

RCUH EMPLOYEE TRAVEL: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

General

1. Q: Can I use the RCUH Travel Request and Travel Completion Forms for a UH employee?

A: Yes. For more information on UH eligible users please refer to Policy 2.603 Travel for UH and Other State and City/County Employees. All required travel information, documentation, and approvals must meet the UH requirements for official travel.

2. Q: Why does Policy 2.601 RCUH Employee Travel, presume that an employee's tax home and family home are in the State of Hawaii?

A: This was necessary to address an estimated 99% of travel situations in which Hawaii is the tax and family home for an employee. An employee's "tax home" is located at his/her official station, i.e., regular place of work. This may differ from the location of an employee's family home. Travel expenses between an employee's family home and his/her tax home are personal commuting expenses and should not be claimed as business travel expenses on Travel forms. If the business travel does not commence and end at an employee's tax home, or if an employee's tax home is outside the State of Hawaii, provide an explanation of the circumstance on each travel document processed.

3. Q: Can I use Employee Travel forms for professional consultants and independent contractors?

A: No. Travel forms are for RCUH and UH employee travel only. Travel expenses for professional consultants and independent contractors should be included in the agreement for services and processed on a purchase order. If an independent contractor is not charging a fee for services, the Attachment 10 Non-Employee Expense Payment Form may be used.

4. Q: Can I use Employee Travel forms for volunteers?

A: No. Travel forms are for RCUH and UH employee travel only. You may use the Attachment 10 Non-Employee Expense Payment Form to reimburse expenses; however volunteers can only be reimbursed/paid for actual expenses paid out of pocket. Employee allowances do not apply (e.g., same day subsistence, M&IE federal allowable rates, etc.). Refer to Policy 2.008 Tax Treatment of Business Expenses, for more information about volunteer expense payments.

See *also* RCUH Human Resources Policy 3.220 RCUH Volunteer. Official UH volunteers must be registered, see AP A9.041, Utilization of Volunteer Services of the University of Hawai'i. Verify with your DUO/FA whether it is permissible for an official UH volunteer to travel off-island.

5. Q: Can I use Employee Travel forms for State of Hawai'i or City & County employees?

A: No. Travel forms are for RCUH and UH employee travel only. Non-UH State of Hawai'i employees and City/County employees must use travel forms required by their employing agency or department, and submit their travel forms to their respective agency/department. The respective agency/department would then invoice the RCUH Project for the travel costs.

Travel Requests, Amendments, Advances

6. Q: I do not need a travel advance for my trip. Am I required to file a Travel Request and Advance Form (Travel Request)?

A: Yes, a Travel Request places the employee on "official" travel status.

7. Q: How do I amend a Travel Request online?

A: A Travel Request cannot be amended once the FA has approved the document. If the travel has not occurred yet, any changes or modifications should be documented on a hard copy of the approved Travel Request and kept on file with the project. If the travel has ended, any changes or modifications should be made on the Travel Completion.

8. Q: I received a travel advance for an upcoming trip. How do I amend a Travel Request online to request additional travel advance funds?

A: A second travel advance payment cannot be requested using the same travel document. The employee must return the original travel advance check, or refund the advance payment with a personal check made payable to RCUH. The project must process a "zero" travel completion online which will close the travel document. After the initial travel document is closed the project may process a new Travel Request online with the revised advance amount.

9. Q: I obtained my airline ticket on the internet and charged it to my personal credit card. My trip is three (3) months away. Can I include the cost of my airline ticket in my Travel Request?

A: An employee may receive a travel advance 30 days prior to their departure. The PI/Supervisor and FA have been delegated the responsibility to authorize an advance.

10. Q: If a traveler wants to take personal time prior to or after the business destination, how is the per diem computation handled?

A: RCUH recommends that the trip expenses be estimated using an itinerary where personal time is excluded and only the business destinations are accounted for. Any transportation, M&IE or other travel cost above this estimate is the responsibility of the traveler.

11. Q: My travel is being supported by more than one account across departmental lines. How do I process a Travel Request?

