

STAFF TRAVEL AND EXPENSES POLICY

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1 Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to set out the procedures for making business travel arrangements and the rules for claiming expenses. It includes details of types of expense that may be claimed, and the procedure for making a claim. It applies to all staff and any other persons who are travelling on official business on behalf of the University.

The policy recognises the need to balance a number of factors including; our Duty of Care requirements, our desire to support staff, business needs, concern for the environment, public perception and prudent use of public funds.

The policy is written in conjunction with, and forms part of, the University's Financial Regulations, with the Executive Director of Finance, Services & Resources having overall responsibility for the policy.

This policy will be subject to periodic review and change and updated annually. It supersedes all other policies, procedures and manuals currently in use.

The policy will be communicated to all staff and the latest version being made available on the University's finance [web pages](#)

The responsibility for complying with this policy rests with all departments and the University makes no obligation to reimburse those claims which are not compliant.

Deliberate, negligent or repeated disregard to the policy may result in disciplinary action.

2 Policy Objectives

The policy aims to ensure that:

- (i) staff neither gain nor lose financially;
- (ii) the University obtains good value for money. Value for money will be measured in terms of the total cost of the travel and staff time;
- (iii) the expenditure which can and cannot be reimbursed by the University is clearly set out; and
- (iv) that adequate controls are in place to ensure compliance with Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs' (HMRC) rules and requirements for tax dispensations. Further information of the HMRC legislative context is available [here](#)

3 Principles

All business travel expenditure must be claimed in accordance to the policy.

Staff will be reimbursed for business travel and any expenses incurred wholly, necessarily and exclusively in the performance of their duties, however, staff should be prudent in incurring expenditure when on University business.

The University expects all travel to be booked, ordered and paid for by the University and by employees as an exception only.

The policy applies to all expenditure irrespective of payment method, applying equally to credit card transactions, purchase order / invoices and individual expense claims.

Expenses outside of the policy incurred in genuine emergency situations, while on an overseas trip and where immediate action is needed, will be reimbursed if the expense is reasonable given the circumstances.

In the event that a particular matter is not covered within this policy, or in matters relating to expenditure wholly or part-funded by external funds, e.g. where more restrictive conditions may apply, please consult with the University's finance department prior to incurring the expense.

4 Visits to Europe from 1st January 2021

Please view the government guidance [here](#) which will advise on the current requirements for travel, including the details you may need for border control and if you will need a visa or permit for your stay.

Checklist prior to travel:

- ensure you have applied for University Travel Insurance,
- check your passport,
- check you have the right driving documents if applicable,
- check the travel advice for the country you are visiting to get the latest information.

If you are travelling on business, there could be additional checks you will need to complete, further information is available [here](#)

5 Submitting a Claim

The majority of business travel should be incurred through the usual purchasing routes, principally through purchase orders raised on the University's finance system Unit 4, or through University purchasing cards, rather than incurred directly by staff. However, in certain circumstances it is recognised that staff may incur incidental expenses on behalf of the University.

If staff need to make an expense claim, this must be done via the Staff Expenses system on Unit 4. Please note the old paper claims process has been stopped and withdrawn. Guidance on submitting a claim through Unit 4 can be found on the Staff Finance [web pages](#).

Before submitting your claim for approval, please ensure that it is clearly and correctly completed. Those approving claims are expected to be diligent in their review and approval of expenses.

By following this policy, any delays caused by queries as a result of incorrect completion or missing information, will be avoided.

6 Timely Submission

Expense claims **must** be submitted as soon as possible, and in any event, within three months of the expense being incurred. This is to ensure that the purpose of the claim is current, clear and understood by staff, and that timely recording can be made for budgetary control purposes.

Any claims submitted after this deadline may not be reimbursed or may require additional authorisation. Where there are legitimate explanations for the delay, these reasons should be included within the expense claim.

7 Definition of Business Travel

A business journey is a journey undertaken by staff to carry out their duties for the University, or to attend training courses or conferences necessary for the performance of those duties.

