

McHenry County College

Travel and Miscellaneous Expense Reimbursement Guidelines and Procedure

Purpose and Scope

It is the purpose of this procedure to establish guidelines and processes regarding travel authorization, travel advances, reimbursable travel expenses, and travel and expense voucher report preparation and submission. This procedure applies to all administrators, faculty, and staff of McHenry County College (hereafter referred to as employees).

Employees are encouraged to attend and participate in approved meetings, seminars, and conferences to promote professional growth and development for the employee as well as provide benefit to the College.

The College is held accountable by the public, students, and state and federal governments that provide its funding. As such, all employees traveling on College business must exercise prudent and thoughtful judgment in the type and manner of expenses they incur. In all cases, reimbursement for travel and related expenses will be limited to actual expenses incurred by the employee. Employees are responsible for ensuring that their travel arrangements and expenses comply with this procedure and they follow the procedures contained herein for approval, reporting, and reimbursement of allowable expenses.

Travel Approval

Approval for travel must be obtained from the appropriate supervisor (non-unit supervisor, next level administrator, or dean/executive dean) prior to any travel arrangements being made or conference registrations being paid. If a travel advance is being requested, the travel approval must be done using the Travel and Expense Voucher form.

For business travel outside of the continental United States, employees must have prior approval from the Office of the President, or designee.

By approving travel and/or a travel advance, the authorizing supervisor is verifying that the travel and related expenses are in conformance with all Board policies and procedures and within the scope of the budget. The authorizing supervisor has the authority to deny approval of the travel if the expenditure does not conform to Board policies and procedures or is not possible within the scope of the budget.

Advances for Travel and Meeting Expenses

1. Employees may receive a cash advance of 80% of the total travel expenses (excluding any prepaid expenses such as air travel, conference registration fees, advance lodging payment, etc.) if they are estimated to exceed \$100.00.
2. Exceptions to the 80% rule are the following:

- Travel for athletic teams and student clubs or organizations where students are attending the event at the expense of the College will be advanced at 100% of estimated cost so that the coach, advisor, etc. will not have to pay student expenses.
 - Trips and tours miscellaneous expenses will be advanced at 100% of the estimated cost.
3. To obtain a travel advance the employee must complete the “Estimated Expenses” column of the Travel and Expense Voucher, include the account number to be charged, and forward to the supervisor for approval. All expense estimates are to be listed on the form; however, any prepaid expenses such as air travel, one night hotel reservation, conference registration, etc. must be deducted from the total when calculating the 80% advance. The approved advance request must be received in the Accounting Office at least 2 weeks prior to travel.
 4. Once approved, the Travel and Expense Voucher form should be forwarded to the Accounting Office and the advance check will be issued to the employee 5 business days before the stated date of travel.
 5. Upon return from travel, the “Actual Expenses” section of the Travel and Expense Voucher form must be properly completed, approved by the appropriate supervisor, and submitted to the Accounting Office within 2 weeks of the last day of travel.
 6. If unspent funds remain from the travel advance, a check in the amount of unspent funds must be attached to the completed Travel and Expense Voucher form before submission to the Accounting Office. After the Accounting Office audits the Travel and Expense Voucher, the check will be deposited into the same account the advance was charged to.
 7. If funds are due the employee, a check will be issued to the employee in a timely manner upon the Accounting Office receiving the properly completed and approved Travel and Expense Voucher form.
 8. Advances not returned, or accounted for, to the Accounting Office within 2 weeks after the last travel date will be considered delinquent. An employee with a delinquent advance will not receive any further travel advances until the delinquent advance is resolved. Continued late submission of Travel and Expense Voucher forms to account for travel advances may result in the denial of future travel advances to the employee.

General Travel Information

1. Travel should always be arranged to serve the best interests of the College. When planning travel, the most direct route and the most economical transportation should be used as well as consideration given to travel time, expense, and absence from campus.
2. Expenses are reimbursed for the actual cost paid for transportation, lodging, meals, and other reasonable expenses incurred while on travel status. Expenses are reasonable when they are ordinary and necessary to accomplish the official business purpose of a trip.
3. Original itemized receipts are required for all items listed on the Travel and Expense Voucher report. If a meal is charged on a credit card, the itemized restaurant receipt must be submitted along with the credit card receipt showing total, tax, and tip.

Receipt copies are not acceptable for reimbursement. Failure to obtain and retain receipts for expenses claimed can result in denial of reimbursement of those expenses.

4. All items must be clearly identified on both the original receipt and the Travel and Expense Voucher form as to what the expense is. "Miscellaneous" expenses will not be reimbursed.
5. No expenses of any nature including transportation, lodging, meals, or registration fees, for spouses or other persons accompanying the employee will be reimbursed.
6. Upon completion of travel, employees should complete the "Actual Expenses" columns of the Travel and Expense Voucher, attach all required receipts, and forward the completed Travel and Expense Voucher to their supervisor for approval. The supervisor then will submit the voucher to the Accounting Office. This must be done so that the approved Travel and Expense Voucher is received within 2 weeks of the last travel date.

