

Travel Expense Reimbursement Policy

1. [General](#)
2. [American Express Corporate Card](#)
3. [American Express Department Card](#)
4. [Expense Reimbursement Limitations and Receipt Requirements](#)
5. [Sponsored Project Travel](#)
6. [Non-Employee Travel Reimbursements](#)
7. [Transportation and Related Expenses](#)
 - a. [Commercial Transportation](#)
 - i. [Purchase of Tickets](#)
 - ii. [Payment of Tickets in Advance of Travel](#)
 - iii. [Unused Tickets](#)
 - b. [Personal Owned Vehicle](#)
 - c. [Car Rental](#)
 - i. [Rental Car Insurance](#)
 - d. [Miscellaneous Transportation – Related Expenses](#)
 - i. [Tolls](#)
 - ii. [Parking](#)
 - iii. [Traffic Violations](#)
 - iv. [Public Transportation](#)
 - v. [Shuttle Service](#)
 - vi. [Taxi Service](#)
8. [Lodging, Meals and Related Expenses](#)
 - a. [Lodging](#)
 - b. [Meals](#)
 - c. [Per Diem Allowance](#)
 - d. [Other Travel Related Expenses](#)
 - e. [Registration Fees](#)
 - f. [Telephone Calls](#)
 - g. [Other Miscellaneous Expenditures Not Reimbursable](#)
9. [Travel Reports and Payments](#)
 - a. [Travel Advances](#)
 - b. [Travel Expense Reports](#)
10. [Family Members](#)
11. [Foreign Travel](#)

General

The Boston College Travel Expense Reimbursement Policy provides guidelines and procedures for employees who travel on behalf of the University. The basic intent of the policy is to ensure that individuals traveling on University business neither gain nor lose personal funds as a result of that travel. Travel costs are to be allocated and expended within established budgetary limitations and, as funds to support travel are limited, travelers are not to make commitments to travel or to incur travel expenses without first obtaining the appropriate approvals.

These policies and procedures are intended for University-wide use. However, if a department elects to institute a more restrictive policy for purposes of budgetary control, Procurement Services will support that policy and will work with the department to enforce it.

All travelers are to comply with the following travel expense reimbursement policies and procedural guidelines.

[Back to the top](#)

American Express Corporate Card

The University has contracted with American Express for a University corporate card that offers advantageous terms to the University and its travelers. All full-time employees travelling on BC business should apply for an American Express corporate card. Your American Express card should be used for all travel expenses. Travelers are responsible for paying American Express directly. To apply for an American Express Corporate Card, visit [BC's Travel website](#).

[Back to the top](#)

American Express Department Card

The American Express Department corporate card is used to book travel for students and individuals not employed by BC such as visiting professors, speakers and candidates. It can be used for air, hotel, and car reservations. This card is managed by the department by verifying all expenses and maintaining all supporting documentation. To apply for an American Express Department card, visit [BC's Travel website](#).

[Back to the top](#)

Expense Reimbursement Limitations and Receipt Requirements

University travel is reimbursed only on the basis of actual and reasonable expenses incurred, subject to the limitations set forth in this policy. Request for reimbursement must be signed by the traveler and are encouraged to be submitted on a Boston College Travel Expense Report form (which can be found on the [Financial Management Systems' website](#)) or a suitable alternative.

Original itemized receipts are required for all travel expenses, including airfare, hotel, and car rental bills, and all individual expenses that exceed \$25.00. In addition, the University reimburses itemized expenses without receipts to a maximum of \$25.00 per day. The \$25.00 allowance for minor unreceipted expenses is intended to accommodate travelers who would otherwise be inconvenienced by obtaining a receipt. It is not intended to allow for a per diem of \$25.00 or any other per diem amount. Please note, credit card statements are not considered original receipts.

[Back to the top](#)

Sponsored Project Travel

Travel costs under a sponsored project are subject to those allowed by BC's travel policy and procedures which govern University-related travel unless federal regulations or the sponsor imposes greater restrictions. Certain sponsored projects may contain provisions that further limit the amount and type of reimbursable travel expenditures. When there is a conflict between University policy and sponsor requirements, the more restrictive policy applies.

All travel expenses charged to federally sponsored projects are governed by the cost principles of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) [Circular A-21](#), and therefore must pass the following three tests:

- The cost must be allowable under both the provisions of Circular A-21 and under the terms of the specific award
- The cost must be allocable; that is the expense can be associated to a project with a high degree of accuracy
- The cost must be reasonable; that is the cost reflects what a "prudent person" would pay in a like circumstance.

