

University of Liverpool

TRAVEL & EXPENSES POLICY

Version Number	3		
Document Status	Revision & combination of Expenses Policy and Travel Procedures		
Effective Date	March 2025		
Review Period	Every three years (first review December 2025)		
Responsible Department	Finance and Procurement		
Policy Author	Amy Noble – Director of Procurement Katarzyna Milkiewicz-Siewiorek – Head of Finance Operations		
Approval Route	Committee	Submission Date	Approved?
	Senior Leadership Team	02.10.2025	Yes
Linked Documents	Subsequent links to follow associated with sustainable travel guidance, associated procedures, and FAQ Guides.		
Does this replace any previous policies?	Yes, Expenses Policy Feb 22 and Travel Procedure		
Consultation	Considered and targeted consultation with members of SLT, and technical finance teams. Including all aspects of Governance (Legal / Insurance / Data Protection)		
Equality Assessment (Evidence of due regard to Public Sector Duty and Equality Act)	Impact	No impact noted during development of the policy. A detailed EqIA has been developed to support the Policy, with a post implementation review due September 2025	
Regulatory / Compliance	Compliance with all relevant regulatory matters including. Adherence with: HMRC Travel — mileage and fuel rates and allowances - GOV.UK For information required to satisfy VAT requirements, please see VAT Guidance on the intranet Off Campus Activity Guidance		

	Access To Work PCI -DSS PCI Security Standards Council – Protect Payment Data with Industry-driven Security Standards, Training, and Programs
Data Protection	There are no data protection concerns, assurance and adherence against The Data Protection Act 2018. Data Protection Impact Assessment has been completed (Stage 1 – Ref 11924). Internal Security Standards assessed, and all required information security actions have been taken.
Communication	Communication strategy to deliver institution wide email communications, with additional targeted email communications to specific users of the travel and expenses booking systems. Accompanied by in person, and virtual roadshows for the first quarter post implementation, with bi-annual continued drop-in clinics thereafter as business as usual once fully embedded. Any questions in relation to the Policy can be guided via the intranet links to Hints & tips and Frequently Asked Questions guidance to follow, with a latter refresh to existing Travel & Entertainment guidance procedure to follow.
Contents	1. Introduction 2. Purpose of Policy 3. Responsibilities 4. Travel 5. Accommodation 6. Expenses 7. Business Entertainment 8. Individual Circumstance

1. Introduction

Travel is an essential element of university business – we are global, and it is important that we engage with the world through our research, field trips, conferences, and collaborations. However, travel has a significant impact both financially and environmentally, and this policy is intended to ensure that all travel and associated expenses are of clear value to the University and conducted in the most economical way, maximising value for money while minimising associated environmental impacts.

Staff and students must consider whether travel is essential for supporting their academic and business objectives. The University recognises that some travel is necessary for supporting these objectives. However, wherever possible the number of trips and travellers should be limited to those that are deemed essential and, where possible, undertake other work for the University while there.

This policy has been prepared in accordance with Income Tax and National Insurance Contribution regulations and His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) regulations.

This Policy will ensure travel and expense arrangements are managed in a manner which:

- Considers the welfare and safety of employees / students travelling on behalf of the University, inclusive of individual circumstance
- Enables the University to report on the impact of its carbon emissions and reduce this impact
- Considers sustainable travel methods and review of travel options / routes to support our Sustainability Strategy
- Ensures cost effectiveness when travelling on University business
- Fully considers the need to travel (or not) prior to any commitment to purchase.

2. Purpose of Policy

This Travel and Expenses Policy provides information as to what items the University will pay for and what not when travelling locally, nationally, or internationally on behalf of the University, whether claimed as expenses, purchased via a requisition, a Corporate Card (*Travel & Entertainment*), or through the University's Travel Management Companies (TMC).

This policy applies to all employees, students or visitors who need to spend money for business-related activities including from research grants, discretionary accounts, and internal sources of funds. It is the policy of the University that employees are reimbursed the actual cost of expenses necessarily incurred in the performance of the duties of their employment.

Travel on University business is defined as travel necessary for meeting the University's business needs which is paid for or reimbursed by the University. This covers the following areas of expenditure:

- Travel
- Overnight costs and allowances
- Entertainment and hospitality
- Conferences / training courses
- Telephone and internet costs
- Expenses that are not allowable.

