

West Highland College UHI

Travel and Expenses Procedure

Purpose:

The purpose of this procedure is to set out the guidelines which must be followed when making business travel arrangements and claiming for expenses that have been incurred in connection with College business.

Scope:

This procedure covers-

- All employees of the College and members of the Board of Management.
- Students of the College where the travel is for academic (learning and/or research) purposes and where travel is organised by the student in pursuance of a study programme;
- Other representatives of the College (eg visitors, contractors or visiting academics) where the travel is directly related to academic (learning and/or research) purposes and authorised by the College

Accommodation

- When employees are necessarily away from home on College business they are entitled to hotel or other suitable accommodation.
- Basic standards include cleanliness, privacy, personal security and the availability of breakfast.
- Staff should book and pay for their own accommodation unless the College has an account with the accommodation provider or prior arrangements have been made
- Staff are reminded of the need to demonstrate value for money and reasonableness of expenditure when selecting accommodation.
- If staff wish to stay with friends or relatives instead of hotel accommodation, this is permissible.

Accommodation Rates

Bed and Breakfast	-	up to £100
Dinner	-	up to £25
Staying with friends/relatives	-	gift up to £15 (VAT receipts to be provided)

- Claims in excess of these limits must be justified in writing, having been authorised in advance by your line manager.
- Where the cost of the hotel room has been paid in advance by the College, the employee is responsible for settling the cost of any additional items before leaving the hotel. Allowable expenses can be reimbursed.

Air Travel

- Where it is the most cost effective method of travel or operational requirements dictate, staff may opt to travel by aeroplane.
- All UK domestic flights will be economy class

Alcoholic Beverages

- No claims for alcoholic drinks purchased for personal use are to be accepted
- Claims for alcohol are only permitted for entertaining/hospitality where there is a genuine reason for the meeting.

Authorisation of Expenses

- Expense forms cannot be self-authorized.
- Expenses claims should be authorised by a more senior member of staff – this is usually the claimant's line manager. In the absence of the line manager this should be a member of the Executive Leadership Team.

The authorisation confirms that:-

- Any journey taken was authorised
- Expenses were properly and necessarily incurred on College business

Business Entertainment

- Appropriate entertainment by a member of College staff of people from an external organisation for a clear and necessary business purpose may be claimed.
- This must be approved in advance by the staff member's line manager
- Expenditure claimed should be reasonable and not excessive
- There should be a clear justifiable purpose for each employee's attendance
- Claims must be supported by receipts and the names of staff attending must be stated on the Expenses Claim Form

Car Hire

- For long journeys in excess of 125 miles when a pool car is not available, car hire should be considered, wherever appropriate and where it is economical. This option may not be available for staff located at some centres.

Car Parking

- The College will reimburse all expenses for car parking costs incurred whilst travelling on College business away from the normal place of work. Claims must be made on the College Expenses form and supported by receipts.
- In the exceptional and unlikely event that a parking meter was used and no receipt is available, a comment should be made on the submitted expense claim form.

Claim Deadlines

- Expense claims must be submitted within 3 months of the expense being incurred. Any claims submitted after this deadline may not be reimbursed and have to be additionally authorised by the Director of Finance.
- Every effort should be made to submit an expenses form within the financial year that the expense was incurred. Therefore, particular attention needs to be paid to claims incurred during the months of June and July.

Cycle to Work Scheme

- Cycle Scheme enables employees to get a bike tax-free, saving on average half the cost. It's free to join and easy to work online. More information can be found at www.cyclescheme.co.uk

Display Screen Equipment

- If working with a computer is part of your job, the College will contribute up to £75 of the cost of corrective lenses, if it is deemed necessary for working with display screens.
- All staff are eligible to apply.
- Details and claim forms are available from Human Resources

Excess Parking Charges and Fines

- Claims for excess charges, speeding fines, wheel clamp unlocking etc will not be met by the College under any circumstances

Holidays

- Although it is acceptable to tag a holiday onto a trip primarily undertaken for College business, the College will not bear any cost for this portion of the trip.
- Staff must seek approval and book their annual leave using Cascade and have this holiday approved by their line manager, before making arrangements for any trip which includes personal time where a holiday is being taken.
- If any costs pre-paid by the College are affected by the extra time for the holiday, the member of staff is required to reimburse the College for the difference. Calculated by using the costs of the trip without the holiday and the actual cost.
- If there is an additional cost for taking a holiday during a business trip and the member of staff fails to reimburse the College accordingly, the total value of the trip becomes a taxable benefit and will be reported to HMRC at the financial year end.

Hospitality and Gifts

- Whilst modest hospitality is an accepted courtesy of a business relationship, the College should avoid a situation whereby giving/accepting the hospitality may be deemed to have influenced a business decision or lead to an allegation of a conflict of interest.
- Small gifts to staff in limited circumstances may be appropriate. Any such gifts require the authorisation of a member of the Executive Leadership team.
- The Director of Finance will keep a register of hospitality/gifts received by staff members, except for items such as diaries and calendars.

Local Public Transport Expenses

- Local bus or train fares for business journeys may be claimed using the College Expenses form, supported by receipts.

Lost or Mislaid Receipts

- For lost or mislaid receipts/tickets staff must produce duplicates or alternative acceptable proof of payment such as itemised credit card statements.
- In the absence of any proof of payment reimbursement cannot be made.

