
Travel, Mileage, and other Reimbursable Expenses for College Personnel

Policy Statement:

Members of the College community are reimbursed for reasonable, approved travel expenses incurred when conducting College business. Reimbursable travel expenses include costs associated with attending meetings, conferences, conventions, seminars, workshops, field trips, athletic and other College events, as well as travel between Bergen Community College campus locations.

Reason for Policy: To establish guidelines for the reimbursement of travel-related expenses for approved College business. This policy addresses the nature and types of expenses that qualify for reimbursement, the approval and documentation requirements, the method(s) of payment, and examples of expenses that do not qualify for reimbursement by Bergen Community College (the College).

Who Should Read This Policy:

Any employee, trustee, or external persons who are authorized to travel on behalf of the College, and/or those who process and approve travel-related financial transactions.

The Policy Statement:

This policy ensures that expenses incurred for approved business travel are fairly and equitably reimbursed, that such expenses are consistently reported, recorded, and reimbursed, and that all applicable federal, state, and local policies and regulations are adhered to.

These procedures apply to all travel activities regardless of the source of funds. Travel funded by an institutional grant, or the Bergen Community College Foundation is subject to the requirements outlined in this policy. Whenever a funding agency (grant, foundation, other) mandates more restrictive provisions, the more restrictive requirements will govern funds that are expended from those sources. Travel expenses that are funded by an institutional grant must comply with allowable cost requirements of the funding agency, and these expenses must be reviewed and approved by the Office of Grants Administration.

Expenditures incurred for official College business travel are reimbursable in accordance with the travel guidelines documented in this policy. Exceptions to the travel requirements detailed in this policy must be approved by the Department Vice President, Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and/or the President.

All business travel on behalf of the College must be preapproved by the traveler's supervisor or designated executive approver. Approval for business travel is required for expenses that the College remits payment directly to the vendor or to the authorized traveler. Approval must be secured from the appropriate Executive Team member in advance using the Pre-Travel Authorization/Off Campus Participation Form whenever the estimated travel expenses exceed \$100, or the trip includes an overnight stay. Travelers are expected to use the most fiscally responsible mode of transportation where practical, and reservations should be made as early as possible to take advantage of advance purchase discounts/pricing. Air and rail travel arrangements **should** be made through the College's designated travel vendor whenever feasible. Contact the Purchasing Department for assistance as needed making travel arrangements. **Compliance with the requirements of this policy is the responsibility of the individual traveling on College business and the individual approving such travel expenses.**

If a traveler includes personal travel before, during, or after their approved business travel, reimbursement will be appropriate only for the periods during which official College business is conducted. Reimbursable expenses will correspond with a roundtrip to the designated location of the official business. Additional transportation, lodging, meals, or other travel expenses incurred for personal travel are the responsibility of the traveler and should be paid with the traveler's personal credit card or other payment method(s).

I. Authorization

All same-day or overnight travel for conferences, conventions, workshops, seminars, and other official business require prior written approval via a Pre-Travel Authorization/Off-Campus Participation Form. Students, faculty, and staff require approval from the traveler's supervisor, the cost center manager where the expenses will be charged, and the applicable Executive Team member. Travel authorization must be obtained and approved prior to departure.

Travel expenses totaling \$100 or less do not require a Pre-Travel Authorization/Off-Campus Participation Form. This exemption occurs for travel that includes only mileage, parking, tolls, and/or small expenses. The traveler's immediate supervisor must nonetheless be aware and authorize such expenses prior to the expenditures, and the supervisor must also approve the expense report (Payment Request Form) that is submitted for request reimbursement. The approval attests to the appropriateness of the travel for College purposes, that travel requirements are being adhered to, and that budget funding is available to cover the travel expenses.

