11.1 Policy Statement

It is the policy of the University to promote safe travel by Students to and from events and activities that advance the University’s mission of research and discovery, teaching and learning, community engagement and public service. This policy serves as a guide for student travel and supports compliance with relevant State and The University of Texas System rules and regulations.

11.2 Scope

11.2.1 This policy applies to currently enrolled Students taking part in travel to attend activities or events that are:

   a. organized and sponsored by the University; and
   b. occur more than twenty-five (25) miles from the University campus.

11.2.2 The types of activities and events covered by this policy include but are not limited to academic course related field trips, Recreational Sports club trips, the activities of recognized student organizations, and meetings and conferences of academic organizations where a Student is attending/participating due to their affiliation with the University.

11.2.3 This policy does not apply to travel undertaken by Students to attend out of town athletic events, or to engage in student-teaching, internships, practicums, observations or research, unless the student-teaching, internships, practicums, observations or research is organized by a member of the University’s faculty.

11.3 Definitions

11.3.1 Organized Event - event or activity that is initiated, planned and arranged by a member of the University's faculty or staff, or by the members of a registered student organization, and is approved by an Appropriate Administrator.

11.3.2 Sponsored Event – event or activity that the University endorses by supporting it financially, or by sending Students to participate in it as official representatives of the University.

11.3.3 Student – criteria for student status may be found – student affairs chapter 1

11.3.4 Appropriate Administrator - Dean, Department Chair, or Director of an administrative unit, who is authorized to approve University Student Travel or their designee.
11.3.5 International SOS- The 24-hour medical, emergency and security response organization that serves as the U.T. System international emergency assistance provider.

11.3.6 U.T. System – The University of Texas System, including yet not limited to its Board of Regents.

11.4 Travel Authorization

In order to assure that the events or activities that involve student travel are within the course and scope of the University's mission, and that student safety concerns have been addressed, travel undertaken pursuant to this policy must be approved in advance by an Appropriate Administrator.

11.4.1 To request authorization, members of the faculty, staff or registered student organizations who organize activities covered by this policy must submit a completed Student Travel Request Authorization form, along with the required documents and information, to the Appropriate Administrator for approval. Whenever possible, the request should be submitted at least five (5) working days in advance of travel to the activity or event.

11.4.2 The following information/documents must be submitted along with the Student Travel Authorization Request form:

a. A list of participants including their names, local addresses and phone numbers, and the names and phone numbers of persons to contact in case of an emergency.

b. The name and phone number for the responsible University employee(s) who will be available to the Students at all time during the travel or activity regardless of whether or not that person will be attending the activity or event.

c. Copies of valid drivers’ licenses issued by the state where the licensees permanently reside that are not currently suspended or revoked for any Students who will operate motor vehicles.

d. Copies of current medical insurance certificates, or a copy of both sides of a current group insurance membership card valid for use at medical facilities in the United States for domestic travel, for each person who wishes to participate in the activity or event, or statements that individual student do not have medical insurance. The purchase of a short-term Student Field Trip Insurance for domestic travel can be arranged by academic and administrative units on behalf of students who do not have, or cannot verify, current medical coverage, or for students who wish to have a secondary medical insurance policy for the activity or event. Information concerning this coverage is available from the Office of Vice President for Business Affairs.

e. Completed and signed Release and Indemnification Agreements for each participant.

f. Completed and signed Authorization for Medical Treatment forms for each participant.

11.4.3 When leading group trips, faculty or staff should carry emergency contact information, proof of medical insurance coverage, and the Authorization for Medical Treatment form for each participant.

11.4.4 Faculty who teach courses that involve frequent domestic field trips may collect the following information from Students at the beginning of each semester and keep it on file with the Appropriate Administrator for use throughout a semester:

a. proof of current medical insurance or statement that student does not have medical insurance;

b. completed and signed Authorization for Medical Treatment forms;
c. completed and signed Release and Indemnification Agreements (a single release and indemnification agreement may be used if a single description fits all the proposed trips); and
d. proof of valid drivers’ licenses issued by the state where the licensees permanently reside that are not currently suspended or revoked for any Students who will operate vehicles.

11.4.5 One-time approval may be provided for multiple trips led by faculty or staff that involve the same destinations and same participants.

11.4.6 The Student Travel Authorization Request, the Authorization for Medical Treatment and the Release and Indemnification Agreement forms are available from the Vice President for Business Affairs or can be downloaded from its Web site at https://www.utep.edu/vpba/doing-business/business-resources/useful-forms.html.

11.5 Student International Travel

11.5.1 In accordance with U. T. System policy, registration with International SOS is required, prior to departure, for all Students who travel internationally to an activity or event covered under this policy. Enrollment in International SOS triggers automatic enrollment in the international health coverage plan for Students.

11.5.2 Information regarding International SOS may be found at: https://www.utep.edu/travel/international-travel-planning/emergency-assistance.html.

11.5.3 Students must adhere to the University’s International Travel Policy and Procedures. This includes submitting requests for exceptions to travel to destinations where the U. S. Department of State has issued a country-wide travel warning.

11.6 Travel by Motor Vehicle

11.6.1 Compliance with Laws and Policies

Motor vehicles used for travel or activities covered by this policy must comply with the requirements of The University of Texas System Administration Policy UTS157, Automobile Insurance Coverage for Officers and Employees and General Requirements for the Use of Vehicles.

