TRAVEL EXPENSES AND REIMBURSEMENTS

I. PURPOSE
Provides procedures for reimbursement of authorized travel expenses (other than travel to the TCCTA convention) and accounting for travel advancements.

II. BACKGROUND
A. The specific procedures outlined below are based on minimum administrative requirements. Travel procedures are designed to provide the greatest possible flexibility within these requirements, relying on the discretion of travelers and their supervisors in the stewardship of college funds.

B. The federal government frequently supplies regulations for the use of travel funds through grants and contracts. The terms of the particular grant or contract should be consulted for guidance by anyone contemplating travel under grant or contract.

III. DEFINITIONS
A. Professional travel is defined as travel necessitating an absence from normal assigned or contractual duties (such as travel to attend a professional conference or seminar). Prior to engaging such travel, employees must secure written authorization for the absence from regular duties via the "Request for Approval of Professional Leave" form. Travel undertaken as part of an employee's regular or assigned or contractual duties (such as travel to/from WCJC campuses for instruction, registration, test administration, applicant interviews) does not constitute an absence from normal duties and therefore does not require that the employee file a "Request for Approval of Professional Leave" form.

B. Local travel is defined as travel (1) that does not require the traveler to be away overnight and/or (2) that occurs within a hundred-mile radius of the campus at which the traveler's assigned office is located. Such travel, which is governed by Regulation 484 (Travel Locally by Staff), does not require submission of a "Request for Approval of Professional Leave" form; but travel beyond this radius or overnight travel does require a request form for each trip.

IV. POLICY
A. All professional employees as a part of their continued professional growth are encouraged to participate in professional meetings and workshops in their respective disciplines.

B. Travel to professional meetings and workshops for which employees plan to be reimbursed by the college must be approved beforehand by all the individual's supervisors through the appropriate dean/vice-president (in the case of credit faculty, supervisors include the department chair, the division chair, and the Dean of Vocational Instruction or the Vice President of Instruction) on the form labeled "Request for Approval of Professional Leave" (copy available on the intranet under forms).

C. Normally, the college will reimburse employees for the following approved professional travel expenses: transportation, lodging, registration fees, and other specified incidental expenses. Meals will be reimbursed on a per diem basis.
D. To be reimbursed, the employee must complete a form entitled "Travel Expense Statement" (copy available on the intranet under forms) and must file the completed form in the Business Office within thirty calendar days after returning from the trip.

E. The college will reimburse the employee within two weeks after the Business Office receives the properly completed forms.

(POLICY APPROVAL: 5-17-95, Board of Trustees; revised 4-16-97, amended 10-18-11)

V. PROCEDURES

A. Before an employee schedules any professional travel (as defined in section III), he/she secures approval by completing and filing the "Request for Approval of Professional Leave" form.

B. When an employee has completed a college-authorized trip (other than one traveling to other WCJC campuses for instruction, registration, test administration, interviews, etc., which is covered in Regulation 484), a copy of the travel reimbursement form must be completed within thirty calendar days after return.

C. Travel Expense Statement

1. The employee must complete every item on the top portion of the form including the fourteen-digit account number to be charged.

2. All reimbursable expenses are entered on the appropriate lines.

3. Other expenses associated with normal travel that may be reimbursed (item 7) include the following:
   a. Telephone calls and Internet service, including those necessary to obtain transportation and hotel reservations, but not personal calls. Receipts and/or supporting documents are required.
   b. Expenses associated with baggage handling and storage, including gratuities.

4. Total Expenses. All expenses are totaled and entered on this line.

5. Less Cash Advanced. Enter on this line the amount received from the college prior to the trip.

6. Total Reimbursement to Claimant. If the amount of the "Cash Advance" line is greater than the "Total Expenses" line, the difference is entered on the "Total Reimbursement to Claimant" line in parentheses. This amount is owed by the employee to the college and must accompany the form when it is sent to the Business Office.

If the amount on the "Less Cash Advance" line is less than the "Total Expense" line, the difference is the amount due the employee from the college. After the travel form has been properly completed and forwarded to the Business Office, the employee receives the due amount within two weeks after the Business Office receives the properly completed Travel Expense Statement.

D. As is true for all claimed expenses, expenditures for hotel and air/train/bus carrier expenses must be supported by receipts or proof of payment. An adequate receipt or proof of payment is one that substantiates the expense and includes these elements:
1. conforms to laws, rules, and regulations relating to travel reimbursements and institutional activities;

2. is within the travel dates as stated on the travel expense statement;

3. is for the traveler;

4. is an official receipt of the organization/vendor/provider of the goods and services as denoted by an invoice or receipt from the company;

5. is for a reimbursable expense.

E. Travel expenses not reimbursable include the following:

1. Cost incurred by unreasonable failure to cancel transportation or hotel reservations.

2. Fines for automobile violations or personal misconduct.

3. Lost or stolen tickets, cash, or property.

F. Unused air, rail, or bus tickets purchased through the college are returned to the authorizing office at the completion of the trip so that proper credit may be obtained.

