Summarised Expenses & Benefits Policy

Introduction

1. This summarised policy applies to all staff of the University of Aberdeen claiming expenses and benefits incurred in connection with University business. It is essential that all expenses and benefits claimed demonstrate value for money, are appropriate and can withstand external scrutiny. It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure best value is achieved in all circumstances. This policy applies to all expenditure from all Colleges or Sections, regardless of funding source. Full details can be found in the Expenses and Benefits Policy on the University’s website at http://www.abdn.ac.uk/finance/finregs/finregs.

2. Expense claims are intended for reimbursement of travel, subsistence and accommodation costs only. Purchases of goods and services should be dealt with through normal University policies and should not be included on expense claims.

3. All expense claims must be authorised by the relevant line manager and must be supported by original detailed receipts (the customer copy of a credit or debit card receipt is not acceptable).

Annual Staff & Student Events

4. It is recognised that Colleges, Schools & Sections would want to organise induction or retirement events. These inclusive events should be agreed in advance with the Head of College. Schools and Sections may also wish to organise a one off event, for example to reward staff in recognition of a successful event or operational activity, or a Christmas party, such events should be restricted to one per year.

5. For events held on campus, catering (including beverages) must be provided by the University's internal caterers. Total expenditure should not exceed £20 per head.

Business Entertainment

6. The UK Bribery Act 2010 makes it an offence to accept or offer a bribe. University employees must ensure that hospitality either received or given does not affect, or are perceived to affect, the outcome of business or research activities.

7. Necessary costs of entertaining business contacts will be reimbursed on production of receipts. For this purpose, “business contacts” do not include other employees of the University or of any organisation or company associated with the University. The following information must be shown on the claim form:

   a. the name(s) of attendees;

   b. the organisation which they represent and,

   c. the purpose of the entertainment

8. The number of University attendees to external attendees should be no more than 10 University attendees to each external attendee.

9. It should be noted that all entertainment expenditure must be authorised by the line manager before it is incurred. The University will accept claims for alcoholic beverages at a reasonable level, currently £10 per head per event.
Working Lunches

10. Working Lunches where provided from the University’s facilities. Where the provision of food and refreshments is from external suppliers, tax and NIC charges may arise.

Subsistence

11. If your duties require you to travel you are entitled to claim the additional cost of meals taken on route. If however you are attending a catered conference you can only claim personal incidental expenses. Only the costs of meals taken in the course of business journeys will be borne by the University. You may claim either the actual, reasonable costs of food and non-alcoholic drink, supported by receipts, or scale subsistence expenses as follows:

Day Subsistence Allowance

12. If you have a permanent workplace, you may claim the following amounts without receipts, for each day on which you purchase a meal while at least 5 miles away from home and your permanent workplace.

   a. **Lunch** - £10.00 when absent from your permanent workplace or home for more than 5 hours, spanning a normal mealt ime.

   b. **Lunch & Dinner** - £25.00 when absent from your permanent workplace or home for more than 10 hours, spanning two normal mealtimes.

Overnight Allowances

13. Staff in certain designated Sections whose duties entail extensive travel may, at the discretion of the manager, receive reimbursement of either of the following overnight allowances as appropriate:-

   a. **Overnight Subsistence Allowance - £30 per night away** - where you are away from home or the normal workplace, you may claim an overnight subsistence allowance in addition to accommodation costs. The allowance is payable in respect of nights spent away from home. Where overnight allowance is claimed, you may not claim daily subsistence allowances referred to above nor any actual meal or other incidental costs.

   b. **“Staying with Friends” Allowance - £25 per night away** - where you choose not to stay in hotel accommodation, and stay overnight with friends or relatives, an allowance per night may be claimed by way of a contribution towards the costs incurred by your hosts. Where this allowance is claimed, the only other scale subsistence allowance for which you may claim, where appropriate, is the daily lunch allowance described above.

Personal Incidental s

14. You may claim the actual costs of personal incidental expenses such as newspapers, private calls, laundry, drinks, etc provided that the total amount spent on such items amounts to no more than £5 per night (where the night is spent in the United Kingdom) or £10 per night (where the night is spent outside the United Kingdom).

Hotel Accommodation

15. When you are travelling on business you should obtain accommodation in a reasonable quality hotel. The following pricing guideline should be applied to accommodation costs when booking hotels:

   - UK hotels (excluding London) up to £100 per night
   - London hotels up to £150 per night
   - Overseas up to £150 per night
16. If these prices are unachievable approval from your line manager should be obtained prior to booking.

**Travel Expenses**

17. You may claim the costs of necessary business travel.

18. All staff and students must register business travel involving overseas travel, overnight stays or airline travel with the University's Insurance Section prior to departure. Further information and an online registration form can be found in the “Working Here Section” of StaffNet.

19. Staff undertaking overseas travel should also refer to the Overseas Travel Policy found in the “Policy Zone” of StaffNet and check current travel advice provided by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office prior to departure.

**Air/Rail fares**

20. Employees, who need to travel by air or rail, should normally travel at tourist or economy class or standard class for rail fares, taking advantage wherever possible of any reduced rates. In relation to air travel, all domestic and short haul flights (less than 7 hours in length) should be economy or tourist class. Long haul flights (over 7 hours) may be at business class with prior approval of the Head of School/Section or Head of College/Administration. For rail travel, staff may travel business class with prior approval from the Head of School/Section or Head of College/Administration. All student travel should be at economy or tourist class. All such travel should be booked through the approved travel contact.

