

ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATING PROCEDURE: Travel and Other Expenses

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Linked to a College Policy:	# 4-414, <i>Travel and Other Expenses</i>

Policy Statement

The College Policy and this Procedure are intended to ensure compliance with Ministry expense directives and the College's integrity with regard to the spending of public funds.

Definitions/Acronyms

Approver: An administrative position which has been delegated authority for approval of financial transactions for a College Department(s).

SMT member: The College's Senior Management Team members.

Reimbursement: Includes employee expense statements as well as College credit card statements.

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Operating Procedure

1.0 GENERAL

The purpose of this Procedure is to:

- set out rules and principles for the Reimbursement of travel, meals, hospitality and other expenses to ensure fair and reasonable practices;
- provide a framework of accountability and transparency to guide the effective oversight of public funds in the Reimbursement of expenses that support College objectives; and
- ensure that Fleming College complies with the Broader Public Sector Expenses Directive.

The expense rules apply to any individual in the College making an expense claim, including the following:

- appointees,
- board members,
- volunteers,
- employees, and
- consultants and contractors engaged by the College, providing consulting or other services.

In addition, every funding agreement between the College and a ministry or agency of the Government of Ontario or any other funding agency is deemed to include the requirements of this Procedure. This Procedure prevails over any relevant terms of an agreement if there is any conflict or inconsistency between them.

Alcohol cannot be claimed and will not be Reimbursed as part of a travel or meal expense. For rules regarding Reimbursement for the service of alcohol as part of a hospitality event see section 7.0.

College funds spent on food services being served at all College sites must be arranged through the College food service provider as they are the exclusive provider on campus. Culinary School events and food served in Fulford's space prepared by the Culinary School are the only two exceptions.

The College reserves the right to refuse, in whole or in part, Reimbursement of expenses.

Expenses for a group can only be claimed by the most senior person present –expenses cannot be claimed by an individual that are incurred by his/her Approver (e.g., a supervisor/manager cannot submit his/her Director's claim for lunch even if they were at the same event).

Should any individual fail to adhere to the expense rules, the following will occur:

- the supervisor will upon notification of failure to adhere take appropriate corrective action,
- if necessary a written notification from Finance will be issued to the employee and their supervisor and/or other appropriate management levels,

- the employees College credit card may be zero balanced and possibly suspended, and their authorization to travel will be reviewed, and
- the employee may be subject to disciplinary action.

This Procedure does not prevail over a collective agreement between the College and a bargaining agent representing employees of the College.

This Procedure is posted on the College's website so it is available to the public. Frequently Asked Questions can be found on the [Finance](#) website.

2.0 ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK

The President has the authority to establish additional rules regarding expenses and may modify the rules or level of approval upward to a more senior level.

This Procedure is based on the following key principles:

Accountability: The College is accountable for public funds used to Reimburse travel, meals, hospitality and other expense. All expenses must support business objectives. Since expense accounts can become matters of public record through audit or other means, expenses must be, incurred and claimed in a manner that is publicly defensible and will not harm the College's reputation as a good manager of its resources.

Transparency: The College is transparent to all stakeholders. The rules for incurring and Reimbursing travel, meals, hospitality and other expenses are clear, easily understood, and available to the public.

Value for Money: College dollars are used prudently and responsibly. Plans for travel, meals, hospitality and other expenses are necessary and economical with due regard for health and safety and efficiency of operations.

Fairness: Legitimate authorized expenses incurred during the course of the business of the College are reimbursed.

3.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Individuals making claims must:

- comply with the principles and spirit of this Procedure;
- obtain appropriate approval from their supervisor/manager (or as otherwise indicated) before incurring expenses;
- submit itemized receipts (paper, electronic or scanned format) with all claims, except where meal allowances are used (see Section 6.0), credit card slips are not sufficient;
- clearly document the description and purpose of the expenses submitted;
- submit claims by the end of the month following the month in which the expense was incurred;
- submit only one (1) expense report claim for a single trip;
- if the information above is not available or is not possible, submit a written explanation with the claim to provide the Approver with adequate information for decision-making;
- repay any overpayments – it is considered a debt owing to the College;

- if leaving employment with the College, submit any claims before leaving.