Staff have a permanent workplace, e.g. Hope Park, Creative Campus, Plas Caerdeon. All travel between a permanent workplace and a temporary workplace, or travel between home and a temporary workplace, or travel between two temporary workplaces, is classified as business travel. Staff carrying out visits to students on school-based experience would also be deemed to fall within this category.

Those expenses incurred through business travel may be reclaimed from the University through submitting an expense claim, however, the University shall not reimburse the costs of ordinary commuting or private travel.

The cost of travelling from home (or any other place staff may attend for personal reasons, such as the home of a friend or relative) to a permanent place of work is regarded for tax purposes as 'substantially ordinary commuting' and therefore a private journey. The University will only reimburse the cost of these journeys where these arrangements have been pre-approved by the relevant dean or head / director of school / service or in the event of an emergency call out.

8 Promotional Incentives

Travel arrangements shall not be influenced by any promotional incentives such as airline mileage credits or personal cash credit card discounts or rebates. Staff should not benefit personally from any promotional incentives but should use them to offset the cost of the current or future business journeys.

The use of air mile credits for private travel is not permitted.

9 Combined Business and Personal Travel

Combined business and personal travel is acceptable where the cost of the business part of the travel is not increased as a result of the extension and where staff meet all of the costs relating to the personal element.

10 Third Party Expenses

Partners, spouses or other persons ("companions") not employed by the University shall not travel at the University's expense.

Companions may accompany staff for personal reasons, however the University must not be charged for more than if staff had travelled alone. The companion's travel must be invoiced separately and paid for privately. This can be arranged by contacting the TMC, who will book the entire trip and ensure that the University is invoiced for only the staff travel costs. The Traveller is required to pay the companion's travelling costs at the time of booking.

It is recommended that separate private insurance be taken out for these persons travelling.

Where practical, travel costs should be invoiced separately and paid privately. If the invoice includes both private and official travel costs staff should pay the total invoice and reclaim any expense through the expense claims procedure.

In contrast, the University may request that the companion accompany them on a trip in order to represent the University. Under these circumstances the University will pay for all travel costs where this has been pre-approved by the relevant dean or head / director of school / service.

11 International Travel

Departments must keep a record of all international travel (both scheduled, booked and completed). It is recommended that this data be recorded on a spreadsheet and includes as a minimum the following; traveller names, dates, destinations and reason for travel. This information must be kept up-to-date and provided regularly to University Executive Managers (UEMs), at least monthly. It is recommended that this data be reviewed at the start of each term to ensure that all regular / planned international travel is captured.

It is a mandatory requirement that the International Office are informed of all proposed international travel PRIOR to booking and UEMs must be made aware of all international travel at point of booking.

12 Authorisation for Travel

Staff must comply with their own departmental procedures regarding the authorisation for travel, which should include Line Manager or Budget Holder approval for travel (on a journey by journey basis). This is to help ensure that all travel represents value for money, is consistent with departmental priorities, and has been subject to a risk assessment. Staff will also ensure that they have budget holder approval.

For all travel which is not made through the University's TMC, staff shall ensure that they have prior authorisation before the booking is placed.

13 Use of the University's Travel Management Company

The University has appointed a travel management company ("TMC") through a competitive tendering exercise.

The TMC **must** be used for the following:

- (i) Flights (including domestic, European or long haul)

- (ii) Hotels / overnight accommodation
- (iii) Rail (international)
- (iv) Car hire (international)

The TMC should be used for the following:

- (v) Rail (domestic)

There are many reasons for the use of a TMC and these are just a few of them:

- (i) No time lost in obtaining competitive quotes and submitting expense claims for every major journey.
- (ii) In the event of any international incident or major disruption to rail or air travel, they can provide rapid information to the University on staff who have booked through them and whose safety or travel could be affected.
- (iii) The University has no control over non-appointed agents in case of dispute.
- (iv) The contract 'small print' has been carefully negotiated and is known to be fair to the University.
- (v) The University has the ability to accumulate valuable management information such as spend levels and CO₂ emissions (our carbon footprint).
- (vi) They know the University's rules and requirements and can develop good customer profiles.
- (vii) Enhancements and improvements to the services can be introduced.
- (viii) Arrangements can be made for consolidated invoicing and charging.

