



## **Travel Office Policies and Procedures**

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## **I. General Travel Policy**

### **1.1 Definitions**

In this Manual the following terms have the following meanings:

Appointment Travel	Appointment travel refers to the cost of travel payable by the University in connection with a foreign-hire faculty member or administrator relocating from his or her country of residence to take up a position offered by the University.
AUC Employee	AUC employee means any of the following employment categories: faculty member, administrator, manager, or staff member enjoying a formal contract of employment with the University.
Business Day	A Business Day is a day on which the administrative offices of the University are open for the conduct of regular business.
Business Travel	Business Travel comprises all trips where the cost of air transportation is covered entirely by operating expense budget(s) and where the tickets for such trips are purchased exclusively through the Travel Office. Such travel is charged to general ledger expense objects such as 621-32-120 (official travel) or 621-31-520 (professional development travel).
Ceiling	The Travel Office shall on a monthly basis provide a rolling, three month forward, airfare prices for travel to frequented cities. The ceiling shall be the maximum reimbursable amount for business travel.
Discounted Ticket	A discounted ticket refers to any ticket that is purchased for a price less than that advertised by the airline. Such discounts may be obtained by purchase of the ticket through an accredited Travel Agent enjoying the standard IATA remission prevailing from time to time, to which may be added an “override” commission linked both to the volume of business transacted between the airline and the Travel Agent and to the volume of business transacted between the Travel Office and the Travel Agent. Alternatively, the discount may arise by direct agreement between the Travel Office and the airline, normally based on the volume of business placed annually with the airline.

Faculty Support Grant Travel	Faculty Support Grant Travel refers to the travel portion of conference, research, research development, and teaching enhancement grants that are partially financed from University funds. Travel expense for these purposes that is <i>wholly</i> borne by the University is categorized as Business Travel and is subject to the policies and procedures covering Business Travel.
Fare Basis	For a given class of travel an airline may publish a variety of fare rates, to which differing contractual conditions and limitations may apply. The Fare Basis under which a ticket is issued appears on the face of the ticket and is normally designated by a simple letter of the alphabet, such as D, H, F, J, K, M, Y, S, X etc.
Full Fare Ticket	A full-fare ticket is a ticket that is purchased at the highest price advertised by an airline for the applicable travel class (i.e. First Class, Business Class, Special Business Class, Economy Class etc.) before application of any special offer or discount. The Fare Basis is normally F for First Class, J or C for Business Class and Y for Economy Class travel. A Full Fare ticket is typically valid for a period of one year from the date of issuance, with no minimum stay at the point of destination.
Home Leave	Home Leave refers to the cost of travel payable by the University once a year (and at a time acceptable to the University) to permit a foreign-hire faculty member or administrator to return to his or her country of residence, as contractually defined. Home Leave is not offered during the final year of employment with the University.
Personal Travel	Personal Travel refers to all trips undertaken by a member of the AUC community the cost of which is the sole responsibility of the person contracting for such travel arrangements.
Reference Airline	In computing cash equivalents for airline tickets the Travel Office uses, for the applicable travel dates, the best Economy Class price it can obtain from one of the following airlines: Air France, Alitalia, Egypt Air, Lufthansa, British Airways, and KLM. These are referred to in this Manual as Reference Airlines. In the case of travel to destinations other than Europe or North America, the Travel Office may also take account of the price quoted by Egypt air or

by the national airline of the country to which travel is to be undertaken.

Special Fare Ticket

A Special Fare Ticket is one that is purchased at a special price advertised and promoted by an airline for a limited duration of time. Like Excursion Fare Tickets, Special Fare Tickets impose certain schedule restrictions on the traveler.

Sponsored Grant Travel

Sponsored Grant travel refers to the costs of travel which are paid for or reimbursed by a sponsoring agency or grantor. Such travel is undertaken subject either to the rules and regulations imposed by the grantor, or, absent such conditions, subject to the University's policies and procedures.

Student Travel

Student Travel refers to trips undertaken abroad by students and accompanying staff whose costs are either paid for entirely from University funds or are shared between the Universities' operating expense budget and the participating students. Trips for cultural, educational, and sports events are all examples of this form of travel.

Termination Travel

Termination travel refers to the cost of travel payable by the University in connection with a foreign-hire faculty member or administrator leaving Egypt at the end of his or her contract of employment to return to his or her country of residence (as appearing in the original contract of employment).

## **1.2 Scope of Services, Objectives & Priorities**

### **1.2.1 AUC Travel Office**

The AUC Travel Office (referred to throughout this Manual as the Travel Office) is situated in the New Campus. It is open to the AUC community from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. every day on which AUC is open for normal business.

The Travel Office provides the following services to the AUC community:

- Flight reservations and ticket purchases for both domestic and international air travel
- Hotel and car hire reservations both domestically and internationally
- Purchase of comprehensive holiday packages where such arrangements are made through local airlines or travel agents

The first priority of the Travel Office is to provide services to students, faculty and staff who are traveling on AUC business, or on trips sponsored by AUC; the second priority is to serve faculty and administrators on categories of AUC travel where use of the office is optional; and the third priority is to assist the entire AUC community in the execution of private travel plans.

