

Muhlenberg College Travel and Expense Policy

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Section 1: Purpose

The Muhlenberg College Travel and Expense Policy applies to all Muhlenberg College faculty, staff, students, or individuals during the course of performing college-related business. It is a framework covering how expenses deemed reasonable, necessary and ordinary can be claimed and reimbursed.

Section 2: Responsibilities

The responsibility to follow this policy rests with the traveler, the approving supervisor, and the Business Office.

A. Employee / Non-Employee Traveler Responsibilities

- Ensure that the expense items listed on their expense report are valid and have a direct business connection to the college.
- Provide a detailed description of the trip including an explanation of the business purpose, agenda and accomplishments during the trip.
- Ensure that the expense report submitted is a reasonable accounting for expenses paid while traveling. This means that receipts are attached to all expense items, the receipts are submitted in accordance to the date and location of the travel and that the expense items are reasonable in nature. The traveler should always exercise the highest level of professional judgement at all times.
- Verify that the items listed on their expense report are not items that have been submitted for reimbursement through the college credit card or any other method of reimbursement.
- Timely submittal of a reconciliation of funds spent from a *cash advance*. The Business Office requires that a cash advance be reconciled within **10 days** of a traveler returning home from a trip. Any unused funds should be returned to the Business Office at the time that the reconciliation is submitted.
- Complete an expense report through Workday Expenses to receive reimbursement for personal funds spent. Once the expense report is completed, it is the responsibility of the traveler to obtain approval from their direct supervisor or the departmental manager who oversees the budget funding the travel expenses.

B. Approving Supervisor Responsibilities

- Verification that the traveler has requested reimbursement for expenses that are in alignment with this policy. If a supervisor is unsure of what an expense is or did not authorize the travel expense, the expense report must be sent back to the traveler.
- Authorization of expense items that have been placed on the traveler's expense report. An approving supervisor may not authorize expenditures for themselves regardless of the amount, this includes meals in which they were present. Department chairs can submit their expense reports to the appropriate dean for approval.
- Ensure that adequate funds are available and free from encumbrance within the departmental budget to cover the traveler's expenses. If funds are not available, then the approver must request additional funds before the traveler incurs the expense.
- Ensure that documentation necessary to grant an exception is submitted. An explanation should be submitted with the expense report and receipts to serve as a justification for why the exception should be reimbursed.

C. Business Office

The Business Office will review all expense reports to ensure that:

- Both the traveler and approver have authorized the travel expense
- Each expense item is reasonable, necessary and ordinary
- Key Compliance Matters are followed
- All [Expense Guidelines](#) are followed
- All exceptions are clearly stated in supporting documentation
- The receipts submitted match the expense item listed on the expense report
- Receipts are clearly visible and legible

If additional information is necessary, then the traveler will receive a notification through Workday from the Business Office.

The Business Office must approve the expense report before payment is issued. An expense report will not be approved for payment until all outstanding items have been resolved and the expense report including all supporting documentation is completed.

The Business Office is responsible to reimburse expense report submissions in a timely manner. Once an expense report has been approved for payment, the expense reimbursement payment will be issued in the next regularly scheduled Accounts Payable check run. Exceptions may be granted if the approving supervisor supplies supporting documentation when the expense report is submitted to the Business Office. The Business Office will reasonably accommodate the request without holding up other critical and regularly scheduled payments.

Section 3: Key Compliance Matters

A. Business Purpose

All expense reports should contain a valid business purpose that is reasonable and necessary to conduct business on behalf of Muhlenberg College. The business purpose stated on the expense report must be as specific as possible. Each expense report submitted must have this business purpose clearly stated in the Business Reason portion of the expense report.

B. Confidentiality

When traveling for college or personal business, individuals are responsible for maintaining confidentiality of all college-related data, information and records. All confidential information should be deleted from mobile devices as soon as they are not needed. Travelers should be aware of confidential information stored on mobile devices and take purposeful actions to secure this data until it can be deleted.

C. Failure to Comply

A traveler who has been given a cash advance but has not submitted a reconciliation with detailed receipts will result in the cash advance being reported as personal income. This means that the cost incurred for travel will be reported as personal income on a 1099 MISC Form at the end of the calendar year.

