of your trip.

Inability to travel due to work or school obligations

Family emergencies like a serious illness or a death in the family are beyond your control. Not planning ahead with your work or study schedule is within your control and therefore not a valid excuse for not traveling.

Making substitutions for another student to travel

No, the approval for travel has been granted for specific individual students. Only the president of the student organization can approve substituting another student. Since each

student traveling must have his/her eligibility verified, even the substitute traveler must be approved.

Financial responsibility when you are unable to find an approved substitute to travel

We understand that circumstances are sometimes beyond your control, and that there may be instances in which you may be unable to travel. Some of these reasons may include a death in the family or serious illness. If you are unable to travel due to an exam or class project and are unable to find an approved substitute, financial responsibility may lie with your organization. Depending on how much of the trip can be canceled without penalty; the amount of financial responsibility may vary. For example, if the airline tickets and conference registration are non-refundable, then UHD would have to charge your student account these costs.

****The University of Houston System Travel policy is available in the Office of Student Activities & Events.**