

Guidance on Travel Planning and Cancellations

While we always hope when booking travel that plans will go smoothly, sometimes unexpected circumstances happen, events get cancelled and trips end early. By following these guidelines, you can help prevent avoidable cancellation fees and understand what costs are reimbursable if travel is cancelled.

Effective March 13, 2020, UGA issued the [following guidance on non-essential travel](#): *“All non-essential travel—including travel to conferences (particularly those held internationally and out-of-state), training, site visits and any non-essential activities—is suspended during this period. “*

Business travel approvals and decisions on “essential status” are unit-based decisions made between faculty, staff, and their leadership. Such decisions should be informed by the particular circumstances. In all cases, units should manage reimbursements consistently across all travelers. Exceptions for current extenuating circumstances are to be used temporarily until May 1st, 2020. This timeline will be evaluated for possible extension.

Trip Planning (for employee and non-employee travelers)

Flights: Closely examine the cancellation/exchange rules and fees before purchasing an airline ticket. Travelers may use penalty or non-refundable fares whenever feasible. However, in cases where travel plans are in question, a refundable fare may be deemed the best option.

UGA works with several authorized travel agencies available to assist with airline reservations. A complete list of these agencies can be found at https://busfin.uga.edu/accounts_payable/authorized_agencies/ as well as the State of Georgia’s Concur travel portal at <https://travel.uga.edu/>.

Hotels: Travelers should not book non-refundable rates or rates that require deposits unless required for conference lodging or other similar situations where refundable rates are not available.

Car Rentals: Should be booked using the Georgia mandatory statewide contracts with Hertz or Enterprise who offer direct billing to UGA departments. More information can be found at busfin.uga.edu/accounts_payable/rental_cars.

Trip Cancellations (for employee and non-employee travelers)

For all cancelled travel: Please reference your approved travel authorization number when submitting any expense report for reimbursement, including those that include cancelled travel costs. Any cancelled travel costs or fees should be coded as the **O – Other Misc. Expenses** expense type. Departmental approvers should review these statements to ensure the associated costs are accurate and appropriate. For example, if a traveler receives a refund (ex. for a registration fee) and has been previously reimbursed, they should repay UGA for the amount of the refund.

Flights: UGA will reimburse for the airfare and/or penalty incurred for a change or cancellation of travel plans when the change or cancellation is required by the state of Georgia or is the result of other unavoidable situations approved by your UGA department. These costs may be covered even by grant funding, such as [the NIH announcement](#). Travelers should include a brief explanation of the circumstances when submitting their expense statement. If airlines discontinue or suspend flights to a destination, the airline may offer waivers or waive change fees for travelers that have tickets to the destination. If you have purchased a ticket directly from the airline, please contact the airline for assistance.

If your flight was booked through an authorized travel agency and you purchased a non-refundable fare, the travel agency will not issue a credit. If you choose to move the university-related travel to a later date, please contact the travel agency to make those changes and discuss any change fee charges. If the airline has discontinued or suspended flights to your destination, please contact the travel agency for assistance.

In general, UGA is not able to reimburse for a flight if the airline issues a flight credit to the traveler instead of a cancellation. For specific scenarios and exceptions due to extenuating circumstances, review the scenarios below.

Hotels: When all reasonable efforts have been taken to resolve cancellation fees with the hotel and a fee is still charged, please include a brief explanation when submitting the expense report for reimbursement.

Car Rentals: Travelers should contact the car rental provider directly to discuss cancellation fees. Fees associated with the cancellation can be submitted for reimbursement. Please include a brief explanation when submitting the expense report for reimbursement.

If you have any additional questions, please contact us through onesource@uga.edu or call 706-542-0202 (Option 2). Additional related information is outlined in the FAQs found in the [Travel Policy](#).

Scenarios/Examples for Employees and Non-employees

These scenarios are examples to inform UGA units. They do not cover all possible scenarios but address some of the more common situations.

Traveler/Department Responsibilities:

Situation	Traveler/Department Responsibilities:
<p>Traveler has been reimbursed for the flight prior to travel date and airline cancels the flight and issues a credit to the traveler.</p> <p>Airline credits are tied to the individual traveler and cannot be transferred to UGA and/or to another individual. Credits are generally good for 1 year from the date of issuance.</p>	<p>a) If an traveler will use the credit for personal travel, the traveler must reimburse UGA for the flight amount. Departments should document the traveler decision and deposit the returned amounts to the same funding source which originally paid for the traveler reimbursement. It is recommended that travelers/travelers make these payments within 30 days of the decision.</p> <p>b) If the traveler is issued a credit by the airline and will use the credit for upcoming university business, the traveler and department should document the decision and utilize the credit when booking the next UGA trip. If the next UGA trip is to be funded by a different funding source, departments should take reasonable measures to journal the expense to the correct funding source.</p> <p>c) If the traveler is issued a credit by the airline and is not reasonably able to use it for personal travel or upcoming university business within a year, travelers and departments should document the reasons internally and include on any applicable expense report given the extenuating circumstances of the situation. The traveler should understand that in the event the credit is able to be used for personal travel, the traveler must repay UGA for the amount of the reimbursement. It is recommended that traveler make these payments within 30 days of the decision.</p>
<p>Traveler is not able to travel as planned, has not been reimbursed, and the airline will only issue a credit.</p> <p>Airline credits are tied to the individual traveler and cannot be transferred to UGA and/or to another individual. Credits are generally good for 1 year from the date of issuance.</p>	<p>a) If traveler will use the credit for personal travel, the traveler and department should document these traveler decisions and no additional action is required.</p> <p>b) If the traveler is issued a credit by the airline and will use the credit for upcoming university business, the traveler and department should document the decision and utilize the credit when booking the next UGA trip and proceed with associated reimbursements for the university-related travel. If the next UGA trip is to be funded by a different funding source, departments should take reasonable measures to journal the expense to the correct funding source.</p> <p>c) If the traveler is issued a credit by the airline and is not reasonably able to use it for personal travel or upcoming university business, travelers and departments should document the reasons on the expense report and submit the cost for reimbursement given the extenuating circumstances of the situation. The traveler should understand that in the event the credit is able to be used for personal travel, the traveler must reimburse UGA for the amount of the reimbursement. It is recommended that traveler make these payments within 30 days of the decision.</p>

Creditsⁱ – If the Airline only offers a credit...

If the...	And the ...	And the ...	Then the...	Exceptions
Traveler paid out of pocket	Traveler is not yet reimbursed	Traveler has additional travel within a year	Traveler should not be reimbursed now and the credit used for future travel and reimbursed at that time.	During this time, the traveler can be reimbursed. The unit should then reduce flight reimbursement in the next year by the amount of the credit.
Traveler paid out of pocket	Traveler is already reimbursed	Traveler has additional travel within a year	Traveler should use the credit for future travel.	The unit should reduce flight reimbursement in the next year by the amount of the credit. ⁱⁱ
Traveler paid out of pocket	Traveler is not yet reimbursed	Traveler does NOT have additional travel within a year	Traveler should not be reimbursed if using the credit for personal use.	During this time, the traveler can be reimbursed. ^{iii iv}
Traveler paid out of pocket	Traveler is already reimbursed	Traveler does NOT have additional travel within a year	Traveler should repay UGA for the amount of the credit if using the credit for personal use. ^v	During this time, the traveler does not have to reimburse UGA. ^{iv}

Refunds – if the airline/agency offers a refund to the traveler...

If the...	And the ...	Then the...	Exceptions
Traveler paid out of pocket	Traveler is not yet reimbursed	Traveler should not be reimbursed for the full flight.	Cancellation fees may be reimbursed.
Traveler paid out of pocket	Traveler is already reimbursed	Traveler should repay UGA for the amount of the reimbursement ^v	Cancellation fees may be deducted from the repayment amount.

Direct billed airfare

If the...	And the...	Then the...
Travel was direct billed to department	Travel agency does NOT offer the unit a refund or credit	Unit should arrange to move the travel to a different date if possible.
Travel was direct billed to department	Travel agency offers the unit a refund	Unit should accept the refund from the travel agency.
Travel was direct billed to department	Travel agency offers the unit a credit	Unit should accept the credit and apply to future unit travel.

ⁱ Copies of airline credits should be included with any applicable reimbursement, just as an airline ticket would be.

ⁱⁱ Unit may need to reconcile the funding source of the original payment with the purpose/funding source of the new credited trip.

ⁱⁱⁱ If applicable, cancellation fees can also be reimbursed.

^{iv} In general, a traveler cannot receive both a flight credit from an airline and a reimbursement from UGA. Due to current extenuating circumstances, airlines are moving toward policies where only credits are being offered. Until May 1, 2020, in cases where all reasonable efforts have been taken to obtain a refund and a credit is still issued, and the credit cannot be used for university travel within the credit period, the traveler can be reimbursed as an exception due to extenuating circumstances.

^v It is recommended that travelers make these payments within 30 days of the decision. Departments should document the traveler decision and deposit the returned amounts to the same funding source which originally paid for the traveler reimbursement. For Business Managers: deposits for repayment should be made into a DSS or other similar fund as Revenue. A separate GL Journal should then be processed to record that expense credit by specific EmployeeID.