


# MERCY COLLEGE

<b>Policy Name:</b>	Travel and Expense Policy	<b>Policy Number:</b>	2016-1
<b>Associated Form(s):</b>	1) Travel Pre-Approval Form 2) Missing Receipt Form 3) Employee Travel and Meal Reimbursement Form	<b>Book:</b>	Finance Manual
<b>Reviewed:</b>	Non-Academic Policy Review Council	<b>Approved:</b>	12/12/2016
<b>Approval Authority:</b>	President 	<b>Adopted:</b>	<i>12/23/16</i>
<b>Responsible Executive:</b>	Chief Financial & Planning Officer	<b>Revised:</b>	Travel and Expense Policy (3/8/2016)
<b>Responsible Office:</b>	Controller's Office	<b>Contact:</b>	Controller

## 1. General

The College's Travel and Expense Policy (hereinafter this "Policy") has been developed to provide employees on official College business with guidelines for cost-effective travel and ease/efficiency of recording travel expenses. "Travel Expenses" are the ordinary and necessary costs of traveling away from your home base on behalf of the College, which may require overnight stay.

### a. Expenses Covered and Documentation Required Under this Policy

The general rule for the reimbursement of travel expenses (consistent with IRS rules) is that it be actual, reasonable and necessary. The College is under an "Accountable Plan" and as such, the College requires that employees provide appropriate substantiation for all expenses (including tolls, mileage and train fares, etc.) regardless of amount, including but not limited to original itemized receipts and proof of payment. In addition, each expense must have a direct business connection and therefore the business purpose and benefit to the College must be clearly documented for each expense. Expenses not supported by original documentation or for which a business purpose and benefit to the College has not been identified, will not be reimbursed. The College will not reimburse for any personal expenses, without any exceptions.

### b. Reimbursements

Expense reimbursements are to be submitted within thirty (30) days of travel, sooner if practical, but under no circumstance after sixty (60) days. Expenses submitted untimely are subject to disallowance and taxability. Expense reimbursements or corporate card reconciliations exceeding \$3,000 must be approved by a Staff Officer in addition to the normal required approval processes.

### c. Required Approvals

All approvals related to this Policy are to be applied by a level of management above the requesting employee. All domestic and international trips (e.g. conferences, conventions, staff training, workshops, seminars, meetings, etc.) require prior written approval from a level of management above the requesting employee via the "Travel Pre-Approval Form": <https://www.mercy.edu/about-mercy/sites/www.mercy.edu.about-mercy/files/travelpreapprovalform.pdf>. All expense reimbursements must be approved by the employee's supervisor or manager having first-hand knowledge of the department's activities and employee's responsibilities and who is more senior than the employee.

It is the employee's responsibility to ensure that the travel, meal and entertainment expenses are in accordance with this Policy and to exercise reasonable fiduciary responsibility. Since the employee's direct supervisor has first-hand knowledge of the department's activities and the employee's role, in addition to ensuring that the employee correctly followed College policy, it is also his/her responsibility to ensure that the travel was a budgeted and authorized activity in line with the department's mission and priorities. In reviewing the travel, meal and entertainment request, the Accounts Payable Department of the Finance Office will confirm that the expenses incurred are in compliance with College policy, are reasonable and appropriately substantiated. All travel, meal and entertainment expense reimbursements must be approved by a level of

management more senior than the employee. The expenses of all staff officers are to be approved by the President or his/her designee. The President's expenses are to be reviewed monthly and summarized quarterly by the Vice President and Chief Financial & Planning Officer with a report submitted to the Chair of the Board of Trustees of the College.

d. Missing Receipt(s)

There may be a rare case when an original receipt cannot be obtained or is destroyed. For these rare cases, the College has developed the "Missing Receipt Form": <https://www.mercy.edu/about-mercy/sites/www.mercy.edu/about-mercy/files/missingreceiptform.pdf>. This form must be completed in those cases where a receipt cannot be reasonably obtained or is destroyed and reimbursement is being sought. Please note that the form requires that the employee complete an attestation statement that must be endorsed by the appropriate Staff Officer of the College (and dean in the case of a school). The "Missing Receipt Form" is not a substitute for itemized receipts (i.e. meal receipts). Please note that completion of this form does not guarantee reimbursement and such will be at the discretion of the Vice President and Chief Financial & Planning Officer or her/his designee. Excessive submission of missing receipt forms will result in disallowance of expenses sought for reimbursement from the College. In addition, excessive submission of the Missing Receipt Form can result in suspension or revocation of the Mercy corporate card.

For guidance on travel funded by grants (federal, state or private) please refer to section 16. Grant Funded Travel below.

