Changes regarding booking and paying for business travel when using travel agencies

Department: Procurement/ Payables

To: Financial and Administrative Contacts

Date: October 10, 2014

Effective November 1, 2014, the process currently allowed for booking business travel, when using travel agencies, will change.

Currently, when booking business travel, University faculty and staff have the option of providing a University of Guelph charge code to certain travel agencies who would then send the related invoice directly to Accounts Payable for payment. No approval signature is required on the invoice. This represents a significant internal control issue and some of these transactions have been flagged on recent audits.

In order to improve our compliance with our internal policies as well as with the requirements of certain funding agencies, effective November 1, 2014 invoices from travel agencies for faculty and staff travel will not be paid through Accounts Payable. Business travel for faculty and staff must be paid for up front by the traveller and reimbursed to them through the expense claim system (ECS).

The options available to the traveller to make payment to travel agencies include:

1. Use of a University of Guelph AMEX card
2. Use of another personal credit card
3. Obtain a travel advance (prior to booking) through Treasury Operations and use the cash received to pay for travel

With each of these options it will be necessary to submit receipts through the expense claim system (ECS) in order to receive a reimbursement or to clear a related travel advance.

Travel for non-employees (students and visitors) may still be billed directly to the University. However, a University of Guelph purchase order (either a low value or high value PO depending on the dollar amount) will be required by the travel agency to confirm booking. For assistance in obtaining a purchase order please contact Purchasing Services.

All travel agencies who we currently deal with will be notified of these changes and will be expecting payment or a purchase order at the time of booking.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

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