This policy excludes the following:

- International students travelling to and from the University
- Home students travelling between home and the University
- Staff travelling between home and their normal place of work
- Staff relocation flights
- Recruitment / Interview associated costs

Whilst this policy aims to provide comprehensive guidance on reimbursable out-of-pocket expenditure, it is recommended that staff seek advance approval from their line manager in any situation where interpretation of this policy is in doubt.

3. Responsibilities

All travel / expense costs must be justified, and the traveller must be able to demonstrate that the proposed journey fits with the academic and business strategy of the University, and that the expense, environmental impact and risks associated with the journeys

are proportionate to the anticipated outcomes. The traveller should demonstrate that alternatives to travel, such as videoconferencing, have been fully considered and are not appropriate.

Purchasing decisions should not be influenced by any loyalty incentives such as airline mileage credits, hotel points / free nights or personal cash credit card discounts.

Where travel is directly funded by external funding that stipulates additional travel requirements, these should be adhered to, and the stricter of the policies must apply.

Employees are responsible for:

- Understanding the policy and asking for support/further guidance via their line manager/ HR Business Partner when necessary, for example in relation to any adjustments which may be required
- Considering whether travel / expenses are necessary
- Seeking value for money when incurring expenditure on the University's behalf, while minimising the impact activities have on the environment contributing to the sustainability theme of [Liverpool 2031](#)
- Ensuring the necessary budget availability before committing University expenditure
- Making sensible, reasonable decisions before and during travel and ensuring their personal safety and security. Concerns should be raised with their line manager / health & safety / security at any point
- Ensuring travel or expense items claimed that are externally funded also meet the required terms and conditions of that funding, with the adherence to the stricter of the policies also being required
- Submitting relevant expense claims as soon as possible after they have been incurred and must be claimed within two months
- Ensuring that their claim is accompanied by valid receipts, where relevant including a VAT registration number. These can either be scanned and attached or photographed and attached to the system claim
- In cases of mileage expense claims, ensuring that their vehicle is road worthy, appropriately taxed, tested and insured for business use
- Ensuring all individual data in the TMC / expense system is correct
- Instances where an employee incurs a high level of expenses are advised to apply for a university corporate card (T&E).

Approvers / Line managers are responsible for:

- Discussing and agreeing travel arrangements (including alternatives to travel and any adjustments which may be required) with employees in line with policy
- Seeking further guidance from their own line manager, HR/ H&S representative if they are unsure as to the application of this policy and associated guidance
- Confirming that:
 - The expenses were necessarily incurred in the performance of duties
 - The expenses claimed are not also being claimed from another source
 - There is sufficient money in the budget to meet the costs involved
 - Due consideration has been given to achieving value for money

- Due consideration has been given to the needs of the individual (e.g. adjustments relating to a disability and/or those with caring responsibilities)
- If necessary, challenging or rejecting expense claims if not in line with the policy
- Assigning a delegated authoriser during extended periods of absence from the business, notification of this will need to be provided to the relevant team to administer the change.

Claimants and individuals booking or authorising any expenditure will be held accountable for the accuracy of any booking or claim and will be held responsible for ensuring that:

- The expenditure was properly incurred on University business and is compliant with this policy
- All claims are adequately supported by documentary evidence (invoice / receipts)
- Scanned copies or photos of receipts must accompany all claims. Credit card slips or credit card / bank statements will not be accepted as evidence of business expenditure
- The authoriser has the appropriate level of authority to authorise the claimant's expenditure.
- If a claimant makes an error with an expense claim and has been reimbursed, the University will recover the amount from them. Any claims that are submitted and deemed to have contravened this or any other policy will be investigated.

Holidays linked to business trips

Normally holidays should not be linked to business trips. Where there is a desire to do so prior approval must be sought from the individual's relevant line manager. Where it has been agreed that a holiday can be linked to a business trip, the costs to the University must not exceed those that would have been incurred had there not been any holiday linked to the trip. An employee shall not claim any additional travel costs, subsistence or other expenses for days taken as holiday linked to a business trip.

Employees should be aware that from time to time the University may be required to disclose information on travel bookings, subsistence costs and expense claims. All booked exceptions and upgrades for travellers shall be reported annually to the SLT, for inclusion in the annual Travel report.