Federal policy requires that U.S. flag air carriers or approved carriers under the Open Skies agreement be used regardless of cost, convenience, or personal travel preference. For more information, refer to the [Fly America Act and Open Skies Agreement](#). Documentation of any exceptions or waivers must be attached to the travel expense report.

Prior to incurring travel-related expenses, individuals traveling under sponsored project awards are encouraged to contact the Office for Sponsored Programs for guidance regarding approved travel costs.

[Back to the top](#)

Non-Employee Travel Reimbursements

For all individuals not employed by BC (e.g., prospective employees, speakers, consultants) when traveling at the University's expense, a payment should be made directly to the traveler if the American Express Department card was not used to book the travel.

[Back to the top](#)

Transportation and Related Expenses

Travelers are to choose the most practical and economical mode of transportation, and generally are to travel the most direct route. All travelers are to comply with the following guidelines for actual and reasonable transportation expenditures.

[Back to the top](#)

Commercial Transportation

The University reimburses commercial air, rail, and bus transportation fares for economy/coach accommodations. The University does not reimburse for first-class. If a traveler submits an expense report with any upgrades (i.e. extra leg room, preferred seating, etc.) justification is to be provided on all pertinent travel forms in order to obtain approval for payment. Discounted or reduced round-trip rates should be taken when available.

Purchase of Tickets

Transportation arrangements are recommended to be made directly by the traveler through the University's authorized travel agencies. Information regarding the authorized travel agencies are available on BC's Travel website.

When making transportation reservations, it is recommended the traveler supply the authorized travel agency with his or her American Express Corporate Card number. To secure reimbursement, the traveler must retain all transportation ticket receipts (including e-ticket or passenger receipt) for purposes of documenting Travel Expense Report reconciliations.

Payment for Tickets in Advance of Travel

To receive reimbursement for transportation tickets in advance of travel, the itinerary invoice (reflecting travel dates and cost) provided by the authorized travel agency is to be submitted to the Accounts Payable department accompanied by a properly completed Travel Advance form (which can be found on the [Financial Management Systems' website](#) under Forms). Following completion of travel, a Travel Expense Report accompanied by the original transportation ticket receipt is to be submitted to the Accounts Payable department to reconcile the outstanding advance.

Unused Tickets

Any ticket or portion of a ticket that is not used for University travel must be returned to Boston College. If the traveler has already received payment for the ticket in advance of the trip, the traveler must provide reimbursement directly to Boston College by completing a travel Expense Report accompanied by a check.

[Back to the top](#)

Personal Owned Vehicle

When travel by personal owned vehicle (POV) is chosen over commercial transportation in order to save time, to transport equipment or to reduce costs when a number of people are traveling together to the same destination, reimbursement to the traveler is made on the basis of mileage traveled.

When, primarily for the convenience of the traveler, a POV is used for official travel, reimbursement is not to exceed the cost of round-trip air travel between the nearest commercial airports serving the cities of origin and destination.

The mileage allowance covers all operating costs of the vehicle including gas. Repair costs are not reimbursable, whether they result from the traveler's acts or the acts of others. However, ferry, bridge, tunnel, toll road, and parking charges are reimbursable in addition to the mileage allowance.

An accurate daily record of miles traveled is to be maintained. Internet maps can be used for documentation. Upon completion of travel, mileage and expenses are to be submitted on a Travel Expense Report form.

[Back to the top](#)

Car Rental

The use of rental cars is authorized when their use results in savings of cost or time or when other modes of transportation are not available. All additional charges must have a documented business purpose and are subject to approval.

For insurance reasons, the traveler is to charge the rental to his or her American Express Corporate Card and is to do business with the rental car agency offering the best rates. (Information regarding the rental car agencies that provide special discounts to University travelers is available on the [BC's Travel website](#)). To secure reimbursement following completion of travel, the itemized rental car bill must accompany a properly completed Travel Expense Report form.

Rental Car Insurance

Boston College maintains an agreement with American Express to provide insurance coverage up to a maximum of \$50,000 for loss of and damage to a rental car due to fire, theft, vandalism or collision under the following conditions:

- (1) The car must be used for the official business of Boston College;
- (2) The American Express Corporate Card must be used to rent and pay for the car;
- (3) The rental agency's Collision or Loss Damage Waiver (CDW or LDW) must be rejected at the time the rental car agreement is signed;
- (4) All individuals expected to drive the car must be listed on the signed rental agreement; and
- (5) The rental period does not exceed 42 consecutive days.