### **1.2.2 Controller's Office**

The Controller's Office, through the Travel Accounting Section and the Disbursements Section respectively, carries out the following functions and responsibilities:

- Processing and disbursement of Per Diem advance requests
- Encumbrance of travel budgets
- Processing and clearance of Per Diem advances
- Processing of travel reimbursement requests
- Settlement of air tickets and all other travel services procured directly by the Travel Office

The objective of the Controller's Office is to: (a) provide timely payment of authorized Per Diem Advances and cash allowances for tickets, (b) process reimbursement requests expeditiously, and (c) settle obligations to vendors of travel services within their stated terms.

## **2 International Travel**

### **2.2 Class of Travel**

#### **2.1.1 First Class Travel**

University policy does not provide for payment for First Class travel at the University's expense. In this context it should be noted that certain domestic flights within the United States have only two classes of travel: economy class and so-called "First Class". Because of code share arrangements it may happen that a traveler can acquire a seat in the First

Class seating area through the purchase of an unrestricted Business Class ticket and may occupy a seat next to another passenger who has purchased a ticket for First Class. AUC will not pay for any ticket shown on its face to be First Class through use of the code "F". It will, however, permit qualifying travelers (see section 2.1.2 below) to fly with an unrestricted Business Class ticket that may permit seating in what is described as the First Class seating area.

### **2.1.2 Business Class Travel**

#### *A. International Travel*

Business Class travel for First Category employees is allowed to certain individuals as per their AUC contract of employment, or as approved by the AUC Cabinet.

Subject to the limitations set out below, persons occupying the following positions are entitled to fly at the cheaper of a Full Fare Economy Class ticket or a Discounted Special Business Class ticket on international Business Travel at the University's expense:

- Deans
- Associate Vice Presidents
- Associate Provosts
- Chief Technology Officer

These persons are hereinafter referred to as Second Category Travelers. This category may also include other employees whose contract of employment provides for them to be allowed to fly at the cheaper of a Full Fare Economy Class ticket or a Discounted Special Business Class ticket under the qualifying conditions set forth in their contract.

With respect to First and Second Category travelers, all direct *and* continuous travel from Europe to destinations in the United States will benefit from the provisions of this section.

All other employees (i.e. those not defined as First or Second Category travelers) will be flown to their international destinations on Economy Class, and whenever feasible the Travel Office will purchase Discounted or Excursion Fare tickets for their flights.

#### *B. Domestic Travel within the United States*

All travel that originates (i.e. is not a connecting flight to a flight originating from Europe or Cairo) and ends in the United States shall be undertaken in Economy Class unless both of the following conditions are met:

- The scheduled flight time exceeds four hours; and
- The traveler is a First Category or Second Category traveler, whereupon the class of travel will be as set forth in section A. above (i.e. international travel rules will apply).

### **2.1.3 Economy Class**

Except as provided in section 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 above all travel at University expense for all the types of travel listed in section 1.1 above shall be undertaken in Economy Class.

## **2.2 Types of Travel**

### **2.2.1 Appointment Travel**

Prior to the date of travel the New York Office, Area Head or the Provost's Office provides the relocated-hire appointee and qualifying dependents with a one-way ticket (permitting one stop en route) from the point of origin to Cairo. Children over 2 but under 12 are issued child-fare tickets where available, but receive a full baggage allowance (from the US this means up to one piece of baggage for the hold, up to an aggregate weight of 23 kilos).

Should the appointee decide to travel to Cairo using a combination of air and other means of travel, he or she may apply to the Provost's Office or Area Head in Cairo for reimbursement up to the actual, documented cost of travel, but the University's liability shall not exceed the cost that it would have paid had travel been undertaken using the least expensive Reference Airline. Under no circumstances can the University reimburse for travel whose cost is not documented/receipted by the carrier and proof of travel in the form of a boarding card.

Provisions covering unaccompanied air freight to Cairo are to be found in the Faculty Handbook for teaching, research and library faculty and related staff.

### **2.2.2 Business Travel**

Except as noted below, tickets for all Business Travel must be purchased through the Travel Office. Each travel request must be supported by a *Travel Authorization Form*, showing the approval of the relevant Dean or Area Head (Deans obtain the approval of the Provost and Area Heads obtain the approval of the President). The form should be lodged with the Travel Office with as much lead time as possible before the date of travel; during the high season (June 1<sup>st</sup> to September 30<sup>th</sup> and December 10<sup>th</sup> to January 8<sup>th</sup>) it is essential to give not less than three weeks notice of intent to travel, and during peak periods longer notice still is preferable. The Travel Office cannot be responsible for failure to reserve seats on flights that are already fully booked. In such situations the University will not pay for the cost of upgraded tickets, should seats still be available in a class higher than that to which the traveler is entitled.

As a general policy the Travel Office strives to reserve seats on the airline preferred by the traveler. However, from time to time it may happen that the purchase of tickets on the selected airline is significantly more expensive than would be the case using the cheapest Reference Airline. If this cost differential exceeds the cheapest Reference Airline, the traveler has the option of selecting the preferred airline and paying the differential amount.

Exceptionally, the Travel Office may approve purchase of a ticket for Business Travel other than through the Travel Office if it is satisfied that the traveler can procure the ticket at a price cheaper than that available to the Travel Office after all discounts. Because the overall level of discounts obtained by the Travel Office is heavily dependent upon the

annual volume of its business, minor improvements in ticket price will not be taken into account in determining whether it can be procured elsewhere.