4. Travel

All travel and accommodation must be organised and purchased through the University-approved online travel booking suppliers Clarity or Studylink (except for items that cannot be purchased in advance e.g., bus, metro, tram, taxi). If a booking can be found at a significantly lower cost (*by at least 10% and > £50*) this can be booked via the relevant School/ Department Finance Office, which has access to the departmental corporate card in line with the Corporate Card Policy, or may be paid for locally if for example a host institution has access to preferential rates.

For research funded travel (directly funded from a research grant or contract), the traveller is responsible for ensuring that the travel is in line with the relevant funder terms and conditions and that the budget is available.

For all other travel, travellers intending to travel domestically or overseas on University business should obtain prior approval from their line manager before making any related travel arrangements or commitments. University staff should be specific in their request to travel, indicating their planned contribution and highlighting the expected results / outputs from the travel.

Travel bookings should be made as far in advance as possible to ensure cost-effectiveness (ideally at least 30 days in advance).

Health and safety requirements

A risk assessment may be required for off campus activities, and guidance has been prepared to provide advice on what basic actions need to be taken for both low and high risk off-campus activities. Further information relating to Health and Safety considerations can be found at [Off Campus Activities - Health and Safety Intranet](#).

For all travel regardless of funding source, travel Insurance must be activated before travelling overseas, travelling in the UK for fieldtrips, or travelling on a business trip where there is air travel involved, further details can be found at [Recording Overseas Travel](#).

Standards for air travel

The least expensive class of air travel must be used by all staff. In limited circumstances examples giving rise to exception to this requirement are as follows:

- Pre-existing medical conditions, disabilities or accessibility requirements – booking a higher class and/or more accessible form of travel is allowable with the prior written approval of the relevant line manager.
- When the flight requires nine or more hours in the air, there is strong business reason for travelling non-standard class (Premium Economy or Business if Premium Economy does not exist), and prior approval is obtained as set out in Table 1.

For all cases of non-standard flights, approval must be given as set out in Table 1: Travel Approval Hierarchy. Any non-standard air travel requires final authorisation at the point of booking in the system.

Table 1 - Travel Approval Hierarchy

Traveller	Approval Level
All University Staff	Relevant Professional Service Leadership Team (PSLT) Director or Senior Leadership Team (SLT) Member
SLT Members	Vice Chancellor
VC	Chair of Council

Flights should not be used to travel domestically or to destinations served by Eurostar, unless cost or time prohibitive or in instances for which accessibility considerations are required (please refer to Section 8. Individual Circumstance). Exceptions include flights to Northern Ireland, the Shetland Islands or the Outer Hebrides.

Travel by other modes of transport

Alternative modes of travel are encouraged where practical / cost effective to support our Sustainability ambitions.

Travel by train

- i. Rail should be used for all domestic journeys under 7 hours. Eurostar should be used for all journeys to Paris and Brussels unless cost or time prohibitive, or accessibility requirements are to be considered to allow for exploration of alternate modes of travel.
- ii. All rail travel should be booked as standard class. Any exception will require robust business justification, prior relevant supervisory approval per Table 1 and booking via the offline team with the TMC Clarity.
- iii. Advance purchase rail tickets should be purchased when possible and staff are strongly advised to book as far ahead as possible in order to obtain the best price. Last minute travel should be avoided as far as business will allow.
- iv. Underground, metro fares and similar services can be booked through the TMC as part of a rail journey. If fares purchased directly by staff or student using contactless card, the actual travel cost per journey will be reimbursed on a receipted basis.

Travel by boat

- i. When authorised to travel by boat, travellers shall be entitled to the standard mode of travel / accommodation, the cost of which does not exceed the amount that would have been paid for air travel.

Use of privately owned motor vehicle during official business

- i. A staff member required to travel by privately owned vehicle shall be entitled to reimbursement based on the University established operating rates per mile for automobile travel in line with HMRC guidance (see Table 3).
- ii. Members of staff who use their own vehicles on university business must ensure that their motor insurance policy covers them for business use.
- iii. Staff who require the use of accessible parking bays should ensure they have access to the relevant permits e.g. Blue Badge holders.

