

Travel and Expenses Policy

University of Northampton

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1.0 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to set out the rules and procedures associated with incurring and reclaiming travel and subsistence expenditure, whilst engaged on University business. Expenses should be reasonably incurred for appropriate business purposes on a nil-gain, nil-loss basis within annual budget allocations. This policy forms part of the University Financial Regulations and can only be deviated from if exceptional business circumstances require alternative treatment. Failure to comply with this policy may result in reimbursement being delayed or declined.
- 1.2 The key objectives of this policy are:
- To state the University's policy relating to business travel and expenses and explain the types of expenditure that can and cannot be reimbursed.
 - To ensure reasonable standards of service, comfort, convenience and safety for those on University business whilst achieving best value for money,
 - To ensure that the University complies with HMRC requirements
 - To define the process for claiming necessary expenses.
- 1.3 Employees are encouraged to exercise sensible judgement in determining the most cost-effective and efficient means of carrying out the University's business including use of public transport and car sharing.

2.0 TRAVEL EXPENDITURE

2.1 Business Travel

- 2.1.1 A business journey is one undertaken by a claimant to carry out their duties on behalf of the University, including attending approved training courses or conferences.
- 2.1.2 Any travel between the traveller's permanent workplace and another temporary workplace is considered as a business journey. In contrast, the cost of travelling from home to their permanent place of work is not claimable under income tax rules. Any reimbursement will only be allowed in accordance with HMRC guidance on non-taxable reimbursement.
- 2.1.3 Under University policy, claims for business journeys that start or end at home should only be for distances that are in excess of normal travel to work. Thus a claimant living 10 miles from their normal place of work at the University who travels on a business journey of 50 miles should reduce their claim by 20 miles (or by 10 miles if they start off from or return to the University to work the same day).

2.2 Travel Booking

All overseas travel bookings must be made through the University approved travel agents. Flight or hotel expenses will not be reimbursed via an expense claim, unless arising from an emergency or an exceptional situation agreed in advance with Finance.

UK rail travel can be booked either individually and reclaimed, or through the University approved travel agent where it is practical to do so. Any internal UK flights must be booked through the University travel agent. Other allowable expense claims for UK travel will be reimbursed if incurred personally.

2.3 UK Travel - means of transport

2.3.1 Private Vehicles

- Private vehicles should only be used when it is the most cost effective means of transport, having taken into account the cost of travelling on public transport, using a hire car, car-sharing possibilities and considering the best use of staff member's time.
- Staff using their private vehicle on company business must ensure that it is road legal and that they have insurance cover for business use.
- Claimants using their private vehicles for business travel (car, motorcycle or pedal cycle) should claim reimbursement at the mileage rates found in Appendix 1 below.

2.3.2 Hired Vehicles

- Vehicles must be hired only from the University's recommended supplier and will often be more cost effective than use of a private car for journeys over 100 miles. Cars must be returned to the supplier in a safe location and fully fuelled, and an expense claim made for the fuel used.

2.3.3 Rail Travel

- Rail travel should only be booked at standard class. First class travel will not be reimbursed.
- Wherever practical, rail travel should be booked in advance of travel to take advantage of the available reduced fares.
- The University travel team will book train travel centrally upon request to travel@northampton.ac.uk

2.3.4 Taxis

- Taxis may be used where their use is the most cost effective and reasonable for business purposes. For local journeys, they should be booked through the University approved taxi suppliers where practical.

2.4 Sundry travel expenses

- 2.4.1 Car parking costs incurred whilst travelling on University business away from the claimant's normal place of work may be reimbursed, with claims supported by receipts where available.
- 2.4.2 Claims for parking excess charges, fines, wheel-clamp unlocking, or any travel offences will not be met by the University under any circumstances.
- 2.4.3 Motorway, tunnel and bridge toll charges will be reimbursed on production of receipts or tickets.

3.0 TRAVEL INSURANCE

- 3.1 The University's insurance policies will provide appropriate insurance cover for staff and students whilst on University business and privately obtained insurance cover will not be reimbursed. The insurance team in the Finance Department must be notified in advance of any overseas travel booking.

