TRAVEL POLICY

Updated April 2021
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# Peer Evaluator Travel Policy for the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing

Updated 04/07/2022

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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 all 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 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.

Who to Call on Travel Policy Issues
Any questions, concerns, and/or suggestions regarding this travel policy may be directed to:

Name: A’Leyah Finley, Volunteer Resources Coordinator
Telephone: (404) 975-5000
Email: afinley@acenursing.org

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Reservation Procedures
• Travelers should make reservations as soon as one team chair and at least one team member has been assigned to a team; however, reservations should be made no later than six weeks prior to the trip unless circumstances warrant a shorter timeframe.
• All air travel, car rental, and rail travel reservations (including all types of in-route changes) must be booked through the American Express Intelligent Online Marketplace (AXIOM).
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:

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. If you experience any difficulties with booking travel, please contact A’Leyah Finley, Volunteer Resources Coordinator, at afinley@acenursing.org.

**Please Help Us Help You, If You Need Our Help**
We recommend that all bookings are completed Monday–Thursday before 5:00pm Eastern Time. Airlines typically have more reasonable rates between Tuesday and Thursday each week, therefore it is our preference that itineraries are confirmed between Tuesday and Thursday of each week. Taking advantage of lower rates often ensures fewer connections and access to optimal travel times. The ACEN office is located in Atlanta, GA, which is in the Eastern Time Zone. By booking Monday–Thursday before 5:00pm Eastern Time, the ACEN staff is available to assist you with your booking within 24 hours of your request (except on weekends and holidays). While there may be ACEN staff “on call”, we cannot guarantee available assistance with booking your flights prior to the next business day. In the case of holding a flight, most flights will remain on hold for 24 hours following when the hold is placed; however, AXIOM will provide the actual hold time for your reservation *as this timeframe is shortened to 6:00 pm or 10:00 pm Eastern Time on days when rates are likely to increase*. Once the hold time has placed, the itinerary will be released if the flight isn’t purchased, at which time you will need to restart the booking process.

**Electronic Ticket Instructions**
You will be flying on an electronic ticket and you will receive an emailed confirmation from 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 Transportation Security Administration (TSA) identification is required for all travel. See TSA identification information at this link: https://www.tsa.gov/travel/security-screening/identification.
DOMESTIC AIR TRAVEL

Making Air Travel Reservations
- All air travel reservations must be made through AXIOM.
- Air travel reservations must NOT be made directly through the airlines.
- Air travel made through non-AXIOM sites are made at the traveler’s expense and will not be reimbursed.

Airline Class of Service
All domestic air travel must be either basic or basic economy class in the main cabin. Travelers are expected to book 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 based on the following parameters:
- **Airfare:** The preferred total cost for airfare is $400 or less.
  - Any single round-trip flight or two one-way flights combined that exceed $400 is subject to approval by ACEN staff prior to the final reservation being confirmed.
  - Any single round-trip flight or two one-way flights combined over $400 will be cancelled automatically in AXIOM if not approved by ACEN staff.
  - Do not assume airfare over $400 will be approved.
- **Routing:**
  - Routing requires no more than two stops each way of a round trip.
  - Routing does not increase the one-way total elapsed trip time (origin to destination) by more than two hours.

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

Airline Frequent Flyer Programs
Travelers may retain frequent flyer program benefits; however, participation in these programs must not influence flight selection, which would result in incremental cost beyond the lowest available airfare as defined in this policy.
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, et cetera. Travelers should not volunteer for denied boarding compensation when on ACEN business.

Travel Disruption Advice
In the event of a travel disruption, please take the steps below:

Step 1
If the travel disruption occurs at the airport, work with the airline directly to get you to your destination. This helps remove the “middle-man” from the equation, allowing for quicker decisions, especially when time or seats are limited. Things to keep in mind:

- If the travel disruption is due to mechanical issues, it is the airline’s responsibility to get you to your destination, even if they have to work with another airline to get you there. If you do have to stay overnight, it is also the airline’s responsibility to provide lodging and food vouchers.
- If the disruption is related to weather, the airline will work with you to get you to your destination on the next available flight. Please keep in mind that this may be a much later flight or possibly a flight the next day. If the delay is weather-related, the airlines are not responsible for anything other than getting you to your destination on their airline.