Transportation

Air Travel

1. All efforts should be made to obtain the lowest coach or equivalent fare available. Tickets should be purchased with at least a 21 day advance booking whenever possible.
2. If using a travel agency, the original invoice must be submitted on a properly approved Payment Request for payment to the travel agency.
3. If an employee makes their own travel arrangements online or ticketless travel is used, a copy of the itinerary or a copy of the airline's confirmation email clearly showing the total cost of travel for the employee's ticket as well as showing the balance paid in full will suffice as documentation.

Personal Auto

1. Travel by personal automobile is an allowable expense when deemed the most economical and reasonable mode of travel under the circumstances. However, in no case will the reimbursement for mileage exceed the total cost of an advance purchase round-trip coach or equivalent airfare to and from the nearest commercial airport serving the destination. The employee is responsible for determining the cost of an advance purchase airline ticket at the time the travel is approved. If no documentation of an advance purchase airfare is provided by the employee, the mileage reimbursement rate will be limited to the current cost of a 21 day advance purchase airfare.
2. Employees who use their own vehicle for official College business are eligible for automobile mileage reimbursement at current IRS standard business mileage rate.
3. Tolls and parking fees are reimbursable expenses for business related travel.
4. For use of a personal vehicle for official College business during the regular workday not related to overnight travel, the following guidelines apply;
 - Daily mileage is to be recorded on the Monthly Travel Expense Reimbursement Form. It is preferable that mileage reimbursement requests be submitted monthly.

- Mileage will be reimbursed at the current Internal Revenue Service standard rate.
- Mileage is to be computed using the most direct route between locations. MapQuest or other directional software is acceptable for determining mileage.
- Mileage should be computed between the employee's main office location and the destination. If travel begins and/or ends at the employee's home the distance from home to the employee's main office location must be subtracted from the total mileage for that day (one-way or round trip, as applicable).
- Mileage expenses may be allowed between the employee's residence and the destination if College business travel originates or terminates before or after the employee's working hours, or if travel originates or terminates during a regularly scheduled day off.
- Any employee driving a personal vehicle for College business must carry, at a minimum, insurance coverage as required by the State of Illinois. In the event of an accident while traveling on College business, the employee's automobile insurance policy is responsible for coverage of any damage. The College's insurance does not extend coverage to employee's vehicles.

Car Rental

1. Car rental is allowable when other transportation is not available or when such use is considered the most reasonable and economical mode of travel. Whenever possible, employees should use rental companies which provide the lowest rates and employees should choose economy-class cars whenever possible.
2. Generally, car rental is not necessary for College business travel when lodging occurs at a conference or seminar site and transportation to the site is available by taxi, shuttle bus, etc.
3. If business travel is extended to include personal time at the location and a car is rented, reimbursement is only available for the dates of the business related travel.

Other (Train, Limo, Taxi, Shuttle Van, etc.)

1. As with all other expenses, a receipt or ticket is required for reimbursement of train, limo, taxi and shuttle van expenses. Generally, taxi and other transportation expenses will not be reimbursed if a car is rented at the business travel site.
2. Parking and toll expenses will be reimbursed only with required receipts. The only exception to this is tolls in the State of Illinois when the employee utilizes I-Pass. In this case, the employee should note "I-Pass" on the Travel and Expense Voucher Form in lieu of attaching receipts.
3. Every effort should be made to coordinate travel plans to and from the airport in the most economical fashion (i.e. bus, sharing rides, etc.). A private car service should be the last resort for transportation to the airport.

Lodging

1. An original receipt must accompany all requests for reimbursement of lodging expenses, including applicable taxes.
2. Items other than room charges, e.g. phone, meals, etc., must be listed separately on travel expense report and not shown as part of the cost of room.
3. Additional nights of lodging expense beyond what is reasonably necessary for the business travel are the responsibility of the employee and will not be reimbursed.
4. Reimbursement is restricted to the lowest single occupancy room rate available. If a more expensive room is used due to personal preference or travel companions with the employee, the difference between the lowest available rate and the rate paid will not be reimbursed.

Meals

1. The College will reimburse the reasonable and actual cost of meals, including applicable taxes and gratuity at a maximum of 20%, while on business.
2. Original itemized receipts are required for all meal reimbursement expenses. If a meal expense is charged to a credit card or to the hotel room, the itemized meal receipt is required along with the charge receipt.
3. Total daily reimbursement for meal expenses (including taxes and gratuity) will be limited to the maximum applicable meal and incidental expense (M&IE) rate as approved by the Internal Revenue Service. The current approved M&IE rates can be found by going to www.gsa.gov and clicking on Per Diem Rates (in the Travel Resources area).
4. The employee is responsible for ensuring that the meal expense reimbursement claimed does not exceed the M&IE rate for the location that the expenses were incurred in. The Accounting Office will also review the expenses to ensure the rate is not exceeded.
5. When purchasing a meal for more than one MCC employee while traveling, the employee purchasing the meal must document on the receipt the names of all persons in order to be reimbursed for the full cost of the meal. In this case, reimbursement is not limited to the M&IE rate however, the applicable M&IE rate will be compared to the number of attendees and the cost of the meal to ensure reasonableness of the total meal expense.
6. Alcoholic beverages are not reimbursable under any circumstance and the employee is responsible for deducting these items from the bill along with the applicable taxes and gratuity.

