Expenses Policy

Expenses, Benefits, Hospitality and Gifts

With effect from 14.08.23

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline the University's policy on expenses, benefits, hospitality and gifts. The document sets out areas of expenditure that will be funded by the University and identifies areas of expenditure where restrictions are in place or where reimbursement will not be made.

Before incurring any expenditure on behalf of the University it is the responsibility of the claimant to ensure they have read this policy and have understood the nature of what can be claimed as a legitimate expense.

Scope

These regulations apply to the University, its subsidiaries and branches, both in the UK and elsewhere, (the "University Group") except where the relevant decision-making body (normally the Board of Directors of the subsidiary company) has indicated otherwise. The main body of this document is the general policy which is applicable across all entities within the University Group. For expenditure incurred by members of staff who are employed by the University's overseas subsidiaries and branches please also refer to the specific international variations outlined in the appendices and to the specific contractual agreements with individuals.

Note that thresholds and limits given in £ Sterling should be converted to the local currency where appropriate.

The regulations set out in this policy apply to all members of staff of the University who incur expenditure on behalf of the University, its subsidiaries and branches, regardless of the method of payment. These regulations also apply to any non-employees (Campus job workers, students and visitors) who are entitled to claim reimbursement from the University for expenditure incurred on behalf of the University, its subsidiaries and branches. However this does NOT include requests from consultants or contractors for payment for goods or services provided to the University. These must be paid on invoice, processed through the correct procurement procedure; such payments must not be submitted as an expense claim.

The regulations apply regardless of the source of funding for the expenditure. All expenditure is coded to a project, and all projects are University funds (including SDAs); so adherence to these regulations is mandatory. Failure to comply with these regulations may be regarded as a disciplinary offence.

In exceptional circumstances where it is not possible to obtain a receipt the expenditure must be approved by Head of School or Function. Payment of these items will only be considered for small values and will only be reimbursed at the discretion of the Finance department.

The University reserves the right to make changes to these policies from time to time in accordance with current employment law legislation. Employees will be notified of any amendments via the Finance Website
The latest version is always available on the Finance website & the Expenses portal in Unit 4 BusinessWorld (Agresso).

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1 Providing Hospitality

1.1 Background

You must undertake the provision and receipt of hospitality in a way that is appropriate to the University's position; you must not risk any damage to the University's reputation,

1.3 Giving Hospitality to Staff / Entertaining Staff

2.6 Making Donations – ONLY with prior approval

Donations from University funds of any kind to individuals or organisations, including to registered charities, must not be made without the prior approval of the Director of Finance in the UK or the Board of Directors for subsidiary companies. Paperwork must be provided as evidence of approval, if processed by a claim please attach to the line item, if you an expecting to receive an invoice please provide the approver the evidence of approval when creating the requisition . Such items would be on an exceptional basis only and would require to be separately disclosed in the relevant published financial statements.

3 Receiving Personal Gifts and Hospitality from third parties

3.1 Receiving Hospitality

Where you are offered hospitality in the form of a meal or refreshments in connection with a meeting or event organised with an outside party, University policy is that you can accept, provided the hospitality is reasonable in relation to the event. You must ensure issues of actual or alleged improper influence have been fully considered.

All other offers of hospitality should normally be refused. In particular:

i) hospitality offered as an alternative for fees for work done must be refused. If you accept it may give rise to a taxable benefit which must be declared to the relevant tax authority, and which will incur a tax liability;

ii) substantial offers, (value greater than £50), of invitations to social functions, overseas travel or the provision of accommodation outside the purpose and duration of business must be refused;

iii) inducements to either do something or not do something which could affect the contractual position between the University and a potential supplier or customer of goods or services must be refused.

In the case of iii) above, any such approach by a potential or current supplier or customer should be reported to the University Secretary, the Director of Internal Audit Services and the Director of Procurement immediately.

For i) and ii) above, if you believe such an arrangement should be accepted in the best interests of the University, you should seek prior approval from the Vice-Chancellor before accepting. However, requests of this kind will normally be refused as not being in the University's best interests. In any case the details must be entered into the Gifts and Hospitality Register and may give rise to a tax liability.

