



TRAVEL POLICY

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Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing
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TRAVEL POLICY PURPOSE AND ENFORCEMENT

Purpose

This document provides guidelines and establishes procedures for individuals incurring business travel expenses on the ACEN's behalf.

Objectives:

- Ensure all travelers have a clear and consistent understanding of policies and procedures for business travel.
- Provide business travelers with a reasonable level of service, comfort, and safety at the lowest possible cost to ACEN-accredited programs.

Responsibility

The traveler is responsible for complying with the travel policy. The approver is responsible for accurately reviewing expense reports for compliance.

The ACEN will reimburse travelers for all reasonable and necessary expenses while traveling on authorized al ACEN business.

The ACEN assumes no obligation to reimburse travelers for expenses that are not in compliance with this policy.

Enforcement

Travelers who do not comply with this travel policy may be subject to:

- Delay or withholding of reimbursement.
- Restricted privileges for violating this policy.

Who to Call on Travel Policy Issues

Any questions, concerns, and/or suggestions regarding this travel policy may be directed to:

Name: Stephanie Larson, Controller
Telephone: 404-975-5000
Email: slarson@acenursing.org

TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION

Travel Authorization

All travel must be pre-approved by the ACEN prior to ticketing.

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Reservation Procedures

- Travelers should make reservations at least six (6) weeks prior to trip.
- All air travel, car rental, and rail travel reservations, including en route changes, must be booked through the *American Express Intelligent Online Marketplace (AXIOM)*. **All travel must be booked through the online access portal.**

After you have received your User ID and password provided by the ACEN Staff, you may begin using AXIOM.

To log on to the AXIOM site, follow the steps below:

1. Enter this URL into your Web browser: <http://acentravel.gbtconnect.com>
2. Enter the User ID and password provided by ACEN staff.
3. You will be prompted to enter profile information, including contacts and preferences as well as a security pin that you will create for added security.
4. Press “Continue” once you have entered this information.

Complete Registration and Add Profile Information

All necessary profile information must be entered into the system prior to using AXIOM for booking.

Upon completion, you will have full access to the AXIOM tools. You may book your travel arrangements online 24/7. All travel arrangements must be made using the online access portal. If you experience any difficulties with booking travel, please contact Ayanna Gould at peer_evaluator@acenursing.org

Please Help Us Help You, If You Need Our Help

We recommend that all booking is completed Monday through Thursday before 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Airlines typically have more reasonable rates between Tuesday and Thursday each week. It is our preference that flights are confirmed between Tuesday and Thursday. Taking advantage of these lower rates often ensures fewer connections and access to optimal flights closer to your preferred travel times.

In addition, the ACEN staff is available to assist you within 24 hours of your request except on weekends and holidays. While there may be individuals on call, we cannot guarantee that you will be able to receive assistance with booking your flights prior to the next business day.

In the event of holding a flight, most flights will remain on hold for 24 hours following the date/time that the hold is placed; however, AXIOM will provide a hold time for your reservation as this time frame is shortened to 6:00 p.m. or 10:00 p.m. Eastern Time on days when rates are likely to increase. Once the hold time has passed, you will have to restart the booking process.

Electronic Ticket Instructions

You will be flying on an electronic ticket; you will be sent an emailed confirmation by AXIOM. At the airport, you will need to provide the confirmation number to a ticketing agent or at a kiosk to obtain a boarding pass. Proper identification is required for all travel.

DOMESTIC AIR TRAVEL

Making Air Travel Reservations

All air travel reservations must be made through:

- American Express Intelligent Online Marketplace (AXIOM).
- Air travel reservations must **NOT** be made directly through the airlines.
- Air travel made directly through airline sites are made at the traveler's expense and will not be reimbursed.

Airline Class of Service

All domestic air travel must be coach class. Travelers are expected to use the lowest logical airfare available. The travel program usually determines this based on certain parameters outlined in the "Lowest Airfare Definition" section of this policy.