II. Allowable Expenses

Reimbursable travel expenses are limited to costs that are related to conducting official business on behalf of the College. Questions or concerns about these travel guidelines, should be directed to the Purchasing Department. Examples of reimbursable travel expenses include the following:

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- Air and rail travel
- Hotel/Lodging
- Car rental (when not traveling by personal car)
- Personal car usage mileage allowance
- Tolls and parking when traveling by personal or rental car
- Taxi, Uber or other ground transportation (when not traveling by personal car)
- Per diem meal allowance
- Gratuities for meals, luggage handling, parking, car service
- Registration fees for conventions, conferences, seminars, workshops, and other approved events

Air and Rail Travel

Arrangements for air and rail travel should be made in the most economical and direct travel routes where possible. Travelers should be cautious when purchasing specially discounted airfares such as non-refundable and advance purchase fares. Specially discounted tickets, for example with air travel, are generally non-transferable, and in most cases, must be used within one year of the original travel date. Unexpected changes to travel plans may create issues and impact your ability to use the ticket(s) if not used on the dates and times originally reserved.

If a traveler opts to utilize rail transportation instead of air transportation, the traveler must request the most cost-effective available fare that is both reasonable and consistent with the purpose of the trip. If the rail fare exceeds the cost of the prevailing airfare to the same destination, then prior written approval must be obtained from the appropriate Vice President.

All air and rail travel arrangements **should** be made via the College's designated travel vendor. Using the designated travel vendor allows for direct billing to the College rather than using a corporate credit card, a personal credit card, or other personal means of payment. Travelers on College business should avoid making travel arrangements outside the designated travel vendor where possible. Travel-related expenses should not be paid for using a personal credit card where feasible. Information about the College's designated travel vendor and how to make travel arrangements through this vendor can be obtained through the Purchasing Department.

The traveler must book economy/coach airfares. Additional costs that result from upgrades are the responsibility of the traveler and will not be reimbursed by the College. Exceptions to this requirement must be approved in advance by the appropriate department head or supervisor.

Travel with Family Members or Companions

The College is not responsible for costs or incidentals involving family members or travel companions. The Traveler can book their Family members travel associated with the employee with the travel company but are responsible for paying for their portion of the trip with a personal credit card. The costs associated with family members or companions on an employee's business trip are not reimbursable by the College.

Travel Arrangements

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The Traveler (or designee) should contact the College's designated travel vendor and provide the details of their travel plans.

Within 24 hours of setting the itinerary the following MUST be done.

- The travel vendor will email the itinerary to the Traveler (or designee) and the Purchasing Department.
- The Traveler (or designee) must enter a requisition in the Colleague system, one line for the cost of the flight/rail and one line for any processing fees. The Travel Approvers (department head, Executive Team where applicable) should approve the requisition as soon as possible and the Traveler/department should notify the Purchasing Department via email. The requisition number and traveler's name should always be included in the "Subject" line.
- The Purchasing Department will create a purchase order and contact the travel vendor with the purchase order number to finalize the reservation. Once processed, the travel vendor will send a confirmation email to the Traveler (or designee), the Purchasing Department and the Accounts Payable Department. If the requisition is not created and approved within 24 hours, the traveler (or designee) will need to contact the travel vendor and rebook the flight or rail reservation.

The Traveler should direct questions, issues, and/or suggestions to the travel vendor or the Purchasing Department.

Hotel/Lodging

When a traveler attends a business meeting, conference, seminar, convention, or workshop event which requires overnight accommodations, the traveler shall be reimbursed based on a predetermined daily hotel rate. This predetermined daily rate is consistent with the Federal Government's Per Diem rate which can be found at: <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>. If the daily hotel rate is above the per diem rate, preapproval is required prior to booking at the higher rate. The total reimbursable hotel cost is therefore based on the per diem daily hotel rate per night times the number of nights. Costs to upgrade rooms to luxury and upscale categories shall not be reimbursed. If a traveler decides to lodge in a private residence with family or friends while traveling on business, no reimbursement shall be made to the traveler for lodging costs. All reimbursable hotel costs must have a payment receipt with a detailed list of line-item expenses associated with the stay.

