

AIRLINE TICKET REQUEST PROCEDURE

Employees traveling on official state business often require airline tickets. It is the policy of the University **not** to approve such tickets for in-state flights; however, there are rare circumstances when such is granted. This approval is at the discretion of the President or Vice President for Fiscal Affairs, prior to taking the trip.

Presently the University uses Albany Travel Agency (435-2285) as its designated primary booking source for airline tickets. However, it is noted that some airline tickets could be purchased cheaper on-line, as well as through other sources; thus, employees often prefer to purchase their own tickets and be reimbursed. This procedure is permissible and encouraged.

Airline ticket prices must be budget approved via the Official Request for Absence for Travel form or the Request for Purchase form, depending on the circumstances. Please note that even a small lapse of time in obtaining a price for a trip, the travel approval time and the Fiscal Office representative calling the designated travel agency might cause a difference in the price of the ticket. This will possibly result in the person who is traveling having to do an amended request. With this in mind, we ask that you please complete the entire process in a timely manner.

It is the responsibility of the person traveling, or his/her designee, to contact their travel source to make reservations. For those employees utilizing the services of our designated travel agency, until the Office of Fiscal Affairs receives a completed copy of the approved travel form (all signatures, budget approval, etc.), flights are **not** officially approved. Please indicate the price of the airline ticket on the form, for budget approval. This information is needed by the Office of Fiscal Affairs for contact with the travel agency, to give them an official approval number for release of the ticket.

In requesting your tickets through Albany Travel Agency, please indicate on the top right side of your official leave form or purchase form, preferably highlighted, that an airline ticket is needed. This will assist the Budget Office in assuring that the person who calls the travel agency will get a copy of the form, even though it is **solely** the employee's responsibility to do so.

The **Georgia Department of Administrative Services** also lists some very valuable procedures to follow, which includes the below:

Air Travel Regulations Compliance

In order to comply with the travel policies, state employees must endeavor to obtain the lowest possible air fare. Travel policies related to commercial air travel includes the following provisions.

“Employees who require air travel should obtain the lowest available airfare to the specified destination, which may include the use of the Internet, a travel agency, or the State airfare contract. The State Purchasing Office of the Department of Administrative Services has contracted with airlines for various travel destinations. Employees should refer to the statewide contract when making arrangements.”

To obtain the best fare, please plan as far in advance as possible. Research concerning air travel indicates in many cases competitive market fares are the most economical alternative and can be obtained through many carriers. The city pair statewide contracts are designed to be a convenience for state travelers, carrying no restrictions, advance purchase or penalties. The city pair statewide contracts should be the first source to check for acquiring air travel, especially when time does not permit advance planning.

Steps to Obtaining the Best Fares

In accordance with stated travel regulations, state employees should research and obtain the best fares as follows:

1. Access the current City-Pair Statewide Contracts
http://ssl.doas.state.ga.us/PRSapp/PR_StateWide_contract_list_alpha.jsp
2. Compare rates by searching for lower market fares with carriers using any of the following options.
 - a. Utilize the Internet. Please see the following suggestions:

Cheap Tickets	http://www.cheaptickets.com/
Mobissimo	http://www.mobissimo.com/search_airfare.php
Orbitz	http://www.orbitz.com/
Travelocity	http://www.travelocity.com/
AirTran Airways	http://www.airtran.com/
American Airlines	http://www.aa.com/index_us.jhtml
Delta Air Lines, Inc.	http://www.delta.com/home/index.jsp
Frontier Airlines, Inc.	http://www.frontierairlines.com/frontier/home.do
Northwest Airlines	http://www.nwa.com/
US Airways	http://www.usairways.com/awa/
United Air Lines, Inc.	http://www.united.com

- b. Contact your preferred travel agency as applicable.
 - c. Contact carriers directly by telephone if desired.
3. Utilize the lowest possible fare, with preference given to the statewide contract.

4. Explain any deviation from statewide contract through travel expense statement. If the statewide contract is not utilized, the state traveler must indicate the reason for the deviation on the Employee Travel Expense Statement. The waiver process for deviations from statewide contracts will not apply.

Please note the Office of Fiscal Affairs is available for any assistance you need with this process. For further information or clarification, please call 430-4608 or 430-4609.