4.0 FOREIGN TRAVEL

4.1 Overseas travel

- 4.1.1 Prior authorisation will be required for all overseas travel and flights from the responsible University Management Team member. Approval will be given based on the agreed UMT criteria for approving purposes of travel. All overseas travel must be booked through the University travel team and not booked directly by staff.
- 4.1.2 Staff should travel in standard/economy class, taking advantage wherever possible of any reduced rates or special fares.
- 4.1.3 Upgrades of travel may be permitted if authorised in advance of the journey from the travellers own SMT member and appropriate SMT central overseas travel approver. This may be for:
 - A journey exceeding 8 hours in duration.
 - The member of staff is required to travel with someone who is travelling non-standard class.
 - Other reasonable business justification agreed with the Director of Finance

4.2 Foreign Travel Money Advances

- 4.2.1 Staff travelling abroad may request a prepayment card from Finance to cover overseas travel and subsistence expenses incurred whilst abroad on University business. Ten days' notice from the date the request reaches Finance is required for ordering a prepayment card, which should be collected from the Payments team in the Newton Building, St Georges

Avenue. Subsequent 'top ups' to the card can be made on demand, even whilst abroad.

- 4.2.2. The card will be loaded with the agreed sterling advance prior to travel, and is used by the traveller as a debit card when abroad. Foreign currency cash sums may be withdrawn from any overseas ATM for out of pocket cash expenses, but all expenditure and cash withdrawn must be accounted for on their expense claim.
- 4.2.3 On return from travelling, the balance remaining on the travellers' card will be transferred back to Finance. The traveller should make a claim on the U4BW finance system within a month for the sum advanced and all expenses incurred on the card (including receipts against all cash withdrawn), along with scans of the accompanying receipts. Once the claim is approved, the expenses claimed will be set off against the recorded net advance on the employees' next payslip. Any eligible expenses incurred above the advance will be reimbursed, and any net shortfall against the net advance made will be deducted from salary.

4.3 **Passports**

Claimants are responsible for ensuring that they have valid passports for overseas business travel. For any journey, the expiry date of the passport must be at least 6 months after the date of returning to the United Kingdom. Any cost of replacing lost or stolen passports whilst on University business must be claimed through the University Insurance Policy.

5.0 **Accommodation and subsistence expenses**

5.1 **Hotel Accommodation**

- All hotel accommodation (including accommodation for external visitors) must be booked through the University travel team who will advise on appropriate accommodation. In principle, staff will be booked into standard rooms of a 3* quality in the UK and up to 4* overseas, unless special discounts to reduce costs on superior rooms or hotels have been negotiated.
- Reimbursement of the cost of any meals provided by the hotel will not exceed the subsistence rate limits shown in Appendix 1.
- Expense reimbursement claims for hotel accommodation via personal expenses will not be allowed unless booking was approved in advance by Procurement, or it is resulting from an emergency or exceptional situation.
- The claimant is responsible for settling the cost of any additional items, e.g. newspapers, phone calls, bar, mini-bar, restaurant etc. before leaving

the hotel. These additional items, where they are permissible, may be claimed using the monthly expenses claim form and should be supported by original receipts.

5.2 **Subsistence**

When claimants are away from their normal place of work on University business, they may claim reasonable subsistence to cover the cost of meals within the rules and limits in Appendix 1:

- Breakfast expenses on the day of journey with a receipt of up to £8 may be claimable for business journeys commencing before 7.00am. Breakfast after overnight stays is claimable up to £12 and should normally be booked as part of an overnight hotel booking where available.
- A Lunch expense with a receipt of up to £8 may be claimed if continuously absent on business from the University between 10am to 3pm.
- A late meal expense with a receipt of up to £12 may be claimed for business trips finishing after 7.30pm.
- Evening meal costs and the cost of a beverage (including an alcoholic drink) with receipts of up to £25 may be reclaimed when staying away overnight. Meals should be booked as part of the hotel booking where appropriate.
- The cost of beverages or food purchased in connection with business meetings may be claimed as entertaining expense as below, listing all those entertained. Beverages or snacks purchased for personal consumption outside of entertaining or meal allowances should not be reclaimed.

5.3 **Personal Incidental Expenses**

No general allowance is given for daily or overnight business trips and claimants must submit receipts for all reasonable and appropriate expenses incurred while away from the University. Accordingly, claimants cannot claim for items such as mini bar, newspapers, film/DVD hire, or use of leisure facilities or private internet access.

6.0 **Entertaining**

- 6.1 Reimbursement via personal expenses of entertainment expenses incurred with external visitors, or on a University business trip is allowed. The entertaining must be reasonable and proportionate to the seniority and status of the people being entertained. Under HMRC rules, the claim must set out the names and organisations of all those entertained, i.e. external visitors and staff members, together with reasons for the entertainment having taken place. It should be noted that generally the costs of any event where there are more staff members than visitors present will be deemed staff entertaining and thus not tax-free for the staff members, who may attract a personal tax charge on the costs of the entertaining.