Expense reports submitted for travel in a prior fiscal year must be received by **July 20th** in order to be posted to prior fiscal year. Late submissions will be posted against the current year

budget.

D. Receipts

Receipts are required for all reimbursable expenses as proof of payment. A scanned copy or a picture of the original receipt must be attached to every expense item listed on the expense report. A credit card statement, bank statement or cancelled check may not be substituted for a missing receipt. As a general guideline, receipts should include the following information:

- Date of Purchase
- Business Reason
- Store Name
- Location of Purchase
- Itemized list of things purchased
- Total amount paid

E. Missing Receipt

Expense reports with missing receipt will need the Receipt Missing box checked on the Workday Expense Report and a detailed description must be included in the Memo Field. The frequency with which this instance occurs must be as low as possible.

F. Policy Exceptions

Exceptions that deviate from this policy must be reasonable in nature. Pre-approval from a Senior Staff member is necessary and a Spend Authorization must be submitted through Workday Expenses prior to spending the funds. The Spend Authorization should be cleared by submitting an expense report through Workday Expenses after the funds have been spent. Supporting documentation must include information regarding why the exception was approved.

G. Sales Tax Exemption

As a non-profit organization, Muhlenberg College qualifies for sales tax exemption on the majority of purchases. The Business Office can be consulted for questions on sales tax exemptions or to obtain a copy of our Sales Tax Exemption Certificate.

H. Timely Submissions

Travel reimbursement requests should be submitted to the Business Office within **10 days** of returning from travel to ensure the accuracy of our departmental reports. Travelers should review their expense report submissions at year end to ensure that all travel expense have been **submitted by June 30th** within the fiscal period that the travel occurred.

College credit card reconciliations should be submitted to the Business Office by the last day of the month to ensure that all credit card charges are being coded to the correct general ledger accounts. When a credit card holder's reconciliation falls behind by 2 months, the credit card holder's account will be placed on hold, until the reconciliations are submitted to the Business Office.

Cash advance reconciliations should be submitted to the Business Office within 10 days of returning from travel. Any funds remaining from the cash advance should also be returned at this time.

Section 4: Expense Guidelines

A. Air Travel

Standard airfares on commercial flights are reimbursed at the most economical rate. The college does not reimburse for business class, first class, early boarding or upgraded travel accommodations unless it is documented as an exception by the approving supervisor. Travelers should schedule flights to minimize the overall cost to travel.

Reasonable baggage fees are reimbursable air travel expenses when traveling for periods greater than 2 business days.

Travel insurance is a reimbursable air travel expense when it is purchased to reduce the potential loss of funds to the college due to trip cancellations.

Travel Leaders is the preferred travel agent to use when booking domestic or international flights. Travel Leaders is particularly helpful if flight plans are changed and/or cancelled.

B. Alcohol

Expenses for purchase of alcohol will not be reimbursed without preapproval from a Senior Staff member. A Spend Authorization must be entered into Workday prior to spending college funds. The College has a separate policy for the serving of alcohol at College events.

C. Cash Prizes

Cash Prizes require pre-approval from Senior Staff and a Spend Authorization must be entered into Workday prior to spending these funds. Cash prizes may be reimbursed on an expense report if the following information is submitted:

- Name of Person receiving the Cash Prize
- Completed W9 Form for each Prize Winner
- Date of Disbursement
- Amount
- Purpose (Explanation of why cash prize was given)

If the recipient of a Cash Prize is an employee, the prize will be recorded as income and applicable taxes will be withheld from an employee's paycheck. If the recipient of a Cash Prize is not an employee, then they will receive a 1099 MISC Form at the end of the calendar year.

D. Cleaning Supplies

Cleaning supplies are considered an appropriate expense when ordered through Plant Operations. A cleaning supply inventory is maintained in the Plant Operations Housekeeping department. If cleaning supplies are needed, a request should be made to Plant Operations. Any cleaning supplies purchased outside of these guidelines should be pre-approved by a Senior Staff member and a Spend Authorization should be entered into Workday prior to spending the funds.