Use of taxi or car hire during official business

- i. If a traveller must go to a site or meeting venue that is not efficiently served by public transport, or where alternative methods of transport are impractical due to; location/accessibility, pregnancy, disability, illness or injury, luggage, lack of alternatives the traveller may access alternative transport subject to the following conditions.
 - a. All taxi bookings should be made via a reputable pre-bookable taxi service, where possible.
 - b. Car hire should only be used for business purposes and rented in the name of the traveller(s) with any petrol bought solely for business purposes in the hire car can be claimed, a VAT receipt should be obtained for purchases.

Parking charges / tolls

- i. The University will reimburse the cost of on or off-street car parking, congestion charges and tunnel, bridge or road tolls incurred while undertaking University business, away from your normal place of work. The University will not reimburse the costs of excess parking fines or congestion charge fines under any circumstances, as employees bear a personal responsibility to avoid such fines.

5. Accommodation

When employees are necessarily away from home on University business they are entitled to hotel or other suitable accommodation. Basic standards include cleanliness, privacy, personal security, access to accessible room options and the availability of breakfast. Hotel accommodation both for UK and overseas should be booked through the approved TMC or University service provider directly. When staying in a hotel, all claims for breakfast, dinner and relevant necessary incidentals require supporting receipts (see Allowances Table 3).

Accommodation expenditure guidance limits are noted in table 2 below, and accommodation should be booked where possible within these price limits. Where it is not possible to find accommodation within the limit (i.e. within a reasonable distance of the venue), then the cheapest suitable option should be used, and justification provided at the point of booking, with consideration for any additional travel costs that may be associated. The cost of accommodation at, or near the normal place of work does not qualify as business travel and cannot be claimed. Expenditure incurred on newspapers, dry cleaning, personal items, pay-per-view programmes, mini bar items and the use of health and fitness facilities, are not allowable.

Table 2 – Hotel rate guidance

Expenses Type	Location	Guidance limits
Hotel Accommodation	London	£250 (including VAT)
Hotel Accommodation	Rest of UK (<i>excluding Liverpool City Region</i>)	£150 (including VAT)
Hotel Accommodation	Liverpool City Region	£120 (including VAT)
Hotel Accommodation	Overseas	£210 (including VAT)

6. Expenses

Current thresholds are set out in Table 3 – Allowances and subject to change in line with HMRC guidance. Subsistence claims can only be made for the actual costs incurred, supported by receipts up to the thresholds set out below.

Subsistence costs:

Employees who are required to travel on the business of the University are able to claim the cost of meals (as per Table 3 - Allowances). Note that claims will not be reimbursed where the traveller is away from home/work for less than 5 hours.

Table 3 - Allowances

Expense Type	Condition	Maximum Value
Mileage - Car	Up to 10,000 Miles	45p per mile
Mileage - Car	Above 10,000 Miles	25p per mile
Subsistence – Breakfast	All Locations (UK and overseas)	£10 (including VAT and service)
Subsistence – Lunch	All Locations (UK and overseas)	£15 (including VAT and service)
Subsistence – Dinner	All Locations (UK and overseas)	£30 (including VAT and service)
Additional Subsistence guidance for international travel	Per relevant country/location	Expenses rates outside the UK

If the above subsistence limits can't be adhered to for example in certain locations, authorisation should be obtained from the relevant approver. HMRC guidance by location is linked above for information.

The University will not cover the cost of alcohol. Where a member of staff is required to pay an additional premium to cover business use insurance on their privately owned vehicle, the cost of this will not be reimbursed.

Home to work travel

The University is the designated place of work for all staff irrespective of whether the member of staff works at home either on a full or part time basis. Payment by the University, of travel expenses incurred in the course of commuting from home to the permanent workplace, are a taxable benefit and will not be reimbursed by the University. Expenses which are incurred between places of work are allowable e.g. between different campuses of the University. The net cost of travel incurred in the course of commuting from home to a non-permanent workplace will be reimbursed by the University. The net cost is the cost of travel between

home and the non-permanent workplace after deducting the cost of travel between home and the permanent workplace.

Late night travel home

Where an employee is required to work outside of normal working patterns then the provision of transport home, such as a taxi, is allowable, provided that the employee is working until 9pm or later. On exceptional occasions overnight accommodation may be approved. Prior approval from the line manager is required.