### **2.2.3 Faculty Support Grants Travel**

Faculty members apply to the Office of the Provost for Faculty Support Grants. Faculty traveling under sponsored programs must complete a Travel Authorization form. The Principal Investigator must indicate on the Travel Authorization form whether travel is externally funded and that travel is in line with grant terms. If the grant involves international travel the proposed itinerary and dates of travel must be included in the application form, but it is neither necessary nor desirable to include an estimate of the travel expense. The Office of the Provost liaises directly with the Travel Office to obtain a quotation for the cost of travel. Quotations are provided using the least expensive Reference Airline, after credit of all available discounts. For destinations in North America prices are calculated on the basis of the cost of an Excursion ticket in Economy Class (whichever is cheaper); for European destinations prices are calculated on the basis of the cost of Excursion Class tickets in Economy Class (whichever is cheaper). In all cases prices will be computed irrespective of the actual number of days covered by the approved travel.

Faculty members who receive a Faculty Support Grant are required to submit a financial report by the deadline established by the Office of the Provost. The financial report must include evidence that travel was undertaken to the destination(s) identified in the grant application.

Conference grant travel will be reimbursed at 100 percent of actual cost based on purchased tickets at or below ceilings as defined in this policy. Proof of travel is required in order to process reimbursement.

### **2.2.4 Home Leave**

Cash payment in lieu of tickets will not be offered beginning with the 2011-12 academic year. Those eligible for Home leave, including qualifying dependents, are entitled travel only to their designated Home Leave city (the Provost or Area Head may approve exceptions). Faculty contracts prior to 2009-10 contained references to specific cities. The Provost Office will review options for confirming and tracking Home Leave destinations. Travelers for Home Leave will have the option of booking tickets themselves or through the Travel Office. If through the Travel Office, a Travel Authorization form must be completed. If the Traveler elects to book outside the Travel Office, She/he must present both the ticket receipt and proof of travel (boarding card) in order to receive reimbursement, subject to the following:

The Travel Office will prepare representative ceiling airfares for travel to representative cities and will provide a chart for guidance. Reimbursement will only be allowed up to the amount listed. Travelers going to non listed destinations must ask the Travel Office prior to any booking for the ceiling for their travel. The ceilings will be based on the best available refundable ticket and will be updated every month and extend for three months.

Prices will take into account the cost of making two stops during the journey (one during the outbound travel and one during the return trip), provided that the total duration of

travel from Cairo to the destination point is not less than eight hours (including time spent in layovers).

### **2.2.5 Personal Travel**

Members of the AUC community are encouraged to deal with the Travel Office when planning private trips. Because the primary function of the Travel Office is to assist in planning trips and in procuring tickets for trips that are funded by the University, it is much appreciated if those planning private trips provide the Travel Office with as much lead time as possible. This not only enables the Travel Office to spread its workload more efficiently, but also is a most important element in reducing the cost of travel, as the cheapest seats on an airplane are normally the first to be sold out.

See Section III for procedures for paying for personal travel.

### **2.2.6 Sabbatical Travel**

Faculty entitled to Sabbatical Travel must complete a *Travel Authorization form* and submit it to the Provost's Office for approval. The Travel Office then purchases tickets that comply with the authorized travel schedule, normally using the cheapest Reference Airline, after credit of all available discounts. For relocated faculty sabbatical travel will be combined with home leave. In case of full-year leave the relocated faculty member will select to have his or her combined travel at the beginning or end of his sabbatical, and will inform the Provost in writing of his or her decision before the beginning of the sabbatical. For one year Sabbaticals, Tickets are purchased on the basis of the cost of a one-year return ticket.

### **2.2.7 Sponsored Grants Travel**

Faculty traveling under sponsored grants must complete a *Travel Authorization form*. If the traveler is subordinate to the Principal Investigator of the grant, the form must be approved by both the Principal Investigator and the Grants Manager in the Controller's Office. If the Principal Investigator is traveling, the form must be approved by both the relevant Dean and the Grants Manager in the Controller's Office.

Sponsored Grants travel is bound by the rules and regulations for such travel contained in the grant agreement. In the absence of any such rules and regulations, the traveler is subject to the conditions applying to Business Travel (see section 2.2.2 above), with the following additional restrictions and points to note:

- No Business Class travel will be permitted without the prior written authorization of the granting agency.
- The cost of travel must not exceed the budget stipulated in the grant agreement (a cost overrun is permitted up to the ceiling normally permitted by the granting agency in question and subject to the transfer of funds from other budget lines. If no such flexibility is permitted, any anticipated excess cost must be approved in writing by the granting agency prior to the date of travel).
- If the traveler is able to procure the ticket at a price cheaper than the best price obtained by the Travel Office after all applicable discounts and rebates, the

traveler may purchase from such alternative source and seek reimbursement from the University upon submission of a valid receipt and a copy of the ticket and boarding passes. For price comparison purposes “cheaper” means that the traveler has obtained a lower price for the same airline, for the same Fare Basis, and for the same dates of travel.

### **2.2.8 Student Travel**

Tickets for Student Travel whose costs are covered in full from University funds must be purchased through the Travel Office. At least two weeks prior to the intended date of travel the responsible department or unit must notify the Travel Office in writing of the dates of travel, the planned itinerary, and the planned number of persons traveling.

