

Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts Travel/Reimbursement Policy and Procedures

Reviewed January 2026

Purpose: This document outlines the approved process for college business-related travel and reimbursement. For travel course information, please see the Travel Course Guidelines on the [Administration & Finance forms webpage](#).

Policy: MCLA will reimburse employees for all, or part of, business-related travel depending upon contract language and administrative decisions. All purchases, including those for travel and other business purposes, should be made in the most fiscally responsible way. All out of pocket expenses may be reimbursed after the date of travel on the appropriate form. College credit cards are available to faculty and staff for necessary prepaid travel expenses and can be reserved through the Administration & Finance Office (A&F). To obtain the college credit card for prepaid purchases, the traveler must complete a [Purchase Requisition Form](#) with VP approval. Employees with a college procurement card issued in their name should not use personal payment methods for college business and/or travel expenditures. However, cardholders should obtain prior VP approval for meals purchased with their college procurement card during travel, and these purchases should be kept within the current per diem meal rates.

Travel approval: All College related travel must be approved by the employee's immediate supervisor and/or department head prior to embarking on travel; email approval is sufficient. This approval sanctions the employee's leave from campus during the time of travel and event/meeting. This approval also ensures coverage under the college's liability insurance (see additional auto insurance requirement below for travel by car in a college vehicle).

Means of Travel

By car: For all travel it is most economical to use college vehicles. College vehicles are available from Public Safety and Admissions. All offices have access to college vehicles. Travelers are required to submit a [Driver Form](#) a minimum of three business days before the first travel date if they will drive a college vehicle. Should MCLA's auto insurance company deem a submission unacceptable for coverage based on their review of the driving record, we will be notified of the declination (not the reason) and that individual will be ineligible to drive college vehicles.

If a college vehicle is not available and your trip is less than 100 miles round trip, your personal vehicle may be used. If that is not an option and for all other travel, a rental car should be rented through Enterprise Rental in Pittsfield (413-443-6600). Travelers should review the

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Enterprise Rent-A-Car section of the Procurement Policy & Procedures Manual prior to their first car rental for details about the rental process. These options, including use of personal vehicles, should be discussed with your immediate supervisor during the travel approval process.

By air, train, or bus: This travel must be pre-approved by your immediate supervisor and/or Vice President. College employees should travel in coach class and depart from the closest practical airport or station. The choice of airport or airline should be determined by cost of airfare, distance from the traveler's home, or distance from the college.

Reimbursement

General: After traveling, if reimbursement is needed, a [Reimbursement Request Form](#) must be completed and signed by the approving supervisor. Travel reimbursement requests must be submitted within 15 days of travel completion to guarantee reimbursement. In the rare case of non-travel-related expenditures paid out-of-pocket for college business, such as emergency purchases, employees must complete a [Reimbursement Request Form](#) accordingly to request reimbursement. All other purchasing should be done in accordance with the Procurement Policy & Procedures Manual. Original, itemized receipts (not copies) are required for all reimbursements. Providing all required documentation has been received and verified by A&F, reimbursements will be made during the next payment processing cycle. Lack of documentation will delay the payment process.

For car: College vehicles should be returned with a full tank of gasoline as a courtesy for the next traveler and drivers should utilize the MCLA gas card to refill the vehicle. Alternatively, if necessary, the cost to refill college vehicles with gasoline is reimbursable to the traveler with a receipt. If a personal vehicle is used, mileage for reimbursement will be checked with google maps using the most direct route. Mileage will be determined by the closest starting point (either the college or your home address) to the destination and back. MCLA reimburses mileage at the prescribed Federal (IRS) rate.

Meals and Other Costs: All reimbursements require original, itemized receipts as proof. Documentation of travel and/or meeting information is required, including location, events attended, agenda, and meeting attendees.

Meals: When meals are reimbursable under this policy or under any applicable collective bargaining agreement, they will be reimbursed at the rates then in force under the applicable collective bargaining agreement.

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Reimbursement for meals purchased during travel will be based upon receipt amounts submitted **NOT** to exceed the per diem rate described on the travel reimbursement form. Meal reimbursement will not be provided if conference or meeting registration states that such meals are provided. Special events at conferences will not be reimbursed unless pre-approved.

Meal requests for special events, meetings, groups, and/or candidate interviews should be requested via the Purchase Requisition Form as a credit card request. The names of attendees and an agenda should be submitted with the receipt(s) as well as prior VP approval (such as email approval or a VP-approved requisition). It is expected that these expenses will be cost-effective and reasonable.

Tips given to waitstaff should not exceed the standard rate of 20% for dine-in service and 10% for delivery. Tipping on pickup meals will not be reimbursed.

Expenses which are not reimbursable: Alcohol, entertainment expenses (i.e. hotel movies), third party delivery fees (example: DoorDash or Uber Eats fees), tips above the approved rate, credit card fees, personal telephone calls, laundry, traffic fines, parking tickets, or personal trip insurance.

Other: A&F staff will review travel reimbursement receipts, mileage, toll receipts, meal receipts, etc. Employees sign the reimbursement form confirming that the information is accurate. The College reserves the right to request additional information to confirm the accuracy of the reimbursement request. Knowingly submitting a falsified reimbursement form or attempting to be reimbursed for travel not completed will result in appropriate disciplinary action under the applicable collective bargaining agreement.

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Not every situation can be covered by a set of written guidelines. If you have any questions, contact A&F prior to travel and/or completing purchases.

Review: This policy will be reviewed periodically by the Vice President of Administration and Finance.