

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Viterbi School and ISI Faculty and Staff  
**From:** Linda Rock, Vice Dean for Administration  
**Date:** Business Class Travel  
**Subject:** January 9, 2017

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I am writing to relay new information to the policy since its last release in July 2016. The changes are to the other upgraded travel paragraph on page 2 of this memo.

University policy permits business class travel: a) upon approval from the appropriate Senior Vice President, b) when a medical condition requires it, or c) when coach fare is not available. The Senior Vice President may not delegate approval. All requests for business class travel require direct, **prior** written approval from the President or applicable vice-president. For academic units, this is Provost Michael Quick.

Within USC Viterbi, requests for business class travel will be considered for travel associated with university business within the following guidelines:

- International flights in excess of eight (8) hours in length
- Payment is from a non-government grant (corporate or foundation funds), gift or discretionary funds
  - Please note: USC policy states, “Under no circumstances may a government grant be used to pay for business or first class travel.” This policy refers to state and federal government grants.
  - If you are expensing from a non-government grant (corporate or foundation funds), please provide written evidence indicating that the sponsoring agency has approved business or first class travel for domestic and or international flights on this specific account (Note: a copy of this document must be on file with the University’s Office of Contracts & Grants.)
  - For travel on research contracts that meets the flight criteria, grant funds may be used to purchase the economy fare and gift/discretionary funds may be used to fund the upgrade to business class.

- In cases when the travel is for specific university business at the request of the Dean, the payment can be from unrestricted operating funds
- Approval must be requested in writing in advance of ticket purchase (including the purchase of upgrade coupons), and for each trip individually. In certain cases, particularly if a medical condition is involved, a blanket approval may be requested.
- Approval requests must be submitted with sufficient advance notice as the request will need to be submitted first to the Dean's Office, and the Dean will submit to the Provost's Office.

In the case where a department purchases upgrade coupons, the purchase of the coupons needs to be approved in advance and in writing. The use of such coupons does not need to be approved as long as the original ticket was issued in economy.

In the case where a department uses frequent flyer miles at no additional cost to USC, please ensure that the original ticket was issued in economy and that this proof is included in the reimbursement. The proof must show economy fare at the time of booking the ticket. This type of reimbursement does not require any additional approval.

All other upgraded travel (e.g. Economy Plus, Business Select, Bulkhead travel, additional leg room, priority boarding, etc.) does not require additional approval. However, please note that according to the latest OMB guidelines, we are not to pay in excess of the customary standard commercial (coach/economy) airfare on a government contract. Where other upgraded travel has an additional charge, this additional cost (price of the upgrade over basic economy fare) needs to be covered by an unrestricted or gift account and must not be charged to a sponsored project.

Requests for business class airfare and or requests for the purchase of upgrade coupons should be submitted electronically prior to travel to **Cassandra Nash**, Executive Assistant to the Dean, at [cassandra.nash@usc.edu](mailto:cassandra.nash@usc.edu), and must include dates and trip destination, purpose of the trip, estimated cost, and sources of funding proposed.

For ISI employees, requests to Cassandra should contain the email approval of Prem Natarajan, ISI Executive Director.

Once the travel has occurred, units must include a copy of the approval email and attach to the internal requisition or upload to the Kualu DVQE in order for the paperwork to be processed. *(Note: if payment is being requested from a non-government grant account, and business or first class airfare is being reimbursed, please attach a copy of the agency's approval letter to the DVQE to prevent delays in processing the reimbursement request.)*

Please contact Cassandra Nash or Leticia Cornelio if you have any questions. Thank you.