To: TC Faculty and Staff

From: Portia Williams, Executive Director

Re: International Travel

Welcome to the Teachers College Office of International Affairs.

In support of your international college-related travel, the Office of International Affairs has consolidated information from a number of college offices to create a one-stop shop for TC travelers. The information has been divided into three sections: 1) before your trip, 2) during your trip, and 3) after your trip. We hope you find it useful.

Please take a moment to review the enclosed information. If you have any questions, please contact the OIA Program Manager at 212.678.4010.

Safe travels.
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Office of International Affairs – Contact Information

**Physical Address:**
Teachers College, Columbia University
Office of International Affairs
525 West 120TH Street
President’s House, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10027

**Mailing Address:**
Teachers College, Columbia University
ATTN: Name
Box 004
525 W 120TH Street
New York, NY 10027-6696

Phone: 212.678.4008
Fax: 212.678.3471

Email: [InternationalAffairs@tc.columbia.edu](mailto:InternationalAffairs@tc.columbia.edu)

Website: [www.tc.edu/oia](http://www.tc.edu/oia)
Below please find a timeline of logistical information to assist you in formulating your trip:

**Phase I – Before Your Trip (Planning)**

**Primary Travel Instructions**

- Confirm scope of travel requirements
- Verify dates (keeping varying time zones in mind)
- Make Travel Preparations

All travelers should do the following when planning to travel abroad:

1. **Passport and Entry Visa**
   
   a. **Passport** – If you already have a U.S. passport, make sure your passport is valid at least six months into the future. You can apply for or renew your passport at [Travel.State.Gov](http://Travel.State.Gov). Check the visa requirements for each country you are visiting to see if you will need to obtain an entry visa and, if so, apply to the destination country embassy/consulate to obtain the appropriate visa.

   b. **Visa** –
      
      i. **OIA Travel** - OIA will obtain visas for personnel that travel internationally for work related to OIA. Specifically, the Office of International:
         1. Initiates the process for retrieving a visa.
         2. Covers all visa-related costs.
         3. Writes the visa letter on behalf of the traveler.
      
      ii. **Individual Travel** – Those traveling through their departments can obtain a visa by completing the relevant forms through the consulate website of the country of travel. You may also contact Visa Obtainers (used by OIA) for assistance in securing a visa. Please note however, and a fee is charged for this purpose.

      iii. **Preferred Vendor – Visa Obtainers**
         1. OIA utilizes the services of Visa Obtainers, Inc. to obtain visas for international travel. Each consulate has different visa requirements and fees, so be sure to check requirements beforehand at http://www.visaobtainers.com/Visas/index.htm.
         
         2. **Contact Information** - Visa Obtainers, Inc., (800) 977-2909 or (202) 347-2909, 1010 Vermont Ave. NW, Suite 412, Washington, DC 20005, Email: info@visaobtainers.com

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2. **Non-U.S. Citizens** - If you have an F or J visa sponsored by TC, please make sure to check with the Office of International Services to determine if you are required to obtain a travel signature that will allow your re-entry into the United States. Non-U.S. citizens should inquire of their destination country to determine the visa requirements for the country to which they will travel. For example, a Chinese student with a Chinese passport traveling to Canada should contact the Consulate General of Canada in New York to determine the visa requirements. Please note that some countries may also require a special document called a transit visa for connecting flights or layovers.

3. **Smart Travelers Enrollment Program (STEP)** - Register your international travel with the Department of State under the Smart Travelers Enrollment Program (STEP). STEP is a free service provided by the U.S. Government to U.S. citizens who are traveling to, or living in, a foreign country. STEP allows you to enter information about your upcoming trip abroad so that the Department of State can better assist you in an emergency. STEP also allows Americans residing abroad to get routine information from the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate. Non-US citizens should check with their local government website for similar services.

4. **Country Information** - Familiarize yourself with political, health, crime, and other safety-related conditions prevailing in the country, and specific locations within the country, you will be visiting. The [U.S. State Department](https://travel.state.gov) provides up-to-date information on travel and travel risks. Travelers are responsible for checking the State Department website and keeping abreast of travel alerts, warnings, and country-specific information.

