Executive summary - Travel, subsistence and expenses policy

This page provides a summary of the College’s expenses policy. The full document should be referred to for details of what may and may not be claimed as expenses.

Individuals must book all air and rail travel and accommodation via the College’s preferred travel supplier, Diversity Travel (details below). Travel and accommodation should be arranged as far in advance as possible. Booking via the College’s travel supplier provides a host of benefits to the individuals (no cash outlay), College and its bookers, including reduced administration costs and access to negotiated and charity fares and rates.

Please note: Whilst this policy endeavours to cover most circumstances, it is not possible to provide for all situations which may arise. If there is any doubt about what can be claimed, please contact the relevant budget manager in advance of incurring the expense.

Contacting Diversity Travel
The Cedar Team is responsible for handling all bookings on behalf of the College.
- Online: [http://www.diversitytravel.co.uk/](http://www.diversitytravel.co.uk/)
- Phone: 0161 235 5412. Please state that you are making a booking for the RCGP.
- Email: cedar@diversitytravel.co.uk

Rail travel
- All journeys must be made using the cheapest fare available at the time of booking. Please see the detailed policy below for exceptions.

Travel by car
- Mileage rate of 45p per mile for the first 10,000 miles in a tax year.
- Where a private vehicle is used for convenience, the total claim for the journey should not exceed the standard class rail fare.

Travel by bicycle
- Mileage allowance for travel by bicycle – 20p per mile.

Travel by motorcycle
- Mileage allowance for travel by motorcycle – 24p per mile

Travel by air
- Travel within Europe (or of under 5 hours duration) must be made in economy class
- International travel must be approved in advance by the relevant Director
- Long haul (flights of over 5 hours duration) may be made in premium economy (or equivalent)
- Long haul (flights of over 5 hours duration) may be booked in business class if the cost is fully funded.

Overnight accommodation (all rates inclusive of VAT)
- In London, maximum of £105 per night
  - When staying in London, individuals are encouraged to stay in 30 Euston Square (0208 453 4600).
• In Edinburgh, maximum of £90 per night
• Elsewhere, maximum of £80 per night
• Hotel receipts should be in the name of the College or your name

Meals and subsistence
• Under 4 hours away from home, not claimable
• Between 4 and 10 hours, £10 maximum per day
• Between 10 and 24 hours, £25 maximum per day
• Alcohol is not claimable

Locum
• Locum cannot be claimed for attendance at Trustee Board or Council.
  o Backfill and locum were paid during the Trustee Board's pilot period
    but were never intended to be paid once the Board assumed full
    responsibility. As the Board is now fully established, GP members are
    unable to claim backfill/locum expenses for attending Trustee Board
    meetings.
• Locum, where permitted, can be claimed as follows:
  o Per half day (4 hours) not including visits: £200.50
  o Per day (self-employed): £401.00
  o Per day (practice partner): £275.00

General
• Dates of meetings are publicised in advance when discounts on advanced
  bookings are available.
• Claims must be submitted within 3 months
• Receipts must support all expense claims
RCGP Travel, subsistence and expenses policy 2013-2014

Scope

This policy applies to all those undertaking business on behalf of the College. This includes Members and Fellows, Members of Advisory Committees and Working Groups. The policy applies to all staff and contractors where travel and subsistence is reimbursed by the College as part of their contract. They will be collectively be termed ‘individuals’.

The policy applies to the College as a whole including Devolved Councils and Faculties. Additional, but not preferential, arrangements may apply to College Officers and Devolved Council Chairs. These are noted in the document Arrangements for Officers & Devolved Council Chairs Support.

Introduction

The College greatly appreciates the work and the commitment of its members and its staff. We do ask that all individuals bear in mind that the College is a charity and a membership organisation, and therefore we have a responsibility to both our members and our various stakeholders to run our affairs in a cost-effective manner. In undertaking travel and accommodation arrangements we ask all individuals to travel as economically as they possibly can in order to minimise costs.

Wherever possible individuals are encouraged to use public transport, or to cycle or walk in preference to using cars, on the grounds of reducing cost, improving health and minimising the impact of the journey on the environment.

**Whilst this policy endeavours to cover most circumstances, it is not possible to provide for all situations which may arise. If there is any doubt about what can be claimed, please contact the relevant budget manager in advance of incurring the expense.**

 Procedures

All claims must be submitted to Budget Managers **no more than three months** after the meeting, event or activity attended in order that they can submit authorised claims to the Finance Department for processing and payment. Failure to submit claims within the three months maximum period will result in non-payment of expenses, unless under exceptional circumstance which must be agreed by the Honorary Treasurer. All claims must be countersigned by the relevant budget or line manager before actual reimbursement.

Please note that although the College Finance Department will endeavour to pay claims in a timely fashion, it cannot begin to process such claims until they are received and authorised by the relevant budget manager. Inadequate information or missing documentation will inevitably delay claims. All reimbursement of expenses will **only be made by BACS** as this is both a secure and most effective method of payment.
Reimbursement of Expenses

The reimbursement of expenses will only be allowed under HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) rules if:

- The individual (including trustees) is obliged to incur and pay it as holder of the employment or for the doctors while carrying out duties for the College, and

- The amount is incurred wholly, exclusively and necessarily in the performance of the duties of the employment in the case of staff or for other individuals while carrying out duties for the College

The expression ‘wholly, exclusively and necessarily’ is generally applied quite restrictively. To successfully claim, an individual would have to show that it was, objectively, a requirement of his or her duties to incur a specific expense, which means that each and every holder of their employment or office would necessarily be obliged to incur similar expenditure.

