

Policy name	Travel and Expenses
Subject	Reimbursement of Expenses to University of Nottingham Employees
Approving authority	University Executive Board
Accountable person	Chief Financial Officer
Responsible Team	Payments, Cards, Travel and Expenses Services
First approved	2012
Last updated	June 2025
Version number	2.2

1 Introductory Purpose & Background

This policy outlines how employees and individuals engaged by the University are reimbursed for expenses incurred whilst travelling on university business. This policy has been written to ensure compliance with HMRC legislation, and to ensure a consistent approach is adopted, notably in respect of value for money considerations.

The University Financial Regulations state:

- All claims for expenses must be wholly, necessarily, and exclusively incurred in the performance of University duties.
- All expense claims are submitted in accordance with this Travel and Expenses Policy.

2 Scope

This policy applies to all employees of the University and its subsidiary companies. This means all permanent, temporary, or fixed term contract staff who are paid through the payroll of the University or one of its subsidiary companies. It also applies to temporary or contract workers who are assessed as inside the scope of Inland Revenue bulletin 35 (IR35) and paid via an agency payroll.

This policy does not apply to contractors who are assessed as outside the scope of Inland Revenue bulletin 35 (IR35).

Any references to 'the University' include its subsidiary companies, based in the U.K.

This policy does not cover;

- Interview expenses incurred.
- Relocation Expenses incurred on taking up a position at the University.
- [Conference care fund](#)
- Expenses incurred on secondment contracts.
- Expenses incurred for sight tests and glasses.
- Expenses that are the subject of an insurance claim.
- Private motor insurance and breakdown cover

3 Definitions

Business travel

The definition applies irrespective of the mode of transport. The interpretation by HMRC between private and business journeys is explained as:

Business travel is defined as where an employee travels directly on university business, usually to a temporary workplace, and then returns directly to their original destination once the business has concluded. It is, however, acceptable to allow additional time where a more economic return cost option is available. It also allows time (where applicable) for employees to travel prior to the business commencement so that they can undertake University business as necessary (for example travelling the night before to a location that could not be reached in time the following day). Travel expenses that are ordinary commuting, substantially ordinary commuting, or travel to a permanent workplace, are not reimbursable.

For an explanation of 'temporary workplace,' 'ordinary commuting,' 'ordinary commuting' and 'permanent workplace' see [HMRC Booklet 490, Chapter 3.](#)

4 Policy

i) Key principles

All travel (accommodation, rail, and airfare) must be booked through the University's contracted supplier and in accordance with the rates and process outlined in the supporting Standard Operating Procedure document. Where this is not possible, dispensation must be sought from the University [Travel Team](#) prior to making a booking.

This policy supports adherence to the 'value-for-money principle' and the 'Nolan Principles and encourages climate conscious travel.

The-value-for-money principle

The University is a partially charity and research funded organisation.

We use these charitable funds responsibly to achieve the universities work and mission, ensuring value for money, having regard to:

- efficiency and cost-effectiveness,
- wellbeing,
- environmental impact,
- safety and security.

The Nolan principles

The University expects all its staff and students to follow the ethical behaviours set out in the Nolan Principles. Those are:

- selflessness & integrity,
- objectivity & accountability,
- openness & honesty,
- Leadership.

Climate Conscious Travel

Whilst important, travel accounts for a significant and growing share of the University's total carbon footprint and increasingly funding bodies are requiring the environmental impact of travel to be minimised. All travellers are required to reduce the impact of business travel and consider:

- if travel is essential -i.e. join meetings remotely,
- taking public transport instead of going by car or taxi,
- choose more efficient routes and/or aircraft where possible

ii) Key Roles, responsibilities and /or requirements

The Chief Financial Officer has overall responsibility for this policy. Operational responsibility will be delegated to the Finance Director.

The University Executive Board and Pro-Vice-Chancellor(s) of Faculties or Heads of Professional Services are responsible for overseeing the effective enforcement of this policy with the support of Line Managers.

All staff are expected to:

- Gain preapproval prior to booking travel or incurring expenses from the cost centre manager
- Follow the principles set out within this policy and any associated policies or guidance related to travel management such as but not limited to Health and Safety and Insurance.
- Ensure that a suitable and sufficient [risk assessment](#) is identified or completed prior to each trip, dependent on the level of risk. Where a significant residual risk is identified, sign off should be secured from the Head of School/Department or equivalent, and then, in the cases of highest risk, submitted for approval of the Registrar on behalf of the University.
- Where an expense is contemplated in respect of any item not included in this policy this should be discussed with the line manager who may seek guidance from Finance prior to any commitment being made.
- Ensure they are medically fit to travel and are not travelling against medical advice.
- Consider how travel could be avoided and ensure low emission travel options are used wherever possible

Line managers are expected to ensure that:

- Information regarding this policy is in induction information and that any employees for whom they have responsibility are aware of the policy before making work-related travel arrangements or generating expenses.
- A suitable and sufficient [risk assessment](#) is completed prior to each trip. Where a significant residual risk is identified, sign-off should be secured from the relevant Head of School or equivalent and then submitted for internal review and, where required, further authorisation by the Chief Operating Officer
- The traveller is suitably trained and knowledgeable about their destination and is sufficiently experienced to travel.

