The Business Office Advisory contains new and updated policies and procedures from the Graduate Center’s Business Office, CUNY, and the New York State Comptroller’s Office. The information in this Advisory covers issues related to tax levy and non-tax levy entities, and it was prepared and submitted by members of the Business Office staff. Please refer to the directory at the end of this document and feel free to contact each department directly with any specific questions.

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   - Travel & Expense Reimbursements
   - Travel & Expense Reimbursement for Non-GC Faculty
   - Travel Reimbursement for Non-CUNY Employees
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3. Budget
4. Payroll
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6. Payment Request Procedure
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1. Purchasing –

**IMPORTANT** – The NYS Comptroller’s Office is upgrading the Statewide Financial System (SFS). This upgrade, called the SFS Enterprise Enhancement, Phase 1 (EE1) will cause SFS to become unavailable for a couple of weeks. As a result an estimated “blackout” period will take place until mid-October, during which time we cannot generate Purchase Orders or make payments to vendors. Purchasing has stopped processing requisitions and the Accounts Payable Department stopped processing payments effective September 23, 2015. We anticipate SFS will be up and running by the third week of October, at which time we will resume processing requisitions, Purchase Orders and voucher payments.

During the remaining blackout period please do not enter requisitions into CUNYfirst to avoid any possible conflicts. Also:
- Proftech will remain available during the blackout period for office supplies orders.
- For emergency purchases contact the Purchasing Department so we can work with you.
  
  We will continue to keep you informed as the information is made available to us.

**Credit Cards: P-card**

With the goal of significantly reducing the difficulties and problems that we all experienced last fiscal year resulting from CUNYfirst’s system of processing transactions paid with employee-held Procurement cards (P-cards), the Business Office is replacing all employee-held P-cards with only a few P-cards held by members of the Purchasing Department. Going forward if your department plans to make a purchase that requires a credit card, the actual P-card transaction will be handled by the Purchasing staff. This will eliminate the CUNYfirst requirement for you to reconcile, verify, and approve each of your credit card transactions. This will all be handled by Purchasing.

If your department requires a credit card transaction to be processed you will need to use the new P-card process with the following steps:

1. Submit a signed hardcopy/paper requisition to Purchasing. The requisition form is available on the following link: [Purchase Requisition Form](#)
2. The requisition must include the Department name, contact person (including phone number and email address), description of goods/services requested
3. The following must be attached to substantiate the charge: subscription notice, invoice, order form, and any other documents necessary to support the transaction.
Purchasing will not process a credit card transaction without the required supporting documentation. With the new P-card process, the Purchasing Department will handle the CUNYfirst requirement for reconciliation, verification and approval of all P-card transactions. **If you require a transaction to be processed with a credit card please contact the Purchasing Office, provide the supporting documentation and if approved Purchasing will process the transaction with a Purchasing-held credit card.**

All credit card holders (Travel-card and NET-card holders) who have transactions during each monthly period will receive an email notifying them that their credit card transactions have been loaded into CUNYfirst. Credit card holders have **FIVE (5) BUSINESS DAYS** upon receipt of this notification to reconcile their credit card and have their transactions verified/approved by their supervisor in CUNYFirst. Failure to adhere to this deadline will result in the suspension of the card holder’s credit card privileges.

**Office Supplies Vendor**

The College Office Supply vendor has changed from Staples to Proftech, a Minority Owned Business (MBE) and an authorized reseller for Staples. The web site where orders will be placed has changed to Proftech but it is essentially the StaplesLink site with the Proftech name instead of Staples. StaplesLink IDs and passwords will be used to log into Proftech.

The major change implemented is that in order to utilize the Proftech ordering site all tax-levy funded departments are required to generate a blanket requisition in CUNYfirst for Proftech. A requisition must be generated for the total amount your department estimates they will spend on office supplies from Proftech for the entire fiscal year. Therefore, if you anticipate spending $750.00 for office supplies from Proftech for the new fiscal year you would create a requisition for $750.00 in CUNYfirst, which will then be converted into a purchase order. As the fiscal year progresses and you place orders, the expenses for orders will be reduced from the initial purchase order.