- 6.2 Reimbursement of costs and catering for formal business meetings via personal expenses will not be allowed. Booking of external venues for meetings must only occur where no suitable University room is available. Any event requiring room booking or entertaining, whether internally or with external parties, must be to discuss University business and be supported by a formal agenda. Catering for all events should be booked via a purchase order on the finance system or by procurement card.
- 6.3 Reimbursement of costs and catering for staff events via personal expenses will not be allowed. Any events (as opposed to meetings) with catering provided must be open to all members of a faculty or department, should be authorised by the UMT member and be part of a formal development session with substantive content, an agenda and timings. Any event must be booked via a purchase order on the finance system or by procurement card with the agreement of procurement. Catering must be moderate in nature as befitting a training /development event and provision of alcoholic drinks is not permitted for any staff events. Bookings or reimbursement for staff parties of a purely social nature (including Christmas parties) will not be allowed. Any breach of these rules will mean that any attendees may be liable for a personal income tax charge on the cost of the event.
- 6.4 At any business event with external parties where University funded entertaining takes place, claims should be of a moderate and reasonable nature and settled by the most senior staff member present.
- 6.5 Staff working lunches, or other internal meetings where catering is provided other than drinks and biscuits will not be reimbursed on expenses and should not be ordered. Catering must only be provided at meetings where the majority of attendees are business visitors, and the names of all staff and visitors attending must be recorded.
- 6.6 Entertaining events for students are allowed tax free under HMRC rules as client/customer entertaining. However, if more staff than is required to supervise the event attend, it is likely to be deemed taxable entertaining for those staff members attending. All student entertaining events must be approved by the Dean of the Faculty as an appropriate use of their budget and should not involve the provision of alcohol.

7.0 SUNDRY EXPENSES

7.1 Business Communication Costs

Members of staff seeking reimbursement of business telephone calls or internet charges from a private device whilst away from home on business must produce an itemised bill with the relevant incremental expenses highlighted and totalled. Reimbursement of existing inclusive call 'packages' will not be permitted. Costs of line rental or broadband charges are not tax deductible and cannot be reimbursed. Staff who are regularly required to use their own phone for University business, especially if regularly travelling

abroad, should be provided with a University mobile phone, as this is much cheaper.

7.2 **Professional fees and subscriptions**

The University will not make reimbursements for payments of personal professional fees or personal subscriptions and memberships of professional bodies. This still applies where membership of a professional body is a normal expectation of the role (e.g. Finance Director is expected to be a member of an accountancy body) rather than a legal requirement.

Personal memberships will only be paid for staff where it is a legal requirement to have a professional membership for the specific job role they are in (e.g. some health practitioners).

For University corporate memberships of professional bodies, the appropriate Dean or Director must approve the expenditure and these must be paid through the Purchase Order process.

7.3 **Conference Fees**

UK Conference and staff development fees should be approved in advance by the Dean or Director using the SD1 Form and paid directly by the University.

Overseas conferences will be subject to further approval using the overseas travel approval process referred to in 4.1.1 above. Permission for attendance will be based on the agreed UMT criteria for conference attendance. Reimbursement via personal expenses will not be allowed in either case.

7.4 **Staff gifts**

No expense claims are allowed for flowers or other gifts to staff, including birthday, maternity or leaving gifts - these must be funded from staff collections where appropriate. In the case of staff severe illness or bereavement, the Faculty or department may submit a request to HR, who at their discretion will arrange for flowers to be sent.

7.5 **Leaving events**

Reasonable catering for long serving staff leaving events may be provided where appropriate with the permission of the Dean or Director. This must not include the cost of gifts or flowers which must be funded from donations..

8.0 CLAIMING REIMBURSEMENT FOR EXPENSES

8.1 Expenditure Claims

- (a) All claims made for business travel and subsistence, other than mileage claims, must be made on the University finance system. Amounts claimed must be for actual expenditure incurred and be supported with scans of original receipts, except where not provided (e.g. car parking). The subsistence rates given in Appendix 1 are the normal maximum amounts that will be allowed. They must not be used as a flat rate expense claim without supporting receipts.

