

University of Southern Indiana Student Domestic Travel Policy

This document covers the policies and procedures related to student domestic travel. Domestic travel includes travel within any of the 50 states of the United States, the District of Columbia, U.S. Territories and possessions and Puerto Rico.

For information regarding international travel please see the [International Travel Policy](#) governing faculty-led international programs, or [Study Abroad](#) to search all approved study/internship programs.

1. Definitions of Sponsored and Un-sponsored Travel

1.1 Sponsored Travel: Must meet one or more of the criteria below. Basic concepts of sponsored travel include:

- The university provides the students some or all of the funding to go on the trip; funding may be direct to the individual or to the group that is participating in the travel (**Student Government Travel Grants and Provost Travel Grants are university funds. Funds in student organization agency accounts are not university funds.**)
- The travel is part of the educational program and/or the institution has an interest due to the educational or mission relevant nature of the travel, e.g., mandatory or voluntary field trip; student is receiving some form of academic credit for the trip
- The university made any travel arrangements for the trip even though it is not paying for the trip (i.e. booking hotels and flights) and meets other sponsored travel criteria
- Other resources (like vehicles for travel, staff supervision) are provided for the trip AND it meets another sponsored travel criteria from the bullets above

1.2 Un-sponsored Travel: Basic concepts of un-sponsored travel include:

- University exercises no official role, control, or approval over travel
- Travel is for the pleasure or convenience of the students
- There is no university role in this student travel, including but not limited to facilitating arrangements for travel, providing any university financial support, staff or faculty attendance for trip, use of university rental vehicles
- Travel is for internships, student teaching, clinicals, and/or practicums
- The university provides the students no funds to go on the trip, whether direct to the individual or to the group that is participating in the travel
- The travel is not part of the educational program, e.g., mandatory or voluntary field trip, and the student is not receiving any form of academic credit for the trip
- The university made no travel arrangements for the trip (i.e. Booking hotels and flights)
- No resources (such as vehicles for travel, staff supervision) are provided for the trip
- International student organizational travel that is not a part of the Center for International Programs offerings

2. Policies for Sponsored Travel

Travel deemed as sponsored requires that students follow the policies.

2.1 All sponsored travel must be approved in advance of the trip and before making any financial commitments.

2.2 Each trip must have a Designated Trip Leader. The designated trip leader may be a University representative/advisor or a student. Student Designated Trip Leaders should be in good academic and conduct standing. This person must be one of the travelers on the trip. The Designated Trip Leader should be the name listed on the Travel Authorization as the main traveler. All overnight trips must have at least two Designated Trip Leaders. (When there are two trip leaders, one should be listed as the main traveler and the other would be listed as additional trip leader.) Designated Trip

- Leader(s) must communicate with all participants before leaving for the trip to familiarize them with the itinerary, expectations, and specific risks associated with the trip.
- 2.3 An Emergency Contact list must be created for each trip. That list must include the names of all students, faculty, and staff on the trip and emergency contact information for each, including name, relationship, and phone number. It should also contain emergency phone numbers for the University of Southern Indiana. Copies of these documents should be with the Designated Trip Leader, one other individual on the trip, and with the responsible department in the event that the on-location documents are inaccessible.
 - 2.4 Students are always expected and required to abide by all federal and state laws and the policies and procedures of the University of Southern Indiana, including the [Student Rights and Responsibilities: A Code of Student Behavior](#). This includes sponsored travel.
 - 2.5 Travelers must follow the hotel policies, including but not limited to the number of guests per room. Students in a relationship, regardless of biological sex and students of different biological sex or gender identity may not share a room on University sponsored trips. Students may not share a room with faculty, staff, or advisors.
 - 2.6 Ground transportation should be in a University-owned or leased vehicle. Personal vehicles for sponsored travel may be used if traveling within 75 miles from the University. Use of personal vehicles outside of that range must be approved as an exception in advance by the Provost's Office. Consideration for exceptions or lack thereof are listed below.
 - 2.6.1 Intercollegiate sports is sponsored travel and is not eligible for exceptions.
 - 2.6.2 The 75-mile distance is as defined by MapQuest, with the starting point being the University of Southern Indiana (8600 University Boulevard) regardless of the actual starting point of the driver of the personal vehicle.
 - 2.6.3 Students approved to drive personal vehicles beyond that 75-mile distance may not have passengers, unless approved in advance as an exception by the Provost's Office.
 - 2.6.4 Requests for policy exceptions to use personal vehicles outside of the 75-mile distance must be made in writing, approved in advance, and for extraordinary circumstances.
 - 2.6.5 Exceptions may be made for travelers to drive personal vehicles when no one on the trip is eligible to drive a University owned or leased vehicle.
 - 2.6.6 When an exception is requested and a student wishes to drive their own personal vehicle a [General Release and Waiver of Liability by Student Driving/Riding in Personal Vehicles for Sponsored Travel](#) request form must be signed and attached to the Travel Authorization form.
 - 2.6.7 The use of 12 and 15 passenger vans is prohibited.
 - 2.7 Credentialing of Drivers: Drivers of University owned and/or leased vehicles are required to read and acknowledge receipt of the [University's Fleet Safety Policy](#) and must meet the minimum qualifications for drivers, including:
 - 2.7.1 Valid and current drivers' license.
 - 2.7.2 Minimum of five (5) years licensed driving experience and at least 21 years of age (or the minimum age required by the car rental company).
 - 2.7.3 Successful completion of the University's online defensive driver training class. The link for the online defensive driver training is at [Online Defensive Driver Training Class](#). For Login Access Code, contact 812 465-7003 or 812 461-5366.
 - 2.8 Students and student organizations may be required to use other modes of transportation (airplane, bus, train, etc.) to be in line with safe travel practices.
 - 2.9 When the University provides transportation, the trip should begin and end on campus, unless approved in advance as an exception by Provost's Office.

