



## Expenses Policy

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# Introduction

At The Royal College of Ophthalmologists, we are committed to responsible financial management and ensuring that all expenses incurred align with our charitable mission and core values: improvement, inclusion, innovation and integrity.

This policy provides clear guidelines for employees, volunteers, and trustees on how to claim expenses in a way that is transparent, fair, and accountable. The maximum spends outlined in the policy must also be adhered to when costs incurred are booked and paid for by college employees on behalf of individuals.

Our approach ensures that funds are used efficiently while supporting the essential work we do for our members and the wider specialty.

- **Improvement** – We continuously refine our processes to ensure financial resources are managed effectively.
- **Inclusion** – Our expense procedures are fair and accessible to all, ensuring that financial barriers do not hinder participation in our work.
- **Innovation** – We encourage cost-effective and forward-thinking approaches to resource management.
- **Integrity** – We uphold the highest ethical standards, ensuring that every pound spent is justified and in the best interest of our charitable aims.

By following this policy, we safeguard public trust, maintain financial integrity, and ensure that all expenses contribute to the impact of our work.

The College aims to create a culture of mindful spending that aligns with our broader sustainability goals and encourages individuals to minimise the cost of expenses by booking in advance, looking for best value, using discount cards/codes and making group bookings to obtain discounts wherever possible.

The College acknowledges that there will always be a need to physically travel across the UK and internationally. The preferred route of travel within the UK is public transport.

The guidance below applies to anyone attending College business in an official capacity on behalf of the College away from their usual place of work.

The College will pay the following out-of-pocket expenses:

- **Subsistence** taken while on College business
- **Travel** from home/place of work to and from the place of a meeting, event and any additional travel necessary in the course of work on behalf of the College
- **Mileage** costs incurred while on College business by prior approval
- **Accommodation** costs if overnight stays are necessary to the activity and agreed prior to booking. These can be arranged and pre-paid by the College.

## Subsistence

The cost of meals and incidentals while on College business can be claimed. A receipt should support all claims for meals or subsistence. As a guide, claims for subsistence away from usual place of work are as follows:

- Breakfast £10
- Lunch £15
- Dinner £40

These subsistence rates should include all meals in a 24-hour period.

Claims for breakfast will not be reimbursed where breakfast is already included on a hotel bill. Claims for lunch and/or dinner will not be reimbursed where this has been provided to you by the College. Individual claims for the cost of alcoholic beverages will not be accepted.

## Travel

The most environmentally sustainable approach to travel is for individuals to use public transport where possible. The most financially sustainable approach to travel is to book in advance. Please be mindful of these points when booking travel.

### Public transport

Tickets should be purchased for standard class travel in advance.

Those wishing to travel first class train, you will be required to bear the additional cost if the first-class ticket is more expensive than the standard-class fare. You must indicate this on the expense claim and provide evidence to support this.

If using an oyster card or contactless card for public transport, evidence of the transaction must be submitted e.g. your Oyster Card statement or bank statement clearly showing the travel transaction.

### Taxi

Taxis should not be used, 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.

Taxis can also be used by employees traveling alone at night, but this expense must be agreed by your line manager in advance.

Sharing taxis, where possible, is encouraged.

## Use of Taxis for Transporting Equipment

Employees are permitted to use taxis when transporting company equipment under the following conditions:

- The equipment is bulky, heavy, valuable, or sensitive, making public transportation impractical or unsafe.
- The use of a taxi ensures the safe, secure, and timely transport of the equipment.
- Prior approval should be sought where possible; if not feasible due to time-sensitive circumstances, a clear justification must be provided with the expense claim.

## Flights

The cost of flights should be minimised by booking travel in advance, and as a group where relevant/possible.

For flights longer than six hours you are entitled to travel business class.

RCOphth employees can expense additional costs associated with Wi-Fi access on flights, if Wi-Fi access is required to carry out College work.

Those wishing to travel business class for flights less than six hours will be required to bear the additional cost if the business class ticket is more expensive than the economy fare and must indicate this on the expense claim and provide evidence of the economy fare that is being claimed.

Employees who are responsible for transporting examinations equipment such as iPads, are entitled to travel Business Class to reduce risk associated with operational equipment not being transported safely to the examination centre. This is dependent on examination location with economy travel being used when possible.

College will not reimburse flights procured for no cost e.g. using Air Miles.

## Mileage

It is the claimant's responsibility to ensure compliance with all relevant legislation including holding valid insurance and an up-to-date MOT certificate before driving a private vehicle. The College will not accept liability for loss or damage to vehicles used for College business, unless caused by negligence on the part of the College.

Tax relief may be available when using personal vehicle for work; please view the HM Revenue & Customs guide on using your own vehicle for work.

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

- First 10,000 business miles in the tax year 45p per mile
- Each business mile over 10,000 in the tax year 25p per mile

Where a private car is used for College business, you must 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.

Car sharing is encouraged wherever possible.

Car parking charges are recoverable when supported by a valid receipt. Airport parking must be booked in advance to ensure the most economical rates.

