**Royal Holloway, University of London**  
**Travel, Subsistence and Personal Expenses Policy**

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| Related Policies and procedures and guidelines | Procurement policies and procedures  
|                      | Financial Regulations  
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| Deadline for Review  | January 2025             |
Introduction and purpose

1 The Travel, Subsistence and Personal Expenses Policy (referred to hereafter as the Policy) has been approved by the Finance Committee of the university. The contents draw on:

- references to travel included in the university’s Financial Regulations;
- the sector best practice guidance on developing, reviewing and applying travel policies;
- HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) guidance on providing expenses and benefits for employees

2 The purpose of the Policy is to:

- define the university’s policy relating to business travel and related expenditure;
- provide guidance on the types of expenditure that can and cannot be reimbursed by the university; and
- inform employees and those approving expenses of their responsibilities.

Scope

3 The Policy applies to all university employees undertaking travel and associated activities and incurring personal expenses in the course of their employment by the university. It also applies to persons who are not employees but who are travelling on the official business of the university.

The Policy does not apply to persons who are employed at another institution collaborating with the university on a research grant, unless this has been agreed at application stage. Such persons are normally expected to claim travel and other expenses related to the research grant from their own institution’s research grant funds.

The Policy is not intended to cover every eventuality; therefore where there is uncertainty, or an expense is required which was not foreseen in this policy, the exception should be agreed with Finance before the expense is incurred.

4 The Policy applies to all university funds irrespective of their nature, including research grants and departmental funds (including ‘freespend’ or ‘P’ accounts).

Where specific external grant funds are being utilised then the rates of reimbursement specified in the grant’s terms and conditions will normally take precedence provided that these are within limits agreed by the university with HMRC. However they will not override the requirement for claims to be for actual expenditure and supported by receipts.

It should be noted that audit requirements for research grants can be very stringent and grant expenditure will be disallowed by the funder if the appropriate level of evidence (e.g. receipts) is not provided. The evidence will need to prove the expenditure was actually incurred (e.g. an invoice and not just a booking confirmation).

5 The Policy applies to all expenditure whether paid on invoice, with university purchasing cards or reimbursed by an expense claim.
6 This policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant policies including the Financial Regulations, Health and Safety policies, Counter-Fraud Policy and Anti-Bribery Policy.

Policy statement

7 The overarching principle of this policy is that every expense or benefit provided to employees is taxable, unless a specific exemption applies.

Any expenditure on travel, subsistence or personal expenses must be incurred wholly, exclusively and necessarily in the performance of the university’s business. Goods and services should not normally be purchased and then claimed back on expenses, as central purchasing channels should be used. Wherever possible, expenditure should be approved in advance.

Queries, Forms and Further Information

8 Queries about the Policy should be addressed to the following:

- **Head of Financial Control**: principles, interpretation and HMRC requirements;
- **Head of Procurement**: procurement;
- **Payments Team**: payment of expense claims and reimbursements;
- **Insurance Manager**: insurance.

9 The forms identified in the Policy, e.g. the Business Travel Request Form, together with guidance on completion, are available from the [Finance department web pages](#) on the university intranet. Further information is also available from these Web pages and the [Procurement web pages](#).

Authority and Need to Travel or Incur Personal Expenses

10 Travel must be for purposes that are clearly of a necessary business nature and for all travel arrangements there must be adequate budgetary provision.

11 The approval of the budget holder is required prior to entering into any travel arrangements or incurring personal expenses. A budget holder may give this approval through the allocation of a budget for a particular purpose or the agreement of standing arrangements for certain categories of activity or type of expense. Where appropriate, the approval of the grant sponsor or an appropriate committee must be obtained.

12 For travel abroad, staff are required to submit an [online travel request form](#) for the trip to be covered by the university personal accident and business travel insurance policy. The trip must be approved prior to making committed arrangements to travel. All fieldwork trips must be risk assessed before authorisation in line with the Fieldwork and Travel Policy. Where staff require insurance cover for a UK trip of substantial cost (>£250) including pre-booked overnight accommodation and/or travel tickets an online travel request form should be completed.

13 It is not generally the practice for members of the university Council who are not staff to travel on university business, but should such travel be envisaged, the prior approval of the Principal in consultation with the Chair of Council is required. Should the Chair of Council envisage the undertaking of international travel, the prior approval of the Council should be obtained.
Completion of Claims

14 Claims for reimbursement of expenses should be made on the finance system in accordance with the guidance provided. Individuals who are employed in any capacity should claim via Agresso, only those individuals who do not have a Resource Number, e.g. interviewees before they take up a post at university, Council members, or students who have no employment at university should submit expenses using a non-staff expenses form.