Individuals approving claims must:

- exercise managerial discretion judiciously;
- ensure they have personally gathered sufficient information to determine that the expenses were incurred on College business prior to signing to approve expenses and understand they cannot delegate their accountability to another staff member
- ensure staff are aware of the requirements of this Procedure;
- take appropriate action in the case of non-compliance;
- provide approval only for expenses that were necessarily incurred in the performance of College business;
- provide approval only for claims that include all appropriate documentation (e.g. itemized receipts (paper, electronic or scanned format) and the purpose of the expenses submitted, etc.);
- not approve their own expenses.

Good record-keeping practices must be maintained in Finance for verification and audit purposes. Finance is required to review and request additional information for any expense submitted, where appropriate documentation does not appear reasonable, etc. Claims submitted to Finance without appropriate documentation will be returned to the Approver.

Electronic approval is considered written approval for the purposes of this Procedure as long as the Approver has sufficient information to make an informed decision. Individuals are responsible for maintaining records of their own claims.

4.0 MANAGERIAL DISCRETION

For the purpose of this Procedure, managerial discretion is the administrative authority to make decisions and choices with some degree of flexibility, while maintaining compliance with this Procedure and the rules. All decisions made under the expense rules should be made very carefully.

Approvers are accountable for their decisions, which must be:

- subject to good judgment and knowledge of the situation;
- exercised in appropriate circumstances; and
- in compliance with this Procedure.

When a situation arises and discretion needs to be exercised, Approvers should consider whether the request is:

- able to stand up to scrutiny by the auditors and members of the public;
- properly explained and documented;
- fair and equitable;
- reasonable;
- appropriate.

It is the responsibility of both the Approver and the individual to work out appropriate arrangements which would meet the test of being fair and equitable.

Where an Approver exercises discretion in making an exception, in order to ensure a proper record for audit purposes, the rationale must be documented and approved by the approver's immediate supervisor.

5.0 TRAVEL

For the purpose of this Procedure, travel does not refer to a person's regular commute to work – expenses related to a person's regular commute are not reimbursable.

When planning any travel, consider business continuity (e.g., deciding whether senior management or people with specialized knowledge or expertise should travel together).

The method of travel selected should be the most practical and economical way to travel, consider using audio or video conferencing whenever possible, as an alternative to travel.

Economy (coach) class is the standard travel option. Travel in business class must have prior approval by the President, and may be considered in the following circumstances:

- choosing a travel time that allows you to reduce expenditures on meals or accommodation; or
- on international flights.

All travel requires at least prior verbal approval (travel outside of Ontario requires prior written approval). The exception to this is regular recurring travel included in the approved budget, which is considered prior approval

The following chart identifies the level for approvals for travel:

Role	Travel within Ontario	Travel within North America	Travel outside North America
Employee	Manager/Supervisor	SMT member	President
President	Not required	Not required	Board of Governors

International Travel

If travelling internationally (outside North America), in addition to the obligations set out elsewhere in this Procedure, the following rules apply.

Requests for international travel must include:

- acknowledgement that all appropriate approvals are in place;
- written rationale demonstrating critical value of travel for College priorities and interests, and details how the travel will produce a benefit for the College;
- documentation showing detailed itemization of anticipated expenses (note that the lowest cost and most reasonable method of travel must be used);
- Request for Approval for International Travel form (can be found on the [Finance](#) website).

Vehicle

When road transportation is the most practical, economical way to travel, the order of preference is:

- College vehicle;
- rental vehicle;
- personal vehicle, if it is more economical than a rental vehicle.

Rental Vehicle

When renting a vehicle, a compact model or its equivalent is required. Any exceptions must be:

- documented and approved prior to the rental if possible; and
- guided by the principle that the rental vehicle is the most economical and practical size, taking into account the business purpose, number of occupants and safety (including weather) considerations.

The Collision Damage Waiver insurance option offered through the car rental company, which the College has an agreement with, must be selected.

Luxury and sports vehicles are prohibited.

To avoid higher gasoline charges, refuel your rental car before returning it.

The website link for the car rental company which the College has an agreement with can be found on the [Finance](#) website.

Personal Vehicle

If you will be driving more than 200 kilometres in a day, you should consider using a rental vehicle.