The purchase order can be increased or decreased to reflect your actual spending. If you need additional funds in the purchase order you will have to create a requisition in CUNYfirst requesting the increase and if you do not spend your entire purchase order balance you can send an email to Purchasing to request a decrease. After you place an order and receive the goods you will have to sign the packing slip and forward it to Accounts Payable. A receipt must also be generated for the amount of your order in CUNYfirst for each order received.
Meal Allowance:
New guidelines have been created for meals provided during meetings. Those new guidelines were reviewed and approved by the University Central Office and the New York State Comptroller’s Office, and they must be adhered to in order to pay for food provided during a meeting from **tax levy funds**. A summary document created by the University outlining the new requirements is available on the Purchasing Department webpage. The highlights of the new guidelines are as follows:

- **Light Refreshments**: the maximum State allowable amount is $8.00 per person
- **Modest Meal**: the maximum State allowable amount is $15.00 per person

*Please note that these rates include all tips, delivery charges and incidentals.*

The following documentation must be submitted to Accounts Payable for all events when food has been provided:

- **An original agenda indicating the date and duration of the meeting**
- **A printed attendee’s sheet signed by each attendee. If that is not possible, the meeting organizer must submit a signed list of all of the attendees.**

In order to be in compliance with the guidelines any meeting where food is provided must be a minimum of two (2) hours in length. Those food limitation costs have been communicated to Restaurant Associates as well so the vendor is aware of the guidelines. **If the per person cost as indicated in the new guidelines is exceeded an alternative funding source will be required to pay the difference.**

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Ronald Paynter, Director of Purchasing and Contracts at Ext. 7609 or rpaynter@gc.cuny.edu.

2. **Accounts Payable (Tax Levy funds)** –

**Information Regarding the Blackout Period:**
Due to the implementation of the State’s Enterprise Enhancement – Phase 1 (EE1), an upgrade to the State Financial System, we are experiencing a blackout as of September 30 through October 14, 2015. The implementation will impact our ability to process payments, as major changes will be made in the CUNYfirst system to ensure that the system meets the new EE1 requirements.
Office of Finance and Administration

The upgrade will have a significant impact on the Purchasing Department particularly. Therefore, we are asking that you refrain from creating receipts in CUNYfirst against existing purchase orders. An email notification will be sent out as soon as departments can resume entering receipts in CUNYfirst.

**During the blackout period you may do the following:**
1. Create and approve travel authorizations
2. Create and approve expense reports
3. Reconcile and verify credit card transactions (T-Cards and NET-Cards)

**Discontinuation of GC Network-based Fax Services:**

The Graduate Center’s Information Technology Department has decided to **discontinue network-based fax services** throughout the building due to recent budget cuts. Consequently, vendor registration applications can no longer be faxed locally to the Vendor Management Unit (VMU). As an alternative, vendor registration requests can be mailed by the vendor or the requesting department directly to the VMU at the mailing address provided on the form.

For those who do not have access to fax but need faster submissions, the requesting department may also elect to **bring the completed vendor registration forms in person to the Business Office** (Room 8401 / Attn: Guy Gerald Fabre) and those requests will be forwarded to the VMU via a secured file-sharing network. Please be reminded that documents containing sensitive data such as SSN may not be sent via email.

The updated version of the vendor registration forms are available online on the [Accounts Payable](#) webpage. For any questions or concerns regarding vendor registrations, please contact Guy Gerald Fabre at [gfabre@gc.cuny.edu](mailto:gfabr@gc.cuny.edu) or 212-817-7672.