Visiting speakers

Where a visiting speaker is paid a fee, this is normally treated as employment. In these circumstances where there is a contract of employment, any travel or subsistence expenses can be submitted via Agresso.

Where an external speaker is paid by invoice, any travel expenses should be included on the invoice and not claimed via expenses.

Where a visiting speaker is not paid a fee, reasonable travel and subsistence expenses may be claimed as long as the reimbursement is for no more than the actual costs incurred. These claims must be made through a non-staff expenses form.

If a gift is provided by way of gratitude instead of paying expenses, this is considered a business gift and is allowable as long as it was not expected as part of the arrangement and it is low value (e.g. less than £50).

15 Information on the claim should make clear the reason for the travel or other expenditure including, where appropriate, the organisation involved. Where appropriate a risk assessment should be completed and attached to the claim.

16 Employees will only be reimbursed the actual travel and associated expenses incurred necessarily in the performance of their duties or for necessary attendance. Expenditure should be kept to the minimum consistent with the effective performance of work on behalf of the university.

Where the claim is in a currency other than pound sterling the system-generated foreign exchange rate should normally be used. If the system-generated exchange rate is overridden, supporting documentation must be provided to clearly evidence the rate used. This documentation must also be checked by the authorisers of such claims.

17 In cases where a claim is being made using rates and conditions specified in an earmarked external award, this should be clearly stated on the claim form and the relevant sections of the award’s terms and conditions should be attached to the claim and highlighted. Claims must only be for the actual expenditure incurred, supported by receipts: rates specified in awards cannot be paid through the expenses system unless this is the case.

18 Invoices and receipts should be scanned and attached to the expense claim if submitting claims via Agresso. Credit card vouchers and airline tickets are not, on their own, acceptable substitutes. For air travel, evidence of the amount actually paid and of the journey and names of the travellers is required. For accommodation, invoices are required, not just booking confirmations.

Invoices and receipts should always be legible and where appropriate contain the logo or other identification of the supplier.
Original receipts must be kept until the claim is paid to ensure the scanned documentation is satisfactory. If receipts are not kept until this point, then the expenditure may not be reimbursed.

Where expenses are grant funded, different levels of evidence and retention requirements may be required by the funder in order for costs to be accepted as eligible. Non-compliance can result in the clawback of funding. Staff should check with the Research Finance team for the current position for the relevant funder before any expenditure takes place.

Where original invoices are not available, a written explanation must be given. When visiting destinations where receipts are not normally provided it is best practice to keep a log of costs incurred each day with details of journeys made and other expenses incurred. This does not replace the requirement to retain receipts where they are available.

Claims for reimbursement should be made on a timely basis and not later than eight weeks after the expenditure has been incurred. When practical to do so, claims should be made within the financial year in which the expenses have been incurred. Claims made against a ring-fenced award should be submitted before the end date of the award (or immediately thereafter). If an employee incurs expenses frequently then it is more cost-effective to claim these at regular intervals (e.g. monthly) rather than on each occurrence.

Reimbursement will normally be made in £ sterling by direct credit to the UK bank account in the employee’s name which is currently held on the finance system. Changes to the bank account for salary payment made by an employee on MyView will result in this bank account being the account into which expense reimbursements are made.

**Authorisation of Claims**

21 Authorisation of expenses claims is carried out within the finance system workflow, in line with the university's expenditure approval register.

22 By authorising a claim the person doing so is certifying that the claim complies with the Policy, including that it is reasonable, accurate and adequately supported by receipts and other evidence.

23 It is the responsibility of the authoriser to check:

- The expenditure was incurred wholly, exclusively and necessarily in the performance of the university’s business
- The expenditure is considered a reasonable and appropriate use of university funds in line with this policy
- The details of the claim have been completed correctly and it has been correctly coded
- Receipts are attached that match each line of the claim
- There is evidence to back up any departure from the default foreign exchange rate

**Class and Mode of Travel**

24 Journeys by air should be at economy rates. It should be noted that economy class travel combined with an additional night’s hotel accommodation on arrival is likely to be cheaper than business class travel undertaken immediately prior to the start of the business activity.

25 Journeys made by rail should be at the standard class. Wherever possible tickets should be booked in advance to take advantage of cheaper advanced prices.
26 The mode of travel (e.g. air, rail, private car) and route used should be selected to achieve a reasonable balance between the cost of the travel, the time spent travelling, and congruence with the university's Sustainability Strategy. If the employee decides to use their private vehicle even though the budget holder would have expected a cheaper alternative mode of transport to be used (e.g. train or other public transport), then the amount claimed will be limited to the standard fare or cost of the journey by the alternative mode.

27 When developing contracts and other arrangements involving externally-funded travel, staff should consider the impact on their time of the travel and the possibility of securing funding for travel arrangements that facilitate a speedier turnaround.