Where travel costs are covered only in part from University funds the responsible department or unit is free to solicit quotations from airlines or authorized travel agents of its choice. The following procedures, however, must be observed:

- a) *Before* sending out the request for quotation, the responsible department must clear with the Travel Office the agents and/or airlines to be approached. The responsible department will not approach agents or airlines with which the Travel Office regularly does business.
- b) Not less than two weeks before the anticipated date of travel, the request for a quotation shall be sent in writing *on the same day* to each selected airline or agent from whom a quotation is requested.
- c) Requests for quotation shall be sent to not less than three agents or airlines.
- d) The Travel Office *must* be one of the parties requested to provide a quotation.
- e) The request must specify that the quotation is to be submitted in writing.
- f) The request must specify the deadline by which the responsible department is to receive the quotation. The deadline shall be not less than three Business Days before the planned date of travel.
- g) If, upon receiving quotations, the responsible department wishes to enter into a further round of price negotiation, each company that provided a quotation must have the opportunity to revise its quotation (the revision to be in writing), and the same revised deadline must be given to each company. Revised quotations continue to be subject to the deadline specified in e) above, so it is highly desirable to specify an early deadline if a second round of negotiation is envisaged.
- h) The responsible department will be expected to choose the cheapest quotation. If the cheapest quotation is not acceptable, a memorandum of justification for selecting another quotation must be submitted to the Business Office.
- i) When presenting the Manual Warrant for payment through the Controller’s Office, all quotations received should be attached, together with the initial requests for quotation. If the quotation selected was not the cheapest, a copy of the memorandum of justification should also be attached.

### **2.2.9 Termination Travel**

The appointee completes a Termination form in which he or she requests travel to his or her point of origin (or other destination). Termination forms for relocated faculty and administrators are approved by the Provost and relevant Area Head respectively.

Following approval of the Termination form the Provost's Office completes a *Travel Authorization form*, which is submitted to the Travel Office. No more than 30 days prior to the date of termination travel, the Travel Office provides the appointee with a one-way ticket (no stops en route) to his or her point of origin. Should a destination other than the point of origin have been chosen, the Travel Office notifies the appointee of any difference in the cost of the fare to be paid on a personal basis, and such difference must be settled with the University prior to release of the ticket(s).

Alternatively, at the appointee's request, the Provost's Office may prepare a Manual Warrant, requesting that the appointee be paid the cash equivalent of the cost of the ticket(s). In any such case, the University will pay the cash equivalent of the price that would have been paid for a one-way Economy Class ticket (or tickets) with no stops en route, using the cheapest Reference Airline, after credit of all available discounts.

Provisions covering unaccompanied air freight from Cairo are to be found in the Faculty Handbook for teaching, research and library faculty and related staff.

## **2.3 Other Policies Relating to International Travel**

### **2.3.1 Basis for Charging Tickets to Budget Lines**

When the Travel Office purchases Discounted Tickets for Business Travel, Home Leave Travel, Faculty Sponsored Grants Travel, Sabbatical Travel, and Termination Travel, the amount of discount obtained is credited to an offset account in the Travel Office budget center to help defray the costs of running the office. The cost of the ticket before discount is charged to the applicable budget line of the benefiting unit or department. In the case of Sponsored Grants Travel all discounts obtained are credited directly to the relevant grant or contract.

### **2.3.2 Combining of Business Travel & Personal Travel**

An Employee on Business Travel is free to add travel on personal account to the trip, provided appropriate approval has been obtained for such additional absence from the University. The Employee may either elect to purchase such incremental travel through acquisition of ticket(s) from vendors other than the Travel Office, or may elect to amend the itinerary of the Business Travel ticket in such a manner as to accommodate the desired personal travel. In the latter case, the addition of such travel does not obviate the requirement that the Business Travel ticket be procured subject to the conditions set out in section 2.2.2. In respect of such personal travel the Travel Office will seek payment from the Employee for the difference between the actual cost of the ticket (after all applicable discounts) and the cost that would have been incurred (after all applicable discounts) for the approved dates and business itinerary. Reimbursement will be due before the ticket is issued. See Section III for procedures.

### **2.3.3 Frequent Flyer Miles**

While the Travel Office is willing to use Frequent Flyer miles as a means of procuring tickets for personal account, it is not normally appropriate to use this means of settlement for acquisition of tickets required in connection with Business Travel. An Employee on

Business Travel has the right to use Frequent Flyer Miles for the procurement of the required ticket(s), but the University will not be liable to reimburse the Employee a sum greater than the net, validly documented, amount expended in cash by the Employee. In all such cases the conditions set out in section 2.2.2 for tickets purchased by the traveler will apply.

#### **2.3.4 Ticket Refunds**

The Travel Office will negotiate ticket refunds only in respect of tickets that have been purchased through the Travel Office. Depending on the Fare Basis under which a ticket was issued, it should be noted that an unutilized ticket, or travel segment, may not necessarily give rise to any refund from the airline. It should further be noted that obtaining reimbursement for unutilized tickets can be a lengthy process; one should normally count on receiving credit after months, rather than weeks from the date of application for refund.

#### **2.3.5 Ticket Upgrades**

For Business Travel (and for any other type of University-funded travel for which the traveler may elect to procure tickets directly from the Travel Office) the Travel Office is happy to arrange for an upgrade to the next higher (or next but one higher) class of travel at the private expense of the traveler. The amount owed by the traveler shall be the difference between the actual cost of the ticket (net of all discounts obtained) and the amount that the Travel Office would have paid applying the provisions of section 2.2.2 above. Reimbursement for the excess cost must be made to the Travel Office at the time the ticket is issued. In some circumstances a check in favor of the AUC through which the ticket has been purchased may be acceptable.

