TRAVELER'S GUIDE

(Adapted from the New York State Office of the State Comptroller Travel Guide)
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Introduction

The purpose of this Traveler's Guide is to help College of Staten Island employees understand travel rules and regulations and to provide instructions on how to be reimbursed for their expenses. Every reimbursement issue cannot be covered, so this guide will address general travel circumstances. Specific or unique circumstances should be directed to Dina MacLeod, Accounts Payable Office, at 718-982-2483 or at macleod@mail.csi.cuny.edu

As an employee traveling on business for the College, you are performing a valuable service. At the same time, it is your responsibility to spend this travel money as efficiently and economically as possible. The basic rule to remember is that only actual, necessary and reasonable business expenses will be reimbursed. Anyone who is to be reimbursed for travel related expenses must have their travel plans authorized in advance by their department head and vice president or dean. (See Authorization for Out-of-Town Travel Form attached). Vice presidents must have their travel authorized by the President.

As a senior college of The City University of New York the college’s budget is subsidized by the State of New York. Therefore, travel reimbursements for employees of the College are made in accordance with the State of New York travel guidelines.

You must keep receipts of all expenses incurred while traveling. A complete accounting of your trip should be made as soon as you return. Please complete the appropriate New York State Travel Voucher (Form AC 132). A copy of this form is attached for your convenience. Additional forms can be obtained through the Accounts Payable Office. Instructions for completing the Travel Voucher are attached. All receipts and additional schedules should accompany the form and must be signed by the department head and vice president or dean.

When making travel arrangements, you should check to see that you will not exceed the lodging and meal allowances for the locality you are traveling to. A list of these rates by locality can be accessed on the Internet at:

http://www.gsa.gov/Portal/gsa/ep/contentView.do?contentId=17943&contentType=GSA_BASIC

Amounts in excess of the allowances will **not** be reimbursed (see: “Conferences, Seminars, Conventions, Training” section for exceptions). More information may be obtained by contacting the Accounts Payable Office.
**Travel Status**
When you are on assignment at a work location more than 35 miles from both your home and your official station you are considered to be in a travel status. This determines that you are eligible for reimbursement of travel expenses such as meals and lodging.

When travel is to a work location within 35 miles of your residence or official station, you are not considered to be in travel status and **not** covered by the travel reimbursement policy.

**Official Station**
Your Official Station is your usual work location. This is the office or location you report to on a daily basis. The purpose of an official station is to establish when you are in travel status and eligible for travel expenses. Travel between your home and official station is considered commuting and is not reimbursable.

**Transportation Expenses**
When choosing the method of transportation you should consider several factors, such as distance traveled, time to travel this distance, number of travelers, numbers of locations to be visited, and what type of transportation may be available. Advance purchase, red-eye, coach and excursion fares should be used whenever possible. It may be permissible to extend your trip into a Saturday if the savings afforded the College by departing on a Saturday are offset by the per diem cost of your combined meals and lodging.

**Common Carrier**
A common carrier (train, bus, and/or plane) usually results in the most economical method of transportation. This is true especially for bus or train travel between New York City and Albany. The most economical method should be used unless there are circumstances that would make this unreasonable. If you choose to travel by a more expensive method when a common carrier was available, the College may only reimburse you the common carrier rate. The original boarding pass or train ticket must be submitted with the reimbursement along with proof of actual charges paid.

**College of Staten Island Car**
If a College car has been made available for your use, you will be reimbursed for gasoline and any other necessary or emergency expenses.

**Personal Car**
When using your own car for College business, you will be reimbursed a specified rate for mileage. As of January 1, 2009, the mileage reimbursement rate set forth by the Office of General Services is 55 cents per mile. This rate includes all charges for gas, oil, maintenance, repairs and insurance on your car. No other charges will be reimbursed. A completed “Statement of Automobile Travel” (Form AC 160) must accompany your
voucher for all mileage reimbursements. A copy of this form is attached for your convenience. Additional forms can be obtained through the Accounts Payable Office.

**Rental Car**

If a rental car is used for official business, you should rent the vehicle in the name of the State of New York and sign the agreement as agent for the State. When renting a vehicle in New York State, Loss Damage Waiver Insurance (LDW) is not necessary. New York State Statute provides this coverage at no charge, with a deductible of $100. Should you choose to purchase LDW in New York State; the cost will **not** be reimbursed. When renting a vehicle out of State, LDW should be purchased. No other insurance will be reimbursed. Gasoline and any other direct costs of the rental will be reimbursed. Justification for a car rental is required.

**Note:** Rental car usage is **not** reimbursable when the Conference or Seminar is in the hotel where the traveler is staying.

**Parking and Toll charges**

All reasonable and necessary parking and toll charges will be reimbursed. Tolls that you have paid by the E-ZPass method will be reimbursed. Please obtain receipts whenever possible or submit a highlighted copy of your E-ZPass statement as evidence of toll payments.

**Taxi Charges**

Reasonable and necessary taxi fares will be reimbursed, along with a reasonable customary tip. Indicate on the receipt the amount of the tip and the grand total of the fare.

**Receipts for Expenses Paid**

**Original** itemized receipts and invoices must be attached to travel reimbursement requests. Under no circumstances are photocopies acceptable. In instances where canceled checks are used as receipts, the original canceled checks or check images must be attached. **Credit card statements and/or credit card transaction receipts alone are not sufficient receipts as they do not include an itemized description of the purchase.** It is only sufficient backup to substantiate that the traveler has paid for a particular itemized receipt or invoice.