Where hospitality is accepted, anything valued greater than £50 must be approved in advance by the Head of School or Function, and for senior managers by their line

manager. The approval must be written and recorded, verbal approval is not sufficient. This approval must be kept with the registers. See Appendix 6 for the Approval Form. The Register must be maintained and kept by the School and be available for review either by Finance, Internal & External Audit

3.2 Receiving Gifts

With regard to receiving gifts, in some business sectors it is normal business practice for organisations to provide small, low value gifts (pens, paperweights, calendars, diaries and so on) incorporating their name or logo for their customers. It is reasonable to accept such gifts.

You should decline all other gifts valued greater than £15, including seasonal gifts from contractors and suppliers. You should return unsolicited gifts with a note explaining that it is University policy not to accept gifts of this kind. If the gift was anonymous or return could cause offence then the item(s) must be donated to a local registered charity.

You should be familiar with the University's Bribery Act 2010,http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2020/23/contents to which that policy makes reference. It's up to the individual to ensure the hospitality or gift they are receiving is compliant and is not adverse to government legislation

Staff should also be aware of the University's Public Interest Disclosure

Note that in the event that a hire car is damaged by a person on University business, the financial impact must be dealt with through the insurance office and not submitted on a personal expense claim. First contact should be made by that person to the contracted hire car supplier to advise of the circumstance, then the University Insurance department needs to be informed

4.3.2 Travel using a personal vehicle

In the event that a person uses their own personal vehicle for a University business trip, the University will reimburse mileage costs. The rate to be applied depends on whether the vehicle is personally owned or leased as a company car through the University's salary exchange scheme, and it also depends on the miles travelled. Aside from the mileage rate, no personal vehicle related costs will be funded by the University.

The detailed mileage rates can be found on the website at
http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/finance/fcs-expenseclaimsform-open.aspx

It is the driver's full responsibility to ensure that they have a valid driving licence, the vehicle has a valid MOT certificate as appropriate and it is properly insured for appropriate business use, including if applicable for passengers and business equipment.

Please note that you can only claim further allowances if the passenger(s) are employees of the University.

The allowable mileage that can be claimed would be the distance travelled minus your normal commuting distance. When submitting your claim you must provide your post code and the destination post codes of your entire trip to support the claimed mileage value. The outbound and inbound journey would be considered as one trip and should not be claimed separately.
E.g. employee commutes a total of 20 miles to & from their normal place of work. Employee is asked to travel to another location 12 miles in distance, 24 miles commute in total, employee may claim for 4 miles in mileage.

4.3.3 Travel between campuses

The University operates in a number of locations. In the UK, there are two main campuses within Reading and one in Henley. In addition there are University farms and other premises in the area. It is sometimes necessary for travel between these sites for business

4.6 Accommodation

Hotel accommodation (both UK and overseas) should be booked via the Travel Management Company. As such no limits for a particular location are set, the Travel Management Company will offer suitable choice/s for the location/s requested.

The expectation is therefore that staff and students should not be claiming the costs of a hotel via the expenses system. If a hotel cost is claimed via an expenses claim the University has the right to refuse that part of the claim on the grounds of cost.

When a conference includes accommodation at a specific hotel which is included in the overall package and is within price per night limits this is a permissible exception to booking through a contracted Travel Management Company.

If a person on University business is required to stay away overnight and chooses to stay somewhere other than a hotel or equivalent (e.g. with friends or colleagues), the University will not reimburse any notional accommodation costs.

4.7 Subsistence

Subsistence must be based on actual expenditure and supported by appropriate receipts. As a general rule the University does not operate a per diem subsistence policy. Schools and Functions must not attempt to operate a local per diem policy as these will not be paid by the University. Also note that the hospitality and business entertaining regulations apply to all catering expenditure.

The University prohibits the purchase of alcohol for subsistence. If alcohol is purchased as part of a meal, only the food element can be claimed. Any claims including alcohol will be rejected

Any additional items beyond the limits set out below will be considered out of policy

5 Subscriptions to Professional Associations

Where a member of staff is required to be a member of a professional organisation in order to fu (i)5 in

8 Home-working and use of Telephones

8.1 Home-working

Employees official work location is stated in their employment contract and is normally on an University campus or other sites associated with the University (there are exceptions where employees have other contractual agreements)

The University makes no contribution to costs (e.g. internet access, heating and lighting) incurred when you work at home. The only exception is telephone costs as detailed in sections 8.3 & 8.4.

8.2 Computer Equipment

All Computer Hardware (including Peripherals, Printers, scanners etc) & Software must be purchased via DTS.

