

# Elizabethtown College

## POLICY FOR TRAVEL AND RELATED EXPENSES

### Purpose

The purpose is to outline the College's policy on paying travel and related expenses for employees traveling on official College business. Travel is a significant expense to the College and also represents a considerable investment in time away from important College responsibilities, as well as family and community activities. The College's objective in incurring travel expenses is:

- To accomplish College businesses at the lowest possible cost
- To require the faculty member or employee to bear the lowest possible out of pocket expense
- To ensure that both the traveler and those from whom we've acquired services are reimbursed as quickly as possible
- To ensure that both the College and the traveler are in compliance with IRS guidance for business expense reimbursement (i.e. IRS Publication 463: Travel, Entertainment, Gift and Car Expenses)

### General Guidelines

The College is obligated to observe the policy specified in IRS Publication 463 regarding allowable expenses, record keeping and approvals as follows:

- College purpose: All expenses incurred in the course of carrying out College funded travel must support a valid College purpose or function (e.g. student recruiting, teaching, program execution, research, and fundraising). Expenses not having a clear College purpose and which are incurred primarily for the benefit of the individual are considered compensation and must be reported as income on the employee's W-2.
- Accountability & approvals: Travelers must adequately account to their Department Chair, Dean, Vice President or supervisor within a reasonable time following travel (typically 30 days or less). An adequate accounting consists of such items as records of expenses, supporting documents like receipts, mileage records and reconciliation of amounts received as cash advancements.

The College will pay all reasonable travel expenses directly related to the completion of College business. Every effort should be made by the traveler to minimize College expenses.

Reimbursement is made for actual expenses incurred for transportation, local travel, meals, lodging and other necessary business expenses. These expenses must be supported by original receipts. Other expenses, such as **personal** entertainment and recreation, are not eligible for reimbursement. In an effort to maximize College resources, per diem allowances are **not** utilized.

## Authorization

Requests for travel advances or reimbursement must be signed by the employee and by the employee's chairperson/dean or department head, with the exception of the President, whose travel vouchers shall be submitted to the Vice President for Administration and Finance. Employees are liable for repayment of expenditures disallowed by any audit of a travel voucher or other travel related documents. Authorization by oneself for one's own advance or reimbursement is not acceptable under any circumstances.

### Traveler

Vice Presidents  
All other Administrators or Staff  
Faculty

### Authorized BY

President  
Department Head  
Chairperson/Dean

Vice Presidents, Chairpersons/Deans, and Department Heads are expected to review and approve all travel and business entertainment expenditures in order to ensure the consistent administration of this policy. They are also responsible for the adequacy of documentation processed by their staff to be submitted to the Business Office.

## Travel Reimbursement

Travel expense reports, completed and properly authorized as described above, must be presented to accounts payable to receive reimbursement. Receipts and other supporting documentation must accompany the report. The College recommends that travelers request receipts whenever they are available. However, small expenditures for which receipts are not available, such as road tolls, parking and similar expenses are acceptable if a list of uses and amounts are supplied using the missing receipt form. This form may be found online under downloadable forms at [www.etown.edu/businessoffice](http://www.etown.edu/businessoffice).

The College does not provide travel advances or reimbursements for the travel expenses of spouses or dependents who accompany College employees on official travel, unless approved by the Vice President of Administration and Finance.

The College reimburses the travel costs of students and non-employees (such as job applicants, lecturers, consultants and other individuals) when required by authorized contractual agreement or where approval is given in advance by a department head.

## Credit Cards

It is often necessary for College personnel to travel away from home for several days. Travelers who have been issued a P-Card should use it for hotel, restaurant, rental car or other travel expenses whenever possible. If a P-Card is available, personal cards should NOT be used. Please keep in mind

that original receipts are required for all purchases made with your card and that the College is exempt from PA state sales tax on purchases.

## **Travel Advances**

Requests for advances must be pre-approved by the Senior Staff and are paid through the accounts payable office by check. All unused advance travel funds must be returned to the accounts payable office within fifteen (15) days of the completion of a trip. The completed travel voucher and the appropriate supporting documentation should accompany the funds. No further travel advance shall be granted until a settlement voucher is filed from the previous advance. NO unused advance may be carried over to a subsequent report.

Travel advances are made only to employees. **Under no circumstances are travel advances made to students.** Any person who fails to settle an advance will not be issued any future advances until all unsettled expenses are cleared.

## **Transportation Expenses**

### **Air Travel**

The class of air travel is expected to be the least costly consistent with a reasonable level of comfort and convenience for the traveler. This means that standard accommodations should be used unless exceptional circumstances exist. When staying over an additional night will save significant funds, net of hotel and other incremental expenses, supervisors may pre-approve such travel plans. The College's insurance policy covers employees travelling for business purposes, eliminating the need to purchase additional insurance.

### **Vehicle Rentals**

Vehicle rentals are to be used in a manner to minimize costs to the College. Airport or hotel limousine, bus or taxi service should be used in lieu of car rental whenever it is less costly. Rentals are to be limited to situations where other means of transportation are unavailable, more costly, or impractical.

