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## INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL POLICY MAY 2011

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## 1. **Purpose of the Policy**

This document outlines the University of Ghana (UG) policy regarding international travel. Staff should consult the UG Local Travel Policy for guidelines on local travel. The purpose of the policy is to:

- clarify the procedures and processes for obtaining the travel authorization that staff require before travel outside Ghana;
- define roles and responsibilities regarding staff travel;
- set out the types of expenses that may be reimbursed for the various categories of travel, rates and sources of funding for the different categories of travel.

## 2. **General principles**

- All aspects of UG staff travels shall be governed by the highest level of integrity, ethical standards, transparency and accountability that governs all UG's operations;
- The UG is committed to minimizing its costs and ecological footprint in terms of travel. As such, all staff are encouraged to take advantage of the enhanced ICT on the campus and use video/tele- conferencing, as well as software such as Skype wherever possible in order to minimize the need for travel outside the country.
- All UG staff shall bear in mind at all times, their key role as ambassadors for the University and ensure that their actions promote and safeguard the credibility of the University;
- UG expects all staff members to use approved travel funds in the most efficient and cost-effective manner.

### 3. **Scope of the Policy**

This policy covers UG International Business Travel only.

### 4. **Definition of terms**

For the purposes of this policy, UG Business Travel is defined as official travel approved by the Vice-Chancellor or his/her designate to transact business that promotes the mission of the University. UG Business Travel is grouped into four categories defined below:

- 4.1 ***UG Representational Travel:*** This would include travels where staff are invited/requested or obliged to represent UG at international meetings/fora or to undertake specific assignments such as meetings with important persons/organizations in order to conduct business that will benefit the University. Such invitations/requests would normally come from/through the Vice-Chancellor and would be funded from the Central Administration travel budget allocation.
- 4.2 ***Staff Development Travel:*** This would include travels for conferences and meetings where the staff members would normally give a presentation on their work; training workshops and short courses and research related travels. Funding for this category of travel may be obtained from the following main sources:
- External funding from meeting organisers/funding agencies;
  - UG Budget Allocation for Conferences;
  - UG Faculty Development Funds;
  - UG Staff Development Funds;
  - Approved Departmental/Unit Travel Budgets.
- 4.3 ***Project Related Travel:*** This would include travels related to donor-funded projects and contract/commissioned research.

Funding for such travels normally would be agreed prior to project commencement and included in the project budget, and would normally be guided by project/donor specific rules and regulations.

- 4.4 ***External Board and Committee Travel:*** This would include travel where staff of the University, by virtue of their academic and/or professional standing, have been appointed to boards and committees of international organizations. Staff would normally be expected to obtain funding for such travels from the international organization.

## 5 **Travel Authorization**

- 5.1 All staff must obtain travel authorization before travelling out of the country, whether Private or Business Travel. Requests for travel shall consist of a completed UG Travel Request Form which should reach the final approving authority at least two clear weeks before the staff member is scheduled to travel. The UG Travel Request Form may be downloaded from the UG website.

- 5.2 The following categories of staff shall travel outside Ghana only on authorization by the Vice-Chancellor or his/her designate:

- Heads/Directors of Research Centres
- Heads of Department
- Directors
- Deans
- Provosts
- Registrar
- Pro-Vice-Chancellors
- University Librarian

- 5.3 All other employees in academic units, including technical and administrative staff, shall obtain approval for travel from the Provost in the case of Colleges, and the Dean in the case of Faculties/Schools outside the College system. The travel

authorization requests shall be routed through the Head/Director of the relevant unit.

- 5.4 All other employees in administrative/professional units shall obtain travel authorization from the Registrar. The travel requests shall be routed through the immediate supervisor.

## 6 **Travel Insurance**

In addition to the general medical cover provided by the University, all staff are required to ensure that they have adequate travel insurance cover, including full medical coverage for all travels. The University shall provide travel insurance cover for staff who are required to undertake authorised University Representational Travel.