Where permitted by the airline in question, the Travel Office will also arrange for ticket upgrades using Frequent Flyer miles standing to the credit of the traveler.

#### **2.3.6 Travel Budgets and Fiscal Year End**

The University's fiscal year runs from September 1<sup>st</sup> to August 31<sup>st</sup> (The fiscal year will change in fiscal year 2013 to July1 to June30). Generally accepted accounting principles require that expenses be recognized in the period in which they are incurred. This means that a trip undertaken during the month of August 2010 will be expensed in the fiscal year ending August 31, 2010, regardless of whether the ticket was paid for in advance or in arrears. A trip undertaken in September 2010 will be expensed in the fiscal year ending August 31, 2011, regardless of the date of payment for the ticket.

### **3 Travel Expenses (Per Diem)**

#### **3.1 International Travel**

##### **3.1.1 UN Per Diem Rate Policy**

Business Travel expenses incurred abroad are covered by the application of per diem rates. The University follows the per diem rates published from time to time by the United Nations (UN). The daily rates vary by country, and (where applicable) by city; a

list of current rates is obtainable from the Controller's Office. Enhanced rates for expensive cities are not available to travelers who stay outside the limits of the city in question.

Persons traveling and using UN per diem rates to cover their expenses while abroad may complete a *Per Diem Advance Form* and submit it to the Controller's Office not less than 3 Business Days before the indicated date of travel. The full amount calculated to be payable in respect of the prospective trip will be disbursed by check prior to the date of travel. The amount thus disbursed will be recorded as an advance to be accounted for by the traveler. Upon return to Cairo the advance should be liquidated within 15 days by submission of an *Accounting for Per Diem Form* to which the used flight ticket(s) should be attached as evidence of travel.

The UN per diem rate covers *all* expenses incurred abroad, such as accommodation, meals, refreshments, communications and local transportation. Car rental, business entertainment and communication expense, if any, should be accounted for independently. In situations where the traveler is provided with free accommodation or meals, only 30% of the normal per diem rate will be paid. When both free accommodation and free meals are provided, only 5% of the normal per diem rate will be paid.

The number of days per diem to which a traveler is entitled is calculated as the number of qualifying nights away from Cairo. A trip where the traveler leaves on June 1st and returns on June 3rd, for example, would qualify for two days' per diem, for although three days may be taken up by the trip only two nights are spent away from Cairo.

In the case of long-haul flights the traveler may spend an entire night aboard an aircraft. When this happens the per diem allowance will be paid, but at the reduced rate of 30%.

Where trips are undertaken to distant destinations (e.g. the Western coast of the United States) a night of recuperation will *only* be considered a qualifying night for per diem purposes if either of the following conditions are met: (1) the scheduled flight arrival time is not less than fifteen hours later than the scheduled time of flight departure from Cairo; or (2) because of delays actual flight arrival time is not less than fifteen hours later than the actual flight departure time from Cairo (in such cases the traveler may request reimbursement for one additional day of per diem after completion of the trip).

The Travel Office can occasionally obtain significant savings on the cost of the air ticket if the traveler stays an extra day or two at his/her destination. However, these savings need to be offset against factors such as the incremental per diem cost and – in the case of administrators and support staff – absence of the employee from campus. Should the Travel Office believe that it might be in the University's best interest to increase the period of stay in order to reduce the cost of a ticket, it will propose an extension of the trip to the relevant Department or Unit Head. If the Department or Unit Head agrees, final approval for the incremental per diem allowance must be obtained from the relevant Area Head or Dean.

### **3.1.2 Reimbursement of Actual Travel Expenses Incurred**

As an exception to 3.1.1 above Business Travel may be undertaken on an actual expense basis if the traveler can demonstrate that the room rate of a hotel where a conference or seminar will be held is such that it will not be possible to live within the applicable UN per diem rate. In such situations the traveler should secure the written approval of the relevant Area Head to undertake the trip on an actual expense basis prior to the date of departure. Application may be made to the Controller's Office for disbursement of an advance against anticipated expenses. Should there be any doubt as to the reasonableness of the advance amount requested, the Controller's Office may request the written approval of the Area Head.

Whenever travel is undertaken on an actual expense basis the traveler must preserve all invoices evidencing costs incurred and must complete and submit to the Controller's Office a *Travel Expense Report*, to which all such invoices should be attached, within 15 days of return to Cairo. Upon acceptance of this report the traveler will be reimbursed the amount claimed after account has been taken of any previous cash advance. Should the amount claimed be less than the amount previously advanced, the traveler shall immediately reimburse to the University the net balance of the advance still in hand.

### **3.1.3 Partial Contribution towards Travel Expenses**

From time to time situations may arise where, because of lack of available budget or for other considerations, a trip to a seminar or conference may be approved on the understanding that the University will contribute a flat sum towards living expense abroad regardless of the applicable UN per diem rate or actual expense incurred. Where such contributions are paid prior to the date of travel they will be considered advances to be accounted for and the traveler must submit evidence of travel within 15 days of return to Cairo in order to liquidate the advance.

## **3.2 Domestic Travel Expenses**

### **3.2.1 Per Diem Policy**

The general policies covering Per Diem allowances for travel within Egypt for Supporting Staff may be found in Chapter 3 *Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual for Supporting Staff*.