Other Expenses

1. All business calls, fax charges, internet access fees incurred for business purposes while traveling will be reimbursed.
2. Personal calls home of a reasonable length considering the duration of time spent away from home will be reimbursed.
3. Since direct long distance calls from a hotel room can be extremely expensive, travelers are encouraged to use calling cards or personal cellular phones to reduce long distance calling costs submitted for reimbursement.

Non-Reimbursable Expenses

The following is a non-exhaustive list of non-reimbursable travel expenses. This list is not considered all-inclusive and authorizing supervisors as well as the Accounting Office may deem an expense to be non-reimbursable.

- Barber/beautician
- Companion expenses (including taxes and tips for meals)
- Damages to employees' cars
- Entertainment, movie rentals, incidentals (including in-room movies)
- Expenses for social or entertainment meetings between College employees
- Excessive costs (e.g. very expensive restaurants or exclusive hotels) not warranted by the circumstances. Expenditures for meals/lodging must not be lavish or extravagant (e.g. reasonable person standard)
- Gifts
- Interest charges on credit cards
- Laundry and valet charges
- Living expenses applicable to days by which the duration of a trip is extended for personal reasons
- Loss of personal funds or cash advances
- Loss of personal property
- Maintenance or repair of personal property
- Misuse of lost credit cards
- Parking tickets or other traffic fines
- Cancellation charges, flight changes, etc. due to personal reasons
- Purchase of clothing or toiletries
- Travel insurance
- Valet parking (unless no other parking options are available)
- Fitness Centers/Health Clubs

Travel and Expense Voucher Completion

1. The form must clearly indicate the dates of the official business and the location.
2. All expenses are to be itemized by day and not aggregated and reported in a lump sum.
3. All taxes and gratuity associated with meals are to be reported as a part of the meal expense.
4. All reported expenses require an original itemized receipt which must be attached to the form when submitted for approval.
5. The employee is responsible for ensuring that only expenses within the parameters of this procedure are submitted for reimbursement.
6. After filling in all actual expenses the form must be totaled across each row and down each column prior to submission to the Accounting Office.
7. If a travel advance was taken and funds remain, it is the employee's responsibility to deposit those funds to the account charged through an enrollment processor in the registration office and attach a copy of that deposit receipt to the expense report.

8. After completion of the form and attaching all receipts, the employee will forward the form to the appropriate supervisor for approval of the expenses incurred.
9. By approving the actual travel expenses reported on the form, the authorizing supervisor is verifying that they have reviewed the expenses and that the expenses are in conformance with this procedure.
10. The approving supervisor will then forward the form to the Accounting Office and a check will be issued in a timely manner if funds are due to the employee.
11. The Accounting Office will audit all Travel and Expense Voucher Reports for conformance with this procedure. The Accounting Office will also verify and correct addition and extension accuracy, as necessary, and will deny payment for expenses which are not in conformance with policies and procedures. Denied expenses will be communicated through the authorizing supervisor.

Daily or Miscellaneous Business Expenses

The intent of this section of the procedure is to address reimbursement of business expenses that may be incurred on a single day and not part of multi-day travel and miscellaneous business expenses. An example of a daily business expense would be the costs incurred for a single day meeting at another institution or downtown Chicago. An example of a miscellaneous business expense would be the purchase of a book, video/DVD, or other minor miscellaneous supply for your department

1. If the reimbursement is less than \$25.00 and is a miscellaneous business expense, reimbursement can be made via Petty Cash in the Accounting Office by attaching the original receipt to an approved Petty Cash ticket.
2. If the expense is a single day business expense, it should be recorded and reported on the Monthly Travel Expense Reimbursement form and not the Travel and Expense Voucher.
3. See the "Personal Auto" section above for details about reimbursement of business mileage driven in an employee's personal automobile.
4. All items claimed for reimbursement require an original receipt be attached to the Monthly Travel Expense Reimbursement form and/or Petty Cash ticket.
5. Train, bus, taxi, etc. fares are reimbursable provided that an original receipt is attached.
6. Meal expenses for individual employees are not reimbursable for daily business travel unless such travel requires the employee to travel significantly before or after regular business hours.
7. Meal expenses as part of a business meeting may be reimbursable under the following conditions;
 - The names and affiliations of all persons attending must be documented. Additionally, the general topics discussed at the business meeting must be documented.
 - Meetings consisting entirely of MCC employees are generally not reimbursable (i.e. "thank you" lunches, department meetings, annual performance evaluations, etc.) without prior documented authorization from the appropriate Executive Council member.

Exceptions

As a general rule, there will be no exceptions made to any portion of this procedure. If an employee believes that an exception is warranted the employee must submit, in writing, to the President, or designee, the request for exception and fully describe the reason for requesting the exception. Any exception to the procedure must be approved by the President, or designee, prior to reimbursement.

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