2.10 The [University Activity Waiver and Release of Liability](#) form should be used when hazards of the trip involve risks not encountered in normal classroom or student organization settings.

3. Approval Process for Sponsored Travel

- 3.1 All student organizations and students on sponsored travel must complete a travel authorization as a part of the approval process.
- 3.2 If the travel is part of a student organization, the student organization advisor, the director of student development programs or designee, and the Provost's Office or designee must approve with signature on the Travel Authorization Form. Student Organizations must complete the Student Organization Travel Request in EagleSync to initiate the approval process.
- 3.3 If student travel is related to a department, the sponsoring department designee, the Dean or Dean's designee, and the Provosts Office or designee must approve with signature on the Travel Authorization Form.

4. Safety Suggestions for Un-sponsored Travel:

4.1. Defensive Driving Techniques and Safety Tips

Defensive Driving Techniques:

- Driver should require **ALL** occupants to wear seat belts as they were designed for use in your personal or leased vehicle.
- Check instruments and gauges of the vehicle before leaving.
- Scan parked cars carefully as you back up.
- Make a positive glance over your shoulder when changing lanes or backing up to avoid blind spots. Have a passenger get out and help.
- Look "**Left--Right--Left**" before proceeding through intersections.
- Do not go through intersections on a yellow light; pick a point of decision and don't get caught in the middle of the intersection.
- Check wheel-to-lane reference of vehicles next to you--anticipate their movement into your lane--next to or in front of you.
- Following time should be 3 seconds from the vehicle in front of you, depending upon the speed and whether in city or highway driving.
- Stop far enough behind the vehicle in front of you at intersections to see the tires of that vehicle touching the pavement.
- Count a 2 second delay at intersections to allow appropriate following time from the car in front of you.
- Know the stopping distance requirements for the vehicle you're driving, including effects of inclement weather conditions. As a guide, it normally takes one car length for every 10 M.P.H. of speed to stop.
- Check the road 12 - 15 seconds ahead on the highway; 4 - 6 seconds in city driving (about two blocks).
- Check mirrors every 3 - 5 seconds in the city, 5 - 8 on the highway.
- Tune out passengers, concentrate on your driving and focus on the driving of those around you.
- Avoid eating while driving; both hands should be on the wheel.
- Avoid using cell phones while driving.
- Be prepared for construction hazards, including narrow roads.
- **AVOID ROAD RAGE -- BE PATIENT, ALLOWING A CAR IN FRONT OF YOU TAKES LESS TIME THAN AN ACCIDENT.**

4.2 Safety Tips:

What do you do in case of an accident?

- **Call local police** immediately.
- **Obtain other driver's and/or witness** information, including name, address, phone (work and home), date of birth, insurance carrier and policy number, license number and state of issuance, make, model, color, and tag of vehicle.
- **Notify your auto insurance agent or your rental car company** as soon as practical with the make, model, and tag number of the vehicle, along with your driver's license number.