In some instances, hotels may require payment via a credit card. Under these circumstances, this expense is paid by the traveler via a corporate card or a personal credit card, and the College reimburses the cost of the stay upon submission of a payment request with supporting documentation. However, it is the traveler's responsibility to inquire if the hotel requires or accepts a check prior to their stay. When checks are accepted by the hotel, the traveler must enquire how far in advance of the event the check must be delivered. In this case, the traveler must enter a requisition in the Colleague system before the date of the stay to have a check sent by the College to the hotel prior to the required date. Check sent in advance by the College will cover the room rate and taxes for the duration of the traveler's stay. Allowable incidental expenses will not be prepaid by the College as the traveler is responsible for payment and subsequently requesting reimbursement. If the hotel does not accept payment by College

check and the traveler is not able to use a personal credit card, the traveler should discuss this with his/her supervisor and/or Vice President.

For one-day business events at not involving air or rail travel, reimbursement for lodging shall be allowed if the event begins prior to 9:00 a.m. and is impractical for the traveler to travel to the location during the morning. Under these circumstances, reimbursement shall be allowed in accordance with the guidelines set forth in this policy.

If a scheduled trip is cancelled, it is the traveler's responsibility to cancel any air, rail, rental car and/or hotel room reservations as soon as possible to avoid late cancellation fees. Expense incurred for hotel cancellations shall not be reimbursed unless the reason for the cancellation was beyond the traveler's control. If the cancellation was due to a family or work emergency, the incident must be documented, approved by the division's Vice President, and forwarded to the Chief Financial Officer for review and approval of the cancellation expense.

Car Rental

Travelers are encouraged to use local transportation (for example, cab, Uber) where possible. Car rental, including all gasoline and insurance costs connected with the car rental is reimbursable when this is required and more cost effective than other forms of ground transportation. The cost for a car rental may not exceed the actual per-day cost of a mid-size vehicle unless four or more employees are traveling. In this instance, a full-size car may be rented. Travelers should purchase liability insurance and Collision Damage Waiver for the rental vehicle only if the travelers credit card does not provide insurance coverage. This cost will be reimbursed.

Personal Car Usage (Reimbursed Mileage)

When a personal vehicle is used for business travel, the traveler will be reimbursed at the most current mileage rate approved by the Board of Trustees (BOT) at the time the individual travels. The BOT approved rate is generally based on the rate mandated by the Internal Revenue Service. The prevailing mileage rate as approved by the BOT can be found at: <https://www.irs.gov/tax-professionals/standard-mileage-rates> , parking and toll expenses incurred by the traveler are also reimbursed. When a traveler uses his/her personal car, the cost of taxis, Ubers, rental cars, or other forms of ground transportation will not also be reimbursed for transportation to and/or from the event.

Reimbursable mileage refers to miles incurred for business purposes. The total miles must exceed the normal commuting miles from a traveler's residence to his/her work location at the College. Mileage shall be calculated from the College or traveler's home, whichever is the shorter distance to the business destination. If travel occurs on a non-workday, mileage shall be calculated from the traveler's home. Reimbursed mileage includes the cost of gas, charging stations, and wear and tear on the car, but does not include tolls or parking which are separately reimbursed.

The traveler's automobile insurance will serve as the primary insurance in case of accidents- and related expenses when personal vehicles are used for business travel. Employees on official business for the College are considered employees during the entire period of the business trip. Employees therefore maintain the benefits afforded by the College's insurance coverage, including worker's compensation,

during the period of the trip.

Tolls and Parking

The traveler is reimbursed for tolls and parking expenses incurred when traveling by personal car or rental car. However, when the business trip requires air or rail travel, the traveler is not reimbursed for tolls and parking to or from the location of the event. Parking expenses and tolls may be paid by the traveler via E-Z Pass for tolls, corporate credit card, personal credit card, cash, or other payment method. Receipts are required for all parking and toll expenses to support reimbursement.