5. **Insurance Requirements** - Make sure that you have the necessary insurance. Please refer to the specific section related to your status with the College (faculty, student, or staff) to determine the insurance coverage that is provided by the College and the requirements to be eligible for that coverage. In all cases, the College will only extend coverage for travel deemed to be for College business. College business is defined as activity that is predominantly supported with College funds. This includes money derived from the College’s operating budget as well as funds derived from grants and gifts to the College. For each day of travel on College business, insurance coverage will be extended for an additional 2 days either immediately prior to or after the College business trip.

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Please make sure you have medical insurance and evacuation coverage if you are travelling for vacation or other personal or non-College reasons, as the College insurance will not apply in those circumstances.

6. **Health Services** - Consider scheduling an appointment with a travel clinic for education, vaccination, travel medications, and, if necessary, referrals. You can obtain health information about your destination from the [Center for Disease Control and Prevention](https://www.cdc.gov). Faculty and staff members travelling on College business can visit [HTH’s website](https://hthglobal.com) for the Global Health and Safety database. Students should contact [Health Services of Columbia University](https://health.columbia.edu).

7. Registering Your Trip - **Register Your International Travel with the Office of Risk Management** - All travelers on College business are required to register their travel with the Office of Risk Management. This is necessary to allow us to ensure coverage under the appropriate insurance and to be in a position to assist you in the case of a natural disaster or other urgent circumstance. For example, Colleges that had community members in Japan during the Tsunami, in Egypt during the spring of 2011 and in other similar situations report that they were able to provide immediate assistance to those who were registered but not to those whose travel plans were less clear. See the section applicable to your status (faculty, student, or staff) to determine the appropriate forms to complete.

**Faculty and Staff Travel**

**A. Reporting Requirements** - College faculty and staff members must inform the Office of Risk Management in May about planned international travel on College business for the forthcoming academic year (September to August). The business travel spreadsheet should be utilized to report this information to the Office of Risk Management.

Recording of International Expense Activities - As part of the College's ongoing efforts to comply with IRS regulations, Banner accounts have been created for the most common types of international expense activities. The accounts listed below should be used when initiating a payment request for these international expense categories:

- 7317 - International Travel Expenses
- 7219 - International Consulting Services
- 7636 - International Professional Development
While accounts have not been established for all types of international activity, the College’s Check Request Form includes a check box for payment requests related to any type of international expense, including those that fall into the above listed categories.

**B. Insurance Coverage** - Faculty and staff members traveling on College business are covered by the GeoBlue Traveler, but are required to register for the coverage in advance of their trip at https://www.geo-blue.com/index.cfm. GeoBlue Traveler provides health coverage. For additional information regarding GeoBlue Traveler coverage, please contact the HR department.

Faculty and staff members also have coverage under the Navigator’s Foreign Volunteer Workers Compensation. This coverage applies to work related injuries while on College business. The Office of Risk Management will provide a copy of the Navigator’s Assistance card once you have submitted your forms. The Navigator’s card provides an outline summary of services and travel emergency contact numbers. The card must be carried at all times while traveling abroad on TC business. For additional information about Navigator’s travel program, contact the Office of Risk Management.

**C. Required Forms** - Faculty and staff members traveling on College business must complete and submit the following forms to the Office of Risk Management:

1. Emergency Contact Form
2. Itinerary Report. In lieu of the itinerary form, you may submit your electronic receipt for your flight and hotel information.

**D. Searchlight Portal** - Before you depart - Access OnCall’s web based resource center, My Searchlight Portal, the global health, travel and safety gateway for Teachers College by visiting My Searchlight Portal at http://tc.mysearchlightportal.com. In order for the College to be in the best position to assist you in an emergency, we ask that you complete the following three steps prior to departing on your trip:

1. Register & create your unique traveler profile in My Searchlight Portal.

2. Once registered and logged in, download the Membership Card onto your smartphone or print and carry it with you.

3. Once your profile is complete, forward any itinerary, flight or hotel confirmation via email to TCtrips@oncallinternational.com and cc kaplan@tc.edu (Office of Risk Management). The itinerary will be imported into the “My Trips” feature of the portal within 24 hours, there is no need for you to manually enter your trip unless it is your preference. By taking this step, you enable Teachers College to send you important messages about medical
and security concerns when you are abroad with instructions on actions you should take in an emergency.