E. Child and Pet Care Expenses

Child and pet care expenses are not considered an appropriate expense when traveling on behalf of Muhlenberg College. Funds paid for child and pet care are considered personal in nature and should not be paid out of departmental funds.

Any child and pet care expenses submitted for reimbursement are considered outside of these expense guidelines and should be pre-approved by a Senior Staff member. A Spend Authorization should be entered into Workday prior to spending the funds.

F. Conference Fees

Conference Registration fees are reimbursable when the purpose of the conference is to further the purpose of Muhlenberg College including presenting research papers and gaining additional job training.

Conference Registration fees are reimbursable when the supporting receipt includes:

- Name of the registrant or traveler
- Conference registration form or agenda
- Location of the conference
- Date of the conference
- Amount Due

G. Donations to Charity and Fundraisers

Muhlenberg College is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Accordingly, the College is not authorized to make donations or contributions to other outside organizations. If you wish to make a donation to a charity or cause, personal funds must be used.

H. Gifts/Flowers

The College Chaplain should be contacted regarding birth announcements and expressions of sympathy for Muhlenberg college employees and their immediate family members. Any official recognition of these events will be ordered and authorized by the President or the Chaplain.

Any flowers or floral arrangements submitted for reimbursement other than from the President or the Chaplain are considered outside of these expense guidelines and should be pre-approved by a Senior Staff member. A Spend Authorization should be entered into Workday prior to spending the funds.

College funds may not be used to purchase gifts for coworkers, student workers, interns or other departments. Sympathy memorials, congratulation bouquets, floral arrangements ordered by an individual or department are considered personal in nature and must be purchased with personal funds.

Any gift purchases require pre-approval from Senior Staff and a Spend Authorization must be entered into Workday prior to spending these funds. If the recipient of a gift is an employee, the gift will be recorded as income and applicable taxes will be withheld from an employee's paycheck. If the recipient of a gift is not an employee, then they will receive a 1099 MISC Form at the end of the calendar year.

Gift reimbursements on an expense report should include the following information:

- Name of Person receiving the Gift
- Completed W9 Form for each recipient
- Date of Disbursement
- Amount
- Purpose (Explanation of why the gift was given)

I. Gift Cards

College funds should not be used to purchase gift cards. Any gift card purchases are considered outside of these expense guidelines should be pre-approved by a Senior Staff member and a Spend Authorization should be entered into Workday prior to spending the funds.

The required information for each gift card is:

- Store Name
- Gift Card ID#
- Recipient Name
- Completed W9 Form for each Gift Card Recipient
- Date of Disbursement
- Amount
- Purpose (Explanation of why gift card was given out)

If the recipient of a Gift Card is an employee, the gift card will be recorded as income and applicable taxes will be withheld from an employee's paycheck. If the recipient of a Gift Card is not an employee, then they will receive a 1099 MISC Form at the end of the calendar year.

Gift Cards - Exception for Research Participants only

An exception to required W9 documentation may be granted when low dollar gift cards are given to incentivize participation in anonymous research studies and the following criteria is met:

- The purchase and distribution of the gift cards are in compliance with IRB regulations
- The Gift Cards are \$50.00 or less
- The aggregate payment given to each research participant is less than \$600.00 in a single calendar year

Gift cards for research participants are subject to audit at any time and may require additional information at that time.

J. Gratuities

Reasonable gratuities between 15% to 20% will be reimbursed for meal expenses. Gratuities should be listed separately on an itemized receipt along with the total amount requested for reimbursement for the meal.

K. Holiday or Seasonal Purchases

Holiday luncheons, party trays, gifts, flowers, decorations are not considered an appropriate use of college funds.

Party items such as flowers, gift baskets, cakes, candy, balloons or decorations ordered to recognize birthdays, promotions, retirements, congratulations and well wishes are considered personal in nature and must be paid with personal funds.

Any holiday or seasonal purchases submitted for reimbursement are considered outside of these expense guidelines and should be pre-approved by a Senior Staff member. A Spend Authorization should be entered into Workday prior to spending the funds.

L. International Travel

All expenses paid in foreign currency **should be reported on the expense report in USD** to receive reimbursement. Supporting documentation should be supplied to include the conversion rate used to calculate the USD amount listed on the expense report.