## 7 **Class of Travel and Air Fares**

- 7.1 The under-listed categories of staff would normally travel business class on authorised UG representational travel, depending on the availability of funds:

- Chancellor and other Council members travelling on UG assignments.
- Vice-Chancellor
- Pro-Vice-Chancellors
- University Registrar
- Provosts
- Deans and Directors
- Director of Finance
- University Librarian

- 7.2 For all other categories of staff, UG funds shall be used to cover only economy class fares. However, a staff member may choose to upgrade his/her ticket from personal funds or with air-miles.

- 7.3 The class of travel of spouses of staff whose position entitles them to travel with their spouse on specific official travels shall be the same as the staff member is entitled to. Written approval

from staff member's immediate supervisor for spouse to accompany staff member shall be required before expenditure on the spouse's ticket is authorized.

7.4 Staff entitled to business class travel shall not downgrade their ticket in order to use the difference between business and economy class ticket prices to purchase tickets for spouses and other family members.

7.4 Within the class of travel, staff should explore options for and purchase the cheapest possible tickets. Trips should be planned ahead wherever possible in order to take advantage of lower rate air-fares. Staff are encouraged to check available fares on-line before contacting travel agents. Where trips are funded from UG sources, staff are encouraged to use the UG approved Travel Agents (list available at UG website) unless they can demonstrate availability of cheaper fare options from other sources.

## 8 **Road Transport**

Where staff choose to travel by road to neighbouring countries, the rules and regulations outlined in the UG Local Travel Policy regarding mileage claims shall apply. In all cases, the cost of the road travel shall not exceed the cost of an economy air ticket for the trip.

## 9 **Other External Travel Related Costs**

9.1 **Visas:** Staff travelling outside Ghana shall ensure that they have valid visas and all other travel documents required for their destination. Through the Passages Office, UG shall arrange and pay for visas of staff undertaking approved UG representational travel. For all other travels it shall be the responsibility of the staff member to arrange and pay for their visas. The visa cost may be claimed from the sponsor where the rules and regulations allow such expenditure. Staff may seek the assistance of the UG Passages Office on visa applications.

9.2 **Vaccinations:** Staff should check the international health requirements of their destination countries and ensure that they have the necessary vaccinations. UG shall reimburse cost of vaccinations for staff undertaking approved UG representational travel. For all other categories of travel, the cost of vaccinations may be claimed from the sponsoring agency where the rules and regulations allow such expenditure.

9.3 **Warm Clothing Allowance:** A warm clothing allowance at a rate to be determined periodically, is payable, on application, to an employee travelling to a temperate country on official duties for a period of three or more months during the winter period (September to March for the Northern hemisphere, April to September for the Southern hemisphere). The allowance is payable once every five years.

## 10 **Per Diem/Daily Subsistence Allowance**

10.1 Staff undertaking authorised UG representational travel shall be entitled to payment of per -diem allowance/daily subsistence allowance (DSA) at rates guided by the International Civil Service Commission DSA Report. These are updated on a regular basis and prevailing rates may be obtained from the Finance Directorate. The rates payable would depend on the travel destination and shall be abated depending on the facilities provided as follows:

- |      |   |                                     |
|------|---|-------------------------------------|
| i)   | No accommodation or meals provided        | Full rate of DSA payable.           |
| ii)  | Free accommodation provided without meals | Two thirds of the DSA rate payable. |
| iii) | Free meals provided without accommodation | Two thirds of the DSA rate payable. |
| iv)  | Free meals and accommodation provided     | One third of the DSA rate payable.  |

Travel days shall be included in the calculation of the DSA if the combined duration of the outward and inward flights exceeds ten hours. One additional day shall be allowed for trips where the duration of the outward and inward flights combined is more than ten hours but less than 18 hours; and two additional days for trips where the duration of the outward and inward flights combined is 18 hours or more.