What qualifies as a reportable accident?

- **Any collision involving your personal owned or leased vehicle needs to be reported to your insurance agent or to the rental car company, whether vehicle damage occurs or not.**
- Injuries from accidents sometimes occur leading to further investigation of the accident.
- Thus, the more timely the information, the better the investigation.
- If a parked car is involved, it is best to leave a note on the vehicle windshield with a contact phone number.

Other safety considerations:

- **Accident:** In case of accident, follow the response procedures above.
- **Fire:** Evacuate Vehicle.
- **Flat Tire:** Try to pull vehicle to the side of the road away from traffic with the damaged tire away from traffic. Have occupants vacate the vehicle and stand away from the road. Utilize the tire changing equipment provided. If you are unable to change the tire, or would be in harm's way (i.e. bad weather conditions, heavy traffic, no shoulder) then pull your vehicle off the roadway as soon as possible and call your AAA, family member or rental car company.
- **Life Safety:** In case of serious accident with resulting injuries, notify police/emergency response.
- **Maintenance:** If the driver notices any maintenance concerns, e.g. lights, brakes, tires or horn, he/she should fix them immediately or report them immediately to their rental car company.

Appendices

Appendix One: Making Travel Arrangements and Payments

After the student (or faculty/staff) has received his/her confirmation email from Travel Services office, he/she may contact Travel Services office about travel purchases. Please note the following regarding travel purchases:

One Month Prior

1. If air travel is required and sufficient funding is approved, the student should forward to Travel Services office (travelsrv@usi.edu) at least one month prior to departure a copy of his/her preferred flight itinerary along with the required passenger information:
 - a. Name as it appears on the student's government-issued, photo I.D. to be used at airport check-in (driver's license or passport). The name must match EXACTLY.
 - b. Date of birth (MM/DD/YYYY)
 - c. Gender (M/F)
 - d. Redress number. If unknown, then the student doesn't have one.
 - e. Contact number for possible flight changes. Preferably cell number.

Three Weeks Prior

2. If a hotel stay is needed and sufficient funding is approved, the student should make his/her own hotel reservation and request a travel advance for the cost of the room. The travel advance request should be submitted to Travel Services at least three weeks in advance of the trip departure date.

If there are multiple students traveling and three (3) or more rooms are reserved, then the Travel Services' office will facilitate payment directly with the hotel after the student forwards the reservation confirmation(s) to the Travel Services' office. The reservation confirmation(s) needs to be forwarded to Travel Services at least three weeks in advance of the stay. Some hotel rooms reserved online may not be eligible for payment by the Travel Services' office in which case a travel advance can be issued.

If a registration fee needs to be paid, the student may complete a direct pay form found on Accounts Payable website at [Direct Pay Form](#) (a video tutorial of the form is also available on the website under "Direct Pay Form Instructions"). Complete the form and obtain the signature approval of the financial manager. Submit the signed direct pay form to the Travel Services' office at least three weeks prior to the registration deadline.

If registration is to be paid online, then call Travel Services at 812/464-1957 to coordinate registration online. Travel Services will provide payment information at the registration website when prompted. A signed direct pay form is still required even though a check will not be mailed. The form will be used to support the charge to Travel Services' credit card.

3. If registration is to be paid by check, then attach a completed conference or event registration form to the direct pay form. If a registration form is not applicable, then provide a memo stating the facts of the payment and the memo will be mailed with the check. Any mailed registrations that require a check must be submitted to the Travel Services' office at least three weeks prior to the deadline.
4. If there are additional travel expenses to be paid, then a travel advance may be issued to cover these expenses if there is sufficient funding. To request a travel advance, contact Travel Services at least three weeks prior to the trip departure date.
5. If a USI vehicle rental is needed for pick-up at USI, then go to [Vehicle Rental](#) and complete a Vehicle Reservation Form. When using a USI vehicle rental, the driver will be asked to sign a Vehicle Registration Form. This form has a signature space that confirms the driver has a valid license, is at least 21 years of age, and understands that only authorized drivers may operate the vehicle. If a rental vehicle is needed for pick up at a destination, such as an arrival airport, please contact the Travel Services Office at 812/464-1957. The reservation will be made using a guest account of USI's online booking tool. 12 and 15-passenger vans are not available for rental or use for University travel.