Upgrades for Domestic Air Travel

- Upgrades at the expense of ACEN are not permitted.
- Upgrades are allowed at the traveler's personal expense. Upgrades must not be charged to the ACEN. Upgrade expenses will not be reimbursed.

Lowest Airfare Definition

Travelers are expected to book the lowest logical airfare as determined by the travel counselor based on the following parameters:

Airfare: The preferred cost for flights is \$400 or less. Any single round-trip flight or two (2) one-way flights combined that exceed \$400 is subject to approval by ACEN staff prior to the

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final reservation being confirmed. Any single round-trip flight or two (2) one-way flights combined over \$400 will be cancelled automatically in AXIOM, if not approved by ACEN staff. Do not assume flights over \$400 will be approved.

Please work proactively with ACEN staff to ensure you have a confirmed flight(s).

Routing:

- Routing requires no more than three (3) stops each way of a round trip.
- Routing does not increase the one-way total elapsed trip time (origin to destination) by more than 2 hours.

Discounted Airfares

The following types of low fare alternatives will be considered in determining the lowest logical airfare:

- Specially-negotiated fares
- Non-refundable fares
- Penalty fares
- Advance purchase fares
- Connecting and one-stop flights
- Off-peak flights
- Alternate airports

Airline Frequent Flyer Programs

Traveling individuals may retain frequent flyer program benefits. However, participation in these programs must not influence flight selection, which would result in incremental cost to ACEN beyond the lowest available airfare as defined in this policy.

Lost or Excess Baggage

The ultimate responsibility for retrieving and compensating lost baggage lies with the airlines. The ACEN will not reimburse travelers for personal items lost while traveling on business. Measures that can be taken to minimize baggage losses include:

- Always carry valuables (e.g., jewelry, laptop computers, cameras) onboard the aircraft.
- Always carry important and/or confidential documents onboard the aircraft.
- Clearly tag luggage with name, address, and telephone number.
- Retain baggage claim receipts for checked-in luggage.
- Purchase luggage insurance. (Costs vary and are the responsibility of the traveler.)

Follow these procedures if your bags are lost en route:

- Obtain a lost luggage report form from an airline representative in the baggage claim area.
- Itemize the contents of your bag including receipts wherever possible.
- Include a copy of your airline ticket and baggage claim stubs.
- Keep a copy of the report, airline ticket, and claim stubs.
- Ask the airline about reimbursement.

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Travelers will be reimbursed for excess baggage charges only in the following circumstances:

- When traveling with heavy or bulky materials or equipment necessary for business.
- The excess baggage consists of the ACEN visit related records or property.

Denied Boarding Compensation

Airlines occasionally offer free tickets or cash allowances to compensate travelers for delays and inconveniences due to overbooking, flight cancellations, changes of equipment, etc. Travelers should not volunteer for denied boarding compensation when on al ACEN business.

Overnight Delays

Should an airline delay necessitate an overnight stay, the traveler must first attempt to secure complimentary or discounted lodging from the airline. If unsuccessful, the traveler should contact American Express Online Travel Specialists at 1-669-272-1434 for assistance. Please see Emergency Travel Assistance section for additional information.

Cancellations

When a trip is cancelled after the ticket has been issued, the traveler should inquire about using the same ticket for future travel.

Travelers can reuse airline tickets for ACEN business if airfare eligibility requirements are met.

It is the responsibility of the travelers to call AXIOM at 1-669-272-1434 to cancel the reservation.

Unused Airline Tickets

Unused airline tickets or flight coupons must never be discarded or destroyed as these documents may be required for rebooked travel.

Travelers with an electronic ticket must call American Express Online Travel Specialists to initiate a refund or credit for future travel.

LODGING

Hotel Selection Guidelines

Travelers are required to use:

- Properties in the **Moderate, Economy, Budget** categories.

Room Guarantee

The nurse administrator is responsible for reserving and guaranteeing all rooms for the team chair and team members. All rooms are guaranteed for late arrival. When necessary, the nurse administrator is also responsible to cancel the hotel reservations.

Hotel Cancellation Procedures

Travelers are responsible for cancelling hotel rooms and must contact the hotel if the booking was made directly with the hotel.