Taxi, Uber, and Other Car Service

Taxi, Uber, or other car service charges are permitted from the College or from home to/from the airport or train station. The traveler should use the most economical means of transportation to/from the airport or train station. Hotel shuttle buses or airport/rail ground transportation to/from the hotel should be used where feasible. Taxi, Uber, or other car service should be used and will be reimbursed when more practical. For example, taxi, Uber, or other car service should be used when visiting multiple locations during a business trip. These expenses are paid by the traveler and reimbursed by the College where allowed. Receipts must be obtained to support the expenses related to these transportation methods.

Meals (Per Diem Meal Allowance)

Meals are reimbursed up to the per diem daily rate of \$80.00, including tax and gratuity. Thus, any amounts incurred each day which exceeds the per diem daily rate will not be reimbursed. If the traveler incurs less than \$80/day, the actual amount incurred will be reimbursed. If a meal(s) is included in a registration/conference fee, or if paid for by someone else, the traveler will not be reimbursed. Itemized receipts of what was ordered for each meal must be submitted. Alcohol is not allowed and thus any alcohol ordered will not be reimbursed. Meals are paid by the traveler on his/her personal credit card.

Gratuities

A maximum gratuity of up to 15% is allowed for other services where a gratuity is in order. Receipts should be provided in support of such payments. This expense is paid by the traveler and reimbursed up to the maximum percentage allowed.

Registration Fees

Registration fees for conventions, conferences, seminars, workshops, or official meetings are reimbursable. An original receipt for the registration fee or a copy of the registration form must be submitted. This expense can either be paid by the College or by the traveler. The traveler must submit a purchase requisition in the Colleague system for the College to submit payment prior to the event's start date. The Purchasing Department will then issue a purchase order to the event sponsor. Most event sponsors accept a purchase order to secure a spot at the event and will invoice the traveler/College. The Accounts Payable Department will then remit payment by check. It is the traveler's responsibility to

inquire how far in advance of the event the sponsor require payment. Event registration should be planned and made in advance, when possible, to take advantage of “early bird” discounts.

III. Meetings with External Individuals or New Employees

Meetings or other events which include meals in conjunction with the employment of new personnel or meetings with consultants, legislators, or other outside parties are reimbursable. This includes meetings and events when traveling on College business or when conducting business at the College. The following guidelines apply:

- Requests for meetings and events which include meals require authorization as defined in this policy prior to incurring the expenses.
- Reimbursement is limited to those in attendance that are part of the College business meeting or event.
- The per diem meal rate will prevail.
- Exceptions require approval of the President and/or Chief Financial Officer.
- Original detailed receipts must be provided when submitting the expense for reimbursement.

IV. Group Travel

Group travel consists of multiple individuals (i.e., faculty, staff, and/or students) traveling to a destination for a common business purpose such as training meetings, field trips, and athletic events. The individual planning the group travel is responsible for ensuring that the travel arrangements are consistent with the guidelines outlined in this policy.

Each Cost Center Manager must authorize group travel. Travelers in the group must pay for their own expenses and submit a Travel Reimbursement Request Form for reimbursement. In certain circumstances (i.e., student groups) it may not be feasible for everyone to pay their own expenses. In these cases, expenses may be grouped and paid by one individual and submitted for reimbursement. Supporting receipts are required and must be submitted with the reimbursement request.