We also recommend you utilize this information gateway to research your destination. You can find health, safety and transportation information by reviewing country and city guides.

E. Travel Assistance Card - Once the Office of Risk Management receives all the forms, the Office of Risk Management will provide you with the Travel Assistance Card. The card provides you with an outline summary of services and a Travel Guard contact numbers in case of an emergency services that requires assistance. The card should be carried with you at all times while traveling abroad.

8. Excluded Countries - Teachers College will not fund, award credit for, or otherwise sponsor or support, any international student travel relating to graduate course in any country or location within a country for which 1) the U.S. State Department has issued a warning that orders departure of U.S. dependents and non-emergency personnel; recommends that U.S. citizens depart the country; advises U.S. citizens against all travel to the country; or recommends that U.S. citizens defer non-essential travel to the country, or 2) all listed countries with a high threat level. This restriction applies through the date of departure.

9. Emergency Instructions - Print out and carry your emergency instructions with you at all times while traveling overseas. You can obtain these instructions from the Office of Risk Management.

Transportation & Lodging
Travelers may call one of the designated travel agencies (see list below) and identify themselves as a Teachers College, Columbia University traveler, and ask for any special University negotiated rates or discounts. If you are already aware of a special conference or "consolidator" airfare or hotel accommodations, be sure to advise the agency of airline/hotel or other particulars.

Preferred Travel Agencies*

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Contact</th>
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<tr>
<td>CWT Vacations/</td>
<td>(800) 783-9200</td>
<td>Contact:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Triad Travel Group, LLC</td>
<td>or (203) 312-0031</td>
<td>**Mary Dowd-Martin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:mdmtriad@charter.net">mdmtriad@charter.net</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.cwtvacations.com">www.cwtvacations.com</a> (online booking)</td>
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</table>
Other Preferred Agencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Contact</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anthony Travel, Inc.</td>
<td>(877) 284-2254</td>
<td><a href="http://www.anthonytravel.com">www.anthonytravel.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMS Travel Group</td>
<td>(212) 986-7557</td>
<td><a href="http://www.dmstravel.com">www.dmstravel.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fox Travel and Tours</td>
<td>(212) 598-0205</td>
<td><a href="http://www.foxtravelandtours.com">www.foxtravelandtours.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STA Travel</td>
<td>(212) 865-2700</td>
<td><a href="http://www.statravel.com">www.statravel.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valerie Wilson Travel</td>
<td>(212) 592-3400</td>
<td><a href="http://www.vwti.com">www.vwti.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X-1318</td>
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<tr>
<td>L &amp; M Travel</td>
<td>(704) 861-8537</td>
<td><a href="http://www.l-mtravel.com">www.l-mtravel.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functions Travel</td>
<td>(212) 663-4718</td>
<td><a href="mailto:functionny@aol.com">functionny@aol.com</a></td>
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</tbody>
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*As contracted benefits and preferred agencies may change, please check the Columbia University Travel Portal for the most up-to-date information. A Columbia Cunix ID and password are needed to view this secure, printable webpage.

Phase II – During Your Trip (Traveling)

Now that you have successfully embarked on your trip, you will likely incur daily expenses. Please note the following list of travel expenses and the record keeping necessary to comply with the Teachers College expense and reimbursement policies. **NOTE: Please be sure to obtain and keep all original receipts:**