Travelers will be held responsible and will not be reimbursed for “no-show” charges unless there is sufficient proof that the billing is in error.

Travelers should request and record the cancellation number in case of billing disputes.

Travelers should note that cancellation deadlines are based on the local time of the property.

Hotel Payment Procedures

Travelers are responsible for payment for all lodging expenses. During a site visit, lodging should not be charged to the nursing program.

Hotel costs should be paid using a personal charge/credit/debit card.

Hotel Frequent Guest Programs

Many hotels have frequent guest programs that reward travelers with free accommodations in exchange for a given number of paid room nights at the hotel. Awards from such programs may be retained by travelers for personal use. However, participation in these programs must not influence hotel selection that would result in incremental cost beyond the ACEN’s maximum per diem of \$150/room rate.

Any membership fees associated with joining these programs are not reimbursable.

RENTAL CAR

Rental Car Guidelines

Travelers may only rent a car to their destination if pre-approval is obtained, and driving is more cost-effective than airline or rail travel.

Reimbursements will not be made for rental cars that are not pre-approved prior to travel.

All requests to rent a car must be approved by the ACEN Controller, Stephanie Larson, at least four (4) weeks prior to the site visit. Pre-approval ensures that the traveler is covered through the ACEN liability insurance while traveling to/from home and to/from the site visit, and ensures reimbursement of this expense. ACEN will reimburse the cost of the rental ONLY. Mileage is only reimbursed when the peer evaluator is using their personal vehicle to travel to/from the site visit. Stephanie Larson can be contacted at slarson@acenursing.org.

Making Rental Car Reservations

Rental car reservations must be made through:

- American Express Intelligent Online Marketplace (AXIOM)
- Rental car reservations must **NOT** be made directly through the rental car company.

Rental Car Categories

Travelers should book the following rental car categories:

- Economy
- Compact

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When picking up a rental car, travelers should check with the rental car agent for any promotional rates, last-minute specials, or free upgrades. Travelers should utilize any discount programs they belong to.

At the time of rental, the car should be inspected and any damage found should be noted on the contract **before** the vehicle is accepted.

Rental Car Insurance – Domestic

The ACEN has made provisions for insuring rental cars against damage.

Rental car insurance is included in the al ACEN negotiated rate.

Therefore, travelers must decline all insurance coverage except:

- Collision Damage Waiver (CDW)/Loss Damage Waiver (LDW)

All travelers and employees who will be driving must sign as a driver on the car rental agreement.

Rental Car Cancellation Procedures

Travelers are responsible for cancelling rental car reservations and must contact an American Express Online Travel Specialists via telephone by calling 1-669-272-1434 or via AXIOM online. Travelers should request and record the cancellation number in case of billing disputes.

Returning Rental Cars

Every reasonable effort must be made to return the rental car:

- To the original rental city unless approved for a one-way rental
- Intact (i.e., no bumps, scratches, or mechanical failures)
- On time to avoid additional hourly charges
- With a full tank of gas or at the level at the time of pick-up

Rental Car Payment Procedures

Unless otherwise instructed, rental cars must be paid for with the traveler's credit/charge/debit card.

Rental Car Accidents

Should a rental car accident occur, travelers should immediately contact:

- the rental car company
- local authorities, as required

Stephanie Larson, Controller in the ACEN office

Office: (404) 975-5002

Cell: (917) 885-1104

Email: slarson@acenursing.org

Rental Car Club Memberships

Travelers may participate in rental car club membership programs that are free of charge or at their own expense.

OTHER TRANSPORTATION PERSONAL CAR USAGE GUIDELINES

Travelers may use their personal car for ACEN travel only if pre-approval is obtained. Expenses incurred without pre-approval will not be reimbursed. Pre-approval can be obtained by contacting Stephanie Larson at the ACEN office:

Stephanie Larson, Controller
Office: (404) 975-5002
Cell: (917) 885-1104
Email: slarson@acenursing.org

All requests to drive must be approved by the ACEN Controller, Stephanie Larson, at least four (4) weeks **prior** to the site visit. Pre-approval ensures that the traveler is covered through the ACEN liability insurance while traveling to/from home and to/from the site visit, and ensures reimbursement of this expense. Stephanie Larson can be contacted at slarson@acenursing.org.