The following expenses can be reimbursed without deduction of income tax providing it is necessary for the actual performance of duties, subject to approval and correct receipts:

- Business travel – mileage, fares, visas etc.
- Subsistence – meals and accommodation costs as specified in Table 2 and Table 3 of this policy.
- Gratuities – unless a service charge has been included and therefore no additional gratuity to be paid
- Business calls – using either a home or personal mobile telephone.

Fees required as part of a visit outside the UK

Fees applied for as part of University business: these will be reimbursed on production of a receipt. This includes items such as:

- visa fees
- vaccination costs
- testing requirements (for example, Covid testing for entry)
- currency fees

Non-allowable expenses

The following expenses should not normally be incurred by an individual (such costs should be incurred via the purchasing processes or use of purchasing card). Non-allowable via reimbursement claim. Allowable via purchasing processes or purchase card:

- Publications, books, newspapers and professional journals
- Protective clothing
- Uniforms or work clothing
- Equipment and mobile phones
- Travel / accommodation except in exceptional circumstances where it is not possible to use the TMC and / or use corporate cards.

Non-allowable expenses through any payment method - University policy

- Discount rail cards
- Pre-flight lounges
- Excess luggage charges
- Any traffic related or congestion charge fines incurred on business travel
- Professional subscriptions
- Childcare /pet care costs
- Alcoholic drinks.

HMRC view the following as taxable benefits and therefore are non-allowable:

- Staff entertaining lunches and dinners
- Gifts to staff to acknowledge additional work
- Home telephone rental costs
- Any costs related to internet connectivity at home
- Home to work travel
- Expenses for spouse or family

Members of staff should not under any circumstances pay an individual for services from their own personal funds. Such payments to third parties are liable to tax and national insurance deductions. Members of staff who make such payments will be held personally responsible for these liabilities. All such payments should be referred to the Payroll Office for processing on an individual basis.

7. Business Entertainment

In principle entertaining is permissible in relation to University business, with University facilities and services being used in most circumstances. Delivered To You is the preferred supplier for such events.

Expenses resultant from provision of hospitality for external business contacts will be reimbursed provided that: this is in the course of carrying out University business, the ratio of staff to external guests is no more than 2:1, and an agenda is completed. The agenda form can be found [here](#).

Staff entertaining and working lunches

The University does not reimburse staff only entertaining, or the provision of lunches for staff, during the normal working day. Such costs are viewed by HMRC as a taxable benefit. However, lunches that are provided during a full day awayday / workshop exceeding 3 hours are allowable.

Awayday / Team Building / Networking Events / Retreats

- The condition of an awayday, team building event is that only light refreshments are allowed e.g. tea, coffee, light lunches are provided. Alcohol is not allowed.
- The University does not allow / pay for any “wrap up” discussion meetings / meals after these events, or multi day events unless by exception with prior approval as per Table 1.
- Any tax that the University incurs due to non-compliance with this rule will be charged to the department on a grossed-up basis.

8. Considerations for Individual Circumstance

Regarding travel and other associated costs such as accommodation, consideration should be given to individual circumstance. The policy allows flexibility for staff and students to request accessible travel and accommodation options that are appropriate for the individual.

For example, colleagues/students who live with one or more disability may benefit from the use of alternate/specific methods of transportation, to ensure they can travel with ease and within the parameters of any adjustments they may have. This also ensures the University is compliant in our obligation to ensure reasonable adjustments are considered for disabled users.

Another example may include those with caring responsibilities, where consideration should be given to ensure the most time-effective mode of travel.

Depending on the requirements for travel, it is also worth considering the needs of those with particular religious beliefs, for example ensuring that colleagues/students are able to carry out any religious observations (e.g. not necessarily booking travel during particular religious holidays or at times of the day where worship is required) and that they are able to access meal choices in keeping with their beliefs.

Where possible, conversations should be held with line managers or other relevant points of contact to allow for discussion, led by the individual, regarding the most appropriate form of travel.

Access To Work

In regards to colleagues who may require reasonable adjustments to be put in place in relation to a disability, individuals can apply for part-funded support from Access To Work [Access To Work](#). This may include further support regarding travel, personal assistance or specialist equipment.

Further advice and guidance in relation to Access To Work can be sourced via the University's equality, diversity and inclusion related webpages [HR - Diversity & Equality](#) or via a discussion with the University's Disability & Wellbeing Advisor.