The preferred exchange rate that should be used on an expense report would be the exchange rate that was available to the traveler at the time that they converted their USD to a foreign currency. For example, if a professor exchanges USD for EUR at the airport, then they could claim that exchange rate for all of their purchases. If a professor uses their personal credit card, then the professor could claim the USD amount that appeared on the credit card statement.

If neither of these exchange rates are available to the traveler, then you can go to <https://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/> and claim the trending rate on the date of purchase. This exchange rate is typically a wholesale rate that is reserved for large banks and preferred investors, so it is highly unlikely that a Muhlenberg traveler would have been able to obtain the wholesale rate. Using the trending rate on xe is acceptable.

Currency conversion fees necessary to purchase appropriate travel expenses can be claimed on an international travel expense report when a supporting receipt for the fee is submitted.

The College has several approved vendors for Athletic team international travel. Please contact the Treasurer's Office for a list of approved providers.

M. Lodging

Hotel or B&B costs are reimbursable when a detailed receipt is submitted. These overnight lodging receipts must include:

- Name of the traveler
- Name and location of the hotel
- Dates of the hotel stay
- Detailed listing of the room rate, taxes and accompanying charges

Movies, gym and laundry charges are not a reimbursable expense.

Wi-Fi charges levied by a hotel to gain internet access while traveling are reimbursable, as long as the internet access is used to conduct work while staying at the hotel.

Rental of a hotel conference room, living quarters for extended periods time while living abroad or land to conduct research may be reimbursed if a detailed receipt is submitted with the following information:

- Name of Renter
- Name and Location of rental
- Lease period
- Detail listing of charges
- Business purpose for the rental

N. Meals

Self or Employees

Meals are reimbursed at the price listed on the receipt with the condition that the amount of the meal is a reasonable rate for the location in which the restaurant is located. A list of standard meal per diem rates are published on the US General Services Administration website <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates> and can be used as a gauge to determine if a meal expense is reasonably priced. Requests for reimbursement that are deemed excessive by the Business Office will be reimbursed at the rates obtained via the above referenced link.

A detailed receipt is required to receive reimbursement for meal expenses while traveling. Meal reimbursement receipts must have the following information:

- Name of Restaurant
- Location of Restaurant
- Detailed listing of items purchased including food, beverages and gratuities
- Date
- Amount
- List of people in attendance (if for a group)

The most senior level employee present should pay and file meal expenses. Meal expenses will not be reimbursed when the conference registration includes meals or snacks. Meal expenses will not be reimbursed for a traveling companion or family member.

Students

Meals with students are reimbursable if deemed necessary by faculty or select administrative staff. Examples of acceptable meals with students are required early arrivals of athletes and student events

Meal reimbursement receipts must have the following information:

- Name of Restaurant
- Location of Restaurant
- Detailed listing of items purchased including food, beverages and gratuities
- Date
- Amount
- List of people in attendance

- Academic purpose of the meal

Donors and Business Guests

Meals with Donors and Business Guests are reimbursable when there is a legitimate business reason for the meal expense.

Meal reimbursement receipts must have the following information:

- Name of Restaurant
- Location of Restaurant
- Detailed listing of items purchased including food, beverages and gratuities
- Date
- Amount
- List of people in attendance including job title and company name when applicable
- Business purpose of the meal

Employment Candidates

Meals with employment candidates are reimbursable for selected positions.

The recruiting expense funds available from the Provost Office for faculty positions can be used for meals with the candidate and two hosts. The departmental budget must be used to cover additional attendees. Please contact the Provost Office for more details on faculty employment candidate dinner reimbursements.

The recruiting expense funds available from Human Resources for non-faculty positions can be used for meals with the candidate and one host. The department budget must be used to cover additional attendees. Please see the Candidate Expense Policy available through Human Resources for more details on non-faculty positions. Contact the Provost Office for more details on faculty reimbursements.

Meal reimbursement receipts must have the following information:

- Name of Restaurant
- Location of Restaurant
- Detailed listing of items purchased including food, beverages and gratuities
- Date
- Amount
- List of people in attendance
- Job position the candidate is interviewing for

Departments

Faculty and administrative meetings should not be scheduled for breakfast, lunch or dinner and are not reimbursable without prior approval by a member of Senior Staff. Meals and refreshments for Departmental Meetings require written approval by a Senior Staff member in advance of the meeting. A Spend Authorization should be entered into Workday prior spending the funds.

