



REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES POLICY

1. TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT

Purpose

This policy covers:

- all authorised travel carried out in relation to a College function,
- accommodation and meals costs incurred in relation to a College function, and
- any other miscellaneous expenses incurred in relation to carrying out College functions, and includes:
 - Council, Board and Committee members
 - Members and Fellows generally
 - Staff, and
 - those outside the College undertaking a College-authorised activity, such as guest lecturers engaged by a Chapter to speak at Science Week, non-College attendees of examination workshops.

This policy sets out guidelines for incurring expenses and for their reimbursement.

As Chapters are not separate legal entities from the College, a reference to the ‘College’ in this policy includes a Chapter if the context permits.

If you are uncertain about a particular expense or aspect of this policy, contact the EO, College Manager or Honorary Treasurer through the College Office, prior to the expenditure.

Air Travel

The Honorary Treasurer is the final arbiter for all travel reimbursements.

Unless an exemption is granted by the Treasurer (see ‘*What can be booked?*’ below) airfares necessary for College business should be booked in advance using the lowest available type of airfare after checking each airline. College staff will use published, direct airfares, available for purchase six weeks prior to Science Week, from all capital cities to the Gold Coast as the basis for examining claims for reimbursement.

The College will not reimburse the full cost of airfares broken up with protracted stopovers. Instead, it will reimburse the cost of a direct airfare or, where a one night stopover necessitated by difficult flight times is substantiated, the cost of that airfare and appropriate relevant accommodation expenses (see section **2 Accommodation and meals** below).

The College will bear the costs where an unavoidable cancellation is necessary in the case of

someone who booked a non-refundable fare.

Flights for observers at Science Week will only be reimbursed as expenses by prior agreement of the College office where the observer was not otherwise attending Science Week.

What can be booked?

Domestic Australian and New Zealand airfares: must be economy class (or cheaper if available).

International travel Air travel of greater than 6 hours will be reimbursed at a **fully flexible economy fare** at the discretion of and with prior approval of the Honorary Treasurer.

Chapters should note that if it is possible to obtain a discounted higher-standard seat (such as Business Class) where the cost is not greater than a standard fully flexible economy fare, this will also be allowed. Chapters should always ‘shop-around’ to try to find these types of deals rather than just rely on the standard fares many travel booking sites publish.

Where the Chapter has a bona fide belief that they will not be able to obtain a suitable speaker without a higher-standard seat (such as Business Class) and can not find a suitable discounted booking for no more than the cost of a fully flexible economy fare, the Chapter should:

- scope the best-priced flight which will suit the speaker, and
- **before any booking or commitment to the speaker is made**, apply to the Treasurer stating the reasons why an exemption to the policy should be granted. Chapters are encouraged to make applications early in case the Treasurer may need to seek the views of Council before making a decision. Chapters are also reminded of their obligations under the *Chapter Guidelines* section ‘*Protocol for Expenditure of Chapter Funds*’ to have their budgets approved before any expenditure in a financial year occurs and to note the approval process where expenses exceed those budgeted for.

Air travel of less than 6 hours will be reimbursed up to the lowest economy fare available with a reasonable itinerary with prior approval of the Honorary Treasurer. Travel insurance is recommended for international travel.

Chapters must only book airfares consistent with this policy as approved by Council in their annual budget (see *Chapter Guidelines* for more information). This includes airfares booked directly by speakers (or any other person outside of the College) where the Chapter will reimburse the cost.

Airfares should be booked as soon as possible in advance of travel in order to take advantage of any discounts. A cheaper non-refundable fare along with appropriate travel insurance should be chosen in preference to a more expensive refundable fare.

One piece of checked personal baggage can be claimed, when using an airline that charges for checked baggage. Extra bags and excess baggage charges will not be reimbursed unless the material being carried is related College business (e.g. paperwork, equipment etc.).

Surface Travel - Generally

Travel should be booked as far as possible in advance if there is any cost benefit in doing so.

All surface travel will be by economy or equivalent class, unless another class is cheaper, or otherwise preapproved by the Honorary Treasurer.

Home to Airport

If the traveller's own car is used for travel to and from the home airport, long-term parking should be used for any parking over 24 hours duration.