V. Receipt/Documentation Requirements

Valid receipts/documentation must be provided in support of expenses claimed for reimbursement. Receipts/documentation should include the date of the purchase, vendor’s name, location, itemized list with corresponding unit cost, and total cost. The following should be provided:

- **Air/Rail Travel** - Itemized airline/flight or railway ticket or valid receipt that identifies the trip details including price and proof of payment.
- **Hotel** – itemized invoice/folio showing all room, taxes, and incidental expenses, and proof of payment.
- **Car rental** – rental agreement and/or receipt including proof of payment.
- **Mileage allowance when using personal car** - MapQuest or Google Maps for mileage verification to/from the business trip.
- **Tolls** - receipt showing the name of the bridge, tunnel, or turnpike; date incurred; and amount (E-Z pass statement will suffice if receipt not available)

- **Parking** – receipt showing the date, parking location, amount, and proof of payment.
- **Ground Transportation (tax, Uber, bus, shuttle)** – receipt with the date, vendor, amount, and proof of payment.
- **Meals** – receipt showing date incurred/purchased, vendor name, location, itemized list of food and beverage with corresponding unit cost, total cost, gratuity, and proof of payment. Any alcohol purchased will not be reimbursed.
- **Registration Fees** – original receipt or copy of registration form with proof of payment.
- **Activities** associated with the meeting/event – Conference tours.

VI. Required Travel Request and Reimbursement Forms

The following pre and post travel forms are required when planning business travel and when claiming expenses for reimbursement. These forms should be submitted to the Accounts Payable Department with the required information and approvals as indicated in them.

1. Pre-Travel Forms

- **Pre-Travel Authorization/Off-Campus Participation Form** – This form is used to request initial approval for the business travel which includes details of the business trip, estimated expenses to be incurred, budget coding information, and approvals. If multiple sources will fund the travel (e.g., grants, department operating budget, etc.) each budget code must be provided, and the appropriate approvals included. Contact the Purchasing Department for all forms.

2. Post-Travel Forms

- **Travel Reimbursement Request Form** – This form is used to claim reimbursement all expenses incurred by the traveler where applicable for hotel/lodging (if not paid by the College), car rental, personal car reimbursed mileage, tolls, parking, per diem meal allowance, gratuities, and registration fees (if not paid by the College). Most of these items will be paid by the traveler on his/her personal credit card. All required receipts/documentation must be submitted with this form. The traveler will not be reimbursed for any expense(s) until the required receipts/documentation is provided. Air or rail fare should not be included in this form, as such arrangements should be made through the College's preferred travel vendor which will direct bill the College. The traveler should submit this form requesting reimbursement within thirty (30) business days of the trip end date. A post travel memo explaining your trip will be required and submitted to your supervisor. Contact the Purchasing Department for all forms.

VII. Non-Reimbursable Expenses

Expenses that are **not** reimbursable by the College include, but are not limited to the following:

- Alcoholic beverages
- Laundry services – washing, dry cleaning, pressing, and other apparel cleaning services.

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- Activities - Golf, sporting events, museum visits, concerts, and other entertainment events)
- In-room or in-flight movies
- Health club facilities
- Personal gifts
- Minibar refreshments
- Parking fines or traffic tickets
- Shoeshine
- Car wash
- Spouse/relative/companion travel costs
- Ticket fare upgrades
- Excess or lost baggage charges
- Cancellation and flight change fees for non-business or non-emergency reasons

VIII. Unanticipated Business Expenses

If the traveler incurs unanticipated expenses that exceed either the approved travel request and/or the approved rates, a written justification must be attached to the Travel Reimbursement Request Form. Reimbursement for these expenses is subject to review and approval by the division's Vice President and by the Chief Financial Officer.

IX. Submission and Reimbursement of Expenses to Traveler

Travel expenses should be submitted for reimbursement within 30 days of the completion of the business travel. Allowable travel expenses not paid with College issued funds will be reimbursed to the traveler upon submission of an approved Travel Reimbursement Request Form with all required receipts to the Accounts Payable Department. Travelers can expect payment within thirty (30) business days of receipt of appropriate documentation by the Accounts Payable Department.

Related Documents/Policies:

Contact the Purchasing Department for all related forms.

Policy History: (adopted/amended)

Adopted: November 1, 2017

Amended: August 6, 2024

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