28 Exceptions to the policy on class of travel may only be authorised by the Principal in conjunction with the relevant Executive Dean or Head of Professional Service, on exceptional grounds, such as a medical condition or a very strong business case. A copy of this approval must be attached to the expenses claim.

Guidance on Expenses Eligible for Reimbursement

29 Travel between home and an employee's normal, permanent place of work, by any means of travel, on any day, whether a normal working day or not, is not classed as business travel and is not reimbursable, although an exception may be made for disabled employees, see 30 below. Where occasional visits are made to another Royal Holloway site, this may be treated as a temporary workplace and travel costs will be reimbursable.

30 For disabled employees, practical and financial support may be available through the Access to Work Scheme, a publicly-funded scheme which can provide support, for example relating to travel to work or equipment in the workplace.

Where government funding cannot be secured, if a reasonable adjustment has been agreed with the university to provide disabled employees with the means of travelling between home and work, or have the cost of their home to work travel paid for or reimbursed, no benefit in kind will arise for home to work travel. To comply with HMRC rules, the employee must have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the employee's ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

An employee will not be able to utilise this HMRC exemption where:
- they have a potentially recurring disability that is currently in remission such that the impairment ceases to have a substantial adverse effect; or
- previously had a disability but has since recovered
- has an impairment and may be receiving medical or other treatment which alleviates or removes the effects

Where this is exemption is used the circumstances must be stated on the expenses form or Agresso transaction, recording at that point in time why the exemption applies and providing evidence of the agreement of the reasonable adjustment.

31 Employees who work wholly from home or are engaged in a hybrid working arrangement are not eligible to have the costs of home to work travel, accommodation or other subsistence reimbursed on the occasions where they attend their primary Royal Holloway site (e.g. university campus). Accommodation at or near the university should not be booked using central channels such as purchasing card, payment by invoice or internal recharge from the Hub.
Where visits are more regular and employees spend more than 40% of their time at another site and this is expected to be for two or more years, this will be deemed to be a second permanent place of work and any travel costs to and from the workplace will not be reimbursable.

The journey travelled cannot be reimbursed if it is substantially the same as the journey between home and the normal or permanent place of work.

If the employee is at their place of work prior to travel, the cost of the journey claimed should be from their place of work to the destination.

If the employee’s journey begins at home, the cost reclaimed should normally be the lower of:

- The cost of travelling from home to the destination
- The cost of travelling from their place of work to the destination

Any exceptions to this must be justified and reasons given, for example another route is more cost-effective.

Staff using their private vehicles (car, van, motorcycle or bicycle) for business travel may claim reimbursement at the mileage rates laid down in Appendix A. Claims should be supported by robust mileage logs. The cost of fuel for private vehicles cannot be claimed. Prior to travel, claimants should ensure they comply with the university’s Policy on using your own vehicle, including ensuring the appropriate business insurance is in place and that a driver approval form is completed.

Vehicle hire arrangements should be made with one of the university’s recommended suppliers. The vehicle hired must be a standard, non-luxury model and specification. The cost of fuel for hired vehicles may be claimed and should be supported by receipts.

For journeys by private or hired vehicle, staff are expected to travel together if it is practical to do so. An additional private mileage allowance is payable for passengers (see Appendix A).

The university will reimburse expenses for car parking costs incurred whilst travelling on university business away from the employee's normal place of work. Where possible, claims should be supported by receipts. The university will not reimburse excess parking charges, fines, wheel clamp unlocking, etc.

The use of taxis should be limited and alternative, more cost-effective transport should be used where possible. Taxi fares may be reimbursed for travel within a metropolitan area and/or where suitable local public transport is not available, and are normally expected to be for short distances only.

Where staff are working after 9pm at a work location and require transport home a taxi will be allowable if no other suitable forms of transport are available. The time of travel must be explicitly mentioned in the expenses claim. (NB this is not allowable if late working is a choice or part of a normal working pattern.)

Subject to the provisions of section 18 above, a receipt should always be provided with the logo or other identification of the taxi firm used.

Local bus, tram and underground train fares for business journeys may be claimed. Claims should be supported by receipts (e.g. used tickets) where possible. Claims for journeys paid by
Oyster card (or contactless card) will only be reimbursed when supported by a journey history, which can be obtained through a contactless and Oyster account online or the TFL Oyster and contactless app, or for credit cards a transaction history should be provided. Top ups for Oyster cards cannot be claimed.