**Reimbursement for Meals and Lodging**

Reimbursements of actual lodging costs are allowed up to a specific amount, plus an allowance for meals. Travelers will be reimbursed for breakfast and dinner only; expenses relating to lunch will **not** be reimbursed. Tips and incidental expenses are included in the reimbursement amounts. Per Diem rates for meals apply by locality. Receipts are required for lodging and must be submitted with your voucher. **No sales taxes on lodging should be paid within New York State. Travelers are required to present an “Exemption Certificate” (NYS Department of Taxation and Finance**
Form ST-129, Tax on Occupancy of Hotel Rooms) at the time of your check-in. Occupancy taxes are not considered a sales tax. Please contact Sandi LeBow in the Purchasing Office at 718-982-2163 for a tax-exempt certificate.

The State of New York allows travelers to use the rates established by the Federal government. Per diem meal and lodging rates are established by city, so the city you are traveling to must be indicated on your travel voucher. For out-of-state travel, local and state taxes will be reimbursed. A list of per diem rates by locality can be accessed at the State’s travel website at:


Amounts in excess of the per diem rates will not be reimbursed through tax levy funds. More information may be obtained by contacting the Accounts Payable Office.

**Time Requirements for Meal Allowances**

The normal per diem allowance is for dinner the first day, lodging, and breakfast on the following day of travel. You may be eligible for reimbursement of breakfast on the day of departure or dinner on the day of return, if you meet the following time requirements:

**Breakfast**

You are allowed reimbursement for breakfast if you have to leave at least one hour before your normal work starting time. For example, if your regular work hours are 9 A.M. to 5 P.M. you would be entitled to breakfast on the day the trip starts if you have to leave before 8 A.M.

**Dinner**

You are allowed reimbursement for dinner on the day the trip ends if you return at least two hours later than your normal work ending time. For example, if your regular work hours are 9 A.M. to 5 P.M. you would be entitled to dinner reimbursement on the day your trip ends if you return after 7 P.M.

**Receipted Meal Allowances**

Breakfast and dinner only (lunch is not included) are reimbursable (with receipts only) in accordance with the per diem meal allowance set by New York State on the travel website above. The allowance is set based on the area of travel and is allocated between breakfast (20%) and dinner (80%).

**Unreceipted Meal Allowance**

The unreceipted meal allowance is $5.00 for breakfast and $12.00 for dinner.
Weekend Allowance

You are allowed lodging and meals for weekends when it is necessary for you to be in a travel status. The College may authorize reimbursement for expenses to return home, limited to the amount that you would have been paid if you had stayed at your travel destination. An explanation must accompany your travel voucher.

Conferences, Seminars, Conventions, Training

All conferences, seminars or training programs sponsored by the State or The University of New York should be within established per diem rates. You must be in a “Travel Status” (see section on Page 2) in order to be reimbursed for Meals, Lodging and Travel expenses. Payments for expenses above the per diem limits must be obtained from other sources. A commitment in writing must be obtained in advance from the funding source and submitted with your purchase requisition to the Purchasing Department.

No department or individual may obligate the College in any agreement between the College and a conference center for the use of their facility. The College’s Purchasing Office is solely authorized to sign any agreement or document that creates an obligation between the College and a conference center for use of their facility. The College of Staten Island Purchasing Office will obtain the approval of the University’s Office of General Counsel prior to signing any agreement.

When attending a conference that is not sponsored by New York State or The City University of New York, the lodging and meal amounts may exceed the normal per diem amounts if the attendee stays at the hotel hosting the conference or at other participating hotels. The conference registration form and/or conference brochure showing the name of the hotel must be submitted with your travel voucher.

If meals are included in the conference fee, the meal allowance must be reduced on your voucher. Fees for social activities such as sightseeing tours or golf outings are considered personal expenses and will not be reimbursed.

Many conferences supply transportation between the conference site and the transportation terminal. Otherwise, low cost shuttle services or taxi service should be used. Car rentals must be justified and used for official business only.

Miscellaneous Expenses

Telephone Calls

Reasonable business related calls will be reimbursed. The business purposes should be indicated on your voucher.

Baggage Transfer Expenses

Baggage transfer and storage expenses will be allowed only if they are reasonable and necessary.
**Personal Expenses**

Laundry charges, in-room movies, valet service, theater and sporting event tickets, and other entertainment expenses are considered personal expenses and are not reimbursable. Expenses for supplies and materials will be reimbursed when they are for business purposes.

**International Travel**

For special instructions regarding international travel, please contact the Accounts Payable Office.

**Fraudulent Claims - Section 175.35 Penal Law**

Offering a false instrument for filing is a Class “E” felony. Employees, including supervisors, who knowingly misrepresent the facts concerning travel for official business or who file or sign any travel form which contains deliberate false statements given with intent to defraud the State may be subject both to administrative and/or disciplinary action, including the possibility of termination and criminal action.

**Attachments:**

- New York State Travel Voucher (AC 132)
- Travel Voucher Instructions
- Travel Voucher Detail Sheet (AC 148) for more than one local trip
- Statement of Automobile Travel (AC 160)
- Authorization for Out-of Town- Travel Form