

BOLGATANGA TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY



INTERNAL TRAVEL POLICY

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1.0 Introduction

Bolgatanga Technical University (BTU) is committed to internal travels where staff need to travel to attend conferences, workshops, studies amongst others. In line with the above, the Internal Travel Policy seeks to outline the procedures and processes that regulate staff internal travel. The purpose of the policy is to:

- i. clarify the procedures and processes for obtaining the travel authorization that staff require before they travel within the country.
- ii. define roles and responsibilities regarding staff travel.
- iii. set out the type of expenses that may be reimbursed for the various categories of travel.

2.0 Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of this policy are to:

- i. inform employees of the issues they need to consider to ensure a trouble-free experience while travelling on behalf of the University.
- ii. ensure compliance with Financial and Accounting Policies and Procedures Manual of Bolgatanga Technical University and government Financial Administration Regulations.
- iii. ensure that all aspects of staff travels are governed by the highest level of integrity, ethical standards, transparency and accountability that govern all BTU's operations.
- iv. ensure cost-effective internal travels.

3.0 Guiding Principles

The following principles shall guide all internal travels. Travelling staff should:

- i. neither make undue personal financial gains nor losses when travelling on behalf of the University.
- ii. have the necessary approvals and travel documents.
- iii. book airline tickets as far in advance as possible (ideally 14 days or more) in order to obtain advance purchase discounts and optimal travel times.
- iv. follow the terms of sponsored research agreements for travel under such agreements.

4.0 Definitions

i. Internal Travel

Travels within the country Ghana by land, lake or rivers, rail, air or any other means approved by the Vice Chancellor or any designated Principal Officer.

ii. Business Travel

Travel for the purpose of conducting business for the sole benefit of the University.

iii. Allowable Expense

A reasonable, appropriate and necessary expense incurred for the primary benefit of the University business and therefore permitted to be reimbursed or directly charged based on the permission of the University or by the terms of the University Finance Policy or by the express permission of the Finance Officer, or any designated Principal Officer in writing.

iv. Allowable Source Documents

Original service provider receipt, ticket, invoice or electronic invoice, or any other source document permitted in the Accounting Manual. A digital image of the original receipt is acceptable where it is printed and legible. In such a case, the original paper copy of receipt is not available.

v. Per diem

A per diem is an allowance determined by the government to cover accommodation, meals and incidentals while travelling for business purposes. Per-diem amounts are published by the Ministry of Finance.

vi. Accommodation

Accommodation expense shall include hotel, hostel, or any other form of lodging, allowable in the Accounting Manual or approved in writing by the designated Principal Officer.

vii. Necessary

A purchase or service required to achieve a particular business objective.

viii. Original Receipt

The original merchant receipt or invoice issued by the supplier or service provider to substantiate the business transaction. A digital image of the original receipt is acceptable where it is printed and legible.

In such a case, the original paper copy of receipt is not available.

ix. Reasonable Expense

A prudent expenditure incurred on behalf of the University.

5.0 Policy Guidelines

i. Alternative to Travel

Whenever practicable, video or web conferencing should be considered as alternate to travel.

ii. Cash Advances

Bolgatanga Technical University travelers may receive cash advance for the purpose of traveling on University business. Cash advances must be properly substantiated and submitted within certain time limits and in accordance with the Finance Policy.

iii. Use of the University Carpool

Application may be made for the use of the University car(s) where it is more prudent.

Road Transport

Where staff choose to travel by road using public or commercial means within the country, cost of Travel and Transport (T&T) including internal running shall be given using State Transport Corporation fares. In all cases, the cost of the road travel shall not exceed the cost of an economy air ticket for the trip.

iv. Submission and Approval of Expenses

All travels and related expenses must be substantiated and submitted for approval within 30 days after the expense is incurred. It is not necessary to wait until the completion of travel to submit an expense report, and more than one trip may be included in the same report.