If you are going to drive your personal vehicle for more than five days within a single calendar month – even if you are not exceeding 200 kilometres in a single day – you should consider lower cost options, such as vehicle rental.

The Approver must make a decision on the type of vehicle used for travel (personal or rental) based on the frequency of travel as well as the distance per trip.

If you use your personal vehicle while on College business, the following apply.

- The vehicle must be insured at the vehicle owner's expense for personal motor vehicle liability and the policy must have a limit of Third Party Liability not less than \$1,000,000.
- It is the driver/owner's responsibility to ensure that the motor vehicle insurance includes coverage for business use of the vehicle.
- The College will not reimburse the costs of insurance coverage for business use, physical damage or liability.
- The College is not responsible for reimbursing deductible amounts related to insurance coverage.
- In the event of an accident, you will not be permitted to make a claim to the College for any resulting damages.
- The College assumes no financial responsibility for personal vehicles

Carpooling is recommended for multiple people attending the same meeting/function (business continuity is to be considered as per section 3.0 - Travel).

Reimbursement and Rates

Rates are based on kilometres (KM) accumulated from April 1 of each year (fiscal year).

Rates are established in collective agreements, for individuals outside a collective agreement the rates in this Procedure apply.

Reimbursement will occur for the lesser of the actual KM's travelled to/from the destination and the KM's which would have been travelled had the individual left from or returned to their Fleming home campus. The starting point, destination and purpose of the trip are to be clearly documented.

Total Kilometres Driven per fiscal year	Southern Ontario (\$ per KM)	Northern Ontario (\$ per KM)
0 – 4,000 km	0.40	0.41
4,001 – 10,700 km	0.35	0.36
10,701 – 24,000 km	0.29	0.30
More than 24,000 km	0.24	0.25

Reimbursement rates for personal vehicles driven outside Ontario will be at the rates for Southern Ontario.

A description of the boundary between Northern and Southern Ontario can be found in the collective agreements.

Parking and Tolls

Reimbursement is provided for necessary and reasonable expenditures on parking, as well as tolls for bridges, ferries and highways, when driving on College business.

There is no reimbursement for traffic or parking violations.

Accommodation

There will be no reimbursement for hotel suites, executive floors or concierge levels when traveling. No reimbursement will occur for personal expenses such as movie or game rentals, bar services, spa services, dry cleaning, etc.

Reimbursement may be made for single accommodation in a standard room.

For extended stays at a single location, accommodation must be arranged with prior approval. This will take advantage of lower weekly or monthly rates.

Penalties incurred for non-cancellation of guaranteed hotel reservations are the individual's responsibility and may be reimbursed only in an exceptional circumstance.

Private stays with friends or family are acceptable, and a cash payment or gift may be provided to the friends or family:

- A maximum of \$30 per night is allowed for accommodation including any meals with friends or family, in lieu of commercial accommodation. Instead of a receipt, you must submit a written explanation describing the purpose of the trip, identifying the host and the number of days you stayed.
- The \$30 value may be given in the form of a small gift (which must be accompanied by a receipt) or by cash.

Visas and Immunization

You may be reimbursed for:

- the cost of a visa, plus the cost of immunizations and medications if necessary, for international travel.

Tips/Gratuities

You may be reimbursed for reasonable gratuities for porter, hotel room services, and taxis. Keep a record of gratuities paid.

Examples of reasonable amounts for gratuities include:

- 10%-15% on a restaurant meal;
- 10% on a taxi fare;
- \$2-\$5 for housekeeping (up to two nights in a hotel), up to \$10 for a longer stay;
- \$2-\$5 per bag for a porter.

Telecommunication

If you are away on College business, reimbursement will be made for:

- reasonable, necessary personal calls home for each night away; and
- additional business expenses, such as:
 - business calls and facsimile transmissions;
 - emergency calls from air or rail phones;
 - internet connections and computer access charges.

6.0 MEALS

Alcohol cannot be claimed and will not be reimbursed as part of a travel or meal expense.

Reasonable and appropriate meal expenses may be reimbursed. You may incur a meal expense when you are on College business and you:

- are away from the office area (i.e., at least 24 km) over a normal meal period; or
- have prior approval for the expense with the purpose of the meeting documented (e.g., a business meeting within the office area that must occur over lunch or dinner).

