

Procedure 20335e: Air Transportation

Rules and procedures for the purchase of air travel services, both on public carriers and charter aircraft are based on the requirement that all expenditures of the University must be necessary and reasonable and that the mechanism of payment must be in accordance with state and university procedures.

A. Rates

Public transportation rates must not exceed those for tourist/coach class accommodations. Business class or premium coach seating such as comfort plus air travel may be granted for international travel under the following circumstances:

- When the cost does not exceed the lowest available tourist/coach fare.
- For travel to Western Europe if the business meeting is conducted within three hours of landing.
- For transoceanic, intercontinental trips involving flight time of more than eight consecutive hours.
- If the traveler pays the difference.

Business class for rail travel may be granted under the following circumstances:

- When it does not cost more than the lowest available tourist/coach fare (comparison must be attached to the travel reimbursement request).
- When reserved coach seats are not offered on the route.
- If the traveler pays the difference.

Reimbursement for first class travel is prohibited. Travelers purchasing first class airline tickets will not be reimbursed for the expense from public funds.

Travel Protection Insurance for airline tickets is not an allowable expense.

Internet Purchases - Internet travel users must be careful when procuring airline tickets. The Internet sites often list only a class code and the user should know the following code designations:

- Tourist/Coach – B H K L Q T U V W Y
- Business Class – C J
- First Class – A D E F J P

A.1 Fly America Act

If international travel is being charged to a Federal grant or contract, then the "Fly America Act" applies. This act states that all federal contractors who receive funding assistance for travel shall comply with the Fly America Act and will only use US flag air carriers when traveling. For more information about the Fly America Act, visit

<http://www.tvlon.com/resources/FlyAct.html>.

If you have questions regarding the Fly America Act, please contact the program administrator for the federal grant/contract.

B. Purchase Procedures

B.1 Individual Business Travel

University departments may purchase airline tickets for individual business travel by any one of the following payment methods. (Details of each purchase are found later in this procedure.)

- [Process Travel Agency Authorizations through HokieMart](#)
- [Department's Bank of America \(BOA\) Visa Corporate Purchasing Card \(P-Card\)](#)
- [Traveler's Corporate BOA Visa Travel Card](#)
- [Personal Funds](#)
- [Direct Pay Non-Contract Travel Agencies](#)

The Commonwealth of Virginia requires the university to use one of these methods for making payments for air travel services. The university does not have the option of making cash payments directly to the airlines unless the payment is the result of a purchase made through a Requisition for Purchase or meets the conditions of the direct payment provisions for group travel.

Use of the university contracts and the BOA Visa charge cards are completely restricted to university business. No personal travel reservations may be arranged by use of these university procurement means.

Airline tickets may be purchased up to 90 days before the travel occurs. If it can be documented that there are substantial savings made by purchasing the ticket earlier or if there is reason to believe the seats could become unavailable, the Travel Supervisor may make an exception to the 90-day limit.

Airlines have created a new economy class airline ticket in order to compete in the low cost airfare market. Each airline can have a different name for this new level of economy class service; refer to the airlines website for additional information. Departments can elect to purchase either the lowest or standard economy class ticket based upon the needs of the department. The lowest class ticket offering may not allow for services such as carry-on bags, seat assignments prior to check-in, flight changes or refunds, passengers traveling together the ability to sit together and the last to board the plane.

Certain airlines now charge additional fees (baggage, etc.) for services formerly included in the airfare cost. When procuring airfare for business travel, travelers should consider total costs in selecting the most appropriate carrier. Airlines publish limits for baggage and the fees associated with these limits. Travelers are expected to be aware of those limits. In the event these limits must be exceeded for legitimate business purposes, the cost is reimbursable. Recently, airlines have created a higher level of coach class services that charges a premium for certain desired seats. Such upgrades in the coach seating area are enhancements to the coach fare and are not

reimbursable. A receipt and appropriate explanation must be included with the Travel Reimbursement Request.

Charges for changes to tickets/reservations to accommodate personal comfort, convenience and taste are not reimbursable. Change fees must be explained on the Travel Reimbursement Request.

All unused transportation tickets or refunds received while in a travel status should be returned to the University Bursar's Office to be deposited to the Banner fund to which the original ticket was charged.

Boarding passes are not required for all air and rail reimbursements made directly to employees.

B.2 Group Travel

Any of the listed [travel agencies](#) on university contract may provide services for group travel. University departments who are responsible for group travel, such as study abroad groups, may not make commitments for this purchase without first attempting to purchase the services from one of the contract agencies. If the travel agencies on contract are unable to provide the services, you should document your efforts and you may then purchase services from another source.