## Accommodation

Where possible overnight accommodation should be avoided. Individuals should try to travel on the day of the meeting or business event.

Accommodation will not be provided where the claimant lives within reasonable commuting distance of the venue.

The College has agreed preferential rates for overnight accommodation with The Wesley Hotel, 81 - 103 Euston Street, London NW1 2EZ (near the College). Please contact the College where a member of the team will be able to book this for you. Bookings for The Wesley arranged via the College will be settled directly by the College.

If accommodation has been booked for you by the College and you no longer need the reservation, please contact the College as soon as possible and a minimum of 48 hours before as we may still be charged.

Employees may only claim accommodation costs in London in exceptional circumstances where they:

- Either have an extended working day i.e. an early start (before 7am) and a late finish (after 10pm)
- Or work fully remotely and are required to support a London-based event/activity for the College.

The cost of overnight accommodation and breakfast should not exceed the College's accommodation rates as detailed below.

- London up to £180
- Elsewhere in the UK up to £145

International accommodation shall be booked and paid for by the College.

## Travel Insurance

The College has a comprehensive travel insurance policy which insures all Employees, Volunteers and Trustees travelling on College business both in the UK and internationally. Details will be provided to those travelling.

## Visas and Vaccinations

When travelling internationally on College business all costs associated with visas or vaccinations will be paid for by the College or will be reimbursed.

## Expenditure not covered

The following will not be reimbursed:

- Expenses associated with events you have been invited to in a personal capacity.
- Accommodation more than 24 hours before (48 hours for overseas) or after an event or exam set up.
- The travel and subsistence expenditure of spouses or other travelling partners.
- Expenditure not related to College activity.
- Meals purchased at or near your home or place of work.
- Actual expenditure only will be reimbursed and not round sum meal or subsistence allowances.
- Expenditure related to casual or personal entertaining.
- Expenditure where a valid VAT invoice or receipt is not provided.

## How to make a claim

College expenses must be claimed back via the PayHawk app.

To submit a claim, users must be registered for an account. New users can register by emailing [accounts@rcophth.ac.uk](mailto:accounts@rcophth.ac.uk)

Instructions on how to use this app can be found [here](#).

The College will normally pay expenses by BACS directly into an individual's bank account. We aim to process claims within four weeks of the date of submission.

## Receipts

Receipts must accompany all claims.

## Timeliness of submission

Expenses should be submitted as soon as possible after they have been incurred. The College reserves the right to refuse to reimburse expenses which are submitted over three months after the event.

Any cost incurred above the maximum limit will not typically be reimbursed, unless expressly authorised by the CEO or relevant Director in advance. The maximum limit is inclusive of tax.

## Reasonable adjustments

The College is committed to fostering an inclusive and supportive work environment. As part of this commitment, we recognise that individuals may have different needs when it comes to travel, accommodation, and other College-related expenses. Reasonable adjustments may be made to our standard expenses policy to support those with disabilities, medical conditions, caring responsibilities, religious requirements, or other individual circumstances.

Employees, Volunteers and Trustees are encouraged to speak with a member of the senior leadership team if they believe they require a reasonable adjustment to the expenses policy. Requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and confidentiality will be respected at all times.

The College will make every effort to accommodate these needs while maintaining fairness, budget responsibility, and adherence to legal obligations.

## Misuse of the Expenses Policy

At The Royal College of Ophthalmologists, we take financial accountability seriously and expect all employees, volunteers, and trustees to adhere to this policy with honesty and integrity. Any misuse of the policy, whether intentional or accidental, undermines our ability to fulfil our mission and maintain public trust.

Misuse of the expenses policy may include, but is not limited to:

- submitting false or misleading expense claims
- claiming for personal expenses or non-business-related costs
- inflating costs beyond reasonable or actual amounts
- failing to follow the required approval and documentation process
- repeated non-compliance with expense submission deadlines and procedures.

## Consequences of misuse

If an individual is found to have misused the expenses policy, the following actions may be taken, depending on the severity of the breach:

- Informal warning – For minor or first-time errors, guidance may be provided to ensure understanding and compliance.

- Formal investigation – Serious breaches will be investigated thoroughly, which may include reviewing past expense claims.
- Repayment of funds – Any unauthorised or improper expenses must be reimbursed to the College.
- Disciplinary action – Employees may face disciplinary measures in accordance with our organisational policies, which could lead to formal warnings, suspension, or dismissal.
- Trustee or volunteer review – Trustees or volunteers found to be in breach may be subject to review, with potential removal from their role and/or membership.
- Legal or regulatory action – In cases of fraud or intentional misuse, the organisation reserves the right to report the matter to relevant authorities, which could result in legal consequences.

All expense claims are subject to regular audits to ensure compliance and financial integrity. If you are unsure about any aspect of this policy, you are encouraged to seek clarification before making a claim.

## Dispute

In the event of a dispute, please follow our Complaints Policy, which is available on our website and employee intranet.

### **Review**

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