

## TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE POLICY

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### Introduction

The University is a publicly funded body with charitable status, therefore the highest standards are expected of the way it controls the funds in its care.

Payments to staff of expenses and benefits are subject to the financial and other regulations and policies agreed by the University Board of Governors. In addition to the needs of the University, these regulations recognise taxation requirements and where appropriate those of outside bodies. The University reserves the right to withhold payment of expenses where this policy has not been followed. The provisions noted in this document apply to all permanent and temporary members of staff and those with part-time teaching contracts. Where students of the University, visitors, members of University Committees and external examiners are able to claim expenses this policy must also be followed.

Since April 1996 staff have been under an obligation of self-assessment for their personal tax. University regulations clearly distinguish between benefits (which are taxable) and expenses (which may be deductible against taxable income in normal circumstances). They provide the framework which avoids additional tax liabilities for staff.

Any difficulties claimants may have in understanding or interpreting the following rules and Regulations should be referred to HR & Payroll Services Office for clarification.

Important themes with this policy are as follows:

- Environmental and sustainability considerations-environmentally friendly forms of transport are encouraged
- Maximising economies-booking early will generally ensure best value for money

### Basic Rules

The University pays expenses only where they are incurred wholly, necessarily and exclusively by individuals undertaking University business in the performance of their employment or other activities approved by the University. The nature of this business must be recorded and retained on orders, expense claims and other payment documents.

Expense payments are not made as a benefit to staff, they are made to cover necessary costs that are incurred; frequently as a result of periods of time where University work is undertaken away from the campuses. Subsistence may only be claimed for working away from the normal place of work (at a distance exceeding 5 miles) for a period expected to exceed 5 hours.

The commitment to pay expenses should be agreed in advance by the budget holder. Staff should incur expenses in the knowledge of their line manager and in pursuance of their duties.

Budget holders may not authorise payment of their own personal expenditure; these must be signed off by their line manager. Wherever possible, travel and accommodation should be arranged beforehand using official purchase orders; suppliers then invoice the University direct or through University purchasing cards.

The University reserves the right in certain circumstances to offer reduced rates provided they are agreed in advance between the person claiming and their line manager. This is a usual process within Universities where, for instance, research grants are insufficient to cover full costs. Reduced rates may not be enforced without the agreement of the person claiming. As part of the agreement to undertake the particular activity normally staff must ensure that expenses can be covered from the relevant budget. A staff member may agree a reduced claim where prior agreement has defined the extent of University support for any activity e.g. a residence or exhibition or research.

If a member of staff has particular travel and subsistence needs or costs related to an impaired mobility or other disability (e.g. requiring a taxi instead of public transport), they should contact the HR office in advance.

Payment of expenses is made through payroll. There are basic standard maximum allowances published by the University and expenditure is reimbursed up to these levels provided it is evidenced by a receipt. Receipts must be in the form of a proper itemised bill – a credit card voucher is not acceptable as a receipt. All travel and subsistence expenses (other than those paid directly by the University on invoice) should be claimed on the Mileage & Subsistence Claim form. In the absence of proper receipts, the expenditure can be assumed to be of a personal nature and therefore will not be eligible for reclaim. Claims should be submitted by 10th of the month for payment with that month's salary and must be submitted within 3 months of the date incurred.

Documents authorising payment must be signed by the person with budget responsibility or the line manager for budget-holders' own claims. The Vice-Chancellor's expenses are approved by the Director of Finance and Resources.

### **Subsistence Rates**

Breakfast (Depart before 7am)	£6
Lunch (depart before 12 noon - Return after 2.15 pm)	£8
Tea (return after 7 pm) or	£3
Evening meal (return after 9 pm)	£18
Bed and breakfast	£100
Daily rate *	£32

\* Daily rate is the total of breakfast, lunch and evening meal

### **Notes**

1. An alternative to overnight provision in a hotel for bed and breakfast is to stay with relatives or friends. In these circumstances an allowance of up to £20 will be paid, providing this does not lead to additional and unreasonable travel claims. Please see

the Private Accommodation section for further information. Receipts for actual accommodation or subsistence expenditure must be provided.

2. Any personal telephone calls made while staying at a hotel must be settled by you and should not form part of a claim.
3. Receipts must be obtained for all accommodation and meals, and reimbursement will be the actual cost up to the maximum according to the approved scale shown above. Overall daily subsistence rates cannot be exceeded.
4. The cumulative daily rate can be applied where there is entitlement to a full day's allowance.
5. Claims should not include gratuities; if these are paid, they are the personal responsibility of the employee.

The above rates apply to all claims whether reimbursed via payroll or paid by purchasing card. If claims exceed these rates, the excess will be deducted from the individual's pay.

Staff should arrange travel as early as possible to take advantage of advance booking discounts.

### **Entertaining**

All entertainment expenditure must be approved by the line manager prior to the event. The maximum amount which can be claimed is £20 for breakfast/lunch/dinner and receipts must be provided.