Meal expenses will be reimbursed at the established meal reimbursement rates, regardless of the actual meal costs. This is a **meal allowance**. Taxes and gratuities are included in the meal reimbursement rates. Receipts are not required to be submitted with meal claims or retained.

Individuals must be on travel status over the meal period and meals must be purchased in order to be able to submit a claim for reimbursement.

In limited and exceptional circumstances (e.g., health considerations; limited options available) where a meal expense is higher than the meal reimbursement rate, the actual cost of the meal may be reimbursed subject to managerial discretion. In these situations, the claim for meal reimbursement must be accompanied by an itemized receipt (paper, electronic or scanned format) (a credit card slip is not sufficient), a written rationale for exceeding the meal allowance rate and approval from the approver's immediate supervisor.

Reimbursement will not be provided for meals consumed at home or included in the cost of transportation, accommodation, seminars or conferences.

Meal reimbursements/allowances relating to overtime hours worked are established in collective agreements, for individuals outside a collective agreement the reimbursements/allowances will be consistent with collective agreements.

If you travel as a regular part of your job, your meals will not normally be Reimbursed unless you have obtained prior approval.

If a meal is purchased with a College credit card, there will be no further Reimbursement (i.e. if a meal is purchased for an amount less than the meal Reimbursement rate there will be no further Reimbursement to the individual for the difference between the Reimbursement rate and the actual meal cost).

For all occurrences where there are meals paid for others on the expense claim, meal allowances are not permitted and the individual submitting the claim for Reimbursement must provide the original itemized receipt and is to clearly indicate on the itemized receipt or expense claim who they had the meal with and the circumstances surrounding the meal.

If meals will be reimbursed by a funding agency which prohibits meal allowances and requires original itemized receipts, actual meal costs are to be claimed up to a maximum of the meal allowance rate and individuals must provide the original itemized receipts when submitting the claim for reimbursement.

Meal Rates in Canada

Reimbursement for meal expenses incurred in Canada are subject to the meal reimbursement rates set out in the chart below. These rates are an allowance and include taxes and gratuities.

Meal Type	Meal Reimbursement Rate
Breakfast	\$13.00
Lunch	\$17.00
Dinner	\$30.00
Daily total	\$60.00

Meal Rates outside of Canada

Reimbursement rates for meal expenses incurred in the United States of America are the same as the above meal rates in Canada, however in US funds.

Meal expenses incurred outside of North America will be reimbursed as set out in the appendices of the Treasury Board of Canada Travel Directive, April 1, 2008, or successor directive. This document can be found on the federal government [website](#). Appendix D - Allowances – Module 4 will provide the maximum rates in the funds identified for each country.

7.0 HOSPITALITY

Hospitality is the provision of food, beverage, accommodation, transportation and other amenities to people who are not engaged in work for the College, other designated Broader Public Sector organizations or any of the Ontario government ministries, agencies and public entities covered by the OPS Travel, Meal and Hospitality Expenses Directive (available on the Ministry of Government Services website).

Functions involving only people who work for the above noted organizations are not considered hospitality functions and cannot be reimbursed. This means that hospitality may never be offered solely for the benefit of anyone covered by this Procedure, or by the OPS Travel, Meal and Hospitality Expenses Directive. Examples of such expenses would be: office social events, retirement parties and holiday lunches.

Hospitality may be extended on behalf of the College when:

- providing people from national, international, or charitable organizations with an understanding or appreciation of the College and its objectives;
- conducting prestigious ceremonies for distinguished guests from the private sector;
- the business of the College includes hospitality functions; and
- other hospitality functions as approved by the President, providing they conform to the rules listed in this section of the Procedure.

All hospitality requires at least prior verbal approval.

Hospitality may include the consumption of alcohol at a meal or a reception with invitees, but only when there is a business case and prior written approval. Alcohol should be provided in a responsible manner, e.g., food must always be served when alcohol is available. Preference should also be given to wine, beer and spirits produced in Ontario.

A “Hospitality Event Approval Form” must have prior written approval by the President for hospitality events where alcohol will be served (can be found on the [Finance](#) website).

If the hospitality event is hosted by the President, the President must seek prior approval from the Chair of the Board.

Use a College facility for hospitality events if there is one available and appropriate (the College’s food service provider has exclusivity for all College functions). If a College facility is not available and another is chosen, the President must provide prior approval.

