



Travel Expenses

The following guidelines should be used by all persons traveling on official business of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, including:

- Members of the Commission on Higher Education
- Evaluators, Team Associates, and Consultants to Institutions
- Task Forces, Advisory Groups, Committees, and Consultants to the Commission
- Guest Speakers, Panelists, and Facilitators at Commission-sponsored events
- Staff, if traveling on institutional matters

At the conclusion of a trip authorized by the Commission or Commission staff, each traveler is required to file an expense voucher in order to provide an account of expenditures incurred and to request reimbursement. All expense vouchers must be accompanied by receipts or invoices in order to comply with the minimum accounting standards established by the Internal Revenue Service and the reporting standards of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. A copy of the expense voucher is available on the Commission's website at www.msche.org.

Failure to submit vouchers within one month following a travel event could result in the forfeiture of reimbursement. Please note that a signed voucher should be returned to the Commission even if no expenses are incurred.

The Commission reserves the right to disallow all or part of a traveler's expenses if, in its opinion, the traveler did not fulfill his or her obligations associated with the assignment or event. For evaluators, team associates, and consultants: Under no circumstances are expenses to be reported directly to the institution, nor should team members or consultants accept any form of direct reimbursement from the institution. Institutions may, however, make some travel and lodging arrangements on behalf of the Commission's visitors, such as local hotel accommodations, local transportation and flights, and they may pay for such arrangements directly.

In selecting a means of transportation, a balance must be struck between the need for economy on the one hand and the efficient use of time on the other. Taking that into consideration, the traveler should:

- use public transportation (e.g., airport buses, commuter trains, airport limousines), unless group taxi fares are most convenient and no more costly;
- use private automobiles as opposed to rental cars; and

- travel by air or rail at coach rate fares, except that travelers on institutional matters to be paid for by the institution may travel business class for air travel if the institution authorizes the upgrade or if the total travel time in each direction exceeds 10 hours, assuming the most efficient travel time and transfer time between connecting flights.

Air Travel

All travelers are expected to travel at coach rate fares, except as provided earlier. Even within coach, business class, or other classes, airline fares may vary considerably, depending on the airline, the travel agent, and other factors such as a Saturday night stay. Some lower fares are available through the services of a consolidator. Please use the least expensive reasonable transportation. If the quoted fares seem high, check with the Commission office or with the institution you will be visiting (if applicable) for suggestions for economical approaches.

Airlines often will offer special rates for travel that includes a Saturday night stay. If the potential savings exceed the cost of an overnight stay at a hotel, the traveler should take advantage of this option if it is convenient to do so, unless the ticket is non-refundable and the traveler anticipates a change or cancellation. If non-refundable tickets cannot be used by the traveler, they should be surrendered to Commission.

If a traveler does not have the resources to cover out-of-pocket travel expenses, or needs to be reimbursed prior to the actual meeting date, he or she should contact the Commission staff. If an individual does not carry personal flight and travel insurance, the cost of its purchase in amounts up to \$100,000 for a specific trip is a legitimate expense. The traveler should check with his or her home institution, which may have such coverage for faculty, administrators, and staff.

Rail Travel

All travelers are expected to travel at coach rate fares. Although travel on Amtrak's Acela Express is permissible, travelers should not use First Class unless they are prepared to pay the difference themselves. Regular Amtrak or Metroliner is preferable to Acela.

Travel by Automobile

Travel by private automobile is generally limited to round-trip distances of no more than 500 miles, and expenses are reimbursed at a flat mileage rate set by Commission and consistent with IRS regulations. The flat rate is intended to cover all operating expenses, including depreciation and insurance.

The Middle States Commission on Higher Education does not carry automobile liability or collision insurance for the protection of persons traveling on Commission business in their own cars. For travel by private automobile in excess of 500 miles, for which specific exemption has been obtained, reimbursement will be based on either the flat mileage rate or the air coach fare rate, whichever is less.

Rental cars should be at competitive rates, and the traveler should purchase insurance for liability and collision, unless it is already covered by personal automobile insurance.

International Travel

When a traveler is going to an overseas location on official Commission business, prior approval from the institution must be sought before making arrangements to travel by business class, except as provided above. Failure to secure permission may result in the traveler's paying the difference between coach and business class fares.

Expenses incurred in the preparation for international travel (e.g., passport/visa fees, immunization costs, etc.) should be reported on the Commission's expense voucher and accompanied by receipts.

Please refer to "International Travel by Commission Staff and Volunteers" for restrictions on travel abroad.

Housing

For Commission-sponsored meetings, single rooms will be reserved for each traveler if an overnight stay is approved by Commission staff. Only room and tax charges, and reasonable meals associated with travel to the meeting and not provided by the Commission at an event, will be paid by the Commission. Travelers must be prepared to cover all other expenses. These permitted expenses should be noted on the expense voucher.

Other Expenses

The Commission (or the institution hosting visiting evaluators) does not pay for persons not directly involved in the conduct of official Commission business. The Commission (or the institution hosting evaluators) will take responsibility only for reasonable travel costs, lodging, parking, and meals not included at official Commission functions. Personal expenses such as movies and alcoholic beverages will be deducted.