G. Completed and signed travel and reimbursement forms must be received by the Business Office by the Friday of the first full week in September for any expenses claimed in August of the previous fiscal year. If the Business Office does not receive the required paperwork by this deadline, travel claims cannot be honored.

VI. GUIDELINES

A. Normal Travel

Air, rail, and bus travel is reimbursed on the basis of actual cost. All reimbursements are based on coach fare only.

B. Private Automobiles

When travel by private automobile, travel is at the approved mileage rate. This mileage allowance covers all transportation and operating costs. No reimbursement is made for the cost of repairs to the vehicle, whether they result from the traveler's acts or acts of others. Toll road and parking charges are allowed in addition to the mileage allowance if receipts are obtained for such charges.

Mileage for automobile travel is reimbursed at the current IRS-approved rate. When the IRS changes its rate, the college adjusts its reimbursement rate to accord with the IRS allowance. If the IRS rate increases during the college's fiscal year, the college rate changes with the beginning of its next fiscal year. If the IRS rate decreases, the college rate changes on the effective date.

C. Automobile Rental

Supervisors may authorize the use of rental cars where other transportation is not available or when such use results in a cost saving. Justification must be supplied in writing prior to rental. Travelers using rental cars purchase full-coverage collision insurance protection and are reimbursed for this additional expense.

D. Private Airplane
The use of privately owned and operated aircraft on college business is subject to specific approval of the President for such use. Reimbursement for such travel is at the rate paid per road mile between the departure and destination points; this figure includes all costs and fees of any nature whatsoever associated with the use of the aircraft. No traveler using private aircraft may purport to be an agent of the college in entering into agreements with airports and other authorities. No privately owned aircraft may be used on college business without filing proof of insurance (meeting or exceeding college coverage) with the Vice-President of Administrative Services and obtaining his/her written permission for use of the aircraft.

E. Other Transportation

Shuttle service to and from airports or bus and railroad stations, plus reasonable gratuities, is reimbursed to the extent that such service is not included in bus, rail, or air fares. Taxi fares, including gratuities, are reimbursed where shuttle service is not practical. This includes taxis between hotels and bus/railroad stations or airports, between appointments, or between hotels and temporary place of duty.

F. Lodging and Food

Travelers should use standard accommodations in first-class, but not luxury, hotels or motels. An exception to this rule is made when the traveler is attending a meeting that is being held in a luxury hotel. In this case, it is proper to stay at that hotel. The traveler is reimbursed for the actual reasonable expense of lodging, and supporting receipts should be obtained and submitted.

The college reimburses travelers for meals at a per diem rate of $40 per day per individual. If reimbursement for meals is being requested for someone other than the traveler, a separate explanation must be provided stating the business purpose of the meal(s), the name(s) of the other person(s), and their title(s) or capacity. If an itemized credit-card receipt is the documentation for meal reimbursement, the business purpose of the meal(s) must be stated, along with the name and the title(s) or capacity of the person(s), even if just the traveler. Any exception to the $40 total reimbursement must be by written authorization of the supervising vice-president; and this authorization must accompany the reimbursement request.

Regardless of distance, the college reimburses for meals (a) if college business requires the employee to be away overnight or (b) college business requires the employee to dine out with a guest of the college, in which case the college reimburses the employee for both the guest's meal and the employee's meal or (c) the employee attends an off-campus professional meeting that includes a meal or (d) the employee as part of his or her college duties is accompanying a student group to an official meeting, conference, competition, or approved field trip. Other allowances for meal reimbursement may be made on a case-by-case basis, whether the employee is away overnight and regardless of distance traveled, provided the employee secures approval for meal reimbursement in advance of the trip.

G. Travel Advances

Advances for travel are only provided for faculty and staff traveling with student groups. A Check Request form (copy available on the intranet under forms) must be completed for such advances, with a copy of the form entitled Advance for Student Travel. In the "Explanation of Expense(s)" box on the Check Request form, insert "See attached Request for Advance for Student Travel" to serve as the explanation. (After completion of each such trip, the employee submits a completed "Accounting for Advance for Student Travel," along with any other travel-reporting documents.)

1. Travel advances for the same purpose and time must be a consistent and uniform allotted amount (that is, the same amount for each student). If justification exists for variation (for example, a student is participating for a half-day only and therefore
receives one-half of the allowance given to other students), a notation explaining the
difference must accompany the request for advance and the travel expense statement
accounting for the advance.

2. Travel advances must be accounted for within 30 days of the last trip for which the
advance was requested.

3. If one advance is taken, an accounting must be submitted and approved before
another advance can be given.

4. Travel advances taken in one fiscal year must be accounted for before the end of that
same fiscal year.

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