- **Travel and Expense Reimbursements:**

  a. **NY State Contracts:**

     CUNY employees must use the available New York State contracts for air travel, lodging and vehicle rentals when planning and/or executing official CUNY business travels. The New York State contracts/agreements can be accessed through the Graduate Center’s [Accounts Payable](#) webpage by clicking on “Useful Links.” These contracts and

b. Travel Authorizations:

Travel Authorizations (TA, an estimate of travel expenses) **must** be created AND approved in CUNYfirst **prior** to the first day of travel. Employees who are traveling are required to provide the **dates and times of travel**, **destination** and **business purpose** on their TA and on their Expense Report in the CUNYfirst T&E module:

- For Out of Town travel, the departure and arrival times should also be included
- The Default Location field should reflect the location/county where the expense was/will be incurred. Change ‘SEARCH by Criteria’ to ‘Description’ and type in the name of the city of destination preceded by the percentage symbol (%) to look up the corresponding county
- All expense types must have a corresponding **Business Purpose** associated with them.

c. Travel Reimbursement:

Tax levy employees who have a CUNY travel card (T-Card) may use the travel card exclusively for their own expenses related to CUNY business when they are traveling. Allowable expenses include local transportation, conference fees, airfares, per diem meal, etc. The card may not be used to cover travel expenses for any other person – tax levy or non-tax levy. Furthermore, the card may **not** be used for non-tax levy expenses.

Once travel has taken place, **copy/convert** the Travel Authorization into an Expense Report and upload all the supporting documents in the T&E module in CUNYfirst. Supporting documentation and justification letters must also be submitted to Accounts Payable when needed to complete your payment request. In addition to reconciling the travel card on a timely basis in the Credit Card Reconciliation module, a business purpose and original receipts are required. Note that scanned copies of the business purpose and receipts should also be uploaded in both modules. Expense Reports for Out of Town travel without an accompanying CUNYfirst Travel Authorization will be rejected and will not be paid through tax levy OTPS funds.

The current CUNY and State regulations regarding travel and expenses are still in effect. Approvals will also be done directly in CUNYfirst by the designated department approvers. In some instances, the College administration has identified proxies and delegate
Office of Finance and Administration

approvers who have the ability to create travel authorizations or Expense Reports and approve CUNYfirst transactions respectively on behalf of other users.

d. Non-travel (Personal) Reimbursement:

Again, all reimbursement requests must be submitted using the Travel and Expense module in CUNYfirst, which allows CUNY employees and their proxies to create travel authorizations and expense reports for travel-related and non-travel expenses alike. This online self-service application has replaced all other travel and expense reimbursement procedures and it must be used even if you are not claiming reimbursement for the expense, in which case the expense type should be identified as non-reimbursable.

For all reimbursements not associated with an Out of Town Travel, use the Non-Travel Expense option in the drop down menu. For non-travel expenses, employees should indicate in the Comment field the date and time the expense was incurred: use the date/time of the event for expenses associated with an event, or use the date/time on the receipt for general office acquisitions. Expense Reports that do not meet the above requirements will be rejected.

For information about the new guidelines for On-Site Business Meals, with regards to the use of tax-levy funds, see the Purchasing section of the Business Advisory. The information has also been posted on the Accounts Payable web page for your convenience.

➢ T&E Reimbursement for Non-GC Faculty:

The Central Office has provided an alternative method of paying non-GC faculty through the Travel and Expense Module. If you are creating an expense report or a travel authorization for someone whose home college is not the Graduate Center (a faculty member at another CUNY college) and you need to charge the expenditure to a Graduate Center tax levy account, contact Angella Bowley immediately at abowley@gc.cuny.edu or 212-817-7668.

➢ Travel Reimbursement for Non-CUNY Employees:

CUNYfirst has also revised and simplified the procedure for senior colleges to process travel reimbursements for non-CUNY employees. A Vendor Registration Form is no longer required
for individuals who are not CUNY employees in order to pay for their travel and travel-related expenses associated with CUNY’s business. Instead, submit the request (Standard Voucher, GD-11, original receipts and business purpose document) directly to Accounts Payable for processing. A State-issued Single-Pay Vendor ID will be used in lieu of a CUNYfirst ID to pay for/reimburse the non-CUNY employees’ travel expenses.