The payments cards travel, and expenses team will:

- Process and audit claims on weekly basis.
- Pay fully approved claims on a weekly basis.
- Raise queries on claims in a timely manner.
- Review the policy document every 2 years.
- Present the policy to the University Executive Board for review of any required significant changes.

iii) Key components of this policy

Expenses

Claims procedure

Employees' expenses must be claimed using the University Expense System.

Externally Funded Travel

Claims or travel that are to be charged to an externally funded research project must meet the funder terms and conditions as well as University terms and conditions, or it will be an ineligible claim and will become a departmental operating cost.

Authorisation

Expense claims are subject to approval by an "approver." An approver will review and reject expense claims against this policy. An approver must be:

- an employee independent of the claimant and of any others benefiting from the expenditure.
- at an appropriate level of seniority given the grade of the claimant and of any others benefitting from the expenditure. This is set within the expenses system.

Payment of expenses

Fully approved and audited (where appropriate) employee expenses covered by this policy and submitted via our expenses system, are paid by the University direct to the staff members nominated UK bank account.

In some circumstances, where the expense is taxable and/or subject to Class I NIC and it is the employee who must meet these liabilities, Tax and NIC deductions will be shown on your monthly salary pay slip.

All payments are in £ Sterling.

Travel

All travel (accommodation, rail, and airfare) must be booked through the University's contracted supplier. Before travelling, staff must ensure that they have details of the [CHUBB Assistance](#) who will assist in an emergency.

Rail travel

Standard or Economy is the only permitted class for rail travel. **First class is not permitted under any circumstance regardless of funding source.**

Flights

Standard or Economy is the default class to be used when booking flights regardless of funding source. Requests for Business class flights are to approved only by exception by the Vice Chancellor or Deputy Vice Chancellor. Requests for Premium Economy flights are to approved only by exception by the cost centre manager for your area.

Insurance

The University business travel policy covers staff members and Postgraduate Research students. Family members or colleagues from other organisations are not covered and will need to obtain their own travel insurance.

If a traveller wishes to add personal travel on to their business trip, guidance can be found in the [insurance section of the Travel SharePoint](#) site which outlines how much personal travel will be accepted under University Business Travel Policy. If personal travel is outside of these criteria, individuals must arrange their own travel insurance for the personal travel element.

Before booking and undertaking overseas or UK travel, involving an overnight stay, staff should refer to the [insurance guidance](#). Where details of the cover provided can be found. There is an insurance checklist for cover and countries where travel is not permitted.

If any aspects of a trip do not confirm to the Insurance Checklist in place, staff must contact the [Insurance team](#) directly.

Health and Safety

The institution remains responsible for its staff and students when they are involved in university activity involving travel and work/study off-campus. Health and safety are therefore important considerations regardless of whether the trip is UK or overseas, a meeting, a conference, fieldwork, or any other type of activity and this policy should be read in conjunction with the [Off Site Working Policy](#). It is also important that the University knows where travellers are based, how to contact them whilst away and that suitable support can be provided in case of incident or emergency.

Travel related activity must be covered by a risk assessment that is proportionate to the risk, taking account of the activity being undertaken, the location being visited and the individuals participating. The risk assessment must record the control measures that will be implemented to mitigate risk. In addition, appropriate information and training must be provided to travellers to best prepare them for their trip.

All health and safety information related to travel and off-site working is available on the University's [Travel SharePoint Site \(internal access only\)](#).

Use of in-house restaurant/catering facilities

In house restaurant/catering facilities should be used for working lunches for employees. Charges should be made internally using a purpose or project code and can only be expensed in an exception.

The fundamental principles governing the provision of food for events on university campuses are:

1. Catering, Hospitality & Conferencing must be the first-choice provider to cater for events. Refer to the [University of Nottingham Hospitality](#) website for details of services offered.
2. Third-party caterers should only be considered when Catering, Hospitality & Conferencing cannot fulfil the specific request. Approval must be sought from Catering, Hospitality & Conferencing before appointing a third-party caterer and steps must be taken to ensure the provider adheres to the [University's food safety policy](#).

iv) Compliance with this policy

Claims and bookings must be made in accordance with the rates and process outlined in the supporting Standard Operating Procedure.

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

v) How compliance will be measured

Claims are selected for random audit along with specific expense types that flag for audit when used.

Claims which do not adhere to policy will be rejected back to the employee via the system by their approver and/or by the expenses team who audit claims.

vi) Monitoring and reporting relating to this policy

The University's internal audit team has full visibility of all claims and review as and when required, including in relation to investigations into potential misuse of the policy.

The University's tax team, research and innovation team and procurement team have read only access and reporting functionality to meet their reporting requirements, to gather evidence for internal and external audit requirements and to ensure compliance of the [procurement policy](#).

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5 Review

This policy will be reviewed every 24 months and amendments made as and when required in relation to that review.

6 Related policies, procedures, standards, and guidance

<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/fabs/finance/controlsandgovernance/financialregulations.aspx>

<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/governance/otherregulations/ethical-framework.aspx>

<https://uniofnottm.sharepoint.com/sites/TravelStaffandPGR/SitePages/Risk-assessment.aspx?csf=1&web=1&e=KX6YIR>

[Procurement policies](#)

[Travel and Expenses Standard Operating Procedure Document](#)