## **4 Airport Transportation & Clearance**

### **4.1 Cairo Airport Services**

#### **4.1.1 Eligibility**

Through its airport clearing services unit the Travel Office provides clearing services to qualifying travelers. Because of local regulations the University's expeditor is not permitted to meet travelers who hold Egyptian passports. Provided appropriate procedure is followed (see below) the expeditor will meet faculty, administrators and staff, and their immediate family, returning to Cairo airport from business or private travel. The expeditor will also meet non-Egyptian students arriving at Cairo airport in order to

undertake a course of study at the University. This service is provided only upon first arrival; that is to say, students who subsequently leave the country and return to resume their studies are not eligible to be met.

#### **4.1.2 Transportation/Clearance for Business Travelers**

Business travelers seeking clearance services and/or transportation to and/or from Cairo airport must complete the appropriate form (*Airport Clearance and/or Transportation Request – Official Business*) and submit it to the Clearing Services Unit not less than 2 Business Days before the date on which the service will be requested. Clearing services are not provided upon departure from Cairo airport, but it will be assumed that clearing services will be sought upon arrival unless it is clearly indicated on the form that transportation only is requested. In all cases it will be assumed that transportation services to and from the airport will be required, unless the request states otherwise. Forms will not be accepted without indication of the budget line to be charged for the service and the approval of the applicable department or unit head.

#### **4.1.3 Clearance/Transportation for Private Travel**

Procedures are the same as in 4.2 above, except that a different form is completed (*Airport Clearance and/or Transportation Request – Personal*). Submission of the form to the Clearing Services Unit must be accompanied by payment in cash, for which a receipt is given that also shows the time of pick-up by the driver on the date of travel.

#### **4.1.4 Pricing of Services**

The price of clearance and transportation services is set with the goal of recovering all direct costs incurred by the Clearing Services Unit and Buildings & Grounds Car Services. A discount is given on the cost of the service for private travel, thus constituting a form of indirect fringe benefit. Prices are reviewed periodically and adjustments are announced by circular to the University community.

### **5 Other**

#### **5.1 Other Services of the Travel Office**

##### **5.1.1 Hotels, Surface Transportation Reservations**

Through its Amadeus computerized reservation system the Travel Office is able to assist travelers and conference organizers with the booking of hotels, the rental of cars, and the purchase of railway tickets both for business and private travel. If credit card information is given to secure such reservations or purchases, it is important to ascertain from the Travel Office any financial obligation that might be incurred in the event of a “no show” or last-minute change in booking or request.

## 5.2 Procurement Policy

### 5.2.1 Purchase of Air Tickets

It is the Travel Office's normal policy to purchase tickets through leading travel agents or, on occasion, from airlines directly if discounts are superior to those obtainable when transacting the same business through a travel agent. There is no formal limit to the number of travel agents with whom the University can transact business at any one time, but because attractive terms can be negotiated only on the basis of an adequate volume of business transacted, the Travel Office does not, as a matter of practice, deal with more than three or four agents at the most. The performance of each selected agent is reviewed annually with respect to pricing, and speed and accuracy of execution. Agents whose performance is deemed unsatisfactory are replaced.

## II. Externally Funded Travel (Sponsored Programs)

### 1.1 Definition

**Externally Funded travel** refers to the travel costs which are paid for or reimbursed by a sponsoring agency or grantor. Such travel is subject to the rules and regulations imposed by both the grantor and the University.

### 1.2 Policy

- Faculty traveling under sponsored programs MUST complete a *Travel Authorization form*; Travel Office will NOT process requests NOT submitted using a duly signed *Travel Authorization form*.
- It is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to indicate clearly on All Travel Authorization forms submitted whether the travel service requested is externally funded by a sponsored program.
- All *Travel Authorization forms* prepared for non-local Travel Service (outside Egypt) MUST be approved by the Principal Investigator, the relevant Dean (for Faculty PIs) or VP (non-faculty PIs) and the Grants Manager, Ms. Amira Gaber, in the Controller's Office. The Signatures of the Dean or the VPs are not required for local travel services unless the service will be rendered to the PI.
- When the Travel Office purchases Discounted Tickets for Business Travel, the amount of discount obtained is credited to an offset account in the Travel Office budget center to help defray the costs of running the office. In the case of Sponsored Programs Travel all discounts obtained are credited directly to the relevant grant or contract.
- Externally Funded travel is bound by the rules and regulations for such travel contained in the grant agreement. In the absence of any such rules and regulations, the traveler is

subject to the conditions applying to AUC Travel policies, with the following additional restrictions and points to note:

- **FEDERAL** travel and per diem follow different guidelines from the University's. Air travel must be on US carriers. Federal per diem rates must be used, and settlement of per diem requires that the travelers retain actual receipts for lodging. See travel regulations at: <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21222>
- No Business Class travel will be permitted without the prior written authorization of the granting agency.
- The cost of travel must not exceed the budget stipulated in the grant agreement. A cost overrun is permitted up to the ceiling normally permitted by the granting agency in question and subject to the transfer of funds from other budget lines allowed in the Award Summary distributed by the Office of Sponsored Programs. If no such flexibility is permitted, any anticipated excess cost must be approved in writing by the granting agency prior to the date of travel.
- Travel services **NOT** purchased through AUC Travel Office will **NOT** be reimbursed.