Types of Travel Expenses

1. Transportation
   a. Air
   b. Airport Buses, Shuttles, Car Service and Taxis
2. Hotels/lodgings
   a. Allowable lodging cost is generally based on the least expensive available rate for occupancy in moderately priced, safe accommodations given reasonable personal convenience.
   b. An employee may stay at a place where lodging costs exceed the cost of a room at another hotel in the area (a) in the case of a meeting or conference and staying at the meeting site enables the employee to gain professional benefits due to interaction with other attendees, or (b) if it results in a lower overall trip cost to Teachers College as a result of reduced transportation or other costs.
   c. The cost of lodging for overnight travel within 50 miles of the traveler's place of business is not an allowable cost unless the circumstances necessitating such overnight travel are fully documented as to the compelling business purpose and approved in writing by the department head responsible for authorizing the travel. Potential criteria...
for approval may include extremely late night or early morning job responsibilities or excessive travel time due to extreme traffic or weather conditions.
d. When possible, reservations should be made as far in advance as needed to take advantage of advance purchase discounts or a special conference rate. This is often one month in advance.
e. Travelers are encouraged to use their memberships in specific groups or organizations to obtain discounts that exceed those otherwise available.
f. Travelers are encouraged to make reservations through the Preferred Travel Agencies. If conferences provide special lodging rates, the Preferred Travel Agency may be able to provide an even lower rate (see “Preferred Travel Agency” section for more information).
g. Travelers should inquire while making reservations as to the availability of exemption from stateroom tax for employees of educational institutions. A copy of Teachers College state exemption letters may be obtained from the Teachers College Controller’s Office in advance of travel if required by the hotel.

Meals and Incidentals: Per Diem vs. Actual Cost
A traveler must use prudent judgment when purchasing meals. There are two methods for calculating the reimbursement of meals, per diem (per day) or using actual costs. The traveler’s department determines which method shall be used. The traveler should check before embarking on their trip to find out which method shall be used. You may not "mix and match" between actual expense and the per diem allowance on a given trip.

• Business Travel Meals: Travel is defined as a trip of greater than 50 miles, lasting longer than 24 hours and necessitating an overnight stay. Travelers may utilize either method (depending on department).
• Business and Entertainment Expense Meals: All other meals. Actual cost (using receipts) must be used.

1. Per Diem Allowance Method

a. For U.S. travel, the traveler may be reimbursed for meals and incidentals based on the amount computed at the federal meal and incidental expense (M & IE) domestic (U.S.) per diem rate in effect for the locality of travel on the date of travel. On the day the traveler returns home (e.g., last day of travel), the traveler is entitled to per diem based on the place the traveler slept the night before.

Meals are reimbursed in an amount generally not to exceed the standard (i.e., per diem) meal allowance unless the Controller, Dean or appropriate Vice President has granted an exception. Use of these rates eliminates the need for substantiating actual meal costs. Per Diem rates vary by city. The federal U.S. rates are usually updated regularly.

b. For foreign travel, the traveler may be reimbursed for meals and incidentals based on the maximum federal M & IE foreign per diem rate. Foreign meal per diems are issued on a monthly basis.
c. The following are some highlights of the per diem allowance method:
• The per diem method is preferable due to its simplicity and reduced cost of administration.
• Meals and incidentals are included in the per diem allowance.
• You do not need to have receipts; however, the time, place, and business purpose of the overall travel must be substantiated using Teachers College standard travel forms along with a printout of the current per diem rate for the destination city.

2. Where to Find Current Per Diem Rates

The General Services Administration of the U. S. Government establishes the meals and incidental expense (M&IE) per diem rates.

a. Domestic Rates
A complete list of current domestic rates is available on web at the following address: www.gsa.gov/perdiem

b. Foreign Rates
A complete list of current foreign rates is available on the web on the following address: http://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per_diem.asp

The federal government updates these rates monthly. These rates may not be adjusted beyond the maximum amount established by the government.

3. When Per Diem Rates Must Be Adjusted

Per Diem rates must be adjusted in the following circumstances using the rates provided on the following web site: http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/100120

Enter the City and State then click “FIND PER DIEM RATES”

Click on the “Meals & Inc. Exp.***” link to get the breakdown for each meal

a. On the first and last day of travel - A traveler is entitled to per diem reimbursement only for those meals eaten while traveling during the first and last day of travel. For example: If the traveler leaves home before eating breakfast, the traveler would be entitled to the full per diem for the first day of travel; if he or she leaves home after eating breakfast, the per diem reimbursement would be reduced by the amount for breakfast

b. When the conference attended provides some meals as part of the conference registration fee – A traveler is not entitled to per diem reimbursement for meals provided as part of conference registration fees. For example: A traveler attends a 3-day conference. The conference provides breakfast for all attendees on the second day of the conference at no charge to participants. Since the cost of breakfast is part of the conference registration fee, the traveler is not entitled to reimbursement for breakfast.