A: UH employees have the option to process their travel via UH's eTravel system if an RCUH account (e.g., RCUH revolving fund, direct project, etc.) is not involved. An RCUH Travel Request (and advance) can be processed on the Financial Portal by one department and the travel costs can be split funded via a manual travel completion.

Travel Completion, Rates, Computation & Tax Treatment of Payments

12. Q: Could the payment of travel expenses be considered income?

A: Yes. The following are examples of when travel payments are considered income:

- When Accountable Plan Rules are not followed (becomes a Non-Accountable Plan).
- When advances for travel are obtained and Travel Completion Reports are not filed timely.
- When it is paid for individuals who do not perform services for the institution.

13. Q: I attended a conference in New York but took personal leave in Denver prior to the meeting. When is the pre-boarding allowance applied?

A: The pre-boarding allowance applies to the out-bound business destination leg of the trip. It would begin no more than 3 hours prior to the Denver-New York flight departure.

14. Q: I purchased my airfare via the internet and have no "original" documents. What do I need to submit with my Travel Completion Report to get reimbursed?

A: Although best practices require an original receipt or invoice, RCUH recognizes that many air tickets are acquired through the Internet. RCUH will accept downloaded internet receipts if they include the following: name of the traveler, business destination city, dates and times of travel, date of the expenditure and total amount paid. If the cost of the ticket is being reimbursed to the traveler, the receipt must clearly indicate that the traveler paid for the ticket, if not, the traveler must provide additional proof of payment. This explanation does not include procurement requirements that may also apply.

15. Q: I received taxable income for same day travel. How is my \$20 allowance reported?

A: Select "Check this box for Same Day Travel" on your Travel Completion if your trip includes a taxable same day subsistence payment. RCUH identifies reportable Travel Completion payments only if the box is checked and/or object code 4352 is being charged. RCUH Disbursing notifies the appropriate payroll office of an employee receiving reportable amount(s). RCUH Payroll is notified of RCUH employees, and UH Disbursing is notified of UH employee payments.

It is important to process all taxable travel before the employee's final paycheck is issued.

16. Q: I sent my volunteer to Kauai for a day to collect samples for me. Is he/she entitled to the employee same day \$20 allowance?

A: No, volunteers may only be reimbursed for actual meal costs with an original receipt. If a reimbursement is provided, it may not exceed the \$20 same day rate.

17. Q: What if my travel is being supported by more than one account across departmental lines?

A: If one of the accounts is an RCUH account (e.g., RCUH revolving fund, direct project, etc.) the travel document must be submitted to RCUH Disbursing for manual processing. UH employees have the option to process their travel via UH's eTravel system if an RCUH account is not involved. Only one travel document should exist for a single trip.

18. Q: I traveled to New York to attend a three (3) day conference. At the time of my visit, the federal rate for lodging was \$311/day but I chose to stay at the home of a relative. I don't have a lodging receipt. May I receive a lodging allowance?

A: No. In order to receive a lodging reimbursement, a traveler must have obtained lodging at a commercial establishment, such as a hotel, and provide RCUH with an original receipt.

19. Q: An employee has filed his Travel Completion and has unused advance funds that must be returned to RCUH. Where do I send his refund payment?

A: Submit the refund (e.g., cash or personal check made payable to RCUH) for the unused advance amount along with a copy of the approved Travel Completion to RCUH Accounting.

20. Q: A Travel Completion has already been approved and the employee is submitting an additional expense receipt. How can the additional expense be claimed?

A: Process a Travel Completion (Without a Travel Request) online for only the additional expense. The original travel document number must be referenced in the new Travel Completion.

21. Q: My trip was cancelled at the last minute. What needs to be done?

A: If a Travel Request was filed via the RCUH Financial Portal, a Travel Completion Report needs to be completed online. Any RCUH travel advance allowance must be returned. Uncashed checks may be voided and returned. If the check was cashed, submit a refund check payable to RCUH. The traveler is responsible for collecting any refunds for conference fees, etc. Check with your DUO/FA and ORS if the account can still be charged for the airfare, since most tickets are non-transferable and non-refundable.

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