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Travel Policy, Purpose, Responsibility, and Enforcement

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

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 with Travel Policy Issues
Any questions, concerns, and/or suggestions regarding this travel policy may be directed to the Volunteer Services Coordinators. See the “Who to Call at ACEN Quick Guides” available in the Repository.

Travel Arrangements

Reservation Procedures
Travelers should make reservations for travel as soon as the 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 en 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 Volunteer Services Coordinators using the contact information provided in the Who to Call at ACEN Quick Guides available in the Repository.

Please Help Us Help You (If You Need Our Help)

While Axiom is available 24/7, we recommend that all bookings are completed Monday–Thursday before 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard 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 5:00 p.m. 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 p.m. or 10:00 p.m. 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

As noted above, ALL air travel reservations must be made through AXIOM. Air travel reservations CANNOT be made directly through the airline(s). 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 the ACEN are not permitted but are allowed at the traveler’s personal expense. Upgrades may not be charged to the ACEN and will not be reimbursed.
Lowest Airfare Definition

**Airfare:** Any single round-trip flight or two one-way flights combined that exceed $500 **issubject to approval by ACEN staff prior to the final reservation being confirmed.** Any single round-trip flight or two one-way flights combined over $500 will be cancelled automatically in AXIOM if not approved by ACEN staff. Do not assume airfare over $500 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 time trip (origin-to-destination) by more than two hours.

*Please make sure that you book your trip appropriately and work proactively with ACEN staff as needed to ensure you have purchased flights that are in accordance with the ACEN policy.*

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 costs 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, etc. 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:

If a travel disruption occurs at the airport, work with the airline directly to get you to your destination. This helps remove the “middleman” 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 must 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.

- 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.

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.**

**Delays**
If any traveler is delayed, arrangements must be made to accommodate the change in arrival time as well as 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.

If you are unable to come to an acceptable solution to your travel disruption, contact ACEN for further assistance. See the *Who to Call at ACEN Quick Guides* available in the Repository.

**Cancelations**
It is the responsibility of the travelers to call AXIOM at (669) 272-1434 to cancel a ticket or to cancel online. 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 canceled after a ticket was issued, the traveler should call AXIOM as soon as possible to seek a full refund for the entire amount paid that is either credited back to the ACEN via AXIOM or available as an airline credit for future ACEN-related travel. Typically, there is a timeframe in which airline credit(s) must be used.

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

**Unused Airline Tickets**
Any documents received related to a cancelled ticket must be retained until you have booked your next travel through AXIOM for ACEN business. Travelers must book online through AXIOM to use airline credit for future ACEN business travel.

**Lodging**
Host nursing programs are responsible for securing lodging for the site visit team. When you are invited to participate in the EPR or BOC, arrangements are made by the ACEN for your lodging. Typically, the only time that a peer evaluator would need to secure lodging would be related to major travel disruptions. The traveler should be prepared to provide a personal credit card for any incidentals charged to the room; incidentals during site visits, ERP, or BOC will be the responsibility of the traveler and are covered in the per diem.

**Hotel Selection and Payment Guidelines (for MAJOR travel disruptions)**
In the event of major travel disruptions, peer evaluators are required to use properties in the Moderate, Economy, or Budget categories. In these extremely rare situations, the traveler should book the hotel room and then be prepared to pay for the room using a personal credit card. A copy of the receipt must be submitted to the ACEN for reimbursement. Any incidentals charged to the room will be the responsibility of the traveler.
**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**
ACEN Travelers must be pre-approved to secure a rental car. Typically, rental cars are only approved in an emergency situation. See the *Who to Call at ACEN Quick Guides* available in the Repository. 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 prior to renting the car. Pre-approval ensures that the traveler is covered through the ACEN liability insurance while using the rental car 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.

**Making Rental Car Reservations**
Rental Car reservations must be made through AXIOM and may not be made directly through the rental car company. Travelers should book the following rental car categories: Economy or 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 in the contract before the vehicle is accepted.

**Rental Car Insurance**
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. Only the ACEN-approved peer evaluator/staff 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 Cancelation Procedures**
Travelers are responsible for cancelling rental car reservations via AXIOM online or contact AXIOM via telephone by calling (669) 272-1434. 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 one-way rental). Every reasonable effort must be made to return the car intact (e.g., no bumps, scratches, mechanical issues) and on time to avoid additional charges. The car must be returned with an adequate amount of 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/debitcard. 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 and local authorities, as required. Next, travelers should locate the Who to Call at ACEN Quick Guides available in the Repository.

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 Volunteer Services Coordinators is obtained. This pre-approval from the Volunteer Services Coordinators must be conducted through email. Expenses incurred without pre-approval will not be reimbursed. See the Who to Call at ACEN Quick Guides available in the Repository for contact information. 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 business 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 were using AXIOM for booking).

To be reimbursed for the use of their personal car for business, travelers must provide the following information in the Peer Evaluation Expense 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 for Travelers during a Site Visit
Secondary to 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
- Car service, including rideshare services.

Rail Travel
For rail and complex travel itineraries, call AXIOM at 1(669) 272-1434. 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 all domestic rail services may be utilized when an upgrade is available at no extra cost or if the traveler pays for the upgrade on their own.

Personal/Vacation Travel
Personal/vacation travel may be combined with business travel. Extensions for domestic visits must be pre-approved by the Volunteer Services Coordinators. Extensions for international accreditation visits must be pre-approved by the Chief of Financial Operations. Additional costs incurred from extended bookings for airfare or lodging are the responsibility of the traveler and will not be reimbursed by the ACEN nor charged to the program. Additionally, the ACEN WILL NOT PAY for expenses such as sightseeing, tours, souvenirs, or personal expenses (e.g., movies, fitness facilities).

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

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
Peer evaluators serving on a site visit as a team member or team chair will receive a daily stipend of $75 for site visits, including days of travel, payable upon completion of the site visit. The stipend covers meals, parking, and tolls as well as any miscellaneous expenses incurred. A receipt is not needed for any of the expenses covered by the stipend.
Per Diem Stipend – Evaluation Review Panel (ERP) and Board of Commissioner (BOC) Meetings
Peer evaluators serving as a panelist on ERP or as a commissioner will receive a daily stipend of $75 for each travel day and $35 for the day(s) when meals are provided during ERP or BOC meetings. The ERP panelist or BOC member will be paid the stipend after completing the meeting. The stipend covers meals, parking, and tolls as well as any miscellaneous expenses incurred. A receipt is not needed for any of the expenses covered by the stipend.

Note: 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).

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

Expense Reporting
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.

Documentation Requirements
Travelers must provide the following information with the online Travel Expense form in order to be reimbursed for expenditures:

- Business purpose of the trip (e.g., host program name and location or ERP (only uploaded documents are accepted).
- Receipt with the name of the vendor, location, date, and dollar amount.
- Car Rental – rental car agreement plus charge/credit card receipt or other proof of payment.
- Baggage fees (first checked bag).
- Car service (from home to airport and vice versa).

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 in non-reimbursement of specific items.

Reimbursement Process
To expedite the reimbursement, all reimbursements will be paid electronically via ACH wiretransfer, which is an electronic direct deposit paid directly to your banking institution. The traveler must have a valid ACH Form on file. This form should be completed and submitted. Updates should be submitted when changes are made.