Departments may purchase group travel up to \$50,000 under the direct payment provisions. Group travel expected to exceed \$50,000 must be purchased using a HokieMart requisition (non-catalog form).

B.3 Process Travel Agency Authorizations Through HokieMart

All travel agency authorizations should be processed through the HokieMart with a purchase order. The Travel Services Authorization form (TA) can only be used when purchasing airline tickets from our contract travel agencies and charging the Virginia Tech Foundation (this form is located on the Foundation's website). The Foundation charges cannot be entered in HokieMart.

In cases where a department wants to split the cost of a ticket between a Foundation and University fund, the purchase must be made through HokieMart charging the complete cost of the ticket to a University fund. The department purchasing the ticket will then need to process a Foundation Request for Payment (RFP) form for the amount to refund the University fund that was originally charged. A copy of the initial HokieMart purchase order must be attached to the RFP along with a deposit ticket and sent to the Foundation for reimbursement.

C. Corporate Purchasing Card (P-Card)

The BOA Visa Corporate Purchasing Card (P-Card) (blue card) may be used for charging airline ticket expense for individual business travel purchased through the Internet, directly from airlines, or from travel agencies. This card cannot be used for any other travel expense, i.e. the first night of lodging cannot be charged to this card. The cardholder does not need to attach a price quote from another source when recording the payment using this option; however, efforts should be made to obtain the lowest cost airfare for the services required. The cardholder should

check several different options, including the contract travel agencies, before securing the airline ticket. Prudent judgment should be used when choosing an Internet travel service site.

Procedure for Purchase of Airline Tickets using BOA Visa P-Card:

- Traveler requests authorized approver's approval to travel using normal travel approval procedures. The traveler's department reviews the travel itinerary to determine if there are any legs of the trip that may be personal in nature. If there is a personal piece to the trip, the department is required to keep documentation showing the total expense of the trip and the expense of the trip if there had been no personal travel involved. The traveler is required to reimburse the departmental fund for any amount exceeding the cost of the business travel expenses.
- Traveler or the departmental representative contacts the travel agency, airline, or the Internet to make travel arrangements.
- When the final flights are agreed upon, the cardholder provides the card number to purchase the airline ticket. If the individual making the arrangements is not the cardholder, the travel agency or other vendor places a "hold" on the flight itinerary when the final flights are agreed upon. Please note that a "hold" on the reservation does not guarantee the price--only issuing the actual ticket guarantees the price. The individual making the arrangements notifies the department BOA Visa P-Cardholder that they have reserved a flight. The cardholder calls the travel agency and provides the BOA Visa number to charge. Tickets must be purchased within 24 hours of booking.
- The department must secure a paper copy, facsimile, or e-mail notice of the itinerary from the travel agency, the airline, or the Internet to file in their BOA Visa records.
- The cardholder keeps the traveler's travel approval form and the trip itinerary in their BOA Visa purchase records.
- At the end of the BOA Visa billing period, the cardholder receives the BOA Visa bill and codes each trip to the appropriate Banner fund and account using normal BOA Visa reconciliation processing.
- The authorized approver reviews the BOA Visa Payment Certification Form and approves it. It is this signature that certifies to the Controller's Office that all travel on the attached BOA Visa monthly statement is for university business and that all personal and Virginia Tech Foundation expenses have been reimbursed to the departmental funds. No other travel approval forms have to be attached to the monthly certification form except as follows.
- If the authorized approver approving the monthly certification form has travel expenses in the monthly statement, the cardholder must attach a copy of the Department Head's travel authorization report (approved by the Dean or Vice President) to meet the university's requirement that anyone receiving anything of value using public funds must have that approved by the "next higher level of supervision." Additionally, if the Department Head's designee approves the certification form AND has travel expenses in the monthly statement, the cardholder must attach a copy of the travel authorization report (approved by the Department Head) to the certification.

D. Travel Card

Travelers may use their Corporate BOA Visa travel card (Travel card) for charging travel when they purchase through the Internet, directly from the airlines or from university contract travel agencies. The travelers receive \$500,000 in business travel accident insurance and \$5,000 in baggage insurance when they use their BOA Visa Corporate travel card to purchase airline tickets. The traveler CANNOT be reimbursed for the cost of the ticket until after the trip occurs. Prudent judgment must be used when purchasing tickets from an Internet travel service site. When procuring services via the Internet, the traveler must provide (a) the hardcopy final page from the Internet site showing total cost and confirmed service and (b) the airline confirmation of the type of ticket purchased, i.e., coach, business when this information is not shown on the final page from the Internet.