Per-diem allowance/DSA is paid to cover accommodation, meals as well as all other incidental expenditures such as telephone and taxi fares and recipients would not be required to provide returns on how the per-diem allowance is spent. However, staff are obliged to consider issues of security and choose appropriate hotels recommended by the destination country hosts and not choose cheaper hotels for the sake of cost saving. Where the travel includes substantial inter-city train/bus travel, the costs may be claimed separately from the sponsor.

- 10.2 Per-diem allowance for all other categories of UG business travel shall depend on the provisions stipulated in the funding agreement and where applicable, guided by the rules and regulations of the sponsoring agency. The application for travel allowances shall be supported by relevant documents including proof of funding in the project budget for the travel. Travel allowances may only be claimed before a trip, once the trip is completed, cost may be reimbursed on the basis of actual expenditure and submission of receipts.

## 11 **Travel Advance**

- 11.1 A travel advance may be authorized as accountable imprest by the controller of the budget from which a specific travel is funded for a staff member undertaking a UG Representational Travel to cover costs not included in the Per-Diem/DSA (for

example, in-country bus/train fares, official telephone calls); or to persons undertaking other categories of UG Business travel to cover travel costs approved by the funding agency.

- 11.2 All travel advances must be accounted for within one week of return from the trip. Receipts must be submitted for all expenditure above a threshold to be determined from time to time by the Finance Committee. Expenditures below the defined threshold that are not covered by receipts may be listed with dates and signed by the staff member.
- 11.3 Travel advance shall not be authorized for any staff member with an outstanding travel advance to account for.

## 12 **Travel Allowance and Expenses Claims**

- 12.1 Travel Allowance and expense claims shall be submitted to the Finance Directorate in the case of travels funded from the Central Administration budget or Departmental Travel Budgets; and to the External Funds Unit of the Office of Research, Innovation and Development (ORID) in the case of travels covered by externally funded projects, UG Faculty Development and UG Conferences Fund.
- 12.2 All travel claims and expenditure returns shall be submitted on the UG Travel Expense Claim Form (may be downloaded from the UG web-site).
- 12.3 Funds provided for UG business travel shall be used only for officially approved travels. For travels funded from project/grant funds, staff should refer to the Travel Policy of the donor/funding agency for specific requirements and be guided by these.

## 13 **Reporting**

Staff who undertake UG representational travel are required to submit a report to the Vice-Chancellor within two weeks of return from trip. Staff who undertake other categories of UG business travels are encouraged to submit trip reports to their immediate supervisors on their return and wherever appropriate, share lessons learnt from their travel with colleagues.

**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA  
EXTERNAL TRAVEL REQUEST FORM**

1. Name of applicant.....
2. Position.....
3. Department/Unit.....
4. Faculty/College/Directorate.....
5. Purpose of travel (Please tick as appropriate): Official / Private / Mix of both.
6. If official, please provide the following details (Attach supporting documents where necessary):
  - a. Activity (eg. conference, study tour).....
  - b. Theme of the activity.....
  - c. Location of activity.....
  - d. Role to be played.....
  - e. Costs to be borne by the University of Ghana (Please indicate as appropriate).....
    - i. Airfare: .....
    - ii. Per diem allowance.....
    - iii. Conference/Seminar fees.....
    - iv. Other (Please specify).....
7. Country to be visited.....

8. Proposed date of departure.....

9. Proposed date of return.....

10. Indicate what arrangements have been made for work to be done in your absence

.....  
.....  
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11. Signature of applicant.....Date.....

12. Recommendation of Head/immediate Supervisor (Should also indicate that there are funds available to cover the costs to be borne by the University and also that the applicant has no outstanding duties to perform).....

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Name..... Designation.....

Signature..... Date.....

13. Decision by Dean/Provost/Registrar/Vice-Chancellor.....

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Name..... Signature.....Date.....

