

Standard Operating Procedures

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION &
COMMUNICATION

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1/23/2019

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Definitions

AEC: Department of Agricultural Education & Communication

Chartfield: a series of numbers indicating the fund source with the UF system. Should include, at minimum; the Department ID, Fund Code, Program Code, Budget Reference. (*Example: 60XX0000-10X-XX00-CXXXX*) This can be obtained from the AEC business office, from a project PI/Co-PI or myInvestigator for grants funds, from another department if they are “granting” you funding for an award or travel.

ER: Expense Report – Input by the AEC Business Office for faculty & staff employed by AEC after the Post Travel form has been submitted online with supporting documents.

Fiscal Year (FYXX): July 1, 20YY thru June 30, 20XX

FTE: Full Time Equivalency – 1.0 FTE=40 hours work per week

GA: Graduate Assistant

IFAS: Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

Project Number: The project number as related to grant funding. Should be included with the chartfield when using grant funds for travel or purchases. This can be located in myInvestigator.

TA: Travel Authorization – Input by the AEC Business Office for faculty & staff employed by AEC using the information submitted on the Pre-Travel Form online.

Attendance and Leave Policy

Attendance is an essential aspect of every position of the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication. This policy is not intended to supersede university regulations or policies and should be read in conjunction with university regulations, policies and procedures. Unsatisfactory attendance will be dealt with in accordance with University Regulations. <https://benefits.hr.ufl.edu/time-away/>

Work Hours

- a) The minimum workweek for fulltime employees is forty (40) hours. A scheduled work day for a full-time employee will typically include a lunch period and may include rest breaks. Schedules shall be determined by the supervisor.
- b) Employees are expected to adhere to their specified work schedule, report to work on time every scheduled workday, and be at their workstation ready to begin work at the start of their shift.
- c) Non-exempt employees must accurately report actual time worked and must be compensated for all hours worked.
- d) Any modifications to work schedules including overtime, or flex time, should be requested and approved in advance.
- e) Any overtime for non-exempt employees must be approved by the immediate supervisor and the department chair in advance.

Call-in procedure

- a) In the event of unanticipated absences, including sickness or lateness, employees must call and speak directly to their immediate supervisor as soon as possible, but no later than fifteen (15) minutes after the start of their shift.
- b) If the immediate supervisor is unavailable, the employee should contact the main office as defined by area and leave a number where they can be reached. The supervisor may then return the call.
- c) Failure to follow proper call-in procedure will result in appropriate discipline action.

Breaks

The University recognizes that employees work better when they are rested and refreshed.

- a) During each four (4) hours that an employee works, a fifteen (15)-minute rest period is permitted whenever possible. Supervisors should advise employees of particular arrangements for rest breaks in their sections.
- b) Rest-periods may not be accumulated for later use (to extend lunch breaks, or arrive late or leave early) and may not be combined to use for longer breaks.
- c) Rest-periods are to be counted as time-worked and there is no need to record the time in the system
- d) Employees are expected to take their scheduled lunch break at the designated time and for the scheduled duration.
- e) Non-exempt employees are not permitted to work during their lunch breaks and must accurately report the time.

Tardiness

- a) Tardiness is defined as reporting to work late at the beginning of the work shift, leaving early or returning late from a work break or lunch, or leaving work early at the end of the work day, all without approval.
- b) Tardiness will result in unauthorized leave without pay, unless leave with pay is approved by the supervisor for extenuating circumstances.
- c) The university's system of "rounding time" does not excuse tardiness nor apply to beginning or end of the work shift. It only applies to the way leave is reflected in the system.
- d) Excessive tardiness [three (3) or more instances in a thirty (30) day period] will result in appropriate disciplinary action.

Leave Plans:

Vacation

- a) Vacation leave may only be taken after approval is received from the employee's immediate supervisor.
- b) Except for emergencies, employees should submit requests for vacation in advance. Vacation request for more than three days should be submitted at least one week in advance. Requests for one day or less should be submitted at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance.
- c) The granting of vacation leave is at the supervisor's discretion based on departmental needs and workload.
- d) Vacation leave will not be permitted when an employee calls in sick except for Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) qualifying absences. However, when vacation leave has been properly requested and approved, employees may use it for any personal reason including medical appointments.