Meals for business events and/or meetings held on campus should use Sodexo Dining Services. Please contact Seeger's Union for a list of exceptions.

Meal reimbursements for Department Meals that are off campus should have a corresponding receipt that includes the following information:

- Name of Restaurant
- Location of Restaurant
- Detailed listing of items purchased including food, beverages and gratuities
- Date
- Amount
- List of people in attendance
- Business Purpose

The most senior level employee present should pay and file meal expenses.

O. Office Supplies

Office supplies and tissues are an appropriate expense when ordered through the approved LVAIC office supply vendor which is currently WB Mason or the College Bookstore. Please contact the Purchasing Department for information.

Antibacterial sprays & gels are not considered a reimbursable office supply expense except for the Health Center. The college has installed hand sanitizing stations in every building on campus to make these sprays and gels available.

Supplementary heating and cooling devices should not be purchased without prior approval of Plant Operations, because these devices can pose a safety risk. Plant personnel will investigate the request to determine if there is an underlying problem and will specify the models of equipment to be purchase.

Any office supplies purchased outside of these guidelines should be pre-approved by a Senior Staff member and a Spend Authorization should be entered into Workday prior to spending the funds.

P. Spouse / Family Travel

Travel expenses paid for a spouse, companion, or family member are not considered appropriate College expenses. The only travel expenses that should be claimed on an expense report should be the travel expenses for the individual traveler, who is traveling on behalf of Muhlenberg College. All receipts should be prorated and clear documentation should be provided that separates the traveler's expenses from other expenses.

Any spouse or family travel expenses submitted for reimbursement are considered outside of these guidelines and should be pre-approved by a Senior Staff member. A Spend Authorization should be entered into Workday prior to spending the funds.

Q. Staff Retreats

Staff retreats must receive the pre-approval of a Senior Staff member before the expense is submitted to the Business Office.

Receipts for staff retreats must include:

- Department hosting retreat
- Business Purpose
- Name of Vendor
- Date of Event
- Amount

Any staff retreat expenses submitted for reimbursement are considered outside of these guidelines and should be pre-approved a Senior Staff member. A Spend Authorization should be entered into Workday prior to spending the funds.

R. Technology Purchases

Technology purchases should not be listed on an expense report. All tech purchases must be processed through OIT. This includes hardware, software, laptops, software subscriptions and virus protection subscriptions.

Any technology purchases submitted for reimbursement are considered outside of these guidelines and should be pre-approved by a Senior Staff member. A Spend Authorization should be entered into Workday prior to spending the funds.

S. Transportation

Auto Rental

Receipts for gas purchases, parking and tolls may be submitted on an expense report when the vehicle has been rented. It is not appropriate to request a mileage rate, traffic ticket or parking violation expense for a vehicle that has been rented.

If a traveler would like to be reimbursed for renting a car, then a detailed receipt is needed. This detailed receipt should include the following information:

- Traveler's Name
- Name of the Auto Rental company
- Reason for rental
- Dates of rental
- Amount Due

Personal Vehicle

A flat mileage rate, parking and tolls are the only expenses that should be reimbursed when using your personal car. This mileage rate covers all operating costs including depreciation, repairs, gasoline, insurance and other similar expenses. Mileage rates are reimbursed at the IRS standard issued rate that is updated in January. The Business Office will also keep this rate posted on their home web page. It is not appropriate to request reimbursement for a traffic ticket or parking violation when traveling in a personal vehicle.

College Owned Vehicle

A flat mileage rate, parking and tolls may be reimbursed when using a college-owned vehicle.

Bus/Taxi/Train

Ground transportation including bus, train, courtesy shuttles and taxis are reimbursed at the most economical rates for travel accommodations that fit the scheduled needs of the traveler. Travelers should compare the cost of alternative transportations and select the mode of transportation that minimizes the cost between airports, hotels and final destinations.