Mileage

- Personal mileage will only be paid when a College Pool vehicle is not available and the authorised College Expenses Form must state that a pool vehicle has not been available for the journey
- Where a private motor vehicle or motorcycle is used by an employee to travel on official business a mileage allowance may be claimed
- To qualify for the mileage reimbursement staff should ensure their personal car is appropriately insured for business use and has an MOT if applicable.

Mileage Rates

Car	-	any distance	-	45p per mile
Motorcycle	-	any distance	-	24p per mile

Overseas Travel

Authorisation

- No travel overseas by any member of staff can take place without the approval of an ELT member
- An Overseas Travel request Approval Form must be completed

Class of Travel

- When travelling by air staff should use the most economical means possible
- Requests for travel by premium economy or business class should be approved by the Principal prior to booking.

'Contact Buddy'

- In order to be assured of the safety of all staff travelling overseas it is important that an arrangement is made with another member of staff within the college to make regular contact whilst overseas.
- If such contact is not made the 'Contact Buddy' must discuss the incidence with a member of ELT.

Insurance

- When travelling outside the UK staff will be covered by the College's insurance policy
- To ensure insurance cover the Overseas Travel Authorisation form should be completed identifying any risks associated with the destination of travel
- For clarification of insurance status, contact the Director of Finance

Medical Expenses

- All staff travelling to Europe must obtain a Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC). This will entitle UK residents access to necessary medical treatment at a reduced cost or for free during a temporary visit to the European Economic Area and Switzerland
- Each individual traveller requires their own Global Health Insurance Card

Passports

- Employees are responsible for ensuring that they have valid passports for overseas business travel
- It is recommended that staff have a photocopy of their passport in case of loss or theft
- For any journey, the expiry date of the passport must be at least 6 months after the date of returning to the United Kingdom
- It is generally expected that employees have passports for their own personal use and the initial cost of a passport is not an allowable expense.
- If a replacement passport or a 48 page business passport is required due to extensive business travel, this additional cost may be reimbursed at the discretion of a member of the Executive Leadership Team

Pre-existing Medical Conditions

- If you have a pre-existing medical condition for which you take prescribed medication you need to check whether the medication is legal in the country you

are travelling to. The Embassy or High Commission of the country you are visiting can advise.

- If you have a pre-existing medical condition you should contact Director of Finance with regard to insurance cover. If you do not disclose a pre-existing medical condition which subsequently found to invalidate the College travel insurance you may not be covered by the College or any of its insurance policies.

Risk Assessment

- A risk assessment should be completed prior to any overseas travel

Vaccinations and Visas

- Employees must seek advice on the need for visas and vaccinations for overseas business travel.
- The cost of visas may be claimed using the College Expenses form supported by receipts
- Any charge made by doctors or health centres may be claimed using the College Expenses Form

Rail Travel

- Standard class rail travel should be booked if possible in advance of the business trip to obtain the best value for money and to ensure the availability of a seat.
- First class rail travel is not permitted, however in the exceptional circumstances where it is cheaper than standard class or the difference is negligible when considering space, comfort and WiFi availability, the first class cost can be claimed where proof of both costs is provided for comparison. Line manager authorisation is required prior to commencement of the journey
- If first class travel is the personal preference the difference between standard class and first class must be paid by the individual staff member.
- Use of rail cards – where significant rail travel is envisaged the purchase of a rail card may prove cost effective. Claims for reimbursement should be made using the College Expenses form supported by receipts.
- Staff who travel by train are expected to take advantage of special deals where possible.
- All claims for rail travel should be made using the College Expenses form supported by receipts/tickets

Relocation Expenses

- Relocation expenses will be determined on a case by case basis
The allowance may include some or all of the following and be payable against receipts to cover:
 - removal costs;
 - legal fees;
 - survey fees;
 - estate agent fees;
 - soft furnishings;
 - weekend family visits to view properties.
- Should the post become vacant [for whatever reason] within 24 months, the staff member would be required to repay the allowance calculated on a monthly incremental basis.

Spouses and Partners

- Expenses incurred by or on behalf of spouses and partners are not reimbursable
- An exception to this can only be made when there is an essential and exceptional business case and this must be authorised in advance by the Principal.

Subscriptions to Professional Bodies

- The College will not normally bear the cost of personal subscriptions to professional bodies.
- Where an individual's membership of a professional body can be demonstrated to result in wider benefit to the College, the Principal may agree to meet the cost of the individual's subscription from College funds.

Subsistence Rates

- When travelling away from West Highland College UHI staff are entitled to claim the cost of main meals and other incidental expenses.

Day Subsistence Rates – within the UK

Lunch	-	up to £15
Dinner	-	up to £25

Meals Outside the UK

While meals will be reimbursed on actual receipts, staff are asked where possible to adhere to UK limits as above.

Taxis

- Taxi fares are only admissible for journeys for which there is no other suitable method of transport, e.g. where heavy luggage has to be transported or where the saving of official time is of paramount importance.
- When using a taxi, all expenses must be claimed using the College Expenses Form and supported by receipts.

Unused Tickets

- All unused tickets must be submitted to the Finance Office immediately upon the employees return to enable an application for refund to be made.

Travel and Expenses policy

[Travel-and-Expenses-Policy-2022.pdf \(uhi.ac.uk\)](#)