The following types of vehicles are excluded from the American Express rental car insurance coverage; off-road vehicles, motorcycles, mopeds, recreational vehicles, trucks, antique automobiles, campers, trailers, cargo vans, and any other vehicle which is not a rental car or passenger van traveling on public paved roads.

Rental car insurance is available only in conjunction with the user of the American Express Corporate Card. All claims are to be reported within 24 hours to the Boston College Office of Risk Management as well as the claims administrator for American Express. For the name and phone number of the company responsible for administering the claims or for additional information regarding rental car insurance coverage, including a copy of the rental car insurance policy, please contact the Office of Risk Management.

[Back to the top](#)

Miscellaneous Transportation-Related Expenses

Tolls

Necessary, reasonable tolls are reimbursed.

Parking

Necessary charges for parking are reimbursed, including airport parking fees that do not exceed normal taxi fares to and from the airport.

Traffic Violations

NO traffic and parking violations received while driving rental, personal, or University-owned vehicles are reimbursed.

Public Transportation

As the preferred mode of transportation, public transportation is to be used whenever possible and practical. Public transportation costs are to be itemized on the Travel Expense Report.

Shuttle Service

The cost of shuttle service to and from airports and railroad stations, plus reasonable tips, is reimbursed to the extent that such service is not covered elsewhere.

Taxi Service

Taxi fares, including reasonable tips, are reimbursed when public transportation or shuttle service is not practical.

[Back to the top](#)

Lodging, Meals and Related Expenses

Expenses for lodging and meals are reimbursed, either on an actual, reasonable expense basis or on a per diem basis. Please see below for more detailed guidelines. Personal expenses, such as guest accommodations and other non-business charges, are the responsibility of the traveler.

Lodging

The traveler is to make lodging reservations in advance through the authorized travel agency using our contracted hotels or directly with the lodging facility (for example conference hotel). Sufficient advance booking will assure the best accommodations at the most reasonable cost. Lodging reimbursement is limited to single occupancy, single rooms only, unless rental accommodations are shared by more than one authorized traveler. The traveler is to use his or her American Express Corporate Card to pay the lodging bill immediately upon receipt, and is reimbursed for the actual expense of his or her lodging. To secure reimbursement following completion of travel, the final itemized hotel bill with proof of payment must accompany a properly completed Travel Expense Report form. Please note, a hotel confirmation is not acceptable documentation as proof of payment.

Travelers who lodge in a private residence with family or friends while traveling on University business must obtain prior approval from the responsible vice president, dean, department chairperson, or director in order to receive reimbursement for actual documented expenses in lieu of normal hotel costs. Such travelers are reimbursed for the actual and reasonable expenses incurred in extending appreciation for the hospitality of their hosts. When staying in a private residence, lodging per diem is not allowed.

For sponsored travel please see the Sponsored Project Travel section of the policy.

Meals

The traveler is reimbursed for the actual, reasonable cost, including tax and gratuity, of his or her meals during the travel period. To secure reimbursement following completion of travel, appropriate receipts for all meals must accompany a properly completed and signed Travel Expense Report form. Credit card and itemized restaurant receipts are required for amounts greater than \$75.00. Under \$75.00 only proof of payment is required. If reimbursement is for persons other than the traveler, IRS regulations require that the name of the individuals involved and the purpose of the expense be provided.

For sponsored travel please see the Sponsored Project Travel section of the policy.

Per Diem Allowance

Reimbursement on a per diem basis is allowable for all US travel based on the [CONUS standard rates](#) and for International travel based on [U.S. Department of State rates](#). Such allowances are not reimbursed whenever

lodging and/or meals are furnished at no additional cost to the traveler. For portions of days or meals, the per diem allowance is to be prorated. Conference attendees are not reimbursed for additional meals if meals are already included in the conference registration fee, unless specifically approved by the supervisor. Per diem reimbursement for these expenses is the payment to the traveler of a fixed amount per day to cover the cost of lodging and/or meals and all related taxes and gratuities. Traveler must provide supporting documentation as to location and justification for travel. Traveler must provide documentation of the applicable [CONUS](#) or [U.S. Department of State](#) rates with submitted expense reports for the days travelled.

