



COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON POLICY AND PROCEDURE

NUMBER & TITLE: STUDENT – GROUP TRAVEL
OWNER: PROCUREMENT AND CONTROLLER'S
OFFICES
ORIGINATED: 4/21/06
REVISED:

POLICY STATEMENT:

The College of Charleston (COFC) has the responsibility to enforce State purchasing, disbursement and travel regulations as promulgated by the State Budget and Control Board and to develop procedures that encourage safety, maximize educational value, manage risk, and minimize liability for all student-group travel activities.

PROCEDURE:

- A. Scope of Student-Group Travel. This policy applies to all student-group travel in conjunction with official college-sponsored activities, and registered student organizations, including but not limited to instructional field trips, college recognized club or organization activities, athletic travel events, student-group travel to conferences, workshops, and programs sponsored or endorsed by the COFC.
1. The COFC will not take on any responsibility for unscheduled and/or unauthorized student-group travel.
 2. COFC requires that all applicable campus travel forms be completed and approved prior to the trip.
- B. Methods of Payments. Generally, a combination of purchasing methods (direct payment to the vendor, the State Purchasing Card, and travel cash advance) will be required to fund the trip and will provide for optimal financing conditions.

1. Direct Payment to Vendor. If at all possible, the first option for payment of lodging and transportation expenses such as air fare of student-group travel events should be to arrange for direct payment to the vendor by disbursement voucher using the regular Accounts Payable (A/P) process.
2. State Purchasing Card. The use of the State Purchasing Card is allowable for student travel expenses if the direct payment method is not possible.
 - a. A copy of the approved Travel Authorization must be submitted to the Procurement Office when making the request to Procurement to use the State Purchasing Card.
 - b. The dollar limit on the procurement card may require an increase based on the budgeted amount of the trip. The dollar limit on each procurement card will vary depending on the prepaid expenses (e.g. deposits paid for lodging expenses, airline tickets) that can be made through the regular A/P process and the amount of travel cash advance required.
 - c. The Purchasing Office requires 60 days processing time for approval of a new card and/or changes to authorized limits and types of purchases permitted.
 - d. The number of individuals who may have their travel restrictions lifted on their State Purchasing Cards shall be limited. Lifting the limits on travel will be time-restricted based on factors such as the duration of the trip, seasonal events, nature of the program etc.
 - e. Allowable group travel expenses may include lodging, airfare, meals, ground transportation while in travel status, and activity costs such as entrance fees for museums.
 - f. In the event a State Purchasing Card is required to secure the most economical pricing structure of airline tickets and lodging, the requestor must contact the departmental travel coordinator to make the arrangements.
 - g. The cardholder has the same responsibilities as otherwise delineated in the Purchasing Card Manual. Upon returning from the trip, the cardholder is required to present itemized receipts for all transactions to the Controller's Office upon ten business days or the first five working days of July (the beginning of the new fiscal year), whichever comes first.
3. Travel Cash Advance. A travel cash advance request may be made for the difference of the charges on the State Purchasing Card and the direct payment to the vendor. The travel advance must be settled with the

Controller's Office within ten days of returning from the trip or the first five working days of July (the beginning of the new fiscal year), whichever comes first.

4. Personal Credit Cards. As mandated by the S. C. Comptroller General's Office and College policy, personal credit cards including COFC issued Bank of America Cards must not be used to cover student travel expenses in anticipation of receiving an advance reimbursement prior to taking the trip.

C. Types of Expenses.

1. Meals. Meals will be reimbursed at actual costs not to exceed per diem, except when applicable.
 - a. A faculty/staff member who pays for meals for the entire group must present itemized receipts to get reimbursed for actual costs.
 - b. When a faculty/staff member gives per diem money to each participant, every participant must sign indicating receipt of funds. Recommended documentation would include participants' names, ID numbers, signatures and the amounts received. No other receipts are required.
 - c. A student traveling and paying his/her own costs may claim actual expenses up to the per diem. Itemized receipts are required.
2. Transportation. Transportation may be provided in several different modes:
 - a. Rental vehicle through State Motor Vehicle Management Fleet, College contract or leasing agent;
 - b. Air travel;
 - c. Mileage reimbursement at the approved rate; and/or
 - d. Public transportation.
3. Lodging.
 - a. If each student pays his/her own expenses, actual lodging expenses may be reimbursed. Reimbursement should be submitted on a travel reimbursement form with a copy of the paid receipt for lodging attached.
 - b. Paid itemized receipts are required for lodging. An itemized invoice with a detailed listing of the individuals who received lodging is required regardless of the method of purchase.

4. Travel costs related to an employee traveling as an advisor/chaperone may be treated as student-group travel costs. All expenses may be submitted on one travel voucher. Travel costs for chaperones who are not College employees (i.e. volunteers) should be treated as student-group travel.
5. Gratuities are not an allowable reimbursement for state employees except when paid as a part of a billing for a banquet, luncheon, etc. The amount of the gratuity cannot exceed 20% of the cost of the charges for food.

D. Settlement of Travel Cash Advances

1. All travel cash advance payments must be settled with the Controller's Office within 10 days upon returning from the trip or the first five working days of July (the beginning of the new fiscal year), whichever comes first. The expenses must be justified using paid receipts from vendors, student logs of signatures and amounts of money received.
 - a. If the total dollar amount of the receipts exceeds the travel cash advance, a reimbursement will be made to the individual incurring the out-of pocket expenses.
 - b. If the total dollar amount of the receipts is less than the travel cash advance, the difference owed should be deposited with the COFC Treasurer's Office and a copy of the cash receipt should be included with the expense receipts.
2. Foreign Currency. The traveler should make every effort to exchange foreign currency for U. S. dollars prior to returning to the U. S. However, should the traveler possess foreign currency, it should be deposited with the COFC Treasurer's Office. The Treasurer's Office will notate any loss or gain realized through the fluctuations of the exchange rates and will send the appropriate documentation to the Controller's Office.
3. Non-compliance with this procedure will jeopardize the privilege to receive future travel cash advances.

- E. Advance Payments of Airfare and Registration Fees. The College will honor vouchers in the current fiscal year for advance payments of airfare and registration fees for official travel to meetings/conferences in July and August (of the new fiscal year) if the advance payment results in a savings and funds are available in the requesting department's budget. If the transaction amount meets the prepaid expense dollar threshold, it will be recognized as a prepaid item in the current fiscal year and as an expenditure in the new fiscal year. Please see the Controller's Office policy and procedures on Prepaid Expenses.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- A. The COFC department, registered student organization, academic program, college employee, etc., that/who sponsors the organized student-group travel must ensure compliance with this policy and related procedures. If an individual student travels under these guidelines and policy, a college employee (sponsor) must ensure compliance with these practices.
- B. Departments that use any COFC owned, rented, borrowed or leased vehicle are responsible for assuring that the drivers of the vehicle possess valid drivers' licenses, have attended all driver-training required by the College and have been approved to drive COFC owned, rented, borrowed or leased vehicles.
- C. A traveler on official College business will exercise the same care in incurring expenses and accomplishing an assignment that a prudent person would exercise if traveling on personal business. Excess costs, circuitous routes, delays or luxury accommodations unnecessary or unjustified in the performance of an assignment are not considered acceptable as exercising prudence.