180 Operation and Use of University Aircraft

Approved by President

Effective Date: ____________, 2020

Sidney A. McPhee, President

Responsible Division: Academic Affairs

Responsible Office: Aerospace

Responsible Officer: Chair, Aerospace Department

I. Purpose

This policy provides specific guidelines on the use and operation of university-owned transportation aircraft. It is the intent of this policy that University (MTSU or University) that such aircraft will be used to conduct official university business in an efficient manner, available for the widest practicable use by the appropriate and designated persons.

II. General Provisions

A. University-owned aircraft may be used only to conduct official university business in accordance with the University's travel policy (see Policy 658 Travel). Personal use, including recreational use and/or commuting, is strictly prohibited.

B. University aircraft may be used only when official business cannot be conducted more economically through the use of regularly scheduled commercial aircraft. Specifically, it is appropriate to use University aircraft when the destination is not served by commercial carriers; the time required to use such a carrier interferes with other University obligations; or the number of officials and employees traveling makes the use of University aircraft cost-effective. While convenience is a consideration in selecting this mode of travel, it is not the primary factor and must be considered along with cost, the nature of the business to be conducted, and other relevant factors.

C. Travel on University aircraft is authorized for University employees or prospective employees, students or prospective students, donors or prospective donors, speakers at University events, official guests of the University, officials of the University and their spouses (including trustees) provided such persons are engaged in, or supporting, an official business function of the University. Travel is also authorized for individuals of other state agencies when such persons are engaged in official business of the State of Tennessee.
D. When a flight has been scheduled for official purposes and unassigned seats remain on the aircraft, persons other than those for whom the flight was scheduled may be accommodated on a space-available basis when their travel is deemed in the University's best interest. These include, but are not limited to, employees, persons conducting business on behalf of the University, and spouses accompanying staff on official University business. The University will determine the taxability of such flights on a case-by-case basis.

III. Scheduling Flights

A. All flights on the University aircraft are scheduled through the University pilot, also known as the pilot-in-command. Every effort will be made to accommodate all requests consistent with the most economical and efficient use of the aircraft and flight crews.

B. Procedures for requesting and obtaining approval for a flight are located at https://www.mtsu.edu/aerospace/KingAir.php.

C. As outlined in the procedures, initial requests for aircraft availability should be made by email or text to the pilot-in-command followed up with an electronic request that will be routed for approval through the Aerospace Department and the President’s Office.

D. The pilot-in-command is responsible for ensuring that a proposed passenger list containing the following information is completed for safety purposes and to document the purpose of each passenger’s trip. The proposed passenger list will be emailed to the Flight Operations Manager prior to each flight.

1. Departure/return time, date, time of arrival, and place;

2. Name of each passenger, title, department or agency charged;

3. Destination(s), including intermediate stops; and

4. Business purpose of trip for each passenger.

E. The pilot-in-command is additionally responsible for ensuring that the University aircraft is airworthy and has the required Federal Aviation Agency (FAA) operating certifications and documentation aboard the aircraft.

IV. Charges for Using University Aircraft

A. The per-mile rate for using University aircraft will be set at a level sufficient to recover the cost of maintaining and operating the plane. Rates are approved by the University President, as well as periodically reviewed and revised as needed. Information on
current rates is available at https://www.mtsu.edu/aerospace/KingAir.php. Before scheduling flights on the University’s aircraft, departments should consider the availability and cost of commercial flights and compare the cost of such service with the cost of using the University’s aircraft.

B. Aircraft users will be billed monthly by the pilot-in-command with a copy of each invoice sent to the Flight Operations Program Management Office and the Office of Business and Finance for recording in the University’s accounting system. Charges will be calculated by multiplying the actual flight miles by the approved per-mile rate for use of the plane. If persons from more than one department/agency are on the same flight, the charges will be prorated among the departments/agencies involved.

V. Operation of University Aircraft

A. University aircraft must be operated at all times in accordance with the provisions of the FAA approved flight manual and the University's flight operations procedures manual, which is in compliance with the Federal Aviation Act (as amended) and Civil Air Regulations.

B. The pilot-in-command will submit a blanket Travel Authorization form to the Aerospace Department annually approving travel and operation of the University aircraft for the year.

C. It is recommended that two (2) pilots be utilized for each scheduled passenger flight; however, it is acceptable to only have the pilot-in-command on board if he/she holds the proper credentials for flying the current aircraft without a co-pilot.

D. Under FAA regulations, the pilot of any aircraft is responsible for, and is the final authority as to, the flight operation of that aircraft. All decisions concerning the flight itself will rest solely with the pilot-in-command. The pilot, however, shall keep the Aerospace Department informed of any deviations from the approved flight sequence.

E. The pilot-in-command will complete a detailed flight manifest upon completion of each flight and submit it to the Flight Operations Manager. The flight manifest should include the following information:

1. Business reason for the flight;

2. Flight duration;

3. Date and final destination;

4. Time of departure and time of arrival;
5. Hobbs start and stop times;

6. Destination and intermediate stops of flight;

7. Length of time of each portion of flight;

8. Distance flown;

9. Names of pilots; and

10. Name of each passenger on any portion of the flight; position within University (if applicable), and reason the person is a passenger.

F. The Flight Operations Program Management Office will reconcile flight manifests with flight invoices, and information from Flight Aware, on a monthly basis. Any discrepancies will be reported to the Chair of the Aerospace Department.

VI. Charter Service

A. Sometimes it will be impossible to accommodate all requests for use of University aircraft. In such cases, if commercial flights to the desired destination are not available, and if it is essential to fly at a time when there are no commercial flights, or if it is deemed most cost effective, a charter flight may be arranged and/or leased.

B. When a charter flight is leased, the University and pilot-in-command will comply with the FAA General Technical Requirements regarding Dry Lease Agreements (dry lease agreements are for the lease of an aircraft only, and not for the lease of an aircraft and pilot), or the FAA General Technical Requirements regarding Wet Lease Agreements (when both an aircraft and pilot lease are needed).

C. When flights are scheduled, the user department will be responsible for all costs incurred. It is customary for the charter service to assess an additional wait-time charge when the layover exceeds one hour, for the cost of a co-pilot, and for the time and expenses of the crew when overnight travel is involved. (For more information on chartering planes, see the Policy 658 Travel).

VII. Donated Aircraft and Flight Services

When an aircraft and flight services are donated for official University business, employees must ensure that the plane and flight crew meet current FAA regulations, circulars, and guidance documents, as well as maintain blanket liability insurance. Such donated aircraft by the donor shall not be in exchange for any compensation. The donor must receive zero compensation from the University for the use of the donor aircraft. For purposes of FAA regulatory compliance, compensation can be anything from monetary compensation to free
tickets to games, free parking, or any other item of value.

For additional information regarding the acceptance and use of donor aircrafts, please contact the University's Office of Compliance and Enterprise Risk Management.

Forms:

Transportation Request – King Air

Travel Authorization

Revisions: none.


References: MTSU Policy 658 Travel; T.C.A. §§ 49-7-3002; 49-14-104; Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization Act of 2018; 14 CFR 110.2; 14 CFR 1.1; 14 CFR Part 135; and 14 CFR 91.501(c).