

Travel Question and Answer Session February 1, 2007

NOTE: Even though this information is currently available as a stand-alone document, this information will be eventually combined with the document [Frequently Asked Questions about Travel](#), which is available from the IRIS website.

General Travel Announcements and Remaining Issues from Year-End Maintenance

1. The **Alternative Cost Assignment** portion of the overall trip no longer lets you select Cost Center, WBS Element, etc. from a drop-down menu. You now have to click on the **Cost Distribution** icon and fill in the appropriate information on the **second line**. If you try to put an alternative fund in the first line, the information that was already present there will overwrite the new values entered.
2. We are continuing to see printing issues on Travel Expense reports. There are two areas of concern which will be resolved with the upgrade in April, 2007:
 - a. Overlapping lines on per diem meal reimbursements.
 - b. The trip type overlaying the trip reason.
3. There were some policy changes that took effect on January 15, 2007.
 - a. The mileage rate increased from \$0.42/mile to \$0.46/mile.
 - b. You must now use the CONUS rates for all in-state travel. This means that previous region codes such as TN1U, TN2U, TN1S, TN2S and TN3S are no longer valid for in-state travel occurring after 1/15/07. If you are entering travel prior to that date, you should use the old region codes.
 - c. If you must enter expenses for a trip that includes 1/15/07 as a travel date, you will need to enter an additional destination line starting on 1/15/2007, even if the traveler is still in the same town. For instance, if the traveler is in Nashville from 1/14/2007 to 1/16/2007, you would enter an additional destination for Nashville starting on 1/15/2007 at 00:00. The region code for the first destination would be TN1U, and the region code for the additional destination starting on 1/15 would be TN/NA, even though the traveler is in Nashville the whole time. You will also need to divide the traveler's lodging expenses for nights before 1/15 and nights on or after 1/15. **Make sure the region codes for the two lodging expenses are assigned appropriately.** This is to ensure that the correct lodging rates are assigned for each night.
4. The Travel FAQ document has been updated with references to the new policy changes mentioned above. You can find the [updated document](#) on the [IRIS website](#).
5. Many users have a personal value list for the **Region Code** field in travel that includes TN1U, TN2U, TN1S, TN2S and TN3S. These values should be removed from the list as they are no longer appropriate for travel occurring after 1/15/2007. Personal value lists can also be used for airlines, hotels, and auto rental companies.

6. Some users have reported that nothing happens when they click on links (e.g. "Create Travel Expense Statement") on the initial screen in the TRIP transaction. If this is the case, you should check your personal settings to ensure that the "Basis HTML (for display problems)" selection is **not** checked. If it is checked, uncheck the option, save the settings, back out of the TRIP transaction to the main SAP menu and then access the transaction again. The links should then work normally.
7. There has been an improvement made to the approval screens in travel so that reviewers and approvers no longer have to back out of the screen with the travel overview in order to review, approve or reject the travel request or expense. The **Review**, **Approve**, and **Reject** icons now appear on the same screen as the request or expense overview.
8. Certain users have reported an error whereby travel encumbrances are not being removed from the ledgers. There was a period of time between the last two weeks of December through the first week of January where deleted trips were not being unencumbered. This is a known error. If you run into this issue please contact the IRIS [Helpdesk](#) to have the encumbrances deleted.
9. Trips are now being paid by direct deposit. As such, there is no longer any check information available for travelers. This information was often used to determine if and when a traveler's reimbursement had been paid. The document [TRIP – Display Payment History](#) provides details on finding information on reimbursement payments.
10. There are some additional changes to the travel policies that have recently been made. Those changes are as follows:
 - a. If a traveler goes to a conference and stays at an overflow hotel (because the conference hotel is booked) then the traveler must obtain proof of the conference rate being given at the overflow hotel. Questions have been raised regarding per diem meal reimbursements when a traveler is in multiple cities in one day. The region code that should be used for the meal per diem reimbursement is the region for the city where the traveler sleeps that night.
 - b. Receipts are now required for any expense (except regular per diem meal amounts) over \$50.00. This is especially significant for typical transportation receipts such as taxis, airport parking, etc.
 - c. Tip reimbursements for expenses incurred on a trip will be limited to 20% of the total cost of the service as it appears on the receipt. Anything above 20% will be treated as an exception to policy and will require additional approvals. This is particularly important for entertainment expenses.
 - d. There will be additional verbiage in the policies regarding trips containing both personal and business travel. New documentation requirements will be in place for such trips to explain the nature and extent of the personal travel.
11. This item was not discussed at the Travel Q&A, but was implemented based on a suggestion from the Martin campus. The region code **TN/___** should be used for any city in Tennessee that does not have a specific CONUS region. The

description for **TN/**__ has been changed from “Cities not listed” to “TN Cities not listed” at the request of the Martin campus. Since the region code itself does not show on the Expense Statement, the description “Cities not listed” was not very helpful. Likewise, the descriptions for other states’ general region codes have been updated as well. For example, the description for **GA/**__ now shows “GA Cities not listed”, **TX/**__ shows “TX Cities not listed”, etc.

Questions and Answers from the Session

Q: If you travel to multiple locations throughout the state and enter a log for the mileage expenses, which region code should you use on the reimbursement?

A: You should use the region of the traveler’s official office location.