Appendix Two: Reimbursement Process- Requesting Reimbursement of Travel Expenses and Reconciling a Travel Advance

To request reimbursement of travel expenses for an approved trip, complete a Direct Pay Form and sign the student reimbursement worksheet that was sent to you by email from Travel Services. (It was attached to the trip confirmation email sent to you.) The student reimbursement worksheet provides basic information about travel policy as well as areas to enter dollar amounts spent, but it is not an official university payment voucher. Therefore, in order to process a reimbursement the worksheet must be attached to a signed and completed direct pay form.

Complete the direct pay form and attach the completed student reimbursement worksheet, original itemized receipts, conference agenda, if applicable, and other travel documents to it. Submit the signed direct pay form and attached paperwork to Accounts Payable for review and processing.

If you were issued a travel advance, you still need to complete the student reimbursement worksheet and attach it to a direct pay form along with the original receipts and other travel documents. Accounts Payable will review the receipts and apply the travel advance to the trip expenses which will result in one of the following:

- The approved trip expenses exceed the amount of the travel advance and therefore the student is due a reimbursement for travel expenses not covered by the travel advance if there is sufficient funding.
- The approved trip expenses were less than the amount of the travel advance and therefore the student needs to return the unused cash. The amount to be returned and the fund account number to use for the deposit and other details will be provided by Accounts Payable. Should payment not be remitted by the due date of the advance, the advance will be considered a loan, which is taxable to the individual.
- The approved trip expenses equal the amount of the travel advance and therefore no reimbursement is due the student and no money is due to be repaid to the university.

Some Tips for Travel Reimbursements:

- The name on the receipt, for example guest name on hotel receipt, must match the name of the person requesting the reimbursement. If not, additional information is needed.
- If you paid, a hotel receipt must show payment was made or have a zero balance. If not, proof of payment will be required. You should check out at the desk to ensure this requirement is met. If Travel Services arranged payment of the hotel, include room receipts.
- A conference agenda must be included with the travel reimbursement. A summary of the agenda or the at-a-glance agenda is sufficient. If the trip was associated with research for which there is no official agent then a log briefly outlining the daily business activities is sufficient.
- Meals included in a paid registration fee or hotel stay must be deducted from the per diem allowance. This should be detailed in a conference agenda, but if not please provide this information.
- Include airline boarding passes, if applicable
- All receipts must be itemized. A credit card charge slip with a total is not an itemized receipt although it does provide proof of payment.
- An email from the conference organizers confirming your registration is not a receipt unless it includes payment information such as the amount(s) paid, what was paid (registration, conference dinner, etc.) and indicates you made payment.
- Should Accounts Payable require additional information, you will receive an email at your USI email address. Delay in responding or providing additional information will delay your reimbursement.

Appendix Three: Definitions

Accounts Payable – Office responsible for reviewing and processing post-trip travel forms and documents. Any questions after a trip has occurred should be directed to this office.

Agency Accounts – Student organizations on campus account. Students may use this account for sponsored or unsponsored travel.

Designated Trip Leader – Can be a staff member, students, or approved volunteer. When student or volunteer, the trip does not qualify for field trip insurance.

Field Trip – (academic and non-academic) is an activity and travel sponsored, organized, scheduled and supervised by

the University of Southern Indiana personnel during which students of the University are taken off campus on behalf of and in connection with the University, excluding all sports (varsity and club). Field trips include same day and overnight supervised and sponsored activities. Field Trips must be supervised in order to be covered by the University's Field Trip insurance.

Financial Manager – University representative authorized to approve expenditures and sign off on a travel authorization. This is not your student organization treasurer or off campus advisor. For student organizations, this is typically your faculty or staff advisor.

Travel Advance: Travel Advance is a loan provided by the university to cover travel expenses paid by the traveler. Traveler is responsible for reconciling the loan (by the due date) by submitting travel forms and receipts to Accounts Payable. If advance amounts are due from traveler after review, email notification will be sent to the traveler's USI email address with instructions and due date for returning the balance owed.

Travel Authorization Form – The university form that all travelers must complete for sponsored travel and submit for approvals prior to traveling.

Travel Services Office - Office responsible for reviewing and processing 'pre-trip' travel forms and documents, facilitating payment to travel vendors and assisting with finalizing travel arrangements. Not responsible for developing travel itineraries, negotiating hotel rooms or airline contracts for groups.

Revised: August 22, 2017