The University will not meet any costs for home printing and other computer consumables.

8.3 Home telephones

If you are required by the University as part of your employment duties to make business calls using your home telephone, you are entitled to claim reimbursement of such calls. You must keep adequate details of business calls to allow the University to check on the accuracy of claims made, and attach the original, itemised telephone bill to your expense claim form. The University will not reimburse the cost of any private calls. The University will not reimburse any part of rental of a home telephone.

Home telephones should only be used as an exception as the University provides telecommunication technology , MS Teams

8.4 Mobile phones

8.4.1 Provided by the University

The University will provide you with a mobile phone if a specific business need arises. The provision of a mobile phone will be in accordance with Procurement Policy rules, will be from an approved supplier and will be of a standard specification.

Staff should not attempt to reclaim the purchase of a mobile phone via an expense claim.

When a member of staff is provided with a University mobile phone they will be asked to opt for whether they want to use it for personal calls. For those who do not wish to use their phones for personal calls, their use of the phone will be monitored and spot checks will be carried out by Internal Audit in consultation with Line Managers to verify that no personal calls are made. If they are, then the arrangements set out below will come into operation.

For those staff who opt for personal call usage they will be asked to agree that a sum equivalent to 15% of the monthly cost of providing their mobile phone is deducted from payroll and reimbursed to the University. If and when an individual's monthly cost changes, e.g. because they have asked for a different tariff, the monthly deduction from payroll will be amended.

8.4.2 Personal mobile phones

If you use a personal mobile phone for business related calls you are entitled to claim reimbursement, provided that the following requirements are met.

- You must keep adequate details of business calls and provide original itemised phone bills when you reclaim to allow the University to confirm the accuracy of claims made.
- You are not entitled to claim for any or all of the monthly rental cost of your personal mobile phone **even when this includes inclusive minutes.**
- If business calls made are included within your normal line rental tariff, i.e. are made using inclusive minutes, then no reimbursement will be made as no additional cost has been incurred.
- If in addition to your normal tariff you are charged for call costs, then only the call costs relating to business phone calls will be reimbursed as per your itemised bill.

8.5 Personal Use of the University's telephone system

Reasonable personal use of the University's fixed line telephone system is acceptable; for example you may telephone home to warn of delays at work, and make any necessary changes to planned arrangements caused by such a delay. Excessive, regular use of the University telephone system for personal calls is not acceptable and may lead to further action..

Digital Technology Services regularly report details of call costs to budget-holders.

The cost of all personal non-UK calls must be reimbursed to the University. Payments can be made by bank transfer to the University, contact the Receipts Office for details.

Prior to attending the eye examination you must obtain the Eye Test form, which is available on the University Health and Safety web site. Your line manager must authorise the funding of the eye test in advance.

Note that only the cost of the basic eye test is reimbursable. Any additional tests or extensions to the test are a personal cost and not reimbursed by the University. Also not reimbursed are any charges levied by the optician for certifying the form.

Corrective spectacles

If corrective spectacles are required specifically for use with DSE the optician is required to certify that fact on the form. The certification is not just general short-sightedness; it is an eye defect specific to DSE use. If the optician certifies that the defect is DSE related, the University will contribute towards the cost of a pair of corrective spectacles for use with DSE up to a value of £55.

10.3 Medical insurance or treatment whilst travelling overseas on University business

The University will provide insurance for you against the cost of necessary medical treatment should you fall ill or suffer injury while on international travel in the performance of your employment duties.

In some cases this may incur a tax liability, you should always check with the Financial Tax Accountant and the Insurance Officer to clarify the administration that is required.

11 Reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses

11.1 Basic principles

Wherever possible you should avoid using personal funds by effective use of the University's ordering system or purchase card facility. If it is unavoidable that you incur out-of-pocket expenses when acting on behalf of the University, you may make a claim for reimbursement.

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Reimbursement will only be on the basis of actual costs incurred, fully supported by original receipts from the suppliers. The University does not routinely accept credit card slips, credit card statements or photocopies of cheques as proof of purchase.

In the case of train/tube tickets, if the original ticket has been retained by the transport provider then a receipt slip may be submitted, but this must be explained on the expense claim (or purchase card log).

The onus is on all employees to spend the University's money wisely, appropriately and to maximum effect

Under no circumstances are you permitted to submit an expense form on behalf of another person; expenses must be claimed by the person who has incurred the expenditure.