Sick Leave

- a) Sick leave may be used for an employee's illness, or injury, or exposure to a contagious disease, or medical appointments.
- b) Sick leave may also be used in reasonable amounts for an immediate family member's illness, or injury, or medical appointment or death.
- c) Employees must follow proper departmental call in procedure to notify their supervisor directly when they are out sick. If the employee is not able to call the supervisor directly on the first day of the absence, they must do so as soon as possible thereafter. At that time if the illness is expected to be longer than one day the employee should indicate the expected length of the absence. For absences longer than the expected time, the employee must follow call in procedures on the next day, to keep the supervisor informed. The exception is where medical documentation has been submitted informing the supervisor of the duration of the absence.
- d) When possible, employees should try to schedule routine medical appointments for times that are least disruptive to the department. Also, employees should notify and obtain approval from their supervisors prior to scheduling and using leave for routine medical appointments.
- e) Where an employee has exhausted their accrued sick leave, future unscheduled absences may result in leave without pay, unless the absence is FMLA-qualifying (for which accrued vacation leave can be used).
- f) More than three (3) occurrences of sick leave in any 30-day period may be considered excessive. An "occurrence" is defined as a single absence consisting of consecutive time periods. Employees may be required to submit documentation from a health care provider after each occurrence of sick leave if their sick leave usage is considered excessive or develops into an identifiable pattern.
- g) For an occurrence of three (3) or more consecutive work days, employees may be required to submit a doctor's note upon their return to work.
- h) Employees who call in sick after they have requested and been denied vacation will be required to submit a doctor's note.

Compensatory Leave

Employees who have accrued overtime, regular, or special compensatory leave, must use such leave prior to using vacation leave. Employees must request and receive supervisory approval prior to using any type of compensatory leave.

Administrative Leave

An employee may be granted administrative leave for court/jury duty/witness, death in the immediate family or other situations as approved by appropriate university authorities. An employee who is summoned for jury duty should notify their supervisor of the expected absence as soon as possible and submit a copy of the subpoena. Full-time employees may use up to two (2) days of administrative leave for each occurrence of death in their immediate family. The 2-day benefit is prorated for part-time employees. When requested, the employee must provide their supervisor with the name of the deceased and the affiliation with the employee.

Leave Without Pay (LWOP)

Leave without pay will result where employees who have exhausted their accrued leave balance have their supervisor's approval for their absence. Leave without pay can also be used to make an employee's

FTE whole where an employee with an FMLA qualifying event uses intermittent leave during an extended leave of absence. Leave without pay must be approved in advance by the supervisor.

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

Employees are entitled to up to twelve (12) workweeks or four hundred eighty (480) hours of unpaid leave per fiscal year for absences relating to birth of a child or adoption or foster care; or when an employee or his or her spouse, parent, or child has a serious health condition.

- a) An employee requesting leave under the FMLA must submit a Certification of Health Care Provider form completed by their physician. The form is available online at <http://www.hr.ufl.edu/forms/benefits/healthcarecertification.pdf>.
- b) Employees may use any type of leave towards their FMLA-related absences, however, when overtime compensatory leave is used during FMLA-related absence, it does not count toward the twelve (12) weeks entitlement.
- c) FMLA-related absences must be properly reflected in the system using the appropriate time reporting code.

Leave is a benefit available for employees to attend to personal needs. Supervisors should inform employees about the importance of good attendance, and the effect of unsatisfactory attendance on coworkers, daily operations, and ultimately the division. The Department of Agricultural Education and Communication employees are expected and encouraged to take personal responsibility for their attendance and appropriate use of available leave benefits. Supervisors should make every effort to accommodate leave requests that are submitted appropriately and in a timely manner. However, abuse of leave, or failure to report to work as scheduled, or a pattern of unscheduled and/or excessive absences or tardiness will not be tolerated. These constitute unsatisfactory attendance for which appropriate disciplinary action could result. Also, time worked and leave must be accurately entered in the system. Falsification will not be tolerated under any circumstances, and will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

The Department of Agricultural Education and Communication values its employees and their efforts towards achieving the goals and missions of the University. We hope these guidelines will help employees understand the expectations of the University pertaining to attendance and leave usage. Please feel free to discuss any concerns with your supervisor, department chair or contact your Employee Relations Satellite office at (352) 392-4777.

