

Travel Expenses Policy

Reimbursement of expenses

Section 1 - Introduction

This Policy was approved by the Finance Committee of the College in March 2011 and minor amendments have been made since then.

As a charity and a members' organisation, the College is reliant on the support it receives from its members, who should be neither out of pocket nor enjoy any financial gain when working voluntarily on College-related activity.

Members should be able to satisfy themselves that they could justify to a fellow member any claim they make for payment of expenses, if challenged. The College has a responsibility to the members who finance its activities to ensure that expenditure on travel and subsistence is properly incurred, controlled and represents 'value for money'.

The guidance below applies to members and others attending meetings of the College Council and Committees, and other related meetings. Related meetings include:

- Attendance at Committee meetings by Council members and others
- Meetings with representatives of other institutions, Government, Regulators or funders
- Other meetings on College business
- Other events where there is an identifiable benefit to the College
- Meetings attended by Council members in an official capacity on behalf of the College

Attendance at the above meetings should be an integral part of your duties as a College officer or committee member, and a casual interest in the subject matter is not sufficient for the purpose of claiming expenses. If you have a query in relation to a claim, or require further guidance or assistance, please contact the Finance and Operations department and speak to the Head of Finance and Operations, Thandi Mtetwa.

Section 2 - Travel

2.1 Rail Travel

Wherever possible, advance train tickets should be purchased. These are available up to 24 hours before the day of travel.

As the dates of many meetings are known well in advance members are expected to take advantage of the financial benefits to the College of booking travel in advance. Full advantage should be taken of concessionary fares, cheap day tickets, and rail card options where appropriate. The College will reimburse the cost of rail cards used for business travel, provided the financial benefit of to the College is greater than the cost of the rail card.

Council members are entitled to travel first class on College business particularly if they intend to work during the journey. However, in the interests of economy, please consider travelling standard class where practical.

If you do not book your own rail tickets would you please pass this information on to whoever does (eg the eye department secretary).

2.2 Air Travel

For journeys longer than five hours you are entitled to travel business class if you intend to work on College business during your flights. However, please consider travelling economy class where practical and also using low cost airlines, promotional fares and similar offers where practical, particularly for short flights within the UK and Europe.

2.3 Mileage

Travel by car is acceptable where it is more efficient and economical than the use of public transport. For example, where there is no appropriate public transport for the route; where there are significant files/equipment to be transported; or where there are time and cost savings involved.

Where a private car is used for College business, you should be certain that your car is covered for 'permitted use' within the terms of your insurance policy. No charge should be made to the College for any additional cost in respect of 'permitted use' on private insurance cover.

The current private car mileage rates (which are based on the HM Revenue and Customs rates) are for each tax year (6th April to 5th April) Rate per Mile:

- First 10,000 miles 45p
- Above 10,000 miles 25p

It is unlikely that you will travel over 10,000 miles on behalf of the College. Mileage claimed from other employments is not relevant for the application of this limit.

2.4 Tube, Bus and Taxis

Please travel by tube or bus wherever practical, particularly for short journeys. Where it is impractical to use a tube or bus, for example, because of heavy luggage, a taxi may be used. However, please avoid any additional charges, such as pre-booking or waiting time, wherever possible.

Please do not use taxis for long distance travel, except where the cost of such a journey is less than the cost of travel by other more economical means, and the cost of overnight accommodation that would have been required.

Section 3 – Subsistence & overnight accommodation

3.1 Subsistence

Actual expenditure may be claimed to cover reasonable costs for meals and incidental expenditure whilst on College business.

The limits below are given for guidance on what is considered reasonable expenditure. Up to a maximum of £40, where absent from home or the office for more than five hours but less than 10 hours in any one day. Up to a maximum of £60, where absent from home or the office for more than 10 hours in any one day.

The above amounts are inclusive of VAT. They are not round sum allowances, and receipts should support expense claims.

Lunch

Staff will be pleased to make arrangements to provide a working lunch if you attending a meeting in College when the meeting is scheduled to last for several hours, up to and including lunchtime.

Dinner

You may wish to join fellow members for dinner if you are staying overnight. Please note, however, that you will be entitled to claim for the cost of the dinner only if you are entitled to claim for the overnight accommodation. Otherwise you will need to meet the cost of the dinner yourself.