In the case of External Examiners, only the Course Leader and a nominated member of staff from the course team can entertain and claim the relevant subsistence rate of £20.

### **Detailed Policy**

#### **Accommodation – Hotels**

HM Revenue and Customs expect that the costs of staying at a hotel will be "reasonable" under the circumstances. Staff should pay due regard to the requirements for budget efficiency and public accountability. The most expensive hotels should be avoided. Hotel accommodation should be ordered in advance so that the University pays the charge direct or via purchasing card. If accommodation has not been booked in advance, reimbursement up to the rates can be paid, provided that receipts are submitted with the claim. Personal items such as newspapers, sundries, videos and entertainments which a member of staff might normally have at home should be paid separately by the staff member and not charged to the University.

#### **Accommodation – private**

From a quality of life viewpoint the University wishes to encourage staff away on University business to stay with relatives or friends and recognises staff members wish to acknowledge

the arrangement. Staff who make private arrangements for their accommodation may claim hospitality to entertain their hosts up to £20 but must present a receipt for the cost involved.

### **Advance Payments**

Staff may ask for a payment in advance of travel when they know this will entail significant expenditure which cannot be booked and paid for in advance. An advance may be paid to staff either as cash or cheque and is arranged through the relevant budget holder giving at least 5 days notice.

A properly authorised expense claim form must be submitted as soon as possible after travel, but no more than one month after travel date. The published allowances for retrospective claims will apply. Any unspent amounts should be returned to the HR & Payroll Services Office within the same deadline. The University reserves the right to deduct direct from the staff member's salary any shortfall on any monies not reconciled within 2 months of the return date. The limit for an advance of this nature is £500. A record of all advances made will be maintained. If a member of staff has received an advance, no other expenses claim which s/he submits will be processed until the advance has been accounted for, either by receipts or return of money.

### **Alcoholic Beverages**

HM Revenue & Customs will accept a modest expenditure on alcohol when accompanying a meal taken off campus provided the total is within the maximum amount. The value of the alcohol should be shown separately on the bill.

### **Mobile phones**

Where the University provides a mobile phone or other phone to a member of staff this is for use wholly, exclusively and necessarily in the performance of University duties. A modest amount of private calls are permissible. University mobile phones are not to be used for international calls unless these are work-related or are paid for separately by the member of staff. Suspected abuses will be investigated.

### **Travel – Rail**

Staff are expected to travel standard class and to arrange journeys to travel on saver tickets wherever possible. Advance booking seriously reduces costs. The Vice-Chancellor, External Examiners and members of the Executive Group and Board of Governors on Board of Governors business may travel first class but are encouraged to travel standard class when appropriate or to seek advance first class tickets. Staff may not claim for travel between home and the normal place of work unless negotiated as part of a relocation arrangement when it would be taxable.

Whenever possible, tickets for public transport should be booked in advance, by means of a University official order or via purchasing card. Where prior booking has not been possible, the appropriate fare will be reimbursed, on submission of a completed staff expenses claim form. Used tickets should be retained with receipts and attached to the form.

Staff should consider if discounts can be obtained from the use of railcards such as Young Persons, Senior Citizens, Devon & Cornwall. The cost of these railcards can be reclaimed if sufficient discounts can be obtained. Every advantage must be taken of early booking to minimise costs.

## **Travel - Car**

### **Travel in own vehicle**

Mileage is paid at the rate of 42p for the first 150 miles and then at a lower rate of 27p.

Staff are not normally required to use their own vehicles; a greener alternative should generally be used. If they choose to do so it is their responsibility to see that their own insurance covers them for business travel. Staff should normally travel by train for journeys over 100 miles. For journeys over 100 miles a brief explanation is required for why car rather than rail travel is adopted. The higher rate of mileage will be paid where more than one member of staff is travelling and it is more economical and practical to drive. The names of staff travelling should be noted on the claim form.

The amount of business miles claimed should be the lesser of home to the destination and work to the destination.

The Mileage & Subsistence claim form includes a box which will need to be ticked to confirm that the individual's vehicle insurance held specifically includes business use.

### **Travel-car hire and taxis**

Car hire should only be used following approval of the line manager and where public transport is more expensive or not feasible.

Taxis should only be used where public transport is not available or not practicable (reasons must be given, e.g. security)

### **Travel by bus or public transport**

Subsidised inter-site transport between Falmouth and Penryn should be used and the bus fare can be claimed. Mileage will be paid for those bringing their own vehicle, however, no claims for car parking tickets will be paid.

## **Travel - Air Travel**

With the growth in low-cost air travel, it is possible to book a flight from Newquay airport using a University purchasing card over the internet. The cost of the flight and related transfer should not be more than the standard class rail fare (taking into account any savings on accommodation, and convenience).

**Amendment and Review**

The University reviews the expenses arrangements regularly as a procedure attached to its Financial Regulations and reserves the right to adjust the above arrangements should there be relevant changes in the law or particular new circumstances identified.