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Example: If the full day rate for M & IE in Philadelphia is $66 and you are at a conference that includes breakfast, the partial per diem allowed the day of the conference is $55 ($66 less $11 allowed for breakfast).

1. When a colleague, vendor, or other third party pays for a meal
2. When the traveler claims the actual cost of a business or entertainment meal

4. Actual Expenses Method
If this method is used, the traveler will be reimbursed for his/her actual cost of meals and gratuities. Meals may not be either lavish or extravagant. The per diem rate should be used to judge the reasonableness of actual meal costs incurred. This method is preferred for travels who expect their costs to be higher or lower than the per diem rates.

**Original receipts are required for all meal expenses, regardless of amount, if this option is chosen. If a group of colleagues splits a bill and original receipts are not readily available, the traveler should document the cost of their individual portion of the bill as well as the circumstances.

a. Entertainment Meals
The per diem meal allowance does not apply when entertaining others. IRS regulations pertaining to entertainment meals require original receipts for meals, the name(s) of the guest(s), title(s), or other designation(s) as well as the business relationship to the traveler.

- In addition, the business purpose, place, date, and amount of the expenditure must be documented.
- Travelers using the per diem meal allowance method of reimbursement who are entitled to reimbursement of an entertainment meal must modify the full day rate.

Caution: Federal regulation A21-Section J-17 states that charges to federally funded projects for entertainment costs are not allowed (such as tickets to shows or sports events, meals, lodging, rentals, transportation and gratuities).

b. Non-Reimbursable Meal-Related Expenses
Teachers College does not reimburse for the following costs:
1. Meals in lieu of those included in conference registration fees. If a traveler chooses to decline a meal provided as part of a conference and purchase a meal elsewhere, he/she will generally not be reimbursed for that meal. If the per diem meal allowance is used, the allowance must be appropriately modified.
2. Tips in excess of 20% of meal cost.
3. Meals for spouse or other personal travel companion without a valid business purpose.

***Important Note: Alcoholic beverages are not reimbursable as a direct cost on federally-sponsored grants and contracts under OMB Circular A-21, section J-3, and certain state and local sponsoring agencies. In addition, alcoholic beverages are unallowable for federal indirect cost

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allocation purposes. All College sponsored events at which alcohol is served, (e.g., meetings, conferences, receptions, parties, retirements, fundraisers, etc.), must be considered entertainment and charged to expense account number 7323, "Catering and Special Events."
Phase III – After Your Trip (Returning to TC)

Travel Receipts

a. Travelers must submit all **original**, itemized receipts to support lodging and transportation expenses.

b. A credit card charge slip, photocopies, or faxed copies are **not** considered acceptable substitutes for original receipts unless original receipts are lost (see item #d below).

c. The hotel receipt should indicate the name and location of the hotel and the dates of occupancy. If reimbursable under College policy, meal charges on hotel receipts will be reimbursed separately.

d. If original travel receipts are lost, the traveler may submit other evidence such as credit card charge slips, photocopies, or faxed copies.

Reimbursements

To have reimbursements processed, please forward the following information to the Project Coordinator in the Office of International Affairs:

1) Original receipts
2) Personal contact information (your address and T#)

Reimbursements are typically processed between 2-3 weeks. Please be sure to keep a copy for your own records.
# Risk Management Forms

*Form created and required by the Teachers College Office of Risk Management*

## Office of Risk Management

### Faculty and Staff Emergency Contact Information

**Faculty and Employee member Information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TC ID#:</td>
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<td>Address:</td>
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<td>Local Phone</td>
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<td>Cell Phone:</td>
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<td>Email Address:</td>
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**Please identify a person that you would like the College to contact in the event of an emergency:**

**Emergency Contact**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Relationship to You:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Address:</td>
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<tr>
<td>City:</td>
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<tr>
<td>State:</td>
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<td>Zip:</td>
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<td>Home Phone:</td>
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<td>Cell Phone:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employer:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work Phone:</td>
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<td>Email Address:</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose of the Trip</th>
<th>Dates of Travel</th>
<th>Name of City and Country</th>
<th>Detailed Activities</th>
<th>Lodging Location</th>
<th>Lodging Contact Information</th>
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