It is the personal responsibility of vehicle owners to also carry adequate insurance coverage for their protection and for the protection of any passengers.

Reimbursement for Personal Car Usage

Travelers will be reimbursed for business usage of personal cars:

- On a fixed scale of \$.48 cents per mile.

NOTE: Total reimbursement for driving is limited to the cost of airfare if traveler was using AXIOM for booking.

Travelers will not be reimbursed for any repairs to their personal car even if these costs result from business travel.

To be reimbursed for use of their personal car for business, travelers must provide on their expense report:

- Purpose of the trip
- Date and location
- Receipts for tolls and parking

Gas charges are NOT reimbursable.

Ground Transportation To and From Terminals

The nursing program is responsible for all ground transportation of peer evaluators from air or rail terminals and during the site visit; this ensure that the team members are covered by the institution's liability insurance. The team chair should confer with the nurse administrator to confirm the arrangements and share the information with the rest of the team members. Site visitors may not provide ground transportation during a site visit.

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The team chair should coordinate travel for the team with the nurse administrator. The most economical mode of transportation should be used to and from airports, bus, and rail terminals. The following modes of transportation should be considered:

- buses, subways, taxis
- hotel and airport shuttle services
- personal car

Private limousines or car services may be used only when pre-approved.

Rail Travel

For rail and complex travel itineraries, call the American Express Online Travel Specialists at 1-669-272-1434

Class of Service - Rail Travel

Domestic rail travel will be in coach class.

First class/reserved seating for domestic rail service may be utilized:

- When upgrade is at no extra cost
- At the traveler's expense

PERSONAL/VACATION TRAVEL

Combining Personal with Business Travel

Personal/vacation travel may be combined with business travel:

- Provided there is no additional cost to the ACEN.
- Only with pre-approval from the Stephanie Larson, Controller.
Office: (404) 975-5002
- Cell: (917) 885-1104
- Email: slarson@acenursing.org

Any additional costs incurred from extended bookings for airfare or lodging are the responsibility of the traveler and will not be reimbursed by the ACEN.

Miscellaneous Vacation Expenses

The ACEN will NOT pay for vacation expenses such as sightseeing, bus tours, souvenirs, and personal expenses such as movies, health club fees, and meals.

Personal/Vacation Travel Billing Procedures

Personal/vacation travel billing must NOT be combined with business travel billing under any circumstances.

TELEPHONE USAGE

Business Telephone Calls

Travelers will be reimbursed when using their personal tele calling cards or home telephone for business telephone calls:

- Which are reasonable and necessary for conducting business.
- With an original copy of the bill attached to the expense report form.

Personal Telephone Calls While Traveling

Travelers will NOT be reimbursed for any personal telephone calls made from:

- air-telephones
- rail-telephones
- cellular telephones
- cellular car telephones
- hotels with telephone surcharges

Air-telephone Usage

Travelers must NOT use air-telephones due to the high cost.

Rail-telephone Usage

Travelers must NOT use rail-telephones due to the high cost.

Hotel Telephone Usage

When staying at a hotel, travelers should find out the property's local and long distance telephone rates. Travelers should avoid making telephone calls that have an added surcharge. To avoid substantial charges added by hotels to telephone bills, travelers should:

- Use a charge/credit card, calling card, or call collect whenever possible.
- Travelers must use **1-866-747-9965** or **404-975-5000** when calling the ACEN.

Rental Car Cellular Telephone Usage

Travelers are NOT allowed to rent cellular car telephones.

INTERNET ACCESS

Hotel Internet Access

Access to the internet is not covered by the ACEN. As a courtesy, the hotels will typically provide internet access along with the hotel accommodations however, this provision is at the discretion of the hotel. Typically the team chair will be provided with a room large enough for the team to confer prior to and during the site visit. Internet access may be limited to this room only.