Travel for Business

When traveling on UF Business and using Departmental Funds or Grant Funds follow these procedures to ensure prompt reimbursement of travel expenses, as allowed.

View the UF Travel Directives here: <http://www.fa.ufl.edu/directives-and-procedures/travel/>

US/Domestic Travel

- Meal Rates: Breakfast=\$6, Lunch=\$11, Dinner=\$19; no matter where in the US you travel.
 - You can only claim meals if you are staying overnight.
- Rental Cars: UF has a contract with Enterprise/National Car Rentals. *Account Number: 43A3255*
You MUST use the contract for UF business travel when renting a vehicle. Justification must be

made, in writing, if you do not use this contract. For more information:

<https://procurement.ufl.edu/contracts/rental-vehicles/>

- Airbnb: Effective January 22, 2019, Airbnb is no longer allowed for UF Official business travel. Employees will not be reimbursed for lodging arrangements through Airbnb nor can they use a PCard with Airbnb.

Foreign Travel

- UF requires that all faculty, staff and graduate students who are traveling abroad on University business register with the UF International Center. Visit this website for information and to register online. <https://internationalcenter.ufl.edu/node/116> Include a copy of your registration with your pre-travel and post-travel form.
- If you will be taking a UF owned laptop with an asset decal (barcode) you must register the device online prior to travel. File the Foreign Travel Request here: <http://www.fa.ufl.edu/departments/asset-management/annual-inventory-off-site-certifications-foreign-travel-with-equipment-request/>
- Meal rates vary by city for foreign travel. Links to the foreign per diem rates can be found in the [UF Travel Directives](#).

Pre-Approval Travel Form

You must file a pre-approval travel form prior to travel if:

- You are attending a meeting or conference with a registration fee.
- You will have PCard expenses prior to the travel taking place (ie: Airfare).
- You are traveling abroad (Foreign).

Use the Pre-Approval Travel Form found here: <https://aec.ifas.ufl.edu/resources/faculty--staff-resources/>

Best Practice: Submit this form *PRIOR* to making any purchases related to travel, including conference registration fees. This is an estimate of your travel expenses. At minimum, please submit 30-days in advance of the departure date.

You must provide the funding source with your request (Chartfield string). If you do not know this information, please ask the AEC Business Office for assistance before you submit your form.

Information to include with your Pre-Approval Travel Form:

- Registration Form: This should include details about what is provided with your registration fee.
- Chartfield String, funding source, project number
- Prior approval from other funding source, if applicable. If another department is funding your travel, provide the email or correspondence providing that information.
- Include receipts or confirmations if you have already made purchases and/or reservations related to the travel.

Post-Travel Form

You must file a Post-Travel Form if you used or are using UF funds or grant funds for business travel.

Items to include with your Post-Travel Form:

- Registration Form and Receipt
- Lodging Receipt from the Hotel
- Airfare Ticket(s) – this MUST include a ticket number
- Conference or Meeting Agenda
- Itemized, legible receipts
- Chartfield String and/or Project Number

Graduate Assistant Travel Funding

The AEC Department maintains the philosophy that graduate student participation in research conferences is a win-win scenario for both the student and the department. As funds are available, the department will offer partial support to AEC graduate students attending conferences and presenting conference posters and/or research papers. Due to budgetary constraints, limits must be established as follows on the number and amount of awards provided to any given graduate student during the budget year:

- Until budgeted funds are expended, each PhD student will be provided up to \$200 per conference (\$400 fiscal year total) to support participation in two research/professional society conferences (e.g., AAE, SAAS, ALE, AIAEE, AEC, AEJMC, NACTA, etc.) in fiscal year. A department conference travel award may be received as reimbursement (after travel has occurred) or used to pay pre-registration fees or purchase airline tickets in advance. If department funds are used in advance of the travel, and the student cancels his/her conference attendance for any reason, the student must reimburse the department for the amount of the matching funds. A Pre-Approval Travel Form must be submitted to the AEC Business Office at least 30 days in advance of the travel to initiate the request for department conference travel support. If the student wishes to apply this department support toward a pre-registration fee or airline ticket that costs more than \$200, the student must pay the department the difference in the cost of registration or air travel. The student will be responsible for any late registration fees. A completed TAR form must be approved in advance for all travel that involves university funds and vehicles.
- Up to \$200 will be provided to MS students in the department to help with the cost of their participation in one research/professional society conference during FY, using the same procedures as described above.
- With the exception described in the following bullet, in order for PhD and MS students to receive this department support for participation in research/professional society conferences, the student must be the first or second author and presenter or co-presenter of the paper or poster. These roles must be indicated on the TAR form. This policy is not intended to discourage collaboration on research projects but rather to encourage leadership on such projects.
- To encourage early involvement in research projects and conferences during their graduate program, pending available funding, first-year PhD students will be provided up to \$150 in FY to participate in one research/professional society conference, even if they are not an author or presenter of a paper or poster. This will count as one of the two conference travel awards available in FY to PhD students.

- Students who receive \$200 or more toward their expenses to attend a conference from a grant administered in the AEC department or PIE Center or from another department, PIE Center, or UF sources are not eligible to receive a \$200 conference travel award from department general funds to attend that conference. If the amount of support provided by one of these other sources is less than \$200, students can request the difference (\$200 less the amount from the other source) from the department for that conference. The purpose of this policy is to extend the department funds budgeted to support AEC graduate student conference travel, and thus, allow the department to financially support the conference travel of more AEC graduate students each year. Students requesting a department award for conference travel must add a statement in the “Notes” box on the TAR form indicating the amount and source of additional travel funds for that conference, if any.
- When department funds budgeted for graduate student conference travel support become depleted before the end of the fiscal year, such support will cease for the remainder of the fiscal year.

Departmental Miscellaneous Travel

You must submit a Pre-Approval Travel Form prior to travel in order to initiate the request for use of AEC Miscellaneous travel funds.

Using Your PCard

PCards are designated for use by UF faculty and staff employees who make purchases or travel for UF business. PCards are issued to individual UF employees whose dean, director or department chair authorize the request. *If you would like to request a UF PCard, please email the AEC Business Manager with a justification of how you would use the PCard to benefit your program and UF.*

UF Procurement Card (PCard) Website: <https://procurement.ufl.edu/uf-departments/procurement-cards-pcards/>

Training Required to obtain a UF PCard: PST975, PST076, & PST077

PCard Holders must take the PCard refresher course (PST974) every two years.

When using your PCard in Florida, be sure to tell the vendor that your transaction is tax exempt. The UF tax-exempt number is printed on your PCard. If you would like a business card sized tax-exempt certificate, please contact the AEC Business Office. Other states are not required to honor the Florida tax-exempt certificate.

- Provide receipts to the AEC business office within THREE (3) DAYS of making the purchase. The ONLY exception on this is if you are traveling, you can turn in your receipts upon return.
- Include the funding source with your receipt (Chartfield)
- All receipts must have the cardholder’s signature, unless the receipt is in email form and is forwarded to the AEC Business Office by the cardholder.
- Include a UF business purpose for the transaction.
- Cardholders are responsible for all transactions if they meet your card limits. If you do not know your card limits, contact the AEC Business Manager.
- Your PCard should NEVER be linked or saved on ANY account nor used for recurring charges.

- Using your PCard on Amazon? Request an Amazon Business Account
<https://procurement.ufl.edu/uf-departments/how-to-purchase-from-amazon-business/>
- Personal charges made on your PCard are against UF policy and will result in immediate suspension of your PCard privileges.