



# Handbook of Operating Procedures

**Section:** 5.6.3  
Originally Approved: 06/10/2002  
Last Amended: 11/24/2014  
Last Reviewed: 09/13/2011  
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## STUDENT TRAVEL

### A. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set forth University rules and procedures regarding student and pre-college University program participant travel and to comply with The University of Texas System policy and state law ([Texas Education Code §51.950](#)) relating to student travel. University students may travel off campus when representing a student organization, University department, or engaging in intercollegiate competition or academic activities. Examples of student travel include, but are not limited to, class field trips and assignments; attendance at scholarly or professional conferences; University-funded student organization travel; class trips for educational or cultural enrichment; athletic, student publication, dramatic, music, or forensic competition or performances; student leadership conferences; placement forums; and graduate school visits.

### B. Persons Affected

Students and pre-college University program participant travel.

### C. Policy

#### 1. Authorization

Student and pre-college University program participant travel, as described above, must be registered with and approved by the Dean of Students or his or her designee. The Authorization for Student Travel and Release of All Claims forms must be completed and submitted to the Office of the Dean of Students at least two weeks prior to the trip. Each individual requesting authorization for travel must submit a completed Release of all Claims form with the Authorization for Student Travel form.

#### 2. Statutory Requirements

The statutory requirements in subsection C-3 of this policy are applicable to student travel undertaken by one or more currently enrolled students or participants of pre-college University programs to reach an activity or event that meets all of the following criteria:

- a. An activity or event organized and sponsored by the University. An activity or event is considered to be organized and sponsored if it has been planned and funded by the University and approved by the Dean of Students or his or her designee;
- b. The activity or event is located more than 25 miles from the University; and



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- i. Travel to the activity or event is funded and undertaken using a vehicle owned, rented, or leased by the University; or
- ii. Attendance at the activity or event is required by a registered student organization and approved in accordance with this Policy.

### 3. Safety and Mode of Travel

#### a. All Motor Vehicle Travel

##### i. Seat Belts

Occupants of motor vehicles shall use seat belts or other approved safety restraint devices required by law or regulation at all times when the vehicle is in operation. The number of occupants in a vehicle cannot exceed the number of working seatbelts in the vehicle.

##### ii. Alcohol and Illegal Substance Prohibited

Occupants of motor vehicles shall not consume, possess, or transport any alcoholic beverages or illegal substances. Operators shall not drive while under the influence of drugs or alcohol; this includes over the counter or prescription medication that may impair the driver's ability.

##### iii. Passenger Capacity

The total number of passengers in any vehicle at any time it is in operation shall not exceed the manufacturer's recommended capacity or the number specified in applicable federal or State law or regulations, whichever is lower. 12 and 15-passenger vans shall not be used to carry more than 9 occupants (including the driver) at any one time. Consideration should be given to decreasing the number of passengers if luggage is to be transported in the same vehicle; luggage should be stored under seats or in the rear storage area and in a manner that does not obstruct the view of the driver.

##### iv. License and Training

Each operator of a motor vehicle shall have a valid operator's license, be at least 18 years of age, be trained as required by law to drive the vehicle that will be used, and comply with applicable requirements of The University of Texas System Administration Policy UTS157, [Automobile](#)



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[Insurance Coverage for Officers and Employees and General Requirements for the Use of Vehicles.](#)

Persons who drive a 12 or 15-passenger van must successfully complete a van driving training course at least once every three years. Van driving training is available at the Environmental Health and Safety Office.

v. Proof of Insurance, Inspection, and Safety Devices

Each motor vehicle to which this Policy applies must have a current proof of liability insurance card and display a current State inspection certificate, be equipped with all safety devices or equipment required by federal or State law or regulation, and comply with all other applicable requirements of federal or State law or regulations and any applicable University or U.T. System policy.