In addition, the TMC will price match any quote obtained by the University. However, the comparison must be on an exact like for like basis, including all rules, regulations, booking classes, taxes, debit / credit card fees etc. and the ability to match a price must be made within two hours of the price having been identified.

Travel arrangements can be made using the TMC's online booking tool, or through contacting their dedicated universities division telephone helpdesk.

The online booking tools should be used for all routine requirements, e.g. UK rail tickets, hotels and point-to-point flights. The tool will allow you to compare all available options including low-cost operators and will usually match the best available rates offered by the airline, train operator or hotel.

The telephone helpdesk is recommended for complex itineraries, e.g. multi-destination or where you need to arrange taxi transfers. For access to the booking tool, please contact the Procurement Manager.

All bookings made through the TMC shall be supported by a purchase order, unless payment has been made through a University procurement card. Invoices submitted without a purchase order number will be rejected.

The TMC will invoice the University directly, thus avoiding the need for staff to claim expenses or for rail tickets or hotel bookings to be paid 'in advance'.

Note: It is mandatory that the travel arrangements be booked through the TMC for all 'package' travel. Package travel is a combination of at least two of the following; transport, accommodation and other tourist services, e.g. tours, activities, excursion.

It is acknowledged that there may be occasions where the TMC does not offer the best value for money or there are other business reasons for which they cannot be used. **Permitted exceptions** to the use of the TMC are:

- (i) Where an organiser or host institution, e.g. for a conference can offer or book overnight accommodation at a discounted rate,
- (ii) Where the purchase price (excluding the admin booking fee) cannot be matched by the TMC. Whenever this is the case, the University's Procurement Manager should be notified. The Procurement Manager monitors the performance of the TMC and the competitiveness of quotes to ensure they continue to provide a good service and best value.

14 Booking Travel

Staff should ensure they comply with their own department structure for the booking of travel, e.g. some departments have administrators to book travel, while other departments allow staff to book their own.

Booking as far as possible in advance is strongly encouraged as it is normally significantly cheaper than purchasing at the time of travel.

The majority of business travel should be incurred through the University's approved purchasing routes, e.g. Unit 4 or University purchasing card, therefore expense claims should be for incidental expenditure only.

Before making your booking, ensure that the budget holder will approve the travel and that the booking complies with this policy.

15 Travel Insurance

The University provides staff with travel insurance through its personal accident and business travel policy, other than in exceptional circumstances, e.g. travel to a restricted country. The cover is free with the exception of some high-risk destinations. As the University provides travel insurance cover for business trips, the cost of alternative travel insurance arrangements for business trips may not be claimed.

Cover is not automatic so staff are required to notify insurance@hope.ac.uk prior to travelling overseas so that their travel is logged for insurance purposes. A risk assessment for the trip must also be completed and signed, in line with the University's health and safety policy. Should an unforeseeable event occur whilst you are overseas, the University will be able to locate you and provide assistance. Travel insurance for all domestic travel is automatic and no formal notification is required, the University still requires a suitable risk assessment is undertaken for all travel off site. A copy of the risk assessment is available [here](#).

When assessing the risks, travellers are advised to consult the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) [website](#), which gives country-specific travel advice, including advice on crime, health, terrorism and natural disasters. The FCO is also a useful source of information, advice and practical tips on staying safe, healthy and avoiding problem situations. Staff are responsible for ensuring that they are travelling in line with the advice provided by the FCO. In the event that the FCO have changed their advice, a further risk assessment should be undertaken.

Travellers should ensure that they keep a copy of the insurance paperwork on them at all times and make note of the emergency contact number.