Any attempt to submit a false expenses claim will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence.

The University reserves the right to refuse an expense claim, or will require personal repayment of purchase card or petty cash expenditure, if the University's policies have not been followed.

You must not under any circumstances pass on your log in details to any other person to enter your expense claim utilising the online expenses facility

11.2 Ownership

All items purchased with University funds of any kind are and remain the property of the University. In the event that a member of staff leaves the University they must ensure that all such items remain with the University.

11.3 Expense claim procedure

All expense claims must be made using the appropriate means-2.3laims m 80.04 24y ec/P /MCID 45 >>BD

You are responsible for ensuring that all items on your claim are correct and in accordance with all relevant University and grant regulations, including this policy. In any instance where this is not the case, you must include full details on the claim form to explain the reasons.

Authorisers are required to ensure that there is sufficient information to check that the claim has been completed correctly, that items claimed were incurred wholly, exclusively and necessarily for business reasons and that they are an appropriate use of University funds.

Those staff processing expense claims will challenge any items that do not (or do not have sufficient support to show that they) adhere to University policies. If this occurs, either you or the authoriser is obliged to provide clarification.

Your claim together with 75 Td[to)-3 (a)5 d82.2 567d82.2 56iT96(u)1 (t)1 (h)1 (6 i(s)6ta(d82.2 567d81 (ti

A further advance will not normally be provided until existing advances have been fully accounted for. Additional Advances must be approved by the Director of Finance

The University reserves the right to recover any uncleared advances from any monies owed or payable to you.

Advances, in total or in part, which have not been accounted for and which have not been

Appendix 1 Variations that apply in Finland (branch)

Section	Notes
2.1 Long Service Awards	Awards given as vouchers or cash are a taxable benefit. If an award is given in the form of a gift, that is not taxable.
4.7 Subsistence	Subsistence payments are not taxable up to the limits set by the Finnish tax regime. Therefore subsistence will be reimbursed at the local tax-exempt rate: Absence from their permanent workplace over 10h = EUR 39 over 6h = EUR 18 There is also the tax-reduced lunch voucher scheme. Note that per diems are only tax free if the destination is located more than 15 kilometres away from either the employee's home or main place of work. Per diems are intended as a reimbursement to the employee for any meal costs that are higher than usual. For any day of travel, when the employee receives free meals, or meals included with the travel ticket, the maximum per diem is half the amount specified in the table below. 'Free meals' comprise two free meals in the case of full per diem, and one free meal in the case of partial per diem.
5 Professional subscriptions	If the University funds personal professional subscriptions on behalf of an employee, that is a taxable benefit.
6 Uniforms and work-wear	Only work-wear that is specifically provided for health and safety reasons is tax-free. All other provision of work-wear is a taxable benefit.
9 Relocation	Compensation relating to buying or selling a home is a taxable benefit.

Appendix 2 Variations that apply in Germany (subsidiary)

Section	Notes
2.1 Long Service Awards	Such awards are a taxable benefit. The University will pay the tax.
4.7 Subsistence	

Appendix 3 Variations that apply in Malaysia (subsidiary)

4.4 Temporary place of work for >24 months	This concept does not exist in Malaysian tax rules, therefore travel would be taxable.
4.5.4 Mileage rates	There are no fixed mileage rates in Malaysia; reimbursement must be on the basis of actual cost.
5 Professional subscriptions	If the Company pays an employee's personal professional subscription there is no taxable benefit provided that it is essential for business use.

Appendix 4 Minimum layout for a Gifts and Hospitality Register

Name of School/Department/Service ……

Appendix 5 Hospitality Approval Form

This form must be completed and authorised BEFORE an event or hospitality valued at greater than £50 is accepted. This signed form must be retained with the Gift and Hospitality Register.

Name: ……

Job title: ……

Description of benefit or hospitality:
Justification for acceptance:

Approximate value (to be ascertained and agreed prior to sign off): £……

Offered by (name of company/person): ……

Signature:	Date:

*Authorisation Signature:	Date:
Print Name	

* Authorisation must be by Head of School or Head of Function, or in the case of senior managers, their line manager. For example, HoS must be approved by their Dean, and Heads of Function must be approved by their Head of Service.

Your attention is drawn to the University's policies on such expenditure which can be found at https://www.reading.ac.uk/web/FILES/finance/FfinanceExpensesHospitalityPolicy.pdf