8.0 BUSINESS RELATED EVENTS/MEETINGS

Modest and reasonable expenses such as meals and/or refreshments which relate to business related events and meetings will be reimbursed. Meetings are to occur on College premises (the College’s food service provider has exclusivity for all College functions), if this is not possible due to a lack of availability of an SMT member must provide prior approval to the meeting occurring off site (this would include off site retreats relating to team building, professional development, etc.).

Expenses such as meals and/or refreshments relating to events which are more social than business related will not be Reimbursed (examples include holiday lunches, retirement parties, etc.).

All individuals are to ensure that prior to an expense being incurred which would fall under “business related events and meetings” that they are confident that it will be able to stand up to scrutiny by auditors and members of the public and is therefore fair, reasonable and appropriate.

9.0 HOSTING OTHER INSTITUTIONS

The College may provide support including modest and reasonable meals and/or refreshments when hosting staff from other institutions, including colleges, universities and provincial ministries or agencies, during discussions or conferences on issues of mutual interest and/or cooperation that seek to further the College’s objectives. Such expenses must be approved by an SMT member.

10.0 EXPENSES FOR CONSULTANTS AND OTHER CONTRACTORS

In no circumstances can hospitality, incidental or food expenses be considered allowable expenses for consultants and contractors or in any contract between the College and a consultant or contractor.

See the [Broader Public Sector Procurement Directive](#) on the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services website) for information about procurement and contracts.

Reimbursement for allowable expenses can be claimed and reimbursed only when the contract specifically provides for it.

11.0 STAFF RECOGNITION

Recognition of staff is an important and valuable component of the College meeting its objectives. As such, the following are acceptable and reimbursable expenses which are coordinated through the Human Resources department:

- Years of Service Awards
- Annual Fleming Awards
- Retirement Awards
- Special Events approved by the President

Food and non-alcoholic beverages up to \$200, purchased from the College food service provider, can be reimbursed for retirement receptions held at the College.

There are no other recognition expenses outside of the above which are allowable for Reimbursement (examples include: individual recognition lunches/dinners, gift certificates/cards, staff celebrations, etc.).

In an effort to have consistency and equality College Wide it is strongly discouraged for leaders to pay out of pocket for departmental recognition expenses falling outside of the above allowable expenses (other than small token items).

12.0 GIFTS

No gifts are to be purchased for anyone covered by this Procedure, or by the OPS Travel, Meal and Hospitality Expenses Directive.

Token gifts of appreciation, valued at up to \$30, may be extended to individuals not covered by this Procedure, or by the OPS Travel, Meal and Hospitality Expenses Directive in recognition of support of the College's objectives. Gifts valued over \$30 must be pre-approved by an SMT member.

13.0 CHARITABLE DONATIONS

The College typically does not make charitable donations (see Policy #4-408). Where a gift to another nonprofit or charitable organization is deemed to assist in achieving the purposes of the College, the purpose must be documented and approved by the President or designate.

14.0 CHARITABLE EVENT SPONSORSHIP/PARTICIPATION

Permitted where it is deemed to assist in achieving the purposes of the College. The purpose must be documented and approved by the President or designate.

15.0 POLITICAL EVENTS

The College will not reimburse the cost of attending political events such as fundraising dinners.

Related Documents

- Broader Public Sector Expenses Directive
- College Policy #4-414, *Travel and Other Expenses*
- Board Procedure #BP-002, *Expenses Regarding Governor Travel*

Appendices

N/A

Review / Revision Log

Summary of Changes	Date
Procedure originally linked to the Policy but issued as a separate document	ELT April 2011 Resolution BoG May 25-2011 #3
March 2013: Changes recommended by Administration (via Board Finance & Property Committee) as outcome of regular review of the College Expenses Directive; adoption of meal expense framework included in the Treasury Board of Canada Travel Directive, for implementation April 1, 2013	Resolution BoG March 27-2013 #4
December 2017: Adoption of meal allowances; document was classified and formatted as an Administrative Operating Procedure	ELT December 5, 2017
November 2018: full document review, nomenclature edits, addition of hyperlinks	SMT March 5, 2019
January 2021: minor housekeeping updates	January 18, 2021