15.1 COVID-19

There has been a new exclusion add to the travel policy - "the Policy does not cover and we will not pay for claims under Section B – Travel, Sub-section 1 – Cancellation Curtailment Change of Itinerary Rearrangement or Replacement of any kind directly or indirectly arising from, relating to or in any way connected with the Coronavirus Disease 19 (COVID-19) (or any mutation or variation thereof) and / or its outbreak. To the extent that any Term or Condition in the Policy may be inconsistent with this exclusion, this exclusion shall prevail." For further information email insurance@hope.ac.uk

16 Sustainability

The university actively promotes environmental responsibility therefore travel should only be undertaken when absolutely essential and there is no other reasonable alternative such as telephone, video or web conferencing facilities.

Staff must consider sustainable forms of transport such as public transport (train or bus) or car sharing whenever it is cost-effective to do so. Flights within mainland UK should be avoided unless under exceptional circumstances.

As a reminder, the university runs a free shuttle bus service on weekdays for staff and students between our three campuses: Hope Park, Creative Campus and Aigburth Park.

17 Mode and Class of Travel

This should be the most cost-effective and consistent with the business needs of the University. Usually this will be standard class rail or economy class air travel, although staff should consider different options, e.g. public transport, hire car or private car.

Whenever possible, the booking of travel should be made at the earliest possible opportunity to take advantage of any cheaper fares / rates.

18 Driving on University Business

18.1 Health and Safety Aspects of Driving at Work – Code of Practice

Anyone driving on University business must ensure that they are familiar with the University's Health and Safety Aspects of [Driving at Work Code of Practice](#) .

18.2 Driver Declaration Forms

Anyone who drives on University business is required to complete an annual Driver Declaration Form before driving. This applies to those who wish to; drive University owned or leased vehicles, hire vehicles for University business both in the UK and overseas or use their own private vehicle for University business.

The form shall be completed annually.

The form shall be signed by your immediate line manager and a scanned copy of the form and its supporting documents be emailed to insurance@hope.ac.uk for insurance purposes.

18.3 Use of Hire Cars

Hire cars must be booked through the approved supplier, using the University's purchase order system or purchasing card.

Hire cars are generally more cost effective than the use of a private car for journeys over 100 miles.

Travel to and from your normal place of work is not permitted unless it is more practical for delivery/return of hire car from the home address.

It is expected that the class of car hired is suitable for the business need.

Hire cars should be supplied with a full tank of fuel. The driver is responsible for ensuring the vehicle is returned to the hire company with a full tank of fuel. Failure to do this will result in an extra charge to the University. Fuel should be paid for using a University fuel card or purchasing card. Where one is not available it can be paid for by the driver and claimed back through expenses.

18.4 Use of Private Vehicles

While the University discourages the use of private vehicles for safety and environmental reasons, their use is permitted (e.g. private car, van, motorcycle, bicycle etc.).

The University's motor insurance policy does not cover members of staff who use their own vehicles on University business. It is the responsibility of the driver to ensure that they have adequate insurance in place (minimum 'business use') to cover the use of a motor vehicle for business purposes. The annual Driver Declaration Form includes a declaration confirming that adequate insurance cover has been taken out.

The mileage allowance paid by the University includes all actual and incidental costs involved in running a vehicle in respect of wear, tear and business motor

insurance. The University accepts no responsibility for claims made against staff who fail to have adequate insurance in place.

As well as the correct insurance, staff must ensure that they have the appropriate licence and MOT test certificate for their vehicle and can only carry passengers if the policy permits. The University accepts no responsibility for claims made against staff who fail to have the appropriate insurance.

Mileage will be reimbursed in accordance with the rates below. These rates will be periodically reviewed by Executive Director of Finance, Services & Resources .

It is staff's own responsibility to ensure that they claim the appropriate rate for their mileage claims. If the incorrect rate is found to be claimed any tax liability issued by HMRC will be payable by staff and overpayment repaid to the University.

Mileage claims for business journey must be made for the lesser or:

- (i) Normal place of work to destination,
- (ii) Home to destination

Where unusual circumstances occur, e.g. diversions or road closures resulting in higher than expected mileage being incurred, details should be included on the expense claim. This will avoid claims being queried.