Step 2
If the airline is unable to work with you or if you receive notice of a travel disruption, then seek assistance from AXIOM: (669) 272-1434. AXIOM can let you know if there are available flights. They will try to work with the airline on your behalf to get you an alternate flight. AXIOM will check all options. Please keep in mind that AXIOM will need to seek approval if purchasing any new airfare/tickets. Approval is through the ACEN office and reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

You may experience a long wait time when you call AXIOM, especially if weather is impacting a large geographic area. Please be patient.

Step 3
If any traveler is delayed, arrangements must be made to accommodate the change in arrival time and any changes that may affect the planned visit schedule.

- If you are a team member, contact your team chair and the nurse administrator.
- If you are the team chair, contact your team members and the nurse administrator.

Step 4
If you are unable to come to an acceptable solution to your travel disruption, contact ACEN for further assistance.

Alexander Mariquit: (917) 608-4009
A’Leyah Finley: (407) 388-9826
Cancellations
It is the responsibility of the travelers to call AXIOM at (669) 272-1434 to cancel a ticket. All airlines provide some level of reimbursement for a cancelled ticket if eligibility requirements are met. Some airlines give a full refund/credit for the entire amount paid for a ticket whereas other airlines give a partial refund/credit.

When a trip is cancelled after a ticket was issued, the traveler should immediately call AXIOM to:

1. **Seek a full refund** for the entire amount paid that is either (a) credited back to the ACEN via AXIOM or (b) available as an airline credit to you for future travel on ACEN business. Typically, there is a timeframe in which an airline credit must be used.
2. If the airline will not issue a full refund, **seek a partial refund** for a portion of the amount paid that is either (a) credited back to the ACEN via AXIOM or (b) available as an airline credit to you for future travel on ACEN business. Typically, there is a timeframe in which an airline credit must be used.

Unused Airline Tickets
Any documents received related to a cancelled ticket must never be discarded or destroyed as these documents may be required to rebook travel. Travelers must book online through AXIOM to use an airline credit for future ACEN business travel.

LODGING

Hotel Selection Guidelines
Travelers are required to use properties in the Moderate, Economy, or Budget categories.

Room Guarantee
The nurse administrator of the host program is responsible for reserving and directly paying all hotel rooms for the team chair and team members. All rooms must be guaranteed for late arrival. When necessary, the nurse administrator is also responsible to cancel the hotel reservation.

Hotel Payment Procedures
The host program is responsible for payment for the hotel room expenses. Please note some hotels add charges for room service (meals, beverages, et cetera) and incidentals to a room. The ACEN and host program has no authority over these proprietary policies. The ACEN and host program will not pay for these charges. The traveler must directly pay the hotel for these charges and may be asked for her/his credit card upon check-in in the event that incidental charges are incurred.

Typically the team chair will be provided with a hotel room large enough for the team to confer prior to and during the site visit.
Hotel Frequent Guest Programs
Many hotels have frequent guest programs that reward travelers with free lodging 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, any membership fees associated with joining these programs are the financial responsibility of the traveler.

RENTAL CAR

Rental Car Guidelines
Travelers may only rent a car to their destination if pre-approval is obtained from the ACEN Controller and if 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 at least four weeks prior to travel. 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 ONLY reimburse the cost of the rental and the lowest refueling cost of the rental car. Mileage is only reimbursed when the traveler is using their personal vehicle to travel to/from the site visit. A’Leyah Finley, Volunteer Resources Coordinator, can be contacted at afinley@acenursing.org.

Making Rental Car Reservations
Rental car reservations must be made through 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

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. Therefore, rental car insurance is included in the ACEN negotiated rate. Travelers must decline all insurance coverage except for the Collision Damage Waiver (CDW) and the Loss Damage Waiver (LDW).

All travelers who will be driving the rental car must sign as a driver on the car rental agreement. The included rental car insurance only applies to travelers that signed the agreement.

Rental Car Cancellation Procedures
Travelers are responsible for cancelling rental car reservations and must contact AXIOM via telephone by calling (669) 272-1434 or via AXIOM online. Travelers must 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 (no bumps, scratches, or mechanical failures)
- On time to avoid additional hourly charges
- With adequate gas as defined in the rental agreement 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. An itemized receipt must be submitted to the ACEN for reimbursement.