Where you meet fellow members for dinner and are entitled to claim the cost, you may claim for the actual expenditure, up to the maximum limits above, for yourself and other companions, who are similarly entitled to claim, if you settle the bill personally. Please ensure that full details are given on your expense claim form, with names of those on whose behalf you are claiming.

Tips

If a service charge is added to the restaurant bill this may be paid. If however there is no service charge and it is generally accepted practice to leave a tip or gratuity for service, an appropriate tip/ gratuity will be reimbursed. Within the UK, the appropriate level is considered to be 10% of the expenditure for good service.

3.2 Overnight Accommodation

Where possible you should travel on the day of your meeting or business without incurring overnight accommodation. If you are required to stay overnight when away from home on College business you may claim reimbursement of actual expenditure incurred for overnight hotel accommodation, including breakfast. Maximum B&B rate limit is £159 a night, inclusive of VAT.

Hotel Booking

In the interests of economy, do please exercise discretion when seeking overnight accommodation when on College business. Please also provide full details of the reason for claiming overnight accommodation on your expense claim form.

If, for any reason, you are unable to remain within the above limits for subsistence and overnight accommodation, please obtain advance clearance from the Chief Executive or the relevant Head of Department.

For overnight accommodation connected with meetings in London the College has an arrangement with the Wesley Hotel, near Euston Station and members of staff in the College department you deal with will be able to make the necessary bookings on your behalf. You should ensure that this is done as far in advance as possible.

Accommodation booked in this way will be settled directly by the College.

Incidental Expenditure

The College will reimburse incidental expenditure, to cover such things as newspapers, laundry or telephone calls homes, while away on business. The limits for incidental expenditure are:

- £5 per night for overnight stays anywhere in the UK; and
- £10 per night for overnight stays outside the UK

The above amounts can only be claimed when supported by receipts.

Section 4 – Other Expenditure

The College will also reimburse the actual costs of postage, telephone calls and other incidental business expenses which you necessarily incur as part of your duties as a member representing the College. Please provide full details on your expense claim form, supported by receipts. Telephone calls will be reimbursed with associated VAT when supported by an itemised bill.

Section 5 – Expenditure not covered

We regret that the following will not be reimbursed:

- The travel and subsistence for events that you have been invited to in a personal capacity or as a personal guest of a College Office-Holder or other official
- The travel and subsistence expenditure of spouses or other travelling partners will not be reimbursed, unless the attendance of the spouse is an integral part of a specific representational event
- Expenditure not related to College activity
- Meals purchased at or near your home or place of work
- Personal incidental expenditure will only be reimbursed up to the maximum limits above
- Gratuities and tips, other than in restaurants, will not be reimbursed. If you wish to add a supplement to a charge, or recognise other service, please make this payment personally
- Actual expenditure only will be reimbursed and not round sum meal or subsistence allowances
- Expenditure related to casual or personal entertaining. Discretion should be exercised when claiming business entertaining when on College business. If a member of staff is also attending, they should normally pay for the expenditure incurred

Section 6 - Administration

6.1 Receipts

Valid VAT invoices or receipts must support all expense claim forms. It is recognised that there are certain categories of expense where receipts cannot be obtained, for example, parking meter charges. Un-receipted expenses up a maximum of £10 (or equivalent foreign currency) will be paid, providing a reasonable explanation is provided for the absence of a receipt.

6.2 VAT

Please do not add VAT to the amounts you claim.

6.3 Claim Forms

An expenses claim form will be supplied with the papers for all major meetings and the standard expense form is also available on and can be downloaded from the College website.

Expense claim forms should be completed for any expenditure claimed. Please submit your expense claim forms on a regular basis, preferably immediately after the meeting or event in respect of which you are claiming. The College reserves the right to refuse to reimburse expenses which relate to events more than three months before the claim.

6.4 Payment of Claims

Current Procedure

The College will normally pay expenses by BACS direct to the member's bank account on a weekly basis. Expenses will normally be reimbursed therefore within two to three weeks. Any expenses paid by cheques will be posted to the member's address given on the expense form.

6.5 Dispute

In the event of a dispute, please raise the issue in the first instance with your staff contact. They will discuss the dispute with the relevant Head of Department and with the Head of Finance and Operations. If we cannot resolve the dispute, please then direct your enquiry to the Chief Executive. If the Chief Executive is unable to resolve the dispute, s/he will refer it to the Treasurer, who may decide to consult other members of the Finance Committee. Please note that the decision of the Treasurer is final.

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