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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1. Purchasing —

**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 documents must be attached to substantiate the charge: subscription notice, invoice, order form, 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 Department, provide the supporting documentation and if approved Purchasing will process the transaction with a Purchasing-held credit card.

All credit 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 holders credit card privileges.
New Office Supplies Vendor:

The College office supplies vendor has changed from Staples to Proftech. Proftech is an authorized reseller for Staples as well as a Minority-Owned Business (MBE). The site where orders will be placed has changed to Proftech but it is essentially the StaplesLink site with the Proftech name instead of Staples. Your previous StaplesLink ID and password will now be used to log into the Proftech site.

The major change that has been implemented in order to utilize the Proftech ordering site requires all tax-levy funded departments to generate a blanket requisition in CUNYfirst for Proftech. A requisition must be generated for the total amount that your department estimates they will spend on office supplies from Proftech for the entire fiscal year. For instance, 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 by Purchasing. As the fiscal year progresses and you place orders the expenses for orders will be reduced from the purchase order.

The purchase order generated can be increased or decreased to reflect your actual spending. If you require 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 the Purchasing Office 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. You will also be required to generate a receipt 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 web page. 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) –

CUNYfirst Travel Authorizations (an estimate of travel expenses) must be created and approved prior to the first day of travel. Once travel has taken place, copy/convert the travel authorization into an expense report and upload all supporting documents in CUNYfirst. All the supporting documents and justification letters must be submitted when needed to Accounts Payable to complete your payment request.

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.

New Accounts Payable Webpage:

The Accounts Payable web page has been completely redesigned. The new layout showcases the different financial modules in use and it offers step-by-step guidance for all the business
processes and procedures in accordance with their respective modules. This new web page is more user-friendly and it provides detailed instructions for most “How-To” questions. PDF manuals and guidelines with illustrative screenshots, PDF writable forms and other useful links are some of the new tools available on the Accounts Payable Webpage.

**NY State Contracts:**

CUNY employees must use the available NYS 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 can also be found on the following links: http://www.ogs.ny.gov/purchase/snt/awardnotes/7200122273pm.pdf and http://www.ogs.ny.gov/bu/ss/trav/

**Travel and Expense Reimbursements:**

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.

In addition to reconciling the travel card on a timely basis a business purpose and original receipts are required. A separate travel authorization is required in advance of the travel, and an Expense report (with business purpose and original receipts) is again required upon returning from the travel.

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.

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

Employees who are traveling are required to provide the Dates and Times of Travel, Destination and Business Purpose on their expense reports in the CUNYfirst Travel and Expense 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.

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 reimbursements, employees should also indicate in the Comment field the time the expense was incurred (for expenses associated with an event, use the date/time of the event and for general office acquisitions, use the date/time on the receipt).

Expense Reports that do not meet the above requirements will be rejected. 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 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.

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, a U.S. Permanent Resident, a U.S. Resident Alien for tax purposes, or a non-U.S. Resident Alien (visitor from outside the U.S.). Non-employees include, but are not limited to consultants, independent contractors, prospective students, individuals for employment interviews, etc. 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 and ultimately by the Accounts Payable Pre-Pay Auditors. 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 –**

Preliminary Tax Levy OTPS budgets have been entered in CUNYfirst for all departments to commence purchases for FY 2016. Please note that these are preliminary budgets as the definitive approved budgets have not been finalized yet. The final budgets will be uploaded once they are approved. Furthermore, 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.

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 –

The first pay date for the Fall 2015 semester will be September 3, 2015 covering the period August 20, 2015 – September 2, 2015.

Fall 2015 Teaching Adjuncts will be paid in 8 equal installments. The first payment will be September 17, 2015 and the last payment will be December 24, 2015.

For the new incoming students who will receive a payroll check, please be reminded to update your address.

Recently, the Office of the New York State Comptroller issued corrected W-2s correcting the previously reported value of the employer sponsored health care coverage (Box DD) on the 2014 Form W-2. As per the New York State Tax and Compliance department, individuals who received a corrected W-2 that relates to Box 12 with code DD do not need to file an amended 2014 income tax return. The value of the health coverage is for informational purposes only.

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:

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<tr>
<th>Entity</th>
<th>Documents should be submitted to:</th>
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<tr>
<td>GC Foundation</td>
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<td>Althea Harewood/David Tse</td>
<td>7662/7667</td>
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<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>
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</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 will be required for Non-Tax payments. The processing time approximation starts from the date when all the completed required paperwork is received in the Business Office. If payment is to a new vendor, then please allow 3 additional business days for processing.

Grant Funds:

Although the paperwork associated with contracts and grants often seems involved, all reports and other accounting documents need to be handled promptly and properly. These records are crucial to the Graduate Center, the granting agency and each department involved with administering the grants. Accountability, making sure that money is spent correctly and on time, is essential in managing grants.
All grants must be carried out within budgetary and other guidelines that the funding agency and the Graduate Center have agreed upon. Expenditures need to be closely monitored and well documented.

To ensure that the Graduate Center’s grant activities are communicated to and coordinated with Principal Investigator, Project Directors, the Development Office, the Alumni Relations Office and the Business Office, the following document which contains information pertaining to grant procedures and process has been established. Please click on GCF Grants Process and Procedures for more details.

**Wire Transfers and ACH Transfers:**

All payment 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 account or issued in U.S. dollars;
- 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.

**What is the IBAN?**
The IBAN (International Bank Account Number) is a series of alphanumeric characters which uniquely identify an account held at a bank. It can be up to 34 characters long and contains a two-character country code, two check digits, and the basic bank account number. The basic bank account number identifies the bank as well as the account holder. In printed format, spaces are inserted for readability (i.e. DE16 5003 3300 0532 0130 00).

**What is the BIC?**
The BIC (Bank Identifier Code) is an 8-character code also known as the SWIFT address and is uniquely assigned to banks. Branch codes can be added to the BIC to further designate which branch of a bank should receive the SWIFT message. When a branch code is added, the BIC has 11 characters (i.e. BARCGB22 or DEUTDE3B400).

Please note that additional fees may be deducted by the beneficiary bank from the final amount sent to the payee. The Business Office has no control over those fees.

**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.

**Payment and Deposit Request Forms:**

For your convenience, blank Payment Request and Deposit Request forms for Graduate Center non-tax levy funds can be downloaded using the web-based tool, Argos.

- Please print, complete and submit **Payment Request** forms with appropriate backup documentation to the Business Office.
- Please print and complete **Deposit Request** forms:
  - Checks representing gifts to The Graduate Center Foundation, Inc. in support of Program, Centers and Institutes should be submitted to the Development and Alumni Relations Office, Suite 8204.
  - All other checks should be submitted to the Business Office.

Visit the Business Office web page at:

http://www.gc.cuny.edu/About-the-GC/Resource-Services/Business-Finance
### Business Office Directory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Email Address</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Department</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ab Abraham</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>Allan Tsang</td>
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<td>212-817-7610</td>
<td>Bursar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Althea Harewood</td>
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<td>212-817-7662</td>
<td>GC Foundation / Auxiliary Enterprise / Child Care</td>
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<td>Angella Bowley</td>
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<td>Mario Benitez</td>
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<td>212-817-7634</td>
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