8.2 **Authorisation of Claims**

- 8.2.1 Claims must be authorised by approved budget managers who should ensure that;
- All travel and expenses claims on University business are justified and are in accordance with this policy.
 - Each claim entry contains sufficient detail to that the cost is a valid claim on University resources.
 - Each claim item is correctly charged to the appropriate cost centre code
- 8.2.2 Claimants must not authorise their own claims or those of family members.
- 8.2.3 Reimbursement of expenses funded from externally funded Research Grants and contracts should comply with this policy and any further specific requirements of the funding agreement.

8.3 **Claims process**

- 8.3.1 Claims for reimbursement should be made on the University U4BW finance system. Claims must always be supported by scans of original receipts or other supporting documentation. Please note Credit/Debit card vouchers are not admissible as receipts under HMRC rules. Incorrect claims will be rejected on the system and be subject to delays in payment.
- 8.3.2 Claims for reimbursement should be made as soon as possible and in any case within three months of the date of the expense. Later claims will require approval from the Director or Deputy Director of Finance before the claim is allowed, and claims for items more than 6 months old may be denied.

8.4 **Payment by Procurement Card**

Some claimants with regular travel commitments hold University Procurement Cards. These must be used only in accordance with the University's Procurement Card rules and procedures, and the Travel and Expenses Policy. Under no circumstances should they be used for private travel or other private expenses.

9.0 NON REIMBURSABLE EXPENDITURE

9.1 Equipment and Consumables

Any equipment or consumables, (including telephones, laptops or tablet computers) must always be purchased through the University's own purchase ordering system and not by individuals to be reclaimed later through the staff expense claim system.

9.2 Home Working Equipment

No equipment to enable working from home (e.g. computer or printing equipment) or the cost of phone calls or internet charges from home will be reimbursed.

9.2 Partner's Expenses

Partners, spouses or other persons not connected with the University shall not travel at the University's expense unless authorised by the Director of Finance. Retrospective authorisation will not be accepted.

A partner may accompany a member of staff for personal reasons. In such instances, the University must not be charged more than, if the member of staff had travelled alone. Wherever possible the partner's travel costs should be invoiced separately and paid privately. Private insurance must be taken out to cover the partner's travel.

9.3 Holidays Linked to Business Trips

Additional travel costs, subsistence or other expenses must not be claimed for days taken as holiday when linked to a business trip. Private insurance must be taken out to cover any days taken as holiday.

9.4 The following items will not be reimbursed as part of any Travel and Expenses claim:

- (b) Unauthorised or excessive expense claims
- (c) Any expenditure not supported by scanned detailed, original receipts (except where not provided to claimant)
- (d) Hotel bills, flight costs or other international travel costs (to be pre-approved and purchased centrally, except for emergencies)
- (e) Personal professional fees or personal subscriptions to professional bodies.
- (f) Conference fees or club or society meeting costs (to be invoiced or purchased on procurement cards after being authorised)
- (g) Speeding, parking, wheel clamp or any other traffic offence fines
- (h) Privately purchased Travel Insurance

- (i) Personal telephone calls, or the cost of home telephone or internet charges
- (j) Internet access (unless for business purposes).
- (k) Bar bills, Mini-bar, in-room hotel entertainment or personal items.
- (l) Clothing or any other personal items that the traveller may reasonably be expected to bring from home.
- (m) Excess luggage costs, unless the traveller is required to travel with significant quantities of business materials.
- (n) Laundry costs and dry-cleaning, except for travel trips lasting more than 5 days.
- (o) Membership of airline clubs, airport lounges or similar.
- (p) Alcoholic drinks except where part of an evening meal or approved University business function.
- (q) Cost of departmental parties, catering for staff meetings or staff social events.

APPENDIX 1

Mileage and subsistence rates

Mileage

Type of vehicle	First 10,000 miles	Over 10,000 miles
Cars and vans	45p	25p
Motorcycles	24p	24p
Cycles	20p	20p

The mileage that can be claimed between Waterside and Avenue Campus is set at 1.6 to 2.0 miles each way depending on the car park used and route taken.

Subsistence

Meal type	Maximum reimbursement
Breakfast during travel (On day of travel if journey starts before 7am)	£8
Breakfast (After an overnight stay)	£12
Lunch (If your absence from the university is continuous between 10am and 3pm)	£8
Late Dinner claim (If journey home cannot be completed before 7.30pm)	£12
Dinner, including a beverage (In conjunction with an overnight stay)	£25

A VAT receipt must be provided for all meal reimbursement claims.