vi. Legal Operation of Vehicle and Driving Schedule

Operators of motor vehicles shall comply with all laws, regulations, and posted signs regarding speed and traffic control and shall not operate the vehicle for a continuous period that is longer than the maximum provided by guidelines promulgated by federal or State law or regulations or guidelines promulgated by the University, whichever is lower, without scheduled rest stops or overnight stops. A driver may not drive longer than 4 continuous hours without a scheduled rest stop. The rest stop must last a minimum of 30 minutes before that same driver may resume driving. Total driving time within a 24-hour period may not exceed 8 hours per authorized driver. Driving shall not occur between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. without prior approval from the Department of Environmental Health and Safety.

b. Travel Using a Vehicle Owned, Rented, or Leased by the University

i. Service and Maintenance

In addition to those provisions in subsection C-5, each vehicle owned or leased by the University must be subject to scheduled periodic service and maintenance by qualified persons and comply with all applicable requirements of UTS157, [Automobile Insurance Coverage for Officers and Employees and General Requirements for the Use of Vehicles.](#)



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#### ii. Operators of Vehicles

All operators of vehicles owned, rented, or leased by the University shall be employees of the University and shall have a valid operator's license for the operation of the particular vehicle. In addition, operators shall have a current Motor Vehicle Record on file with the University Physical Plant. Drivers must have a rating of 3 points or less for the preceding 36 months, as required by UTS157, [Automobile Insurance Coverage for Officers and Employees and General Requirements for the Use of Vehicles.](#)

#### iii. Travel by Common Carrier

When a common carrier is used for student travel covered by this Policy, the University shall take reasonable steps to assure the travel is undertaken in conformance with this Policy.

#### iv. Rental Vehicles

All vehicles are required to be rented through the UTPA Travel office. All drivers of rental vehicles must be listed on the vehicle rental agreement.

### 4. Business Procedures Memorandum

For additional information regarding insurance, safety, and mode of travel, refer to The University of Texas System Administration Policy [UTS157, Automobile Insurance Coverage for Officers and Employees and General Requirements for the Use of Vehicles.](#) A copy of the policy can be obtained at the Office of the Vice President for Business Affairs or [http://www.utsystem.edu/bor/procedures/policy/policies/uts157.html.](http://www.utsystem.edu/bor/procedures/policy/policies/uts157.html)

### 5. Coordination of Travel

- a. Each group must designate a travel coordinator, who is responsible for submission of all travel documents, as well as for carrying all necessary documents on the trip.
- b. When possible, the advisor or group sponsor should travel with the group and serve as travel coordinator.
- c. In case of accident, the travel coordinator or designee will contact the University Police Department, who will notify appropriate personnel. All students involved in a vehicle accident are required to visit Student Health Services upon their return to



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the University regardless of the extent of any injury incurred. Pre-college University program participants that are not enrolled at UTPA are not eligible for medical care at Student Health Services.

- d. Prior to leaving, each group must receive a pre-trip orientation, which must include:
  - i. applicable rules of conduct as per the University's Student Conduct Code and this Student Travel Policy;
  - ii. itinerary and contact information;
  - iii. safety issues while traveling and while at the destination point.

Parents/guardians of participants of pre-college University programs will receive pre-trip orientation information as per the program's guidelines.

Students who use their own vehicle or another privately owned vehicle for approved travel are expected to follow all safety requirements set out in this policy.

- 6. All students who travel with a group are required to stay with that group throughout the duration of the trip. Pre-college University program participants who are not enrolled as students at the university must abide by the policy and procedures of their program.

### **D. Definition**

Not applicable.

### **E. Responsibilities**

Not applicable.

### **F. Procedures**

Not applicable.



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### **G. Review**

The Divisional Head for this policy is the Vice President for Student Affairs and this policy shall be reviewed every five years or sooner if necessary by the following Stakeholders:

1. Dean of Students – Senior Reviewer
2. Director of CASP
3. Chief of Staff
4. Director of Environmental Health and Safety
5. SGA President
6. Staff Senate Chair
7. Faculty Senate Chair
8. Academic Affairs Executive Team