When employees are away from their normal place of work on university business for a period of more than 5 hours they may claim subsistence to cover the reasonable and necessary cost of food and refreshments and, if away overnight, accommodation. Basic standards expected of hotel and other accommodation include cleanliness, privacy, personal security and the availability of breakfast. The reasonable costs of food and refreshments include meals (including a reasonable level of alcoholic or non-alcoholic refreshments) and the costs of a snack, tea, coffee, or soft drinks between meals. In all cases, the associated travel should occupy the whole or a substantial part of the working day, including normal meal breaks. As noted in paragraph 30, subsistence or accommodation claims by home or hybrid workers for travel to their primary Royal Holloway site (e.g. university campus) will not be reimbursable.

Employees making a business trip may spend money on items such as private phone calls and laundry. These are not ‘travel expenses’ but are personal incidental expenses incurred whilst travelling. The university will only reimburse those personal incidental expenses that are necessary for the business trip and in excess of those that would have been incurred at home. Claims should be supported by receipts where possible. The costs of personal entertaining and leisure pursuits will not be reimbursed. The limits for Personal Incidental Expenses are set out in Appendix A.

Employees making a business trip may be required to incur minor incidental non-travel business expenditure such as telephone calls, etc. These may be claimed in the normal way.

Employees must not incur personal expenditure on items including (but not limited to) personal computing equipment and office-related furniture, wearable technology or equipment which can be procured through the normal university purchasing arrangements. Where such items are required for a business purpose, such as research, or if they are required for working at home as part of home working or hybrid working arrangements, they must be purchased through university purchasing arrangements and not reimbursed through expenses. The university may refuse to reimburse such items and may be required to deduct tax and national insurance if a reimbursement is made.

If computing equipment, including laptops, iPads, smartphones or other office equipment, is purchased by an individual for whatever reason, including home or hybrid working, and reimbursed on an expense claim then the cost will be included on a Form P11D and treated as a benefit in kind. The related National Insurance will be charged to the School and the cost of the equipment will become a taxable benefit for the individual to be included on their self-assessment tax return.

Employees 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 six months after the date of returning to the United Kingdom. The university does not reimburse the cost of passports or the cost of replacing lost or stolen passports.

Employees may use the university’s appointed travel agent to seek advice on the need for visas and vaccinations for overseas business travel. The cost of these may be claimed if it is not settled by an invoice to the university.

The university does not ordinarily reimburse the cost of a personal subscription to a professional body, however personal expenditure incurred for this purpose is normally
deductible for tax purposes. Exceptionally, personal subscriptions may be reimbursed in the following circumstances:

- the subscription is required for a specific business purpose or activity, such as attendance at a conference or publication in a journal, or obtaining information and participating in relevant discussion boards or HE sector groups; and

- such a subscription cannot reasonably be purchased by the university directly.

The cost of eye and eyesight tests may be purchased directly by the university to the limit specified by the university Health and Safety Team if the employee is required to use Display Screen Equipment (DSE) such as computers or other audio-visual equipment in the course of employment at the university. If an optician certifies that a new or altered prescription for glasses is required solely for DSE usage, the university will pay up to £60 towards the costs of frames, lenses and any special prisms insofar as the cost relates only to the requirements for DSE usage. The invoice from the optician must state that the glasses are required for DSE usage.

The costs of eyesight tests and glasses/contact lenses noted above must not be purchased by the individual staff member and reimbursed through expenses; they must be purchased directly by the university via central procurement or using a university purchasing card.

Where the cost of an eyesight test, glasses/contact lenses is reimbursed to an employee via the expenses system, a taxable benefit arises. 

**Telephone Charges and home-related expenses**

Please also refer to the previous section for telephone expenses incurred during business travel.

No portion of the rental of an employee's own landline, mobile telephone or smartphone or the telephone itself will be reimbursed including where home or hybrid working arrangements are in place.

Business calls will only be reimbursed if supported by an itemised list of calls showing the business calls claimed and their cost, and if these can be separately identifiable from the monthly line rental.

No arrangement may be entered into that results in the university being the subscriber for a telephone at the home of an employee, unless the prior written approval of the Director of Human Resources has been given.

Similarly no expenditure on home energy usage, such as heating or lighting costs, will be reimbursable by the university for any employee.

Any incidental personal use of a telephone or smartphone provided by the university should be kept to a minimum. The university reserves the right to recover the cost of excessive personal use from the employee.

If the tariff provides for free time this should be allocated to business use on a pro rata basis.

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¹ Update to HMRC Employment Manual - December 2022
If Pay As You Go cards are required for business purposes these should normally be purchased by the university and not be reimbursed through expenses. Such costs will not be reimbursed unless the prior written agreement of the Head of Financial Control has been obtained and there is no personal usage. As with reimbursed business calls, these will be reported via P11D (although there is no tax/NI charge).

**Internet Connection from Home**

The cost of a private Internet connection and its ongoing fees are not reimbursable.