11.6.2 Vehicle Operator Requirements

11.6.2.1 All students who may operate vehicles while engaged in travel or activities covered under this policy must have a valid driver’s license issued by the state where they permanently reside that is not currently suspended or revoked and be trained as required by law to drive the vehicle that will be used, as well as comply with applicable requirements of The University of Texas System Administration Policy UTS157, Automobile Insurance Coverage for Officers and Employees and General Requirements for the Use of Vehicles.

11.6.2.2 Operators of motor vehicles shall comply with all laws, regulations and posted signs or directions regarding speed and traffic control and shall not operate the vehicle for a continuous period that is longer than the maximum provided guidelines promulgated by federal or State law or the regulations and guidelines promulgated by the University below, whichever is lower, without scheduled rest stops or overnight stops.

11.6.2.3 Operators shall take a mandatory 30 minute rest break every four hours of driving time.
11.6.2.4 Operators shall drive no more than ten hours in any 24 hour period.

11.6.2.5 Trips requiring more than 10 hours driving time to reach a point of destination shall require overnight lodging.

11.6.2.6 A navigator shall be assigned for all trips scheduled to take more than two hours. The navigator must stay awake while on duty.

11.6.3 Safety Requirements for Both Operators and Passengers

11.6.3.1 Seat Belts. Occupants of motor vehicles shall use seat belts or other approved safety restraint devices required by law or regulation at all times when the vehicle is in operation.

11.6.3.2 Alcohol and Illegal Substances. Occupants of motor vehicles shall not consume, possess, or transport any alcoholic beverages or illegal substances.

11.6.3.3 Passenger Capacity. The total number of passengers in any vehicle at any time it is in operation shall not exceed the manufacturer's recommended capacity, or the number specified in applicable federal or State law or regulations, or applicable U. T. System policy, whichever is lower.

11.6.3.4 Insurance, Inspection, and Safety Devices. Each motor vehicle must have a current proof of liability insurance card and State inspection certification, be equipped with all safety devices or equipment required by federal or State law or regulation, and comply with all other applicable requirements of federal or State law or regulations and any applicable University and/or U.T. System Policy.

11.6.3.5 Individuals who are not University Students or employees acting in the scope of their duties cannot be passengers in the motor vehicle or otherwise participate in the activity or event. In special circumstances, a University employee, not associated with the group attending the activity or event, may be authorized by the Appropriate Administrator to attend and participate in the activity or event.

11.6.4 Travel by Rental Vehicle

Rental of motor vehicles used in travel associated with an activity or event covered by this policy must be leased or rented in accordance with the University Travel Policy.

11.6.5 Travel by Means of a Vehicle Owned or Leased Long-Term by the University

11.6.5.1 In addition to complying with the general rules set out above, travel by means of a vehicle that is owned or leased long-term (for a period of greater than six months) by the University must comply with all applicable requirement of federal or State law or regulation and any applicable U. T. System policy, including not limited to UTS157.

11.6.5.2 Operators. All operators of vehicles described in this section must be University employees and acting within the course and scope of their employment and must be authorized to operate such vehicles in accordance with U.T. System policy UTS157.

11.6.6 Travel by Privately Owned Vehicles

The use of personal vehicles by University Students for travel to events covered by this policy is strongly discouraged and prior authorization is required in accordance with all applicable federal
or State law or University and U.T. System rules, regulations and policies, including yet not limited to UTS157.

11.6.6.1 When requesting authorization for travel that involves the use of personally owned vehicles, the requestor, in addition to submitting the information described in section 11.4.2 above, shall also submit a copy of a current auto insurance certificate for any vehicle and driver to be used for the proposed travel.

11.6.6.2 The persons responsible for the proposed activity and travel under this policy must inform Students who will drive their privately owned vehicles that their personal auto insurance will be the primary insurance at all times when their own vehicle is used for the proposed travel under this policy. This notification must be made in writing and in advance of travel to the activity or event.

11.6.7 Volunteer Drivers and Passengers

In addition to complying with the general rules set out in this policy, non-student/non-employee drivers and/or passengers who accompany Students on travel covered under this policy must sign the Release and Indemnification Agreement and the Authorization for Medical Treatment forms prior to the trip and deliver to the Appropriate Administrator at the time the Student Travel Request Authorization is submitted.

11.7 Travel by Airplane

11.7.1 Student travel funded wholly by the University must comply with University Travel Policy related to the use of Contracted Travel Agencies for the purchase of airfare.

11.7.2 Student travel not funded wholly by the University is not bound to comply with the University Travel policy related to the use of Contracted Travel Agencies for the purchase of airfare.

11.8 Retention of Documentation

A copy of the approved Student Travel Request Authorization form and supporting documentation must remain on file with the organizing department in accordance with the University’s record retention policy or at least for a period of not fewer than two (2) years after completion of travel to an activity or event, whichever period is longer. If any claim, damage or injury is sustained during the travel, all supporting documentation including signed Release and Indemnification Agreements for Students and participants associated with a claim, damage or injury must be submitted to the Office of the Vice President for Business Affairs as soon as reasonably possible after the incident.