Rental Car Accidents
Should a rental car accident occur, travelers should immediately contact:
- the rental car company
- local authorities, as required
- team chair or team member, and nurse administrator only if traveling to a site visit
- A’Leyah Finley, Volunteer Resources Coordinator in the ACEN office
  ACEN Office: (404) 975-5000
  Mobile: (470) 388-9826
  Email: afinley@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 vehicle for ACEN travel only if pre-approval from the ACEN Controller is obtained. This pre-approval from the ACEN Controller must be conducted through email. Expenses incurred without pre-approval will not be reimbursed. Pre-approval can be obtained by emailing A’Leyah Finley, Volunteer Resources Coordinator at afinley@acenursing.org.

All requests to drive must be approved via email by the ACEN at least four weeks prior to travel. Pre-approval ensures that the traveler is covered through the ACEN liability insurance while traveling to/from home and to/from the travel location, and ensures reimbursement of this expense.

It is the personal responsibility of the vehicle owner to also carry adequate and appropriate insurance coverage for her/his protection.

The host program must provide all ground transportation for all peer evaluators during a site visit. No peer evaluator may use her/his personal vehicle at any time for any purpose during a site visit.

Reimbursement for Personal Car Usage

The ACEN will provide a mileage rate congruent with the current standard rate set by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). The current standard mileage rate can be found at: https://www.irs.gov/tax-professionals/standard-mileage-rates.

NOTE: Total reimbursement for driving is limited to the lowest cost of airfare, as if the 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 reimbursement form:

- Purpose of the trip
- Date and location
- Quantity of miles

Gas charges, automobile insurance, and fees are NOT reimbursable as the reimbursement rate covers the costs related to the travel. Any type of repair to a personal car are not reimbursable.
Ground Transportation of Travelers during a Site Visit
For a variety of reasons including liability and coordination, the nursing program is responsible for all ground transportation of peer evaluators during the entire site visit; this means from the time of arrival of each peer evaluator until the time of departure of each peer evaluator. This ensures that the peer evaluators 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 peer evaluators. Peer evaluators may not provide any form of ground transportation during a site visit.

The team chair should coordinate ground travel for the team with the nurse administrator for the entire duration of the visit. The most economical and reasonable mode of transportation for the institution/nursing program, as determined by the institution and within the physical capabilities of the peer evaluators, should be used. The following modes of transportation should be considered, but are not limited to:

- buses, subways, taxis
- hotel and airport shuttle services
- by an employee of the institution

Rail Travel
For rail and complex travel itineraries, call AXIOM at 1(669) 272-1434.

Class of Service – Rail Travel
Domestic rail travel will be in coach class; reserved seating in coach may be booked if there is no extra cost.

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 A’Leyah Finley, Volunteer Resources Coordinator

ACEN Office:  (404) 975-5000
Cell:  (407) 388-9826
Email:  afinley@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 expenses such as sightseeing, tours, souvenirs, and personal expenses, such as movies and health club fees.

Personal/Vacation Travel Billing Procedures
Personal/vacation travel billing must NOT be combined with business travel billing under any circumstances.

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 lodging; however, this provision is at the discretion of the hotel. The host program must ensure all travelers have internet access in their hotel room.

Airline/Airport 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; however, if there is a charge, then internet access will not be reimbursed.

Internet Access during the Site Visit
The governing organization must provide on-campus internet access to the peer evaluators for use during the site visit.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Additional Travel Insurance Purchased by Travelers
The ACEN will NOT reimburse expenses for additional travel insurance coverage.

PER DIEM

Per Diem Stipend – Site Visits
Effective May 1, 2019, peer evaluators serving on a site visit as a team member or team chair will receive a daily stipend of $75 for site visits, payable upon completion of the site visit. The stipend covers meals, parking, and tolls. A receipt is not needed for any of the expenses covered by the stipend.

Baggage fees and mileage to and from the airport are not covered by the stipend. These expenses will be reimbursed and an itemized receipt is needed for only a baggage fee(s). The peer evaluator must submit to the ACEN all information required for reimbursement no later than 10 business days after the site visit. Failure to submit required information within 10 business days will result in the peer evaluator forfeiting reimbursement.
Per Diem Stipend – Evaluation Review Panels
Effective May 1, 2019, peer evaluators serving as a panelist or chair on an Evaluation Review Panel (ERP) will receive a daily stipend of $75 for each travel day and $25 for the day(s) where meals are provided during ERP, payable upon completion of the panel. The stipend covers meals, parking, and tolls. A receipt is not needed for any of the expenses covered by the stipend.