2. Air Travel

All travel should be by the most direct, economical, and usually traveled route. Travelers should make reservations early enough to take advantage of advance purchase discounts. The traveler must request the least expensive air fare available that is both reasonable and consistent with the purpose of the trip. Travel within the United States mainland is to be economy/coach class. Business class travel is strongly discouraged, but may be allowed for international and non-US mainland destinations exceeding six (6) hours if approved by a Staff Officer of the College. Email approval will be acceptable. The ticket and boarding pass must be attached as part of the supporting documentation. Additional charges for seat and other upgrades will not be reimbursed.

Travelers should be cautious when purchasing discounted airfares, such as non-refundable and advance-purchase fares since the airline tickets are usually non-transferable and in most cases must be used within one year from date of flight. These tickets may become a problem if not used on the dates and times originally reserved. If a trip is cancelled for reasons beyond the traveler's control, reimbursement shall be made to the traveler for the airfare. However, the airline ticket must be forwarded to the Accounts Payable Office with the reimbursement request prior to receiving reimbursement. Any expenses for changes in flight schedules to a traveler's ticket shall not be reimbursed unless the reason for the change is beyond the traveler's control. Any expenses related to changes in travel plans caused by family or work emergencies must be documented, endorsed by the appropriate Staff Officer of the College (and dean in the case of a school) and submitted with the reimbursement request for approval by the Vice President and Chief Financial & Planning Officer or his/her designee.

### 3. Lodging

When traveling on College business, employees should inquire about educational discounts and use the lodging rates published by the U.S. Department of State for foreign travel and U.S. General Services Administration for domestic travel as the ceiling. These rates are normally established in October of each year and may be found at: [http://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content\\_id=185&menu\\_id=78](http://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=185&menu_id=78). The domestic rates are also known as "CONUS Rates." The itemized hotel folio must be attached as part of the supporting documentation to receive reimbursement. The cost to upgrade rooms to luxury and upscale categories will not be reimbursed. In addition, personal expenses (e.g. gym fees, movies, spas, etc.) are not reimbursable. For travel with a partner organization, reimbursement shall be limited to the portion not covered by the partner organization. Please provide the documentation for the partner reimbursement to ensure a complete documentation of the trip.

When an employee attends a conference and obtains overnight accommodations at the hotel where the conference is being held (or at a hotel where the conference officials arrange for accommodations), and the rates of the conference accommodations exceed those published by the U.S. Department of State, the employee may be reimbursed for the actual cost of the room if he/she obtains the endorsement of the appropriate Staff Officer (and school dean if applicable). The endorsement must be submitted with the reimbursement request for approval by the Vice President and Chief Financial & Planning Officer or his/her designee.

If a scheduled trip is cancelled, it is the traveler's responsibility to cancel the hotel room. Any expenses for hotel cancellations shall not be reimbursed unless the reason for the cancellation was beyond the traveler's control. Similar to air travel, if the cancellation was due to a family or work emergency, the incident must be documented, endorsed by a Staff Officer of the College (and school dean, if applicable) and submitted with the reimbursement request for approval by the Vice President and Chief Financial & Planning Officer or his/her designee.

### 4. Car Rental

Car rentals, including gasoline and insurance costs connected with such, are allowable when it has been determined, in advance, to be advantageous in the conduct of College business. The cost for car rental may not exceed the actual per-day cost of a mid-size car unless four or more employees are traveling. In this instance, a full-size car may be rented. See the **Mercy College Vehicle Use Policy** to ensure compliance with any other restrictions relating to car rentals. Car rentals must be approved by the employee's supervisor or more senior manager prior to the trip. The car rental agreement must accompany the reimbursement.

### 5. Rail Travel

The same regulations and procedures detailed under section 2. Air Travel, are applicable to rail travel. If a traveler prefers to utilize rail transportation instead of air transportation, the traveler must request the least expensive available fare that is both reasonable and consistent with the purpose of the trip. The original ticket and boarding pass must be attached as part of the supporting

documentation. If the rail fare exceeds the cost of the prevailing air fare to the same destination, then prior written approval must be obtained from the Staff Officer, and school dean if applicable, and submitted with the reimbursement request for approval by the Vice President and Chief Financial & Planning Officer or his/her designee.

#### 6. Taxi, Limousine, and Private Car Service

Reasonable charges for taxis, limousines and private car services are permitted from the College or from home to the airport or train station and vice versa. The traveler should contact the Purchasing Department for the lowest rates for transportation between the College and airport or train station. When practical and cost beneficial, the College encourages the usage of hotel shuttle buses for travel to and from airports, train stations and downtown/metropolitan areas. Associated tips are allowable at a rate not to exceed 18%.