Approvers are responsible for verifying that funds are available for the trip and that any required special approvals have been obtained prior to departure (e.g., approval for travel under sponsored projects).

Approval of the Expense Report will be taken as evidence of the reasonableness of the claim, the availability of funds, and the necessity of the trip in furtherance of the University's business. Requests for refund lacking complete information will be reverted to the requesting employee.

v. Supervisor Pre-trip Approval

The person traveling shall obtain the necessary approval from his or her supervisor to travel and may coordinate with the relevant Principal Officer for that purpose. In case the trip is at the instance of the supervisor, he or she shall coordinate the release of funds and other necessary logistics.

vi. Personal Travel

In a situation where personal travel is combined with the University business, only the business portion shall be considered as allowable expense. Personal expenses should be paid for using personal finance sources that do not result in the University paying for the personal expenses.

vii. Baggage

Charges for baggage that is reasonable and appropriate for the purpose and length of the trip are allowable.

viii. Hotels/Accommodation

a. Hotel Class and Rooms

The class of hotel must be reasonable and appropriate for the business purpose and location. Bolgatanga Technical University travelers should stay in standard rooms only. Suites and other upgraded rooms are not allowable expenses. If there is a valid business need for a non-standard room, it has to be pre-approved by a designated Principal Officer.

b. Hotel Exercise Facility/Gym

Exercise facility fees are not permissible, however, if the traveler is under medical condition (with

evidence) that requires a physiotherapy he/she can use the facility but not exceeding 10 percent of the hotel bill per night.

c. Laundry and Dry Cleaning

Any staff travelling for about 7 or more consecutive nights can use laundry service which is an allowable expense. This cost must be incurred during the trip.

d. Lodging at Private Residences

Travelers should avoid lodging at private residences because of associated risks.

ix. Car Rental

When alternative means of transport is comparatively more expensive than car rental, car rental becomes the best option (e.g., taxi, car service, or train) or where it is more convenient or when it involves safety issues that can justify additional cost.

Fuel: When returning rental cars to the rental agency, employees are expected to refuel the rental car but they should not consider the pre-paid fuel options. The cost of fuel is an allowable expense. When you are traveling with your personal vehicle, the price of fuel is factored into the mileage reimbursement rate (kilometric allowance) and is not an allowable expense.

x. Incidental Expenses

Charges involving tolls and parking that are not part of an employee's normal travel are allowable expenses.

xi. Accidents, Thefts, and Other Safety Issues

Report accidents, thefts, and other crimes to the appropriate authorities as soon as possible.

xii. Taxis

Whenever possible, taxis could be used for in-city destinations except where a rental car or other means of transport is less costly or where there are expediency or safety issues that justify the extra cost.

xiii. Personal Automobile

1. Acceptable Usage

Use of personal vehicle for business purposes is allowed when it is less expensive than alternative

means of transportation or when there are convenience or safety issues that justify the additional cost.

2. Mileage Reimbursement/Kilometric Allowance

If a personal vehicle is used for business purposes, you will be reimbursed at the current authorized mileage rate for miles covered in excess of your normal travel or you will be paid kilometric allowance using the approved rate. The personal mileage reimbursement covers all costs related to the operation of the vehicle, including service, maintenance, insurance, depreciation and fuel/gas.

3. Intercampus Travel

The University may provide a comprehensive fee for shuttle service for intercampus travel. Reimbursement for use of a personal vehicle for intercampus travel is not an allowable expense unless there is a documented medical need.

a. Use of University Owned Vehicles

The University possesses a number of automobiles that may be accessible for business travel needs. Travelers should make sure there is an appropriate vehicle available for use. The University Vehicles shall be operated by only approved drivers and for permitted business only. Buying of fuel is an allowable expense if the University owned vehicle is used for its own business.

xiv. Meals & entertainment

a. Individual Meals & Incidentals

Actual daily expenses claimed should be reasonable and appropriate and should conform with Financial and Accounting Policies and Procedures Manual of the University.