No arrangement may be entered into resulting in the university being the subscriber of an Internet connection at the home of an employee, unless the prior written approval of the Director of Human Resources has been given. The associated tax and national insurance cost will be recharged to the relevant School.

**Business Entertainment and Gifts**

Appropriate entertainment by a member of university staff of people from an external organisation for a clear and necessary business purpose may be claimed. The expenditure incurred should be reasonable and not excessive. There should be a clearly justifiable purpose for each employee’s attendance and there should not be so many employees attending as to suggest it is largely a staff social event. The appropriate form for business entertainment must accompany the claim, and should state the purpose of the entertainment, the number of people attending from each organisation and the organisation’s name, and give for each member of university staff their name and role in the context of the business relationship with the external organisation(s). The most senior university person present should settle the bill and make the claim for reimbursement.

Excessive hospitality or other entertainment offered by an external organisation should be refused. As a guide one might only accept hospitality that one could reciprocate in a similar fashion. The acceptance of corporate hospitality where one is part of a group being entertained would normally be reasonable.

Gifts that appear to have a value of greater than £50 should be refused or returned.

If it is judged that following these guidelines might cause offence to the donor, then the Principal should be notified and a judgement will be made, and a record kept of this.

Personal gifts arising from the staff/student relationship should be refused if their timing could in any way be construed as influencing academic judgement.

Every School should keep a Hospitality/Gift book in which all members of staff should enter any hospitality or gifts received, except for items such as diaries and calendars.

In some cases it may be appropriate to exchange business gifts. The cost of providing such gifts to external parties will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances and up to a maximum value of £50 including VAT.

Any gifts provided by the university to external individuals or organisations (for example, visiting speakers) must not exceed £50. All such gifts must be coded in the finance system as Business Hospitality.
61 In all cases common sense should prevail and the risk of reputational damage, should acceptance (or provision) of the gift become public, must be taken into account.

62 Reference should be made to the university’s Anti-Bribery Policy which takes precedence over the Travel, Subsistence and Personal Expenses Policy.

Staff Entertaining and Gifts

63 Departments are authorised to spend up to a maximum of £60 (including VAT) per person during the year at annual events, such as a Christmas meal. The event must be open to and appropriate for all staff in order to avoid a tax liability and comply with the university’s Equal Opportunities Policy. Separate events for different departments are exempt as long as all employees have the opportunity to attend one of them.

The claim for reimbursement must be made for the department as a whole stating it is claimed under this provision, and not by each member of staff. The claim must be supported by a receipt and the number and names of staff attending the event must be stated on the claim form. If the cost is charged to a purchasing card, the same information must also be provided. It is important to ensure that the cost is coded correctly to staff entertaining, so that it can be identified easily at year-end.

64 Staff entertainment not open to all may be permitted on an exceptions basis with the prior agreement of the Executive Dean or Head of Professional Service, for example a restaurant meal to mark the end of a demanding project or a retirement. Such costs will attract a tax and national insurance charge which will be payable by the School. The names of all members of staff attending such events must be submitted with the claim on the appropriate form.

Away days, business breakfasts/lunches/dinners, team meetings

Whether they are paid via the expenses system or procured centrally, particular care must be taken with regard to staff entertaining provided as part of an ‘away day’ or similar meeting. Even if the primary purpose of an event is business related, events can still attract tax and national insurance charges as they can be deemed by HMRC as staff entertainment, particularly if there is a significant ‘social’ or ‘fun’ element – and this will considerably increase the cost of any such event.

Care should be taken that the agenda for such meetings is clearly business related with the ‘social’ element kept to a minimum. As a guide, examples of activities that may be considered taxable by HMRC are as follows:

- ‘away days’ with a significant social or fun element
- social ‘team building’ events e.g. bowling, go karting etc
- any significant provision of refreshments
- business or team breakfasts
- team lunches, or a team “well done” meal
- meetings held at any ‘social’ location (e.g. local pub or restaurant)
- any event intended to reward employees for their work

65 Personal gifts to staff are not normally a reimbursable expense. However, in certain cases it may be appropriate for the department to make a gift, such as flowers, for example in the event of serious illness or on a retirement (but not for routine events such as birthdays or maternity/paternity leave). The gift from the department must cost no more than £50 including VAT and cannot be in the form of cash or vouchers. Gifts cannot be made as recognition of a
work-related achievement (therefore gifts cannot be ‘thank you’ gifts). The Executive Dean or Head of Professional Service must authorise such expenditure in advance.

NB If the amount exceeds £50 then the whole amount becomes taxable (not just the element that exceeds £50).