The traveler may drive a personal automobile to and from the airport or train station and park there while on business. However, reimbursement shall not be made for these expenses (i.e. tolls, overnight parking fees, mileage) if the expense of driving the personal vehicle is greater than the cost of other direct round-trip transportation from the College or the traveler's residence, as applicable. The traveler is expected to use the least expensive transportation, without consuming excessive travel time. Similarly, if an employee is driven to and from the airport or train station by a relative/friend, mileage and toll reimbursement to the employee is allowed.

#### 7. Personal Car Usage

##### a. Reimbursement for off-campus business

Employees shall be reimbursed for mileage when the employee engages in day trips or work assignments and uses his/her personal vehicle. Mileage shall be calculated from the employee's College base or home, whichever is the shorter distance, at the approved rate as identified on the mileage reimbursement schedule: <https://www.mercy.edu/about-mercy/sites/www.mercy.edu/about-mercy/files/about-mercy/media/browser/Intercampus%20Mileage%20Reimb%20Table%20021616.pdf> Daily commuting expenses are not reimbursable, however the employee may be reimbursed for mileage incurred above and beyond the normal daily commute. See Intercampus Travel (section 7.b. below) for further guidance.

If travel occurs on a non-work day, mileage shall be calculated from the traveler's home. Parking and toll expenses shall also be reimbursed to the traveler at the actual cost.

For mileage reimbursement, the employee is to provide substantiation of the miles traveled which can be obtained from a variety of sites (i.e. MapQuest, Google Maps) so that an assessment on the reasonableness of miles claimed can be made. The mileage rate is an IRS established comprehensive rate inclusive of gas; as such, reimbursement for gas is not permitted when using a personal vehicle. Reimbursement for tolls, however, is allowed if substantiated.

##### b. Intercampus Travel

Mercy College is deemed to be a single work location for commutation purposes (also consistent with IRS rules). This means that if you work at any single Mercy College location for a day, even if it increases your normal commutation, you are not entitled to any reimbursement for additional mileage. The College will, however, reimburse employees for parking and tolls if they visit a single location in a day if they normally do not incur those expenses at their regular work location. Intercampus travel guidelines apply to all Mercy College employees (faculty, administration and staff).

If you work at more than one Mercy College location during a single day, you are entitled to local travel reimbursement for travel between each location. In the case of mileage, it will be reimbursed at the lesser of mileage between the campuses or the mileage in excess of the normal commute for the employee.

For example, if you normally work at Dobbs Ferry, but on one day have business at both the Dobbs Ferry and Bronx campuses—you are entitled to reimbursement for travel between the Bronx and Dobbs Ferry campuses. This includes tolls, parking and mass transit fares. As another example, if you work at the Yorktown campus and you stop at the Dobbs Ferry Campus for a meeting en route to the Yorktown campus, you will be reimbursed for the miles in excess of your normal commute.

Reimbursement rates can be calculated by accessing the intercampus mileage reimbursement table which can be found at: <https://www.mercy.edu/employees/pdf/mileagereimbursement.pdf>.

#### 8. Meal Allowance for Business Travel

The actual cost of meals for business travel is reimbursable. For meals on both domestic and foreign travel, the College will use as a guide the per diem rates published by the U.S. Department of State, which can be found at: <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/100120>. The U.S. Department of State daily per diem rates are based on location, and provide a breakdown based upon meal type (breakfast, lunch and dinner). These rates are considered the ceiling for reimbursement for Mercy College. Please note that snacks consumed by an employee while traveling on College business are not reimbursable. Only breakfast, lunch and dinner are reimbursable. Meals and snacks for traveling between Mercy campuses are also not reimbursable. Alcohol is not reimbursement except as provided in section 9. Entertainment Expenses below.

In addition, to receive reimbursement, conference brochures, emails or invitations must be submitted to support the validity of these expenses, as well as the itemized meal receipt is required for all meals (i.e. the credit card slip is not sufficient). Reasonable amounts for tips are reimbursable and are not to exceed 18%.

#### 9. Entertainment Expenses

In certain circumstances, the College will reimburse an employee for entertainment expenses. In such cases, the business purpose of the meal or expected benefit to the College must be provided. Meal participants must be specifically identified and as such, the name, title and company of the meal participants must be outlined. Alcoholic beverages, while generally not reimbursable, may

be reimbursed if an employee is entertaining a potential donor, dignitary, or other official and the amount consumed is reasonable. Alcohol purchases for College events should be coordinated through the Purchasing Department. Note, however, that entertainment expenses, including alcohol, are never reimbursable under a grant or donor fund, even if there is a donor, dignitary or other official participant.