Baggage fees and mileage to and from the airport are not covered by the stipend. These expenses will be reimbursed and an itemized receipt is needed for only a baggage fee(s). The peer evaluator must submit to the ACEN all information required for reimbursement no later than 10 business days after ERP. Failure to submit required information within 10 business days will result in the peer evaluator forfeiting reimbursement.

HONORARIUM

Peer evaluators serving on a site visit as a team member will be paid a one-time honorarium of $75 per site visit while serving in the capacity as a team member. Peer evaluators serving on a site visit as a team chair will be paid a one-time honorarium of $150 per site visit while serving in the capacity of as a team chair.

Peer evaluators serving on an Evaluation Review Panel as a panelist will be paid a one-time honorarium of $75.

For peer evaluators with no reimbursable expenses, payment for honoraria does not require an expense reimbursement form. The ACEN will automatically pay the honoraria within 10 business days after the site visit or ERP.

For peer evaluators with reimbursable expenses, payment of the honoraria will be processed upon submission/approval of all required reimbursement information.

EXPENSE REPORTING

Baggage fees and mileage to/from the airport are not covered by the stipend. These and any other reimbursable expenses must be submitted online through the reimbursement portal. The reimbursement portal can be accessed through the following link:
https://acenursing.atlassian.net/servicedesk/customer/portal/19/group/34/create/225

Timing for Expense Report Completion and Submission
The peer evaluator must submit to the ACEN all information required for reimbursement no later than 10 business days after the site visit. Failure to submit required information within 10 business days will result in the peer evaluator forfeiting reimbursement.
Travelers must provide the following information in order to be reimbursed for expenditures:

- Business purpose of the trip (i.e., host program name and location or ERP)
- Only uploaded documents are accepted.
  - Receipt with the name of the vendor, location, date, and dollar amount
  - Air/Rail – original passenger itinerary from AXIOM
  - Car Rental – rental car agreement plus charge/credit card receipt or other proof of payment

When a receipt is not available, a full explanation of the expense and the reason for the missing receipt is required. The ACEN may request additional information.

**ACEN Approval Process**

Each traveler’s expense reimbursement form will be reviewed for:

- Traveler’s electronic signature
- Business purpose (i.e., host program name and location or ERP)
- Uploaded documentation
- Policy compliance

**Incorrect or Incomplete Expense Reports**

ACEN staff will contact a traveler if their expense reimbursement form is incorrect or incomplete. An incorrect or incomplete expense reimbursement form will result in delay or may result non-reimbursement of specific items.

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**REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS**

To expedite the reimbursement, all reimbursements will be paid electronically via ACH wire transfer, which is an electronic direct deposit paid directly to your banking institution.

The traveler must have a valid ACH Form on file. The form can be completed and submitted through the following link:

[https://acenursing.atlassian.net/servicedesk/customer/portal/19/group/34/create/225](https://acenursing.atlassian.net/servicedesk/customer/portal/19/group/34/create/225)
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 baggage unattended or with someone you do not know.
- Never agree to carry anything on board or in your baggage for someone else.
- Put your name and address on your baggage. 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 baggage in case the checked baggage is misplaced.

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 (jewelry, laptop computers, cameras, et cetera) onboard the aircraft.
- Always carry important and/or confidential documents onboard the aircraft. Clearly tag baggage with name, address, and telephone number as well as include inside baggage.

Follow these procedures if your baggage is lost in-route:
- Retain baggage claim receipts for checked-in baggage.
- Obtain a lost baggage report form from an airline representative in the baggage claim area.
- Itemize the contents of your baggage 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.

The purchase of baggage insurance varies in cost and is the responsibility of the traveler.

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
- when the excess baggage consists of the ACEN visit-related records or property
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, share ride drivers, or limousine service drivers in unmarked cars. Use authorized taxi, share ride, or limousine services only.
- 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 any loss immediately.

Hotel Fire Safety Tips
While major modern 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. Follow all hotel safety rules; obtain these directly from the hotel upon check-in.

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/or smoke.

In Case of Fire or Smoke...
- Follow all hotel safety rules; obtain these directly from the hotel upon check-in.
- Follow all directions given during emergency.
- Always place your hotel room key and shoes somewhere in your room that you will always know where these items are, and you are able to easily and immediately locate these items (e.g., key on nightstand and shoes next to bed).