Gifts and cards for staff who are leaving are not normally a reimbursable expense. Where a contribution is sought to buy a leaving gift, either a physical collection can be made by staff members or this can be done online, for example if hybrid working arrangements are in place. Staff can use an online ‘pool’ or other online collection method for staff donations and these should not claimed back on expenses, unless it is non-routine event.

**Insurance for Staff and Students**

67 For any overseas business travel or UK overnight travel, the Insurance Manager must be informed at least five days prior to travel by completing the university travel insurance request online form. The Insurance Manager will email a copy of the confirmation of travel insurance produced from this form to the relevant Executive Dean or Head of Professional Services (or their designated deputy) for information.

68 Any period of extended travel or secondment will incur an additional premium, which will be charged to the School. Partners and children accompanying the traveller can be covered by the policy subject to the trip details, and for business trips only. No cover can be provided if the trip includes personal holiday – in such cases partners and children will need to have their own personal travel insurance put in place prior to the trip. Please refer to insurancequeries@rhul.ac.uk.

69 It is the responsibility of staff to ensure they have prepared the necessary risk assessments and have obtained up to date security and health information for their destination. All risk assessments and travel must be approved before requesting travel insurance. Please refer to the Fieldwork and Travel Policy which can be found on the Health and Safety Webpages. Staff must not travel against medical advice or against the advice of the Foreign & Commonwealth Office. The university travel insurance policy will provide emergency 24/7 assistance, links to this will be sent on confirmation of travel insurance and also can be found on the travel insurance webpage. All travellers must take the emergency contact information with them. No reimbursement of insurance purchased personally, rather than using the university policy, will be made to a member of staff or student.

70 In relation to travel insurance claims, the university will not make an insurance claim for property or cancellation insurance of less than £100, but any losses under this value should be notified to the Insurance Manager and may be reimbursed to the individual. Valid medical and other claims will be met in full as will any property or cancellation claim over £100. In the event of a claim the School is responsible for the cost of any insurance excess deduction.

71 No claim will be considered if the trip has not been advised to the Insurance Manager before travel commences unless there are exceptional circumstances to take into consideration.

72 The university’s motor policy provides comprehensive cover for an employee with a valid UK driving licence to drive a hired or university vehicle on university business in the UK and parts of Europe, but the employee must first have provided the relevant details to the Insurance Manager and be cleared to do so.

73 Material changes such as health problems or driving convictions must be notified to the Insurance Manager. The policy is subject to an excess charge for each claim, which will be borne
by the School. If a student is claiming mileage for education or research trips, they must complete a declaration of insurance.

74 The university's motor vehicle policy does not provide cover for employees driving their own vehicles on university business. Where an employee uses their own vehicle, they must ensure that the vehicle insurance policy includes cover for business use and complies with the university’s policy on the use of own motor vehicles. Any extra cost which is incurred is not reimbursable.

Air-miles and other Promotional Incentives

75 The generation of air-miles or similar rewards arising from travel on university business may not be utilised for personal use.

Payment of miscellaneous expenses

76 Cash advance payments will not be made by the university because they are costly to administer and require considerable additional processing.

77 Whenever possible, the university’s approved travel provider should be used for the direct payment of fares, car hire, hotel expenses, etc., thus leaving the minimum amount to be met in the course of the journey. Any such expenditure can be met by using a purchasing card or a prepaid card issued to staff.

Participant payments

78 Payments may be required to individuals who volunteer to participate in research activity individually or as part of a panel. The payments are to compensate the participants for out of pocket expenses and reasonable costs of participation in the research, including travel and subsistence. As such, the arrangements should not create a contract of employment, although the participant may be required to report via self-assessment if applicable (also see section 80 below).

79 The most efficient way to make such payments is to use a prepaid card or retail vouchers (e.g. Amazon or other store vouchers) that can be purchased centrally (for example using a purchasing card) and distributed to participants. Participants can continue to be paid through recognised companies like Prolific or Amazon’s Mechanical Turk with a university purchasing card.

On an exceptional basis payments may also be made in cash and then claimed back via expenses. If cash is used, a risk assessment must be prepared that details:

- how the cash will be sourced (e.g. at a bank branch if small change is required)
- how cash will be kept secure during transit and;
- how cash will be stored securely

80 For any participant payments over £50, there is an increased risk that HMRC would consider it a reward for work. Therefore, in all cases where the participant payments are over £50:

- Finance should be contacted to discuss what the payment is for, how the payment should be made (e.g. prepaid card or BACS) and to confirm that it could not be construed as a payment for work.
- Records must be kept of the following:
  - Name of experiment/study
  - Date or period of the study
- Name of participant
- Amount paid to the participant

Procurement

81 Information on travel procurement is maintained on the Procurement web pages including names of preferred travel suppliers. Further advice, including escalation and price queries, is available from the Procurement Team.