Mileage Allowance Payments

Type of Vehicle	Rate (per mile)
Cars and Vans (Petrol / Diesel / Hybrid)	45p 50p - (when carrying another member of staff)
Cars and Vans (Electric)	45p
Motorcycles	24p
Bicycles	20p

The University offers a salary sacrifice bicycle scheme to staff. Bicycle mileage cannot be paid for journeys undertaken using bicycles obtained under this scheme until ownership has been passed to the member of staff.

Indicative mileages between university sites

Indicative mileage (one way)	Aigburth	Creative Campus	Hope Park	Plas Caerdeon
Aigburth		4	4	92
Creative Campus	4		4	85
Hope Park	4	4		92
Plas Caerdeon	92	85	92	

18.5 Car Parking, Tolls and Congestion Charges

The University will reimburse all expenses for car parking costs incurred whilst travelling on University business away from staff normal place of work, on the production of receipts. Where no receipt is available, a note to that effect should be included within the expense claim. Long term airport parking can be expensive therefore you are encouraged to consider options such as public transport.

It is the driver's responsibility to ensure that tolls / congestion charges are paid promptly. The University will reimburse these costs on the production of receipts.

Claims for parking excess charges, fines, wheel clamp unlocking, etc. will not be met by the University except under exceptional circumstances.

19 Driving a Minibus

Staff who are required to drive either University mini buses or hired mini buses for work related activities, are required to undertake a driving assessment.

Line managers should be aware when this type of activity is being undertaken and are requested to identify people from within their department who are likely to require training.

It is a requirement of the University's insurance policy and [Driving at Work Code of Practice](#) that relevant training is undertaken, to raise awareness and to ensure that staff drive safely. **Note: this is a compulsory requirement even if a member of staffs' licence meets the DVLA requirements for driving this type of vehicle.**

The training, which can be given on an individual or small group's basis, will normally involve driving a Minibus under supervision on the road and a classroom based session, to raise awareness of the relevant legal, practical and safety issues. Should any additional training be required to bring staff up to the required standard, this may be booked direct with the assessor, at the time of the course.

Drivers who successfully complete the assessment and training programme will receive a certificate, a copy of which is to be lodged with your departmental administrator, for future reference. A copy of the certificate should also be attached to the annual driver declaration.

The certification lasts for 5 years.

20 Use of Taxis

The use of taxis is a costly means of business travel. The University prefers staff to walk, cycle or use alternative public transport rather than taxis for short journeys (less than 10 miles), however, the use of taxis is permitted where there is no suitable alternative, e.g. no practical public transport links, late night travel or transporting large equipment. In such cases the University will reimburse the cost of fares incurred. Expense claims must be supported by original receipts.

Taxis should not be used for longer journeys (the use of a hire car may provide better value for money) unless it can be demonstrated that it is the best value

option, there is a verifiable business need and it has been agreed in advance with line managers and explained on the expense claim form.

Staff taking a taxi for the same journey on the same day (e.g. the same event / conference) should travel together whenever possible and economical to do so.

The use of taxis between Hope Park Campus, Aigburth halls of residence and the Creative Campus during business hours is restricted to exceptional circumstances, the free shuttle bus should be used whenever possible. These journeys must have prior approval from line managers.

21 Travel by Rail

21.1 UK Travel

Staff are encouraged to book rail tickets through the TMC, using the University's purchase order system or purchasing card. Where possible the TMC's online travel booking tool should be used. It is recommended that savings be obtained wherever possible by booking rail travel in advance.

Only rail tickets which for business reasons have been purchased on the day of travel from station ticket offices may be claimed back through expenses on production of original receipts. Other claims for expenses may not be reimbursed or may require additional authorisation.

All tickets should be standard class unless proof can be provided that it was cheaper to travel by first class. First class travel may be permitted on an exceptional basis when pre-authorised by the relevant dean or head / director of school / service, or for the University's Rectorate Team.

