

ST. TERESA'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), ERNAKULAM
TERSIAN TRAVEL DESK POLICY AND GUIDELINES

1. PURPOSE OF THE TRAVEL DESK

The Teresian Travel Desk aims to:

- Facilitate educational tours, excursions, and travel-related activities for students.
- Provide logistical support, safety protocols, and travel guidance for academic, cultural, or recreational trips.

2. OBJECTIVES

The specific objectives of travel desk are-

- Ensure that student tours align with academic and extracurricular objectives.
- Promote safe and well-organized travel experiences.
- Provide cost-effective and reliable travel arrangements.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Travel Desk Coordinator:** A designated faculty member responsible for managing all travel-related activities.
- **Student Representatives:** Students from each department or class to represent travel needs.
- **Faculty Supervisors:** Faculty members accompanying students to ensure compliance with academic and safety standards.

4. OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

Note on Department Tours and Field Trips

- ✓ **Departments planning to organize a tour are requested to inform the Travel Desk at least one month in advance to facilitate necessary arrangements.**
- ✓ **For curriculum-related field visits and academic field trips, departments may arrange their own travel, in consultation with the concerned authorities.**

4.1 Required Documents for Tour Approval

Students intending to go on a tour must submit the following:

1. **Three sets of documents** including:
 - Letter from the Head of Department (HOD) to the Principal requesting tour permission.

- Letter from the Principal to the Deputy Director proposing the study tour.
- Letter from the Principal to the Chief Reservation Officer requesting a student ticket concession (for train journeys).
- Letter from the Principal to the Road Transport Officer (for road journeys).
- Itinerary.
- Syllabus showing the subject of study.

4.2 Documents to be Attached for Tour Authorization

- **Letter to the Deputy Director:**
 - List of students and teachers accompanying the tour.
 - Itinerary.
 - Syllabus.
 - Certification from the Principal and HOD.
- **Letter to the Chief Reservation Officer:**
 - List of students and teachers (with age and gender).
 - T 1030 form.
 - Specimen signature of the principal.
 - ID proof of a student.

5. TRAVEL AGENT SELECTION CRITERIA

5.1 Legal and Compliance Requirements

- **Licensing and Registration:** The travel agent must be legally registered and comply with all local, state, and national regulations.
 - Require copies of registration certificates, PAN, GST number, and other statutory documents.
- **Accreditations:** Preference for agents accredited by recognized associations (e.g., IATA, TAAI).
- **Insurance:** Ensure agents provide adequate travel insurance covering emergencies, medical expenses, and cancellations.

5.2 Experience and Expertise

- Agents should have 3-5 years of experience, especially in educational tours.
- Request at least 2-3 references if it's a new travel agent.
- Preference for agents specializing in group travel and student tours.

5.3 Safety and Security

- **Safety Record:** Check the agent's safety record over the past three years.
- **Emergency Handling:** Evaluate their emergency response plan for medical issues, lost baggage, etc.
- **Background Checks:** Ensure drivers and personnel have undergone thorough background checks.

5.4 Payment Terms

- Define clear payment terms, allowing for partial payments or instalments, with final settlement post-tour completion.

5.5 Quality of Service

- Assess the quality of vendors (transport, accommodation) through the agent's network.
- Ensure the agent can tailor trips to meet academic, safety, and budgetary requirements.

5.6 Price Competitiveness

- Require transparency in pricing and obtain at least three competitive bids for comparison.
- Define clear inclusions and exclusions in the travel package.

5.7 Contractual Obligations

- Draft formal contracts detailing itineraries, payment schedules, and penalty clauses for non-compliance.

5.8 Communication and Coordination

- Assign a single point of contact (SPOC) for all communications from pre-trip planning to post-trip feedback.

5.9 Post-Trip Evaluation

- Collect feedback from students, faculty, and staff after each trip to assess service quality and ensure continuous improvement.

6. SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PROTOCOLS

- **Travel Insurance:** Ensure all participants are covered under appropriate travel insurance.
- **Safety Briefing:** Conduct a pre-departure briefing for students and faculty on safety guidelines and emergency procedures.
- **Emergency Contact:** Provide a designated 24/7 emergency contact during the trip.

7. CODE OF CONDUCT

- Students and faculty are expected to adhere to the college's code of conduct during tours.
- Any disciplinary issues will be handled by the accompanying faculty and reported to the college administration.

8. DOCUMENTATION AND FEEDBACK

- Maintain detailed records of each trip, including participants, itineraries, and budgets.
- Collect post-trip feedback to ensure quality and safety of travel arrangements.

9. COMMISSION GUIDELINES

- i. **Written Agreement** - Outline commission terms or financial incentives in a formal agreement with travel agents, ensuring clarity in the commission structure.
- ii. **Reasonable Commission Rate** - Ensure commission rates are industry-standard and do not inflate travel costs for students.
- iii. **Use of Commission**- The travel desk coordinator can channel commissions into a designated fund (e.g., student welfare or development fund). Funds may support future travel activities, scholarships, or administrative costs.
- iv. **Prohibition of Personal Gain** - No personal financial benefits should be received by staff involved in travel arrangements.
- v. **Annual Review and Auditing**- Conduct an annual financial review of commissions, ensuring transparency and appropriate fund usage.
- vi. **Communication to Students** - Clearly communicate to students that the commission structure does not impact travel costs.
- vii. **Competitive Bidding Process** - Select agents based on merit, prioritizing service quality, safety, and cost, regardless of commission offered.
- viii. **Continuous Monitoring** - Periodically review commission policies to ensure ethical practices and adjust to changing market conditions.

10. Review and Updates

The travel desk policy will be reviewed annually, with updates made to reflect changes in college policy, travel regulations, or student needs.