The College will reimburse for the cheapest option of driving and parking, taxi or train, unless prior permission is sought from the Honorary Treasurer (via the Office) for exceptional circumstances. For example:

- trains are infrequent or the flight will be late at night
- the traveller is carrying College related property so driving or a taxi is a more appropriate method of transport.

Science Week Transfer Limitation

Unless otherwise approved by the Honorary Treasurer or EO, a maximum reimbursement of \$120 (adjusted for inflation from 2017 onwards) will be permitted for return ground transfers between Brisbane or Coolangatta airports and the College Science Week venue.

Use of Own Vehicle and Other Information

The College will pay a mileage fee according to ATO rates (<http://bit.ly/1LYPQJP>) for private car travel (one return trip unless previously approved by College Manager) required to undertake a College function. The College will only reimburse direct travel to and from the traveller's normal place of residence or work to site of College business. A private vehicle should only be used where this is more economical than another form of appropriate transport.

Personal expenses incurred by the traveller that are not directly related to the travel itself (e.g. pet sitting, dry cleaning) are not the responsibility of the College and will not be reimbursed.

Additional travel (for non-College reasons) before or after the time of College business is permitted however the College will not reimburse any additional costs that are incurred as a result of the extra travel.

2. ACCOMODATION AND MEALS

Science Week

Council & Staff

Where accommodation and meals have not been provided by the College, Councilors and staff are entitled to be paid at the per diem rate (set out below).

Note: Where not all meals are provided by the College (and a per diem is not payable) these may be claimed as expenses (excluding alcohol).

Board members

Board members are paid per diem for Science Week.

Examiners

Science Week examiners will be paid according to the information provided in the *Examiner Handbook*.

Observers

Accommodation and meals not provided by the College can be claimed as expenses, (alcohol excepted) provided these are reasonable (up to a maximum of the per diem rate for accommodation and meals).

Science Week speakers

Payment for accommodation and meals (and any other incidental costs) for guest speakers engaged by Chapters for Science Week are the responsibility of the Chapter engaging them.

The Per Diem rate:

- is \$300 per day (adjusted for inflation from 2017 onwards)
- starts from the date of departure (provided personal business or leisure is not included before the College function), and
- extends until the day the function is completed and the person departs. Where it is not practical to return travel the same day the function is completed, an additional per diem is payable until it is (normally one extra night).

For any travel consisting of more than 8 hours of flights or crossing more than 5 time zones, up to two per diem payments will be paid to allow the College representative to recover from the air travel.

College provided dinners and events

Council and Board attendees to these events are expected to attempt to maximise their exposure to the College membership (where possible) and be available to discuss College matters.

Examiners' Dinner

Provided free to Councillors, Board members, examiners and staff

Joint Council - Board combined dinner

Provided free to Councillors, Board members and staff

Awards Dinner

Provided free to Councillors, Board members, Candidates and staff

Examination workshop

The College will normally provide accommodation and most meals for attendees. Reasonable expenses for meals (alcohol excepted) not provided can be claimed from the College.

Generally

Mini-bar charges, hotel phone use and entertainment costs are the responsibility of the person incurring the charge.

Where a per diem is paid, this includes any internet expenses.

Laundry expenses can only be claimed for authorised College trips over seven days.

While all Councilors, Board members, staff and observers are encouraged to stay on-site for Science Week, alternative accommodation nearby is permitted.

Science Week

Provided free to Councillors, Board members, examiners, observers and staff.

3. MISCELLANEOUS

Travel insurance for the duration of the business trip can be claimed from the College.

Making a Claim

All expense claims must be submitted with a completed College claim form and all original receipts.

All expenses will be reimbursed in Australian Dollars.

All allowable Science Week expense claims, together with the tax invoice, **MUST** be received by the College on or before 30 September.

Credit Card Expenses

Expenses billed on an Australian or NZ credit card will be reimbursed as billed, including any foreign currency transaction fees. A copy of the relevant part of the credit card statement should be submitted with the claim form and original receipts.

If a credit card billed in a currency other than Australian or NZ dollars or foreign currency cash has been used, the foreign currency amount should be converted to AUD or NZD on a currency exchange website. (e.g. www.xe.com), using the historical rate for the day on which the expense was incurred.