b. Group Meals and Entertainment

When an individual is conducting business with one or more guests, reasonable meals and entertainment expenses are allowable if they are directly related to the University's business.

c. Alcohol

The purchase and use of alcohol, places a significant legal exposure on the University. Therefore, the use of alcohol for business meals and entertainment purposes should be kept to a minimum.

d. Documentation

All business meals and entertainment outlays are required to be documented by the University. There must be a list of attendees comprising titles and affiliation, or identification of a discernible group, total number of attendees, and the business purpose of the meeting. Request for refund of business expenses must be submitted. Receipts are required for all expenses.

The University complies with its Financial and Accounting policy and procedures which require all the University expenses to be authenticated with sufficient records. This substantiation must comprise the following:

- i. Amount of the outlay.
- ii. Time and place of the expenses.
- iii. Business purpose of the expenditure, and
- iv. Names and the business relationships of individuals other than the employee for whom the expenditures were made.

Requests for refund lacking complete information will be reverted to the requesting person.

xv. Communications

a. Telephone Usage While Traveling

Reasonable and essential telephone calls that are meant for conducting the University business are a permissible expense. The itemized hotel bill or an original telephone bill with listed calls must be added to the expenditure report.

b. Internet Access

Internet access (e.g., hotel, airport, hotspot, etc.) is an allowable expense if it is needed for the purposes of transacting the University business and not individual use. Travelers should plan and secure an internet bundle if it is necessary for business purpose.

xvi. Miscellaneous

Reimbursable Expenses

Below are reimbursable expenses, once they are in acquiescence with the relevant Provisions of this Policy, and are for the purpose of the University's business:

- Hotel and Accommodation charges
- Airfare, train fare, bus fare, taxicabs
- Meals
- Business telephone calls
- Charges for internet connectivity at the hotel or motel
- Car rental expenses
- Personal mileage/kilometric allowance, if using own vehicle
- Toll and parking charges
- Conference and convention fees
- Business centre costs (i.e., copying, faxing, etc.)

- Reasonable business entertainment expenses
- Laundry expenses during trips in excess of five days
- Other reasonable and necessary business expenses, not specifically excluded by this policy.

The following expenses are not reimbursable:

- Hotel room movies and other forms of personal entertainment
- Childcare costs
- Barbers/hairstylists
- Traffic fines
- Luggage or briefcases
- Alcohol, unless consumed during legitimate business-related entertainment activities
- Car service for normal travel
- Car washes of personal vehicle
- Clothing
- Meals for social occasions
- Personal entertainment (e.g., sporting events)
- House sitting
- Membership reward fees
- Non-business membership fees
- Non-business postage
- Parking and/or speeding tickets (personal vehicle)
- Personal toiletries
- Shoeshine
- Souvenirs and personal gift.

xvii. Spousal and dependent travel

When an employee is travelling with his/her spouse/partner and/or dependents, it is not an allowable business expense in terms of their meals unless it is pre-approved by the Vice Chancellor/ the sponsor when it is research sponsored project.

xviii. Students' field trips

Students field trips should be in accordance with the University Field Trip Policy.

Appendix 1

BOLGATANGA TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

STUDENTS' FIELD TRIP APPLICATION FORM

Name of applicant

Position.....

Department.....

Faculty/Institute

Purpose of travel:

.....

.....

If official, please provide the following details (Attach supporting documents where necessary):

Activity (for example study tour)

Theme of activity

Location of activity

Role to be played

Costs to be borne by the University (Please indicate as appropriate)

Per-diem allowance

Conference/Seminar fees

Other (Please specify)

Proposed date of departure

Proposed date of return

Signature of applicant Date

Permitted by/Not permitted by: Date:

Head of Department

Recommended/Not Recommended..... Date:

Dean

Approved/Not Approved: Date:

Pro-Vice-Chancellor