

TRAVEL & SUBSISTENCE POLICY



GHANA COLLEGE OF
**PHYSICIANS
AND
SURGEONS**

Updated: 2020

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1.0 Introduction

This policy has been developed in line with the Ghana College of Physicians and Surgeons (GCPS) or the College for the purposes of this document; ten year Strategic Plan 2018 - 2027, with stated vision *“To become in the next ten years the premier postgraduate Medical College in Africa”* and stated mission *“To continuously enhance health care delivery through ethical and technology leveraged training to produce highly skilled specialist doctors who are committed to life-long learning; promotion of research and health policy development and advocacy to meet the health care needs of Ghana and the sub-region”*.

To achieve this vision and mission it is critical that the GCPS Public Health Faculty (PHF) enables the travel involved in post graduate medical education and research conduct, collaboration, cooperation and coproduction within Ghana nationally and sub-nationally; as well as internationally within the West Africa sub-region, sub-Saharan Africa and beyond. The value of travel includes building relationships and networks and enhancing excellence in research and academics.

The Ghana College of Physicians and Surgeons (GCPS) has a clear responsibility to make a difference in society. The value of any journey made should be balanced against the impact on society such as increased carbon emissions and pollution. In all cases the tradeoff between value and impact should be considered with efforts to mitigate potential negative impacts. At all times the question should be asked whether the same value can be achieved by an effort with less negative impact e.g. online conferencing rather than extensive air travel.

The processes and procedures to enable travel must employ efficient back-office systems and reduced bureaucracy.

The GCPS Public Health Faculty (PHF) has a duty of care to all travellers on GCPS business to ensure the highest possible degree of safety and security, whether the travel is national or international. As such, the GCPS PHF asks that all travellers on GCPS PHF business follow this business travel and subsistence policy.

2.0 General Provisions

All travel that is done in the name of the GCPS PHF or for a program or project that is managed by the GCPS PHF must be booked in consultation with the administration of the program or project using the approved GCPS PHF business travel partner or by obtaining prior permission to make the travellers own arrangements for reimbursement in line with this policy.

GCPS PHF resources must be expended solely on activities which are wholly and necessarily in the interests of the College. Any incidents of misdirection of College funds (including falsified claims) will be taken very seriously and be dealt with in line with the College's anti-fraud policy and may lead to disciplinary procedures.

Travel arrangements whether by air or by land should be based on considerations of availability, practicality, safety and cost (lowest logical travel fare by the most reasonable and safe direct route). The most cost efficient manner which meets the business needs should be used, whilst considering safety and environmental impacts.

If travel is being booked by a third party then this must be discussed with the relevant Faculty Chair with full details provided of the travel itinerary and contact details.

Promotional incentives and personal debit/credit card incentives should not influence the purchasing decision. All purchases should represent best value for money.

A risk assessment should be considered for all work related travel activities.

This policy refers to journeys (long distance) i.e. beyond Accra within Ghana or Internationally. Travel within the city of Accra where the normal working premises of the College are located are not included in this policy. Journeys within Accra and the College premises at the Ridge roundabout in Accra cannot be claimed as a business expense as per this policy. Any travel and subsistence claims for such short distance journeys are subject to specific arrangements related to the reason for the travel.

3.0 Per Diem / Daily Subsistence Allowance

Staff undertaking authorised travel shall be entitled to payment of per -diem allowance/daily subsistence allowance (DSA) at rates guided by the International Civil Service Commission DSA Report¹. At any time the most recent /current version of these rates will be referred to. The rates payable would depend on the travel destination and shall be abated depending on the facilities provided as follows:

- i) No accommodation or meals provided: Full rate of DSA payable.
- ii) Free accommodation provided: Two thirds of the DSA rate without meals payable.
- iii) Free meals provided without accommodation Two thirds of the DSA rate provided payable.
- iv) Free meals and accommodation: One third of the DSA rate provided payable.

¹ <https://documents.aucegypt.edu/Docs/Policies/Perdiem%20Rates.pdf>

Travel days shall be included in the calculation of the DSA if the combined duration of the outward and inward travel flights exceeds ten hours. One additional day shall be allowed for trips where the duration of the outward and inward flights combined is more than ten hours but less than 18 hours; and two additional days for trips where the duration of the outward and inward flights combined is 18 hours or more.

Per-diem allowance/DSA is paid to cover accommodation, meals as well as all other incidental expenditures such as telephone and taxi fares and recipients would not be required to provide returns on how the per-diem allowance is spent. However, staff are obliged to consider issues of security and choose appropriate hotels recommended by the destination country hosts and not choose cheaper hotels for the sake of cost saving. Where the travel includes substantial inter-city train/bus travel, the costs may be claimed separately from the sponsor.

Per-diem allowance for all other categories of business travel shall depend on the provisions stipulated in the funding agreement and where applicable, guided by the rules and regulations of the sponsoring agency. The application for travel allowances shall be supported by relevant documents including proof of funding in the project budget for the travel. Travel allowances may only be claimed before a trip, once the trip is completed, cost may be reimbursed on the basis of actual expenditure and submission of receipts.

Proof of travel and requests for reimbursement

Original or scans of receipts, boarding passes etc will be required to be submitted as proof that the travel has been executed. Where a travel allowance is issued in advance of travel; and the travel is cancelled and does not occur for whatever reason, the allowance must be refunded. Where receipts are being submitted to support refund requests receipts must be legible and not altered. If a scan of the receipt is submitted electronically, the traveller must keep the original until the processing is completed in case any queries arise.

4.0 Allowable and Disallowable Expenses

The list below acts as a guide to the expenses that are allowable/disallowable rather than being exhaustive. It is subject to periodic revision. Any unique expenditure that is not listed below will have to be approved by the finance manager if it is minor; or referred to the faculty board if it is major.

1. Tips- these are given at the discretion of the employee and should be covered from ones per-diem except in cases where it's clearly written on the receipt that it should be provided.
2. Laundry-this should be covered by the per-diem except in cases where an employee has travelled for more than two weeks.
3. Room Service- this is disallowable except in cases where a staff member arrives in the hotel after 11pm.
4. Excess Baggage- This will be covered only if it is related to work.
5. Passport and Visas- The cost of Visa will be covered. The employee /member /fellow is responsible for the cost of obtaining a passport
6. Vaccinations-expenses related to the purpose of travel will be covered

7. Personal travel -if an employee decides to combine personal travel together with official travel, only the official travel will be covered.
8. Frequent Flyer- an employee can keep all the points earned from this.
9. Itinerary Change-Only change for official reasons will be covered. Change for personal reasons is not covered and must be borne by the individual concerned.
10. Alcohol-use of alcohol for business meals and entertainment purposes should be kept to a minimum. Alcohol may never be charged to donor funded projects.
11. Telephone Usage While Traveling-Phone calls that are reasonable and necessary for conducting business are an allowable expense. The itemized hotel bill or an original phone bill with itemized calls must be attached to the expense report.