Rental vehicles may be driven only by an authorized renter who has signed the rental agreement. All authorized renters and drivers warrant that they have a current and valid driver's license and are the minimum age required by the rental agency. The College's insurance policy covers vehicle rentals, eliminating the need to purchase additional insurance. (additional insurance will NOT be reimbursed)

When required, vehicle rentals should be reserved through Enterprise in Hershey, West Chocolate Avenue and University 17033, phone 717-533-3099, and should be paid with the travelers P-Card.

### **College Vehicles**

The College has vehicles that are available for use by faculty and staff for College business. Your department will be charged based on the number of miles driven. Employees who plan to leave an automobile at an airport for more than 24 hours while traveling, should take a private vehicle. College fleet vehicles should **not** be used for this purpose. The use of College vehicles is pursuant to the College's rental fleet vehicle policy.

### **Private Automobile**

Reimbursement for use of a private car for College business is made using the mileage rate announced by the Business Office. The mileage rate includes reimbursement for use of the vehicle as well as gas, depreciation, insurance and other expenses of ownership and operation. Additional reimbursement is made for tolls and parking fees. When an employee travels directly from home to a travel site, the distance from home or the College, whichever is shortest, will be used to compute mileage. The total transportation expense for use of a private automobile should not exceed the comparable cost of air fare for that trip.

Receipts are not required for mileage. Alternatively, provide the mileage calculation on the reimbursement request, including start and destination locations, number of miles, the College reimbursement rate, and the business purpose for the travel.

When traveling with other employees, travelers should obtain separate receipts and submit only their own expenses on the travel voucher. This is necessary in order to avoid duplicate payments.

**Please keep in mind that the IRS regulations state that your daily commute mileage from home to work is to be subtracted from any mileage reimbursement.**

The College does NOT reimburse employees for parking tickets, fines, moving violations, vehicle towing charges, or damage to the private car for any reason.

### **Taxi and Shuttle Services**

Local taxi fares and shuttles to and from airports and railroad stations are reimbursable to the extent that such service is not included in the air or rail fare. When necessary to employ these services, travelers should seek the most appropriate mode to minimize costs.

## **Lodging, Meals and Other Expenses**

### **Lodging**

Except in instances in which hotel arrangements have been obtained at group rates by the sponsor of a conference or other event, arrangements for lodging should be made at reasonable rates given the location and time of year. The lodging chosen is expected to be the least costly available consistent with a reasonable level of comfort, safety and convenience for the traveler. Receipts from lodging expenses are required and must accompany the travel voucher.

## **Meals**

Personal meal expense, those incurred by an employee when traveling out of the local area on College business, and business meal expense, those incurred by an employee for meals taken with a colleague, student, prospect, etc. during which a business discussion takes place, may be paid for with a College P-card or is reimbursable at actual cost. All meal reimbursements will be based on the Federal Travel guide. The College, taking into consideration rates differ by location, will allow an average rate up to \$95 per day per person for meals. This is NOT a per diem, receipts are required.

Per diem meal allowances are permissible for student groups only. Amounts are determined by the program budget. Funds are available in advance of an event or trip.

If your meal will be expensed to a federally funded grant, be aware that federal regulations prohibit the purchase of alcoholic beverages with federal funds.

When the traveler is claiming reimbursement for meals purchased for others, the reimbursement request must provide the names of guests entertained, the location and date of the meal, and the specific business purpose for hosting the meal.

ALL meal expenses must be supported by original receipts and a business purpose notation provided.

## **TRAVEL**

Employees are considered to be in overnight travel status only if they are traveling on approved business away from both home and college. Either 50 miles or 1 ½ hours of travel time at a normal rate of speed are considered reasonable commuting distances, subject to weather, itinerary and time considerations.

## **Other Expenses**

Other reimbursable expenses may include, but are not limited to, tips, (not to exceed 20%) internet access, business telephone calls, luggage storage, or valet. All such expenses must be itemized.

## **NON-Allowable Expenses** (not an all-inclusive list)

Alcohol (one drink per person permissible at meals)

Traffic fines

Towing charges from illegal parking

Meter Tickets

Additional insurance

Membership fees (ex: AAA)

Personal services in route (hair, car wash)

Personal items required in route (umbrella, prescriptions, luggage, tissues, medication, coffee, snacks, bottled water)

Loss of personal items

"No show" charges

Unapproved charges for upgraded travel, lodging or rental vehicle

In-flight movies and/or beverages  
Host/Hostess gifts >\$25  
Cost of care for family members, pets, houses, etc while traveling  
Excessive personal calls (one brief call per day is anticipated)  
Laundry services  
Valet services  
Room service >\$25  
Fees for exercise rooms  
In-room movies and/or games  
Non-business related internet services  
Optional conference activities not included in conference fee (golf, cruise)

[Some items such as dry cleaning, laundry or other personal services are reimbursable if the employee is in continuous travel status for **more than 5 days.**]

### **Lost Items**

Loss of luggage, clothing or other personal items is not the responsibility of the College. Each traveler is personally responsible for such items. Recovery of personal losses may be possible through the individual's homeowner's insurance.