Airline Internet Access

Many airlines provide inflight internet access that is available for a fee. Usage of this internet access will not be reimbursed by the ACEN. Airports often provide free internet access.

Internet Access during the Onsite Visit

Typically, the governing organization will provide “guest” internet access to the peer evaluators for use during the site visit. Access to this service is provided at the discretion of the institution however they are encouraged to ensure that internet services are accessible.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Travel Insurance Coverage

In addition, full-time employees traveling on al ACEN business are covered by the following insurance policies at no cost to the traveler:

- Life insurance provided by the ACEN (if applicable)

Additional Travel Insurance Purchased by Travelers

The ACEN will NOT reimburse expenses for additional travel insurance coverage.

MEALS

Personal Meal Expenses

Personal meals are defined as meal expenses incurred by the traveler when dining alone on an out-of-town business trip.

Travelers will be reimbursed for personal meal expenses:

- According to actual and reasonable cost

Actual copies of detailed receipts must be submitted for reimbursement; credit card receipts are not acceptable for reimbursement.

Alcohol or alcoholic beverages will NOT be reimbursed for any traveler.

Spending Guidelines

Travelers will be reimbursed for actual and reasonable meal expenses accompanied by proper and original receipts up to the \$48.00 per day allowed expense for meals.

If individual meals are purchased, reimbursement will be limited to the following allowable expense for meals:

- Breakfast - \$9.00
- Lunch - \$13.00
- Dinner - \$26.00

If attending a meeting where meals are provided, the meal amount should be subtracted from the \$48.00 per day allowed expense for meals.

Spending Limits

Travelers will be reimbursed for actual documented meal expenses with proper and original receipts up to the maximum daily allowance.

Business Meal Expenses

Business meals are taken with clients or associates during which a specific business discussion takes place. This does not include site visits.

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Travelers will be reimbursed for business meal expenses:

- According to actual and reasonable cost up to the maximum allowed

Tipping for Meals

Tips included on meal receipts will be reimbursed.

Tips should be no more than 15% of the bill.

Any tips considered excessive will not be reimbursed.

Payment for Meals

Whenever feasible, meal expenses should be paid for using the traveler's **personal credit/debit card**.

Documentation and IRS Requirements

An original receipt must be submitted with the expense report for any individual meal or expense.

In addition, for business meals, the following documentation is required by the IRS and must be recorded on the expense report:

- Names of individuals present, their titles, and company name
- Name and location of where the meal took place
- Exact amount and date of the expense
- Business purpose of the trip

EXPENSE REPORTING

Timing for Expense Report Completion and Submission

Travelers must file expense reports:

- No later than 10 days after completion of each trip
- Reimbursements filed after the 10 working day period may not be reimbursed by the ACEN.

Approval/Authorization Process

Each employee expense report will be reviewed for:

- Approval signatures
- Business purpose
- Supporting documentation and receipts
- Policy compliance

Documentation Requirements

Travelers must provide the following information in order to be reimbursed for expenditures:

- names of individuals present, their titles, and company name
- name and location of where the meal took place
- exact amount and date of the expense
- Business purpose of the trip

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Travelers must submit the following documentation along with their expense report form:

- Air/Rail – original passenger coupon if issued itinerary from AXIOM
- Hotel – hotel folio plus charge/credit card receipt or other proof of payment
- Car Rental – rental car agreement plus charge/credit card receipt or other proof of payment
- Meals– detailed receipts for each meal

When a receipt is not available, a full explanation of the expense and the reason for the missing receipt is required.

Receipts must include the name of the vendor, location, date, and dollar amount.

Acceptable Receipts

The following receipts are acceptable:

- Original receipt completed by the vendor
- Original telephone bill

Unacceptable Receipts

The following receipts are NOT acceptable:

- Photocopies, unless accompanied by a full explanation
- Credit card receipts for meals

Guidelines for Tips and Gratuities

Tipping a porter, bellman, or waiter should be based on the quality of service rendered. The ACEN will reimburse reasonable gratuities based on the following guidelines:

- Hotel bellman \$1.00 per bag
- Restaurant waiters 15 percent (15%)

Please check local customs for appropriate tipping when traveling abroad. Some hotels and restaurants include a gratuity, in which case a tip is not necessary unless the service has been exceptional.