[Back to the top](#)

Other Travel Related Expenses

Other expenses normally associated with travel that are reimbursable include registration fees, telephone calls made while on official business, and miscellaneous expenses clearly related to the purpose of the travel and fully documented.

Registration Fees

Registration fees should be paid directly to the vendor using the American Express Corporate card and submitted as part of your final expense reimbursement.

Telephone Calls

Documented charges incurred outside a cell phone plan for all telephone calls made while on official business are reimbursed.

Other Miscellaneous Expenditures Not Reimbursable

- (1) Entertainment expenses
- (2) Additional travel expenses incurred when an itinerary is altered to accommodate personal business (e.g., airline change fee)
- (3) Costs incurred by unreasonable failure to cancel transportation or lodging reservations
- (4) Fines for automobile violations
- (5) Damage to property
- (6) Spouse travel
- (7) Child care expenses
- (8) Other expenses not directly related to the performance of the travel assignment (e.g., in-room movies, gym or spa charges or personal items)

For sponsored travel please see the Sponsored Project Travel section of the policy.

[Back to the top](#)

Travel Reports and Payments

Travel Advances

Advances may be obtained in those circumstances in which University travel would impose a financial burden on the individuals involved. A [Travel Advance](#) form must be signed and received by Accounts Payable at least two weeks prior to the trip and must include the proper supporting documentation showing the expenses have incurred. Advances are not issued to employees who have yet to reconcile previously issued advances.

Boston College considers a travel advance to be a loan. As such, each advance must be settled within thirty (30) days of an employee's return from travel. To reconcile an advance it must be reported on the Travel Expense Report form that documents the trip, and any unused portion must be deducted from the reports final balance due.

Travel Expense Reports

Travel Expense Reports must be properly completed and submitted to Accounts Payable department following completion of travel. Expenses claimed on the reports must be supported by original receipts. However, for an unreceipted expense such as tolls or tips, you must identify and may receive up to a maximum of \$25 a day. This is not to be confused with per diem. A properly completed Travel Expense Report includes:

- (1) Full name and campus address of the University employee requesting reimbursement;
- (2) Eagle ID number of the employee;
- (3) Business purpose;
- (4) Travel destination;
- (5) Departure and return dates;
- (6) Expenses incurred, itemized by expense type (i.e. meals, parking, lodging) and supported by attached, original receipts;
- (7) Reconciliation of any travel advance; and
- (8) Signature of the employee being reimbursed, to certify the expenses claimed.

As part of the University's business practice, it is recommended that each Travel Expense Report be signed by the traveler's direct supervisor or the responsible vice president, dean, department chairperson, or director. Travelers are responsible for signing Travel Expense Reports to certify that expenses are appropriate and that all required receipts are attached.

The traveler is reimbursed for expenses, following the submission of a properly completed Travel Expense Report to Accounts Payable. Reports are processed promptly to enable employees to pay their American Express Corporate Card bills in a timely manner. All reimbursements are made payable to the traveler, and not to American Express or other credit card companies.

Travel Advances are to be reconciled on the Travel Expense Report form within 30 days of the travel. If the amount of the Travel Advance exceeds travel expenditures, the unused portion of the advance is to be returned to the University with the Travel Expense Report. Such settlements are to be made payable to "Trustees of Boston College", and are to be submitted with the Travel Expense Report form.

Accounts Payable will make every effort to reconcile outstanding travel advances. If, after repeated notices to an employee, an advance remains outstanding, the responsible vice president is notified and appropriate, legal collection action is taken.

[Back to the top](#)

Family Members

The University does not reimburse travel expenses incurred by a family member. Any employee who travels with family is expected to pay for all incremental costs associated with the family member's travel, for example transportation costs, additional lodging expenses, meal expenses and registration fees.

Foreign Travel

Foreign Travel expenses are reimbursed at the federal travel per diem rates in effect at the time of travel or on an actual expense basis if original receipts are submitted. The current federal travel per diem rates are available at the [U.S. State Department](#).

All claims for foreign travel expenses must be converted to U.S. dollars. The conversion rate and computation, as well as the source used to verify the rate, such as [OANDA](#), must appear on each receipt. Foreign travel expenses charged to American Express Corporate Cards are converted by American Express, and are reimbursed to the traveler as they appear on the Corporate Card bills.

[Back to the top](#)