A non-standard class rail fare is permitted where staff plan to work for the duration of the journey or for disability, impairment or health-related reasons.

Timed returns should always be booked unless it is not possible to estimate with certainty your time of return, in which case open-returns may be booked.

Original rail tickets must be scanned and attached to your expense claim. If these aren't available you should provide alternative forms of evidence, e.g. electronic tickets, booking confirmation, etc.

In circumstances where you are required to hand over your tickets and they are not returned, please detail this within your expense claim form.

The cost of meals and refreshments on longer train journeys may be claimed.

21.2 International Rail / EUROSTAR

These rail tickets must be booked through the TMC, using the University's purchase order system or purchasing card.

Initial enquiries about routes, costs and schedules should preferably be made by e-mail to the approved agent or by using the TMC's on-line booking tool if available.

The cost of meals and refreshments on longer train journeys may be claimed.

22 Air Travel

Air travel must be booked through the approved TMC, using the University's purchase order system or purchasing card.

There is an assumption that all staff will travel economy class unless there are exceptional circumstances to justify business class and approval has been approved by the relevant dean or head/director of school / service.

Air travel should not normally be booked for travel within the UK. Internal flights (i.e. UK mainland) are only permitted if they are cheaper than the rail equivalent.

Advantage should be taken of any cheap day or reduced fares where available.

Business class / first class travel or equivalent must be pre-authorised by the relevant dean or head / director of school / service.

23 Accommodation

When staff are away from home overnight on University business they are entitled to book hotel or other suitable accommodation on a Bed and Breakfast basis.

Standard hotels (3 star rated) provide a good standard of cleanliness, privacy, personal security and access to breakfast and so should be used at all times with no exceptions.

Accommodation must be booked through the University's TMC and not claimed through expenses

Where overnight accommodation is offered as part of a conference package it is permitted to book this independently from the University's TMC using the University's purchase order or purchasing card systems.

Meal costs are covered by subsistence payments, but please note this excludes alcohol.

Gratuities are paid at the discretion of staff and unless specifically included on the bill as a service charge, will not be reimbursed by the University.

The University will not pay for accommodation booked by Staff travelling on University business in the UK or overseas through Airbnb, Uniplaces or similar providers as the University cannot guarantee meeting its Duty of Care requirements to ensure safety in this type of accommodation.

24 Subsistence

Staff incurring subsistence expenditure whilst travelling on University business may claim the reasonable cost of food, including any drink, which is taken with a meal, by submitting the actual receipts for expenditure, and subject to a maximum amount (see table below).

Gratuities are paid at the discretion of staff and unless specifically included on the bill as a service charge, will not be reimbursed by the University.

The maximum allowance payable for overnight accommodation with friends or relatives is to cover small gifts or other gestures of gratitude offered to the hosts and must also be supported by receipts.

The following allowances are intended for staff who are travelling in the performance of their official duties and are thereby prevented from taking meals at their home or at their normal place of work, or from sleeping at home.

Maximum Subsistence Rates

Time away from home	Place (away from normal workplace or home)	Allowable	Maximum Rate per Day
Up to 3 hours	All places	Light refreshment	£3
Up to 7 hours	All places	Food and Beverages	£15
Over 7 hours	All places	Food and Beverages	£35
Overnight Accommodation	Staying with friends/relatives	Accommodation	£25
Overnight, up to 24 hours	London	B & B	£125
Overnight, up to 24 hours	Elsewhere in UK	B & B	£95
Overnight, up to 24 hours	Overseas	See Appendix A https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/scale-rate-expenses-payments-employee-travelling-outside-the-uk	

Maximum allowances per meal:

Breakfast £5.00	Lunch £10.00	Dinner £20.00
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25 Related Policies / Documents

- (i) [Financial Regulations](#)
- (ii) [Staff Expenses](#)
- (iii) [Fieldwork and Overseas Travel](#)
- (iv) [Driving at Work Code of Practice](#)