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## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** October 31, 2017  
**TO:** UAF Deans, Directors, Travelers & Travel Coordinators  
**FROM:** Julie M. Queen, Associate Vice Chancellor for Financial Services  
**RE:** UAF Travel Screening & Audit Process Updates

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In April 2016, to reduce travel reimbursement delays, UAF adopted a travel reimbursement and audit process in which documentation submitted for payment is paid promptly, without review. Ten percent of documents are then subject to post-payment audit by UAF Travel Auditors. Although we have improved processing times from three weeks to three days, our accuracy rate has declined.

In an effort to improve accuracy with the least amount of disruption to travel processes, Financial Services will both increase review in some areas and further streamline processes in other areas. Thank you to the many travelers and coordinators providing feedback to help improve travel processing efficiency and tools. The following changes will begin November 1, 2017.

### Areas for Increased Review

- **Screening for Signed TAs Prior to Payment:** Current audits find that a higher error category is incomplete or unsigned travel approval (TA) forms. Therefore, upon submission of an expense report (ER), travel documents will receive a cursory review to ensure that all required trip approvals are in place (a complete TA is attached) and the listed purpose of the trip is sufficient to clearly establish the business need. ERs that meet these criteria will be paid accordingly. A guiding document detailing the review is available online at the [UAF Travel website](#).
- **Review of International Trips & Trips Over \$3,000:** International and high dollar trips are an area with higher risk exposure. All international trips, and any trip with a total cost of \$3,000 or more, will receive a review prior to approval for payment. Contact with the traveler and travel coordinator will occur upon discovery of material concerns, otherwise adjustments will be made within the ten percent range and the reimbursement will be processed to avoid unnecessary delay.

These changes will not otherwise affect the audit process, which will continue to review and validate the final paid transactions at ten percent of monthly submissions.

### Further Process Streamlining

I recognize that many units have reverted to paper processing as the Travel & Expense Management (TEM) automated solution has become unsupported. We expect a new travel

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*Naturally Inspiring.*

system to be online by mid-2018. In the meantime, we continue to pursue other ways to streamline processes, as follows:

- **New TA Forms with Expanded Functionality:** There are domestic and international versions of the form, available as templates from within DocuSign and as PDF on the UAF Travel website.
- **Reducing Signatures for Expense Reports (ERs):** Supervisor signatures on ERs will only be required in the event that the trip cost is more than ten percent over the TA or the trip itinerary (dates/times/locations) differs substantially from the TA. Expense authority (PI) signature is required only when the payment fund on the ER differs from that of the TA.
- **Improved Audit Checklist Resource for Coordinators:** Compliance expectations from the "audit checklist" have been updated and now include a separate "best practices" section.
- **Process for Travel Paid by a 3<sup>rd</sup> Party:** A 3rd party travel reimbursement form will soon be available to help protect UA employees from tax or ethics related risks associated with travel paid from external sources. Guidance in this area will follow.
- **Empowering OFA Travel Auditors to Approve & Document Common Exceptions:** During the review process, a new internal form will be used by OFA Travel Auditors to document exceptions in alignment with UA Travel Regulations. This empowers them to evaluate individual traveler circumstances, limit returns for correction to a unit, and increases internal controls/awareness around common exceptions. This is intended to expedite the review and limit audit exposure through improved documentation.

If you have questions, feel free to contact me or Jason Theis at [jwtheis@alaska.edu](mailto:jwtheis@alaska.edu) or 474-6223.