Q: When entering mileage on a travel expense statement, is it acceptable to enter a mileage total or are you supposed to enter the mileage leg-by-leg?

A: You should always enter the mileage leg-by-leg. The system will automatically total the entries and enter that value in the total mileage field.

Q: Do you have to specify region codes on each receipt even if you have specified it at the top of the travel expense in the **General Trip Data** section?

A: You should always double-check the region to be sure it is appropriate, but you should only have to specifically change it when travel occurs during a cross-over period when new region codes are used, such as 1/15/2007.

Q: Will the system automatically pick up the correct CONUS rates for travel after the 15th of January?

A: Yes.

Q: Is there a place in IRIS where you can print out the particular CONUS region codes for particular cities and states?

A: Not specifically, but you can search for the region codes you are interested in by clicking on the **matchcode** icon for the **Region** field. If you find a listing there that is useful to you, then you can print the list of the returned values by clicking on the **Print** icon on the **matchcode** screen.

Q: Sometimes my matchcode searches do not pull back results. Why might this be?

A: The search is case sensitive. It is usually most effective to search by capitalizing the first letter of the item you wish to find (“M” for “Marriott” for example) and then adding an *. For instance, to search for all airlines beginning with “A” you should enter “A*”.

Q: If you are entering travel for trip governed by state rate guidelines, do we continue to use the CONUS region codes?

A: Yes. For all in-state travel occurring after 1/15/2007, you should always use the CONUS region codes. However, if you are traveling for a grant that specifies in the contract that you must travel under State or Federal rates, then you must choose the appropriate value in the **Trip Type, Statutory** field. The default value is “University Rates”.

Q: Should you automatically choose “Federal Rates” in the **Trip Type, Statutory** field if you are traveling under a Federal grant?

A: No. The State or Federal grant contract must clearly specify that State/Federal guidelines must be adhered to when traveling. Otherwise, use the default university rates.

Q: Are users authorized to view the clearing document information for the direct deposit payment? Sometimes if you highlight the accounting document (begins with a 7) and click on the **Choose** icon, the system tells you that you are not authorized.

A: Yes. If you have authorization to the traveler then you should be able view the clearing date and clearing document information. If the system gives you an error, simply double-click on the accounting document number rather than selecting it and clicking on the **Choose** icon.

Q: I can no longer print from the new travel approval screens. How do I print now that the **Print** icon is not available?

A: Right-click anywhere on the travel overview portion of the screen and choose "Print" from the menu that appears. You will then be asked to choose your Windows printer.

Q: When you enter a travel request and you have money tied to the trip as an encumbrance, are funds automatically relieved?

A: Travel requests do not have encumbrances tied to them, only travel expense reports. When you enter an expense report, an encumbrance is created. When payment is made on that trip the encumbrance is relieved.

Q: Is there somewhere I can get a break down of the different percentages for meal reimbursements for breakfast, lunch and dinner?

A: Yes. The Travel [Reimbursement Rate Schedule](#) on the Treasurer's Office website has that information.

Q: If a traveler does not want the full per diem reimbursement allowed for meals, can they take less money?

A: Yes, you should request the meal per diem reimbursements as usual and then enter a negative adjustment to the total reimbursement for the trip by using the **Negative adjustment to total** expense type. In the comments section for this expense type you can specify that the negative adjustment to the reimbursement is for meals. **Note:** in order for this expense type to work correctly, you must enter the value with a minus sign (-) in front of the dollar amount. Otherwise the amount you entered will be added to the total reimbursement. This would, in fact, have the opposite effect and **increase** the total reimbursement of the trip.

Q: Is it possible to run a report listing all trips by date?

A: Yes. There are currently three travel reports on the menu in IRIS (**IRIS Reporting >> Financial >> Travel**). Each of these reports has a **Trip Start Date** and **Trip End Date** on the **General Trip Data** tab that will allow you to search by these criteria. The date fields on these reports refer to the actual travel dates of the trip. The **Cost Center** field on these reports refers to the responsible cost center of the traveler. There currently is not a way on these reports to search for trips by the paying fund (i.e. cost center, WBS element, or internal order).

Other Tips and Tricks

- When entering an alternative cost assignment for a trip, you must enter your information on the second line of the **Cost Distribution** window. Otherwise, your data will be overwritten with the information defaulted on line one.
- If you are entering expenses for an in-state trip that includes travel on January 15, you must split expenses (such as “lodging, non-conference”) for dates prior to the 15th and dates from the 15th onward because the reimbursement rates are different. Make sure you use the appropriate region codes for each portion of the trip.
- If you travel to a small city in Tennessee (i.e. the region code = **TN/___**) there is a difference between the reimbursement rate under State/University guidelines and Federal guidelines. The maximum lodging rate under State/University guidelines is \$65.00. That value under Federal guidelines is \$60.00.
- If you are traveling under State or Federal rates for a grant, the meal reimbursement for partial days (i.e. the first and last days of the trip) is determined differently than the reimbursement for travel under university rates. Travelers using state or federal rates are supposed to receive 75% of the full meal reimbursement on the partial days. This is usually entered using the **Meals, actuals** expense type. However, when entering an expense reimbursement such as this, you must remember to select “State Rates” or “Federal Rates” in the **Trip Type, Statutory** field. Otherwise, the travel auditors will detect the 75% reimbursement for meals as an error and will adjust the reimbursement down to what would be allowed under university rates.