E. Personal Funds

Travelers may use their personal credit cards for charging travel when they purchase through the Internet or directly from the airlines. The traveler CANNOT be reimbursed for the cost of the ticket until after the trip occurs. If the traveler considers that a problem, he/she should request the department to use the BOA Visa P-Card process described earlier. When the Internet is used to purchase tickets, the traveler must use prudent judgment. The hardcopy final page from the Internet site showing total cost and confirmed service and airline confirmation of the type of ticket purchased, (i.e., coach, business) must be attached to the travel reimbursement request.

F. Travel Agencies

F.1 Direct Pay Non-Contract Travel Agencies

If a non-University contract travel agency (one not listed below) is being used, they will be allowed to direct bill the University for airline ticket purchases. For further details on direct payments see [P3220](#) posted on the Controller's website. If you need assistance with direct payments please contact an Accounts Payable Supervisor in the Controller's Office.

F.2 University Contract Travel Agencies

The following travel agencies are on contract with the university to provide travel management services.

CI Azumano

192 Ballard Court, Suite 200

Virginia Beach, VA 23462

Phone: 757-213-1282

Fax: 757-544-9081

Webpage: <http://www.ciazumano.com>

Email: vatechPO@ciazumano.com (use this for VTF Travel Services Authorizations)

Covington Travel

4401 Dominion Blvd, Ste. 110

Controller's Office Procedure

Glen Allen, VA 23060
Statewide/National Access: 888-747-7077
FAX: 804-273-0009
Web Page: <http://www.covingtontravel.com>
Email: vatech@covtrav.com

Martin Travel Agency, LLC

1344 South Main Street, Ste. 3
Blacksburg VA 24060
Phone: 951-7854 FAX: 540/951-5043
Statewide/National Access: 1-800/817-1227
Web Page: <http://www.martintravel.com/>
Email: Tammy@martintravel.com or Trish@martintravel.com

Ulti-Max Travel, LLC

22735 Broderick Dr. STE 140
Sterling, VA 20166
Phone: 703-707-0200 FAX: 703-707-1981
Statewide/National Access: 1-866-629-8728
Web Page: <http://www.ultimaxtravel.com>
E-mail: VT@ultimaxtravel.com

Short's Travel Management

1203 West Ridgeway
Waterloo, IA 50701
Team Travel 866-902-9654
Email: teamtravel@shortstravel.com
Recruiting 877-225-0146
Email: state@shortstravel.com
Web Page: <http://www.shortstravel.com/vatech>

Please contact Lynn Meadows (231-8551) dlynnm06@vt.edu with any questions.

Call the agency contact person for more information about the specific services offered by the agency.

G. State, Chartered and Private Aircraft

The University has available for air transportation a Citation Excel and a Citation Sovereign aircraft. The Citation Excel seats a maximum of eight passengers while the Citation Sovereign seats a maximum of nine. In accordance with university policy, there is a three-passenger minimum for all flights. Exceptions to the three-passenger minimum requirement must be submitted in writing through the ATS Director of Aviation to the Assistant Vice President, Business Services for approval. For availability and rates, contact the Air Transportation Services

Flight Operations Manager at 231-2636. State aircraft may be used on official university business, however the use of state or chartered aircraft for university related air transportation requirements must be approved and scheduled by Air Transportation Services.

The use of personal aircraft is permitted for official state travel with prior approval from the Dean of the appropriate college. Documentation of comparable costs for other travel means must be included in the travel reimbursement request package. The reimbursement shall be limited to the most economical means of travel available at that time. For example, if it were less costly to travel by commercial carrier, the reimbursement shall be limited to the lowest cost commercial carrier ticket available. The traveler must include a signed statement with the travel reimbursement request certifying that the amount requested represents the most economical use of public funds. The reimbursement rate per mile shall be the amount listed by the federal government at the GSA website, <http://www.gsa.gov/Portal/content/100715> at the time of the travel. A dated printout of this site indicating the appropriate mileage rate for the travel time period must be included with the travel reimbursement request package. Questions regarding insurance should be directed to the University's Office of Risk Management (231-7439).

H. Cancelled Airline Tickets

Cancelled tickets (Full fare and non-refundable) usually hold some residual value depending upon specific airline policies and restrictions. The traveler should contact the airline prior to cancellation to inquire about refunds or credits. Credits should be used for future airline business travel.