## 1.3 Procedures

### 1.3.1 Requesting Travel Service

- 1- The **PI** will contact the **Travel Office** by Email to request an estimated cost of the service required. The **PI** shall include in the email relevant dates, type of service requested, Destination, grants requirements, etc.
- 2- The **Travel Office** will provide the estimated cost of service requested by the **PI** after one working day.
- 3- PI Fills a Travel Authorization form (attached).  
The Travel Authorization Form must clearly indicate the following:
  - a. Estimated cost of service obtained from the **Travel Office** as per Point #1 above.
  - b. Type of funding: AUC funds or externally funded (Federal or non-federal)
  - c. WBS numbers
  - d. SAP trip number
  - e. Itinerary
  - f. Duration of the travel
  - g. Personnel Name and Number
- 4- The PI shall route the completed Travel Authorization Form for approvals. Signatures are required in the following order:
  - a. **PI**
  - b. The relevant Dean (for Faculty **PIs**) or VP (non-faculty **PIs**). *The Signatures of the Dean or the VPs are not required for local travel services unless the service will be rendered to the PI.*
  - c. Grants Manager, Ms. Amira Gaber, in the Controller's Office. Time span: one working day
- 5- The PI shall submit the completed Travel Authorization Form to the **Travel Office**
- 6- The **Travel Office** shall send to the **PI** a confirmation of the service requested within two working days

**Note:**

- **Travel Office will NOT process requests NOT submitted using a duly signed *Travel Authorization form*.**

## **2. International Travel Perdiem**

Perdiem Rates to be used is based on the travel rules and regulations of the funding source, unless it's agreed to apply the AUC Travel policy:

For travel funded by federal grants, the per diem rates to be applied are located on the website of the department of states travel management:

<http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21287> .

For travel funded by non-federal grants, AUC internal policies and procedures are applied using UNDP rates for international travel. These rates are circulated monthly by the provost office to the various academic department and Grants accounts.

Please note that some non-federal sponsors, as European commission, King Abdullah University for science and Technology "KAUST", dictate the use of other than AUC per diem rates for specific destinations and travel durations. In such case, the per diem rates to be used need to be clearly stated in the award by the sponsor prior to signing the grant agreement & starting its implementation.

### **2.1 Procedure required to issue the per diem advance:**

1. The following documents must be prepared by the traveler
  - a. Original Perdiem allowance application (sample attached) signed by the PI and co-signed by the relevant Dean (for Faculty **PIs**) or VP (non-faculty **PIs**).
  - b. Copy from the e-ticket detailing the trip route and travel class category. Only "Economy" class is allowed. For federal awards, the e-ticket should follow "Fly America Act".
  - c. Original payment request form signed by the PI.
  - d. Copy of the approved travel authorizations signed by the PI and Grants Office Services (GAS) Manager.
2. Submit documents above to Grants Office Services (GAS).
3. GAS will issue the requested payment within 5 working days

### **2.2 Procedure required for per diem Advance settlement:**

1. The following documents must be prepared by the traveler
  - a. Original accounting for Perdiem form approved by the PI.
  - b. Original Boarding passes indicating the dates of arrival and departure from the country of destination upon which the per diem will be settled.
  - c. For Federal travel, the traveler **MUST** submit hotel invoice and receipt to GAS.
  - d. If the Per diem advance was issued to cover more days than actual stay days, the traveler should refund AUC of any difference.

- i. e.g. the per diem advance was estimated to cover a five-day-stay and the traveler only stayed for 3 days as indicated in the accounting for Per diem form, then the traveler should refund AUC the difference of 2 days.
  - ii. If the Per diem advance was issued to cover fewer days than actual stay days, the traveler should be reimbursed for the additional authorized stay days.
2. Copy of the approved travel authorization covering that trip
3. Submit documents above to Grants Office Services (GAS) within 7 working days after the return date.
4. GAS will settle the outstanding advance within two working days.
5. If applicable, GAS will provide the traveler with a collection form to deposit the unused per diem in the CIB.

In case the traveler is the PI, the required financial documents should be approved by the department chair.

### **3. Domestic Travel Per diem**

#### **3.1 Per Diem Policy**

The general policies and per Diem rates covering allowances for travel within Egypt for Supporting Staff may be found in Chapter 3 *Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual for Supporting Staff*.

#### **3.2 Procedure required to issue the per diem advance:**

1. The following documents must be prepared by the traveler:
  - a. Original Per diem allowance application (sample attached) signed by the PI and co-signed by the relevant Dean (for Faculty **PIs**) or VP (non-faculty **PIs**).
  - b. Copy from the e-ticket/bus ticket detailing the trip route and travel class category, if applicable; only "Economy" class is allowed (for air travel).
  - c. Original payment request form signed by the PI.
  - d. Copy of the approved travel authorizations signed by the PI.
2. Submit the documents above to Grants Office Services (GAS).
3. GAS will issue the requested payment within 5 working days

#### **3.3 Procedure required for per diem Advance settlement:**

1. The following documents must be prepared by the traveler
  - a. Original accounting for Per diem form approved by the PI.
  - b. Original Boarding passes/bus or train tickets indicating the dates of arrival and return from the city of destination upon which the per diem will be settled.
  - c. For Federal travel, the traveler **MUST** submit hotel invoice and receipt to GAS.
  - d. If the Per diem advance was issued to cover more days than actual stay days, the traveler should refund AUC of any difference.