Required information needed on ground transportation receipts or tickets include:

- Traveler's Name
- Name of the transportation company
- Reason for travel
- Date
- Amount Due

T. Student Costs for Attendance

Departmental funds may not be utilized to pay for a student's cost of attendance. The Financial Aid Office of the College administers and manages all student financial aid.

Section 5: Cash/Travel Advances

A. Individuals who qualify for cash advances

Cash advances are only available for faculty and staff. Cash advances should not be given directly to a student. A faculty or staff person must complete a cash advance request and an advance will be issued directly to the faculty or staff person. Faculty and staff may give students cash to travel, however it is the responsibility of the faculty or staff member to submit the required cash reconciliation.

B. Dollar limit on travel advances

A cash advance will not be issued for more than the out-of-pocket cost incurred for travel.

C. Requirements before funds are released

New cash advances will not be given until previous cash reconciliation advances have been submitted.

D. Reconciliation of cash advance

A cash advance reconciliation should be submitted within **10 days** of the traveler's return to campus. Any funds not spent while traveling will need to be submitted at the time that the cash advance reconciliation is submitted to the Business Office.

Section 6: College Credit Card

A. Timely submission of College Credit Card Expense Report

Statements will be mailed directly to the card holder. Please compare items listed on the statement to the Expense Report from the college credit card website and review the account code to ensure that each item is being charged to the correct account. Please ensure that each item is coded to the correct account and that each item has a description. Submit the expense report, the statement received in the mail and receipts each month to the Business Office. The college credit card expense reports must be signed by both the cardholder and the cardholder's supervisor.

B. All Expense Guidelines Apply

Examine the monthly credit card statement to ensure that each expense is in accordance to this policy. Employees who are issued a Muhlenberg College credit card are required to follow the above guidelines for appropriate and inappropriate expenditures. Items that should not appear on an expense report should also not appear on a college credit card statement. All purchases are subject to further evaluation by the Business Office.

C. Personal Items

Review the monthly credit card statement to ensure that no personal items are appearing on the credit card statement. Expenditures charged on the Muhlenberg College credit card are restricted to authorized college business expenses. The Muhlenberg College credit card is not for personal use. If a personal item has been charged to your corporate credit card, notate this on your credit card expense report. When you submit your monthly statement to the Business Office, include cash or check for the amount of the personal item.

D. Lost or Stolen Card

Any college-owned credit card that has been lost or stolen should be immediately reported to the credit card company and the Purchasing Department. A new card will be issued within 7 to 10 business days.

E. Unauthorized or Fraudulent Charges

It is the responsibility of the card holder to review the charges that are placed against his/her college credit card to ensure that they have authorized all expenditures. Any unauthorized or fraudulent charges must be identified by the card holder and must be resolved immediately by calling the phone number listed on the back of the card. It is the responsibility of the card holder to ensure that the college receives a full credit for any fraudulent charges placed on the card.

F. International Travel

It is the responsibility of the card holder to notify the college credit card company of any international travel in advance.

For further questions, please see the PNC Procurement Card Manual. This policy is available by contacting the Purchasing Department.

Section 7: Departmental Berg Bucks

All expense guidelines apply to purchases made with departmental berg bucks. Contact the Business Office to request funds be added to a departmental card.

Section 8: Reimbursements from Grant or Federal Funds

When requesting reimbursements from grant or federal funds, additional restrictions and documentation is required. Contact Corporate, Foundation and Government Relations to receive a full listing of these extended guidelines. Reimbursement for alcoholic beverages is prohibited by federal regulations.

Section 9: List of Departments to contact

- Approved Vendors & Corporate Credit Card Questions - Purchasing Office
- Cleaning Supplies & Heating/Cooling Units - Plant Operations
- Departmental Berg Bucks – Business Office
- Departmental Meals through Dining Services Exceptions - Seegers Union
- Expense Report Questions - Business Office
- Floral Bouquets - College Chaplain
- Grants & Federal Funds – Corporate, Foundation and Government Relations
- Insurance and Risk Liability Questions - Treasurer's Office
- Meal Reimbursement for Faculty Candidates – Provost Office
- Meal Reimbursements for Non-Faculty Candidates - Human Resources
- PA Sales Tax Exemption - Business Office
- Technology Purchases - OIT