82 For air travel use of the university’s preferred travel agent (Key Travel) is recommended wherever possible; if there are genuine business reasons why an alternative provider is to be used outside the preferred travel management company, this will be acceptable as an exception, however this reason should be clearly reported as part of the expenses claim (or uploaded with purchasing card documentation) and approved by the School or Professional Service. Please note minor price variations will not be considered a valid business reason. (For rail travel it is recommended to buy a ticket and reclaim the cost via expenses.)

Combining business and non-business travel

83 If business and non-business travel are combined in a trip, the expenses claim must show in sufficient detail the costing of the business and non-business elements to prove that there is no subsidy of the non-business costs and that the primary purpose of the trip was business.

Spouses and Partners

84 Expenses incurred by, or on behalf of, spouses, partners, carers and dependent children are not reimbursable. An exception to this can only be made when there is an essential and exceptional business case. The costs must be essential in order for the staff member to perform the duties of their employment. The business case must be authorised in advance by the Principal on the recommendation of the Executive Dean, Vice-Principal, Deputy Principal or Head of Professional Services as applicable.

In the case of costs relating to dependent children, only the additional costs over and above the staff member’s normal childcare arrangements may be claimed.

There is no tax relief available for travel and accommodation where an employee has childcare responsibilities and has to take their child abroad while carrying out university business. If an exception is agreed as described above, tax and National Insurance contributions will be payable on the costs incurred.

Relocation

85 Relocation expenses must be claimed in accordance with the university’s Removal and Relocation Expenses Policy

Payments to individuals

86 Expenses should not normally be used for goods and services.

Payments should not be made to external individuals and then claimed back via expenses. This includes the use of interpreters, translators, ad hoc music tutors and other similar freelancers who should not be paid directly by staff, or students, and claimed back on expenses.
When engaging individuals it is the university’s responsibility, and not the individual’s, to
determine their employment status and ensure the right amount of tax and national insurance
is paid if it is deemed employment.

It is the responsibility of the university, and not the individual student or staff member, to pay
for goods and services - this burden should not initially fall on staff or students.

Therefore all such assignments should undergo an off-payroll employment status check via the
Procurement Team and not be paid via expenses.

Roles and responsibilities

87 All employees are responsible for adhering to this policy when undertaking travel and
associated activities and incurring personal expenses in the course of their employment
by the university.

The policy also applies to persons who are not employees but who are travelling on the official
business of the university.

88 All employees are responsible for ensuring the approval of the budget holder is obtained prior
to entering into any travel arrangements or incurring personal expenses. A budget holder may
give this approval through the allocation of a budget for a particular purpose or the agreement
of standing arrangements for certain categories of activity or type of expense.

89 Staff members authorising a claim are responsible for ensuring that the claim complies with
the Policy, including that it is reasonable, accurate and adequately supported by receipts and
other evidence. It is the responsibility of the authoriser to check the expenditure was incurred
wholly, exclusively and necessarily in the performance of the university’s business and is a
reasonable and appropriate use of university funds (see section 23 for further detail).

Related documents

90 The following documents are related to this policy:

- Procurement policies and procedures
- Financial Regulations
- Counter-Fraud Policy
- Anti-Bribery Policy
- Health and Safety Policies

Document control

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Owner (usually Director-level)</th>
<th>Chief Financial Officer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operational Owner (where different to policy owner)</td>
<td>Rachel Burgess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approving Body</td>
<td>Finance Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approved on</td>
<td>19 January 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Version (newest to oldest)</td>
<td>Date of approval</td>
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<tr>
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<td>27 June 2023 (CFO)</td>
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Appendix A: Mileage Rates, Maximum Subsistence Rates and Personal Incidental Expenses

Mileage Rates

1 Employees using their own vehicles on university business may claim a mileage allowance as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Private Vehicle</th>
<th>Cumulative Distance in Tax Year</th>
<th>Rate per Mile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Car or van</td>
<td>Up to 10,000 business miles</td>
<td>45 pence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car or van</td>
<td>Over 10,000 business miles</td>
<td>25 pence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motorcycle</td>
<td>Any distance</td>
<td>24 pence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycle</td>
<td>Any distance</td>
<td>20 pence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These rates matches the HMRC approved mileage rates.

2 For each employee who travels on business as a passenger in a private vehicle an additional 5 pence per mile may be claimed. The name of any passenger(s) must be identified in the claim.

Maximum Subsistence Rates

3 When employees are away from their normal place of work for a period of more than five hours and incur expenses on food and (if away overnight) accommodation, subsistence expenses may be claimed as per clause 8 below. This does not apply for home or hybrid workers if the travel is from home to their primary Royal Holloway site (e.g. university campus).