The payee must not be a CUNY employee during the period of travel. The payee can be a U.S. Citizen, Permanent Resident, Resident Alien for tax purposes, or a non-U.S. Resident Alien. Non-employees include, but are not limited to consultants, independent contractors, prospective students, or individuals for employment interviews. CUNY employees include:

- CUNY State employees (senior colleges)
- CUNY City employees (community colleges)
- Research Foundation employees
- Or anyone who works for CUNY regardless of:
  - Part time or full time employment status
  - Leave status: Active, Leave of Absence, Leave with Pay, etc.

>T-Card / NET-Card Reconciliations:

Cardholders will receive an email notification from CUNYfirst when the monthly credit card statements are loaded into the system. Upon receiving the email cardholders will use the online process to review transactions for accuracy, provide the business purpose for each transaction and attach the appropriate receipts in the system. Approval of the reconciliations will also be done in CUNYfirst by the department approvers. In some instances, the College administration has identified proxies and designees who have the ability to reconcile and approve credit card transactions on behalf of other users.

If you have questions regarding the payment process, please contact Angella Bowley, Director of Accounts Payable at Ext. 7668 or abowley@gc.cuny.edu.

3. Budget –

All Tax Levy OTPS budgets have been entered in CUNYfirst for all departments to commence purchases for FY 2016. All departments are urged to adhere closely to their budget especially
when credit card purchases are made, as requests for supplemental OTPS allocations will not be honored in the current Fiscal Year.

CUNYfirst does not allow for Pool Budgeting and therefore all OTPS Department Budgets are grouped in the following 5 expense categories:

- 80120 - Supplies and Materials
- 80121 - Travel
- 80122 - Contractual Services
- 80123 - Equipment Acquisition
- 80124 - Fringe Benefits

Your transaction will not be processed unless there is sufficient budget allocation in the appropriate expense category. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Finney Joshua, Director of Budget, at fjoshua@gc.cuny.edu.

4. Payroll –

Fall 2015 Teaching Adjuncts will be paid in 8 equal installments. The first payment was made on the September 17, 2015 paydate and the last payment date will be December 24, 2015. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Payroll office at 212-817-7630 or payroll@gc.cuny.edu.

5. Non-Tax Levy Entities –

**Contact Persons by Entity:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entity</th>
<th>Documents should be submitted to:</th>
<th>Ext.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GC Foundation</td>
<td>Althea Harewood</td>
<td>7662</td>
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<tr>
<td>GC Auxiliary Enterprise, Inc.</td>
<td>Althea Harewood/David Tse</td>
<td>7662/7667</td>
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<tr>
<td>GC Child Care, Inc.</td>
<td>Althea Harewood/David Tse</td>
<td>7662/7667</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doctoral Student Council</td>
<td>Ab Abraham</td>
<td>7611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC General Fund</td>
<td>Mario Benitez</td>
<td>7671</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Payment Request Procedure (Tax levy and Non-Tax Levy) –

To improve internal control, payment requests cannot be authorized by the same person to whom the payment will be issued. For instance, if a Fund Administrator is submitting a payment request to reimburse her/himself for an out of pocket expense, s/he may not sign the payment request. Instead, the payment request must be authorized by an associate who can verify the expense.

A processing time of approximately 3 to 5 business days is required for non-tax levy payments (starting from the date when all the completed required paperwork is received in the Business Office). If payment is to a new vendor, then allow 3 additional business days for processing.

Wire Transfers and ACH Transfers:

All transfers must be requested on the updated ACH / Wire Transfer Request Form. The requestor must select one of two options: Wire Transfer or ACH Transfer. To ensure legibility and accuracy, complete the PDF fillable form before printing. All of the required fields (including Memo Information) must be completed and must be clear and legible. The form must also include the Fund Manager’s signature. Incorrect information may delay the processing of a transfer request.

When is it appropriate to request a wire transfer?

Wire transfers are generally issued to foreign (international) payees only. Domestic payees (U.S.-based) are generally paid via check or ACH transfer, unless extenuating circumstances exist. A wire transfer may be the best payment method when:
- The vendor will have difficulty cashing a check drawn on a U.S. bank or issued in USD;
- There is risk the payment will be delayed or the check may be lost if mailed overseas.