#### 10. Catering

Within the established budget allocation, the appropriate Staff Officer to the President may approve department/school or College purchase of food and beverage for certain events, meetings, receptions, etc. that primarily involve members of the College community. In the case where a large group is being hosted pursuant to extracurricular activities, the list of participants or sign-in sheets should be provided for support. The College food service has the right of first refusal for events held at the Dobbs Ferry, Bronx and Yorktown campuses. The Manhattan Campus may utilize local food vendors that are reasonably priced.

#### 11. Registrations

Registration fees for conventions, workshops or official meetings are reimbursable. Original receipts must be submitted with the corporate card statement, or "Employee Travel and Meal Reimbursement Form" for the traveler to be reimbursed: <https://www.mercy.edu/about-mercy/sites/www.mercy.edu/about-mercy/files/travelreimbursementform.pdf> (whichever is applicable). Conference brochures, meeting plans, etc. must be submitted as substantiation.

#### 12. Corporate Card

Whenever feasible, the traveler is expected to use the College corporate card to pay for expenses such as registration fees, air/rail travel, lodging, car rental, and other allowable expenses as detailed in this Policy. Cardholders are responsible for attaching original receipts and obtaining approval from their supervisor and the budget owner, if necessary, for the charges. The credit card statement is to be submitted with the "Credit Card Charge Form," with original itemized receipts adhering to this Policy, to the Controller's office within ten (10) business days of statement receipt.

The corporate card cannot be used for personal spending and cash advances. In addition, cardholders are to adhere to established credit limits. In the extraordinary circumstance that a personal expense is charged on the corporate card, immediate reimbursement to the College must be submitted via check or money order along with the "Credit Card Charge Form," which is provided to the employee when he/she receives the credit card statement. Disallowed expenses must be immediately reimbursed to the College or will be offset against any monies owed to the employee.

Failure to adhere to this Policy and untimely submission of corporate card reconciliations (i.e. Credit Card Charge Form) may result in revocation of the corporate card or dismissal from the College. Please refer to the "Corporate Credit Card Policy" in section 11.13 of the Finance Manual

for further details, including the application process and what to do in the event of a lost or stolen card.

### 13. Expenses Related to Meetings, Events and Other College-Related Activities Including Entertaining

It is preferred that tickets for College-related events (i.e. Yankees game, Broadway plays, etc.) be purchased with the assistance of the College's Purchasing Department. However, it is acknowledged that many venues prefer the use of credit cards and tickets be paid for at the point of sale. Purchase of tickets for events must be approved by the appropriate Staff Officer. In addition, the business purpose / benefit to the College must be clearly documented along with the participants of the event.

Expenses related to events held at the College (i.e. performance acts, flowers, balloons, etc.) should also be procured with the assistance of the Purchasing Department. In the case that an employee must procure these items directly, the expense should be adequately documented as stated throughout this Policy.

### 14. Other Reimbursable Expenses

Expenses that are commonly reimbursable by the College to the traveler when incurred for College-related business include:

- Air freight/overnight delivery
- Gasoline for rental cars or Mercy owned vehicles
- Tolls
- Parking
- Telephone calls (business)
- Telephone calls (personal - one per day)
- Facsimile/Computer Services
- Tips, not exceeding 18%
- Car rental insurance

Eligible expenses will be reimbursed upon submission of the fully completed "Employee Travel and Meal Reimbursement Form" to Accounts Payable. Travelers can expect reimbursement for out-of-pocket costs within ten (10) business days of receipt of all appropriate documentation by the Accounts Payable office.

### 15. Non-Reimbursable Expenses

Employees will not be reimbursed for expenses personal in nature or deemed unallowable by the College such as:

- Upgrades to hotel rooms (see section 3 above)
- Upgrades for airfare (see section 2 above)
- Alcohol (unless allowable under section 6 above)



- Toiletries (i.e. deodorant, shampoo, etc.)
- Movies
- Health and beauty spas
- Physical fitness fees (i.e. gym fees, tennis/racquetball courts)
- Golf or green fees
- Fines or court fees (i.e. parking violations, moving violations)
- Travel expenses of family members
- Pet kennel fees
- Babysitting fees
- Credit card finance charges or delinquency fees
- Laundry/dry cleaning for trips shorter than 7 days
- Travel life insurance
- Any other charge that at the discretion of the Vice President and Chief Financial & Planning Officer or his designee is not deemed in the spirit of the Travel and Expense Policy

16. Grant Funded Travel

Normally travel funded through grants, whether government (federal, state, local) or private, will follow this Policy. However, grant personnel must familiarize themselves with the terms of the award agreement/contract and the Grantor's policies as those terms and policies will supersede this Policy in the event that they are more conservative. Conversely, if the terms of the agreement/contract are more liberal than the College's policy, this Policy is to be adhered to.