4 No subsistence is payable for any periods when meals and/or accommodation are included in the fare (for example air travel or rail sleeper).

5 Alcoholic drinks taken with a meal are acceptable as subsistence, but are normally expected not to exceed one third of the total meal cost.

6 All claims for subsistence must be for actual expenditure incurred and, subject to the provisions at clause 18 of the policy, must be supported with receipts. The maximum subsistence rates include taxes (e.g. VAT) and gratuities (tips). Gratuities must not be excessive: the claimant may write the amount on the receipt if it does not already appear there.

7 The overnight allowance for accommodation with friends/relatives has been withdrawn by HMRC. A replacement allowance of £10-15 may be claimed for a gift for the friend or relative.

8 Hotel accommodation and meals overseas should be in hotels and restaurants similar in quality to those that would be used in the UK. As a guide, hotels should be 3-star, or 4-star in more remote, or less secure areas: exceptions to this must be approved in advance by the Executive Dean or Head of Professional Service in conjunction with the Head of Department or appropriate line manager, and a copy of the approval must be attached to the expenses claim. As the cost of such accommodation and the price of food in restaurants vary so much worldwide, no maximum rates of subsistence are laid down. Guidance on hotels should be sought from the university's appointed travel agents.

9 Accommodation bookings should be made through the university's travel supplier (Key Travel) wherever possible, or through local universities booking on an employee's behalf. If there are genuine business reasons why an alternative provider is to be used outside the preferred travel management company, this will be acceptable as an exception, however this reason should be
clearly reported as part of the expenses claim (or uploaded with purchasing card documentation) and approved by the School or Professional Service. Please note minor price variations will not be considered a valid business reason. A risk assessment must be performed taking into account the information in sections 10 and 11 below.

Private rented accommodation such as Airbnb may be used only where the stipulations set out below can be met. Staff should note:

- Airbnb is not regulated and may fail to meet basic safety standards such as smoke detection, electrical testing, extinguishers and fire escape.
- Airbnb is highly unlikely to share traveller information with the university in the event of an emergency.
- Airbnb hosts sometimes cancel at the last minute for various reasons and university insurance will not cover any direct or indirect costs associated with this. Airbnb hosts may have no insurance and their normal domestic insurance may not cover them for letting rooms.
- The accommodation may be an unused back bedroom in a stranger’s house - it will often be less secure than a hotel, with no CCTV, key control, robust door locks, swipe access or room safe. Travellers should wherever possible favour accommodation where it has smoke detection and good locks/security.
- Airbnb bookings may be illegal if the country/region/city/building does not permit short-term room rentals, or if the host has not complied with local regulations but nonetheless advertises the property on the platform regardless.

Therefore Airbnb or other private rental accommodation can ONLY be used where:

- The country/city/region/building permits short-term lets and the property complies with local regulations (the booking is legal).
- There is a reasonably full history of positive reviews.
- The accommodation is a self-contained apartment (e.g. not a stranger’s back bedroom or similar).
- The neighbourhood can be identified as safe.
- The Airbnb bookings calendar is not relied upon, but the host is emailed directly (some hosts are not assiduous about updating calendars).
- Full contact details are left in the travel plan including location of the apartment and owner contact details.

Please refer to the Procurement Team for any queries regarding Key Travel or travel suppliers.

Hotel accommodation at or near the university is not normally eligible for reimbursement where the university is the employee’s primary Royal Holloway site. In most circumstances, Englefield Green, Egham, Virginia Water and Old Windsor would be considered to be near the university. This also applies to home or hybrid workers.

Where in exceptional circumstances it is necessary for a member of staff to stay at or near the university overnight (for example, if there is a very early flight the following day) this should be authorised by the Executive Dean or Head of Professional Service, or appropriate line manager prior to the cost being incurred, with a record of the authorisation and the reason for the exception attached to the expenses claim form or Purchasing card statement – this is required as justification for the exceptional nature of the arrangement in the case of HMRC audit.
Such overnight stays are treated by HMRC as a taxable benefit therefore the university is obliged by HMRC to pay Tax and National Insurance in addition to the accommodation cost. This will be charged to the subproject which paid for the original accommodation cost.

Should the provision of overnight accommodation become a regular arrangement HMRC could view this as provision of accommodation which becomes a taxable benefit on the individual.

**Personal Incidental Expenses Rates**

12 Personal Incidental Expenses are described in the Policy. The following maximum rates apply only to overnight stops away from home on university business. Only actual expenditure can be claimed and should be supported by receipts where possible. If more than the limit is claimed then all of the cost becomes a taxable benefit and tax and national insurance will become payable.

**Maximum Personal Incidental Expenses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Maximum Nightly Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>£5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overseas</td>
<td>£10</td>
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