Recently, our bank informed us that they will be charging the College a fee for each wire transfer. As a result, all departments/funds that request to have their funds wire transferred will be charged as follows:
- International wire transfer: $20
- Domestic wire transfer: $10

For Domestic Transfers, you have the option of having your funds transferred using the ACH Network, instead of a wire transfer. The ACH network takes one to two business days to settle. There is no charge for ACH transfers.
For Domestic Wires the following is needed: Beneficiary Information and Beneficiary Bank Information, including account number, ABA number or Routing number.

For International Wires the following is needed: Beneficiary Information and Beneficiary Bank Information, including SWIFT or BIC code. Additional information may be required for some countries, but that will be requested as needed. If the payee’s bank is part of the European Community, the IBAN and SWIFT or BIC are required as well.

7. Accessing Financial Manager Reports using Argos –

**IMPORTANT** - All faculty and staff, who are authorized to review the financial reports for their specific non-tax levy funds, have access to those financial reports using a web based reporting tool named Argos. With Argos, reports can be accessed at any time during the month and they will include the entire fund’s financial activity, even the most recent transactions. The benefits of Argos are:

- Easier access to financial reports
- All reports can reflect current financial activity, including transactions that were recorded right before the report was ordered
- Flexibility in choosing the reporting period.

For step-by-step instructions on how to access those financial reports, click on the following PowerPoint file: [Argos Guide](#)

Be aware that a Banner account is needed in order to access Argos. The Banner account can be requested by filling out the PDF form using the link below, and submitting it to the IT Helpdesk: [Banner Account Request Form](#)

If you have any questions about accessing Argos or regarding authorization to access a particular department, organization and/or fund please contact Mario Benitez at Ext. 7671 or [mbenitez@gc.cuny.edu](mailto:mbenitez@gc.cuny.edu).

# Business Office Directory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Email Address</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Department</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abraham, Ab</td>
<td><a href="mailto:aabraham@gc.cuny.edu">aabraham@gc.cuny.edu</a></td>
<td>212-817-7611</td>
<td>Bursar, Payroll, Doctoral Student Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benitez, Mario</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mbenitez@gc.cuny.edu">mbenitez@gc.cuny.edu</a></td>
<td>212-817-7671</td>
<td>General Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bowley, Angella</td>
<td><a href="mailto:abowley@gc.cuny.edu">abowley@gc.cuny.edu</a></td>
<td>212-817-7668</td>
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<td>Brydson, Nadine</td>
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<td>212-817-7632</td>
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<td>Daniel, Catherine</td>
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<td>Fabre, Guy Gerald</td>
<td><a href="mailto:gfabre@gc.cuny.edu">gfabre@gc.cuny.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Harewood, Althea</td>
<td><a href="mailto:aharewood@gc.cuny.edu">aharewood@gc.cuny.edu</a></td>
<td>212-817-7662</td>
<td>GC Foundation / Auxiliary Enterprise / Child Care</td>
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<td>Joshua, Finney</td>
<td><a href="mailto:fjoshua@gc.cuny.edu">fjoshua@gc.cuny.edu</a></td>
<td>212-817-7661</td>
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<td>Lei (Tracy), Hing Ying</td>
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<td>Liu, Emily</td>
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<td>Molina, Deborah</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dmolina@gc.cuny.edu">dmolina@gc.cuny.edu</a></td>
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<td>Rodriguez, Maribel</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mrodriguez@gc.cuny.edu">mrodriguez@gc.cuny.edu</a></td>
<td>212-817-7683</td>
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<td>Shor, Stuart</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sshor@gc.cuny.edu">sshor@gc.cuny.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tandrian, Willima</td>
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<td>Tsang, Allan</td>
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<td>Tse, David</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dtse@gc.cuny.edu">dtse@gc.cuny.edu</a></td>
<td>212-817-7667</td>
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<td>Wynter, Maurice</td>
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