21. Whenever possible tickets should be booked in advance (at least 14 days) in order to reduce costs and take advantage of low fares. A variety of carriers should be considered to ensure value for money is achieved. Travel by business class must be booked a minimum of 14 days in advance of travel and open tickets should not normally be purchased when travelling by business class. All staff have responsibility to ensure good use of funds and best value is achieved regardless of the funding source.

22. “Trading down” of travel tickets, i.e. travelling by a lower class in order to claim an extra ticket for a family member or friend, is not permitted.

23. Details of any rail and flight costs for which reimbursement is sought should be reported on the claim form, as for other public transport expenses.

**Taxis**

24. Use of taxis for business purposes is an allowable expense, but due to the cost implications, taxis should not be used for journeys of excessive length nor when a reasonable method of public transport is available e.g. underground. It is not permissible to claim for taxi journeys from home to the normal place of work (or the return trip) as this gives rise to a taxable benefit.

**Using your own car on business**

25. If you use your own private car, other than for travel within Aberdeen, on University business you must seek prior authority to do so from your manager. You should ensure that your insurance cover extends to business use and the insurer should, if necessary, be asked to endorse the certificate to confirm that driving in the performance of the University’s business is covered by the insurance policy.

26. Before travelling, staff are required to compare standard (as appropriate) rail travel costs, and, if cheaper, should opt for rail travel when a direct rail service is available. Alternatively, if rail travel is not available, the cost of car hire (including fuel and other charges) should be considered, once again the cheaper option must be taken. If for any reason, a more expensive mode of transport is chosen, the cost of the cheaper alternative will be reimbursed.
27. Where authority is granted by the University, expenses incurred whilst on University business will be reimbursed (the mileage allowance is detailed in Appendix A). Where public transport is not readily available, the University prefers that a hire car be used. Where mileage allowances are claimed, cumulative mileage totals must be recorded on the claim form.

Gifts

28. The UK Bribery Act 2010 makes it an offence to accept or offer a bribe. University employees must ensure that gifts either received or given do not affect, or are perceived to affect, the outcome of business or research activities.

29. The University will allow gifts to external parties; however gifts of cash are not permitted. A gift must not exceed the Inland Revenue limit of £50 to an individual recipient in any given year. Gifts in excess of £50 are treated as a taxable benefit, with the University responsible for reporting and paying any tax liability. Gifts should be purchased through normal University procedures and not claimed on expense forms.

30. University employees offered gifts or hospitality in excess of £50 must report these to their line manager prior to acceptance. If gifts or hospitality in excess of £50 are accepted these must be recorded in the University's Corporate Gift and Hospitality Register maintained within Schools/Sections.

Non-Allowable Expenses

31. Expense claims are intended for reimbursement of travel, subsistence and accommodation costs only. Purchases of goods and services should be dealt with through normal University policies and should not be included on expense claims.

   a. Alcohol - the University will not reimburse expenditure for alcoholic beverages, unless for entertaining “business contacts”, as detailed under the entertainment section or for annual staff and student events.

   b. Payments to Individuals of any sort are not permitted. These should be processed through the appropriate channels, e.g. Human Resources, Studentships, Accounts Payable.

   c. Other Non Allowable Taxable Benefits include: childcare expenses, kennel boarding for pets, travel cards, top up vouchers for mobile telephones, home telephone line rental or private calls, personal mobile telephone contracts or private calls, personal broadband internet access, membership to airport executive lounges or such like, parking fines or speeding tickets, carbon offset charges, commuting from home to normal place of work, and gratuities.

Allowable Benefits

32. Details for claiming other allowable benefits can be found in the full Expenses & Benefits Policy. These items include:
   a. Car Parking
   b. University vehicles for business purposes only
   c. Training courses
   d. Publications
   e. Professional Subscriptions
   f. Provision of a mobile telephone
   g. Use of office equipment at home
   h. Medical and dental examinations
   i. Job related accommodation
   j. Relocation expenses, to a maximum of £8,000 for qualifying purposes
   k. Uniforms
# Appendix A - Current rates and limits for expenses

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<th>Maximum amount claimable through petty cash</th>
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## Mileage rates

**Employees driving their own cars:**

Per round trip (for cumulative annual business mileage up to 10,000 miles)

- First 100 miles of a round trip: 45p
- Subsequent mileage: 25p
- Rate for all mileage after the first 10,000 business miles per year: 25p

**Motorcycles**

- 24p

**Bicycles**

- 20p

## Subsistence Allowance

- Day subsistence (lunch): £10
- Day subsistence (lunch and dinner): £25
- Overnight subsistence allowance: £30
- Staying with friends allowance: £25
- Personal Incidental Expenses (Daily)
  - UK: £5
  - Overseas: £10

## Removal Expenses Tax Free Allowance

- £8,000
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<td><strong>Author / Creator</strong></td>
<td>Shiona Denton, Accountant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Owner</strong></td>
<td>Irene Bews, Finance Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date published / approved</strong></td>
<td>Operating Board 5 March 2013</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Version</strong></td>
<td>3.0</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Date for Next Review</strong></td>
<td>March 2016</td>
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