Lavish or unreasonable gratuities will not be reimbursed.

Incorrect or Incomplete Expense Reports

Expense reports that are incorrect or incomplete:

- Will be returned to the approver for corrective action.
- May result in delay or non-reimbursement of specific items.
- Disregard for all ACEN policy or altering of receipts can result in disciplinary action or termination for employees.

TRAVEL SAFETY

General Travel Safety Tips

The following suggestions will provide a more safe and pleasurable trip for travelers:

Air Travel

- Plan to arrive at the airport in accordance with current recommendations by TSA or the airline.
- Do not leave luggage unattended or with someone you do not know.
- Never agree to carry anything on board or in your luggage for someone else.
- Put your name and address on your luggage. For added security, use tags that conceal your name and address.
- Remove all old destination tags to avoid misdirection by baggage handlers.
- Carry all medication, important business papers, and a change of clothing in carry-on luggage in case the checked luggage is misplaced.

Upon Arrival at your Destination

- Leave the airport as soon as possible after deplaning. Disturbances are more likely to occur in public airport lobbies.
- Beware of people claiming to be cab drivers in unmarked cars. Use licensed taxi or limousine services only.
- If renting a car, get maps in advance or from the rental car counter and clearly write out the directions from the airport to the hotel. Stop to ask for directions only in well-lit public areas. Keep the telephone number of your destination with you.
- If unfamiliar with the local language, carry a card with the hotel's name and address. This can be shown to a cab driver or police officer should you become lost.
- In developing countries, try to reserve rooms on the third through the sixth floor of the hotel. Disturbances and burglaries are most likely to affect ground and second story levels. In some countries, fire rescue equipment does not reach above the sixth floor.
- Do not leave a sign on the hotel room door for maid service as it announces an empty room for would-be thieves.
- Be sure to carry your credit/charge card company's telephone number in case the card is lost or stolen. Always report losses immediately.

Hotel Fire Safety Tips

While major hotels are equipped with smoke alarms, sprinkler systems, and emergency evacuation instructions, fire safety awareness will increase a traveler's chance of survival in the unlikely event of a hotel fire.

When staying at a hotel...

- Check fire exits. Find the two nearest exits to your room and count the doorways so you can feel your way in the dark and smoke.
- Place your key on the nightstand and your shoes by the bed so you can find them easily.

In case of fire or smoke...

- Put on your shoes; grab your room key and head for the door. If there's any smoke in your room, get on your hands and knees and crawl. The fresh air you need to survive is near the floor.
- Feel the door and the knob. If they are cool, open the door and check the hall. If they are hot, do not open the door. Stay in your room and fight the fire.
- If the hallway is clear, close the door behind you and walk to the nearest exit. Never take an elevator in case of fire! Keep your room key with you in case the hallway becomes blocked and you need to return to your room.
- If the hall has smoke in it, close the door and crawl to the nearest exit. Stay against the wall so that you can count the doorways.
- When walking down the stairwell, hold the handrail to keep your balance.

If you must stay in your room to fight the fire...

- Open your window to vent smoke. If your window doesn't open, do not break it unless absolutely necessary. You may have to close it later if smoke is outside. Never jump from the third floor or above, chances are that you won't survive the fall.
- Call the desk to tell them you're in your room. Hang a sheet out the window to signal firemen.
- Fill the tub with water and turn on the bathroom vent fan.
- Wet some sheets or towels and stuff cracks of your door to keep out smoke. Use your ice bucket to bail water on the door. If the walls are hot, bail water on them. Keep everything wet.
- If there is a fire outside, get everything combustible away from the window.
- A wet towel tied around your nose and mouth is an effective filter if you fold it in a triangle and put the bottom corner in your mouth.
- Don't panic! Keep fighting the fire until rescue arrives.