- i. e.g. the per diem advance was estimated to cover a five-day-stay and the traveler only stayed for 3 days as indicated in the accounting for Per diem form, then the traveler should refund AUC the difference of 2 days.
  - ii. If the Perdiem advance was issued to cover fewer days than actual stay days, the traveler should be reimbursed for the additional authorized stay days.
2. Copy of the approved travel authorization covering that trip.
3. Submit documents above to Grants Office Services (GAS) within 7 working days after the return date.
4. GAS will settle the outstanding advance within two working days.
5. If applicable, GAS will provide the traveler with a collection form to deposit the unused perdiem in the CIB.

In case the traveler is the PI, the required financial documents should be approved by the relevant Dean.

### **III. Travel Office Procedures:**

The travel Office of the American University in Cairo is dedicated to supporting the educational goals of the University through business travel and providing efficient, knowledgeable, accurate and timely service.

The Travel Office is established to help faculty, administrators, staff, and students with their travel plans; whether for business or personal in Egypt or abroad.

#### **Major Functions:**

The main function of the travel office is to handle official business and business-related travel, and to monitor policies and procedures set by the University administration for these types of travel. Business-related travel includes: Home leaves, sabbaticals, Conferences and research-grants travel.

The travel office also is responsible for minimizing the inconveniences experienced by faculty, administrators, students, and staff in arranging their personal travel plans through external travel agents. The Travel Office secures deals on the best terms available for its customers.

For official business travel, the travel office is responsible for arranging clearance services; car transfers to & from the airport for faculty members and administrators upon request, through customs and immigration arranged at the airport in accordance with the guidelines governing the provisions of such services.

#### **How to deal with the Travel Office and how to pay:**

##### **General Rules:**

Cash is not allowed to be handled at the Travel office.  
Credit cards and debit cards are accepted.

### **For business travel:**

1. Faculty, administrators, students and staff are kindly requested to send an E- mail to the Travel Office [travel@aucegypt.edu](mailto:travel@aucegypt.edu) specifying their travel needs, names, dates, and other pertinent information.
2. The travel office will check the request and prepare alternative reservations and prices of flights, cruises, guides...etc. so that well-informed and convenient choices could be made
3. The travel office will send the response via E-mail within 48 hours upon

### **Receiving the request**

Faculty, administrators, students and staff are requested, based on the response to fill in and submit the travel authorization form complete with the required information and signed by both area head and department head.

If the Travel Authorization form is related to grants, then it should be signed by the Principal Investigator, Area Head, and Ms. Amira Gaber in the Controller's Office.

Upon submitting the complete Travel Authorization Form, the Travel Office will issue the ticket within 24 hours and deliver it to the customer.

The travel Authorization Form that is submitted incomplete with the required information or signatures will be sent right back to the issuing department before any tickets are issued.

If there is a personal share due to upgrading the ticket or changing the route or whatever the reason, the customer is kindly requested to follow the following procedures if he / she prefers to pay in cash:

- Receive a collection advice form directly from the Travel Office
- Deposit the personal share amount in CIB AUC Campus Branch
- Submit the original bank deposit slip to the travel office prior to issuance of the ticket.
- Credit and debit cards are accepted in the Travel Office

**There will be no exceptions to the above mentioned procedures.**

### **For Personal Travel:**

Faculty, administrators, students, and staff are kindly requested to send an E-mail to the Travel Office specifying their travel needs, names, dates, and other pertinent information.

The Travel Office will check the request and prepare alternative reservations and prices of flights, cruises, guides....etc. so that well informed and convenient choices can be made.

The Travel Office will send the response via E-mail no more than 48 hours upon receiving the request.

**Based on the response, there are two methods of payment:**

- 1- Credit and debit cards are accepted in the Travel Office
- 2- If the customer prefers to pay in cash, he / she is kindly requested to follow the following steps:
  - Receive a collection advice form directly from the Travel Office.
  - Deposit the full price of ticket in CIB ( AUC Campus Branch)
  - Submit the original bank deposit slip to the Travel Office prior to issuance of the ticket.
  - Upon submitting the original bank deposit slip, the Travel Office will issue the ticket within 24 hours and deliver it to the customer.

**IV. Airport Clearance Procedures**

Faculty, Administrators, Students, and staff are kindly requested to fill the airport transportation request and submit it signed by authorized signatures to the Travel Office. [Minimum notice is 48 hours]

If the service is personal, the customer is requested to pay the cost directly to the main AUC cashier (room # G057- Administration Building) or downtown cashier.

Upon submitting the signed request or the payment receipt, the travel officer will take the necessary action.

In case of any emergency, the amount will be charged to the individual's receivables and followed up for collection or deducted from the following month's payroll.

**VI. Travel Office Forms**

- 1- **Travel Authorization Form:** This form is used for official business travel and should be signed by the appropriate Chairman, Dean, and Provost or Area Head. It should contain details about the itinerary, the account code to which the trip is to be charged and business purpose of the trip.  
[http://www.aucegypt.edu/services/travel/forms/Documents/Travel\\_Authorization\\_updated.pdf](http://www.aucegypt.edu/services/travel/forms/Documents/Travel_Authorization_updated.pdf)
- 2- **Airport Transportation Request:** This form is used for airport clearance service and transportation between home and airport for business and personal travel. This can be used for Faculty's, student's and staff's family members.  
<http://www.aucegypt.edu/services/travel/forms/Documents/airport11.pdf>
- 3- **Collection Advice Form:** This form is completed by the travel Officer and is used only for cash payments in CIB or AUC cashier. It should contain the amount to be paid, the customer name, and the account code (SAP Agent code from which the ticket is purchased).