Policy for Non-HLC Staff Traveling on HLC Business

All trustees, peer-reviewers, speakers, presenters, and facilitators should use the following guidelines when traveling to institutions or HLC-sponsored events.

It is the policy of HLC to reimburse its representatives for all reasonable and necessary expenses incurred while transacting HLC business. This document defines the expectations of HLC for travel planning, the expenses that will be reimbursed, and the conditions under which reimbursement will be made.

HLC’s current fee structure requires the hosting institution for an evaluation visit to directly reimburse HLC for the actual expenses (lodging, meals, and travel) incurred by the peer reviewers. Most educational institutions have reimbursement guidelines for their faculty and administrators when they travel; while the HLC prefers not to choose one standard, due to the great variety of visits and locales, we ask that you be conscientious about the expenses that you incur.

General

1. HLC uses a Travel Expense Reimbursement Form (TERF) in making reimbursements to persons traveling on HLC business. Generally, it is sent to the individual in advance with other materials related to the projected travel. A completed TERF must be submitted to HLC’s office for reimbursement to be made. This form can also be downloaded from HLC’s website.
2. As HLC does not invoice institutions until all visit related expenses have been submitted, please send the TERF to HLC within 30 calendar days after the end of the travel related event. Expense Reports submitted after 90 calendar days could be rejected unless approved for late payment by the Chief Financial Officer (CFO).
3. The IRS requires that receipts for individual travel related expenses in excess of $25 be submitted with the Travel Expense Reimbursement Form.
4. One copy of the TERF will be returned with the reimbursement check. The name and address at the upper left corner is used with a window envelope to ensure that the check is delivered as requested.
5. Travelers are urged to use the most economical mode of transportation. However, please strike the best balance between the use of personal time and the related cost.
6. Neither airfare nor lodging costs should be directly paid by a member institution.
7. Expenses will only be reimbursed for costs incurred from the night prior to the visit/event up to its completion unless approved in advance by the CFO or HLC Vice-President responsible for the event.
8. Individuals traveling on HLC business are permitted to retain bonus miles or points that are provided by airlines, hotels, and car rental agencies. However, HLC strongly discourages the selection of a vendor based solely on their incentive program. If travel services through another vendor are less expensive and as equally convenient, the traveler is expected to use the most economical option.
9. If prior HLC approval has been sought for special travel arrangements, this should be noted on the TERF.

Air and Train Travel

1. Whenever possible, reservations should be made sufficiently in advance to ensure the lowest possible fare.
2. HLC will only reimburse travelers for the cost of an economy fare for domestic travel.
3. Individuals traveling on overnight flights, or to international locations, may elect to fly business class.
4. Travel on non-commercial aircraft requires advance approval from an HLC Vice-President or the Chief Financial Officer.

Automobile, Taxi and Car Rental

1. Personal Automobile: Travelers using their personal automobile will be reimbursed at the current per mile IRS authorized rate. Mileage will be reimbursed for both driving to an institution/event as well as traveling to an airport or train station.
2. Taxi Service / Shuttle: HLC will reimburse the actual cost of necessary taxi or shuttle service, including tip.
3. Car Rentals will only be reimbursed with advance approval of an HLC Vice-President or CFO.
4. When a rental car has been determined to be necessary and approved, travelers should adhere to the following guidelines:
   
   i. HLC’s insurance policy does not cover rental car liability for non-HLC staff. All trustees and peer-reviewers must accept optional insurance coverage.
   ii. If traveling in a group, other team members may be added as authorized drivers.
   iii. No one other than an authorized driver should be allowed to drive the car.
   iv. Re-fuel the car prior to returning. HLC will reimburse the cost of gas used.
   v. Reimbursement will not be made for any moving violations or parking tickets incurred during the rental period.
   vi. Reimbursement for mileage should not be added to the cost of the rental car.

5. Reimbursement will be made for tolls and parking for both personal and rented cars.

Lodging and Meals

1. Reimbursement for lodging will only be made to an individual traveler. When traveling for an evaluation visit, please ensure the charges are not being billed to the institution.
2. An attempt should be made to keep the cost of domestic sleeping rooms under $250 per night.
3. Total housekeeping and porter gratuities should not total more than $5 per day.
4. Meal costs will naturally vary according to geographic location, but we ask that you think about general educational institutional guidelines for meal expenses.

Meeting Space

1. Should after hours meeting space be required for teams visiting an institution, the team chair may book a hotel suite for the length of the visit or a hotel meeting room.
2. If a meeting room is booked, please be conscious of internet, phone, and refreshment costs.
3. Reimbursement for a hotel meeting room should be made to the traveler and not be paid by the institution.

Phone/Internet Usage

1. Reimbursement will be made for reasonable telephone expenses to/from a traveler’s home or cellular phone.
2. Necessary Internet connection charges incurred while traveling will also be reimbursed by HLC.

Incidental Expenses

Incidental expenses such as copying, fax, etc., incurred while traveling will be reimbursed by HLC.

Non-Reimbursable Expenses

1. Airline and hotel travel insurance
2. Childcare
3. Hotel Movies
4. Valet service
5. Expenses of a spouse or companion unless pre-approved by HLC’s CFO, Chief Operating Officer or President.