Therefore, in order to minimise the risk of the College paying unnecessary taxes in the cases of non-compliance, all out-of-pocket expense claims should be fully supported by the following:

1. For travel, you should attach the train ticket, air ticket etc. The only expenses not requiring a receipt are when providing a receipt is difficult or impossible, such as for London tube or bus fares.

2. For subsistence, an itemised restaurant bill must be attached, and only for meals and drinks within or up to the limit of the College’s guidance limits based on hours away for business purposes. Drinks excludes alcohol (except for business entertainment - refer to ‘business entertainment’ section below for details).

3. For overnight accommodation while away on business purposes, it should be the hotel bill in the name of the employee/office-holder/RCGP, and should be within or up to the limit of the College’s guidance limits based on the geographical location.

4. Credit card receipts and bank statements are not acceptable.

5. A proper VAT invoice for all expenses where applicable.

6. Where expenses are incurred in foreign currencies, the amounts should be converted to Sterling.

Business Entertainment

Where business entertainment is concerned, it is normally necessary to demonstrate that the status of the employee or office-holder in question is such that their duties would be expected to involve the entertainment of external business contacts. Additionally, the duties of the employee or office-holder would have to be such that they relate directly to the business entertainment they undertook. **NB: Staff entertainment is not allowed.**
Therefore, in order to minimise the risk of the College paying unnecessary taxes in the cases of non-compliance, all business entertainment expense claims and credit card statements should be fully supported by the following:

1. For each item on the credit card statement you will have to submit the ‘bill’ for expenditure instead of a credit card charge slip.

2. Where business entertainment is concerned you should write on the restaurant bill who you were entertaining and the function it relates to.

Business entertainment for Officers and Devolved Council Chairs is covered by the document *Arrangements for Officer & Devolved Council Chairs Support*.

*It is fraudulent to book expenses for spouses or for personal use. The budget manager who approves such expenditure and the person making the booking will be held liable. Therefore you must ensure that you clarify facts if you are booking on behalf of another person.*

A. **Travelling expenses**

1. Transport by rail or air, and hotel accommodation must be arranged using the College’s contracted service provider. Please also ensure that when you book you specify which budget manager is to be invoiced and reason for travel.

2. The College will reimburse expenses necessarily incurred by those engaged on College business and approved by the budget manager. This includes travel to other College offices locations, as well as events, conferences and meetings attended at external premises.

3. Journeys between home and College offices or other meeting locations are allowable with the exception of staff where the office is their normal place of work. The College will reimburse the cost of return travel between the individual’s normal office base and any other business location.

4. Wherever possible individuals are strongly encouraged to use public transport, or to cycle or walk in preference to using cars, on the grounds of reducing cost, improving health and minimising the impact of the journey on the environment.

5. Individuals are trusted to only claim for expenses legitimately incurred in the course of engaging in College business. The relevant budget manager will investigate any queries or concerns with the individual in the first instance. Any discrepancies or requests to operate out with the College policy will be referred to the Honorary Treasurer.

6. If an individual is accompanied by a spouse or partner who is not involved in College business, the individual must bear the cost of their spouse/partner.

7. Travel by College Officers and Devolved Council Chairs is covered by the document *Arrangements for Officer & Devolved Council Chairs Support*.
**Travel by rail**

1. Travel should be booked via the College’s preferred travel provider and should always be procured as economically as possible, at least 10 days in advance of the event. **Individuals must book the cheapest fare available at the time of booking.** First class travel is allowable where the journey is greater than 2 hours, the journey is booked 5 weeks in advance (as the cheapest advance tickets are issued 6 weeks before any departure date, therefore allowing a week to take advantage of these fares) and on fixed time trains. For examiners conducting the examinations it is allowable to book first class travel, again on fixed time trains, within one week of the exam timetable being issued. These bookings must be made by phone or email.

2. When travelling to/from London airports and where practicable, individuals are encouraged to use, from Heathrow, the tube and Heathrow Connect, from Gatwick, local Southern Rail and First Capital Connect services and, from Stansted, the Stansted Express, as these often offer the most cost-effective means of travel into central London. Where two or more people are travelling to/from London airports, taxis may be used if they offer the most cost-effectives means of transport.

3. Individuals are encouraged to collect rail tickets from FastTicket machines, so as to avoid delivery charges or tickets being lost in the post.

**Travel by tube, tram or bus**

1. In London, and other major cities where public transport services are widely available, individuals are expected to use these modes of transport and to retain all tickets as proof of purchase.

2. Individuals are encouraged to use either their Oyster travel cards (where no additional cost is incurred) or top up Oyster cards for travel on public transport in the London area for the extra journey that is outside your usual work (including rail travel on some services). A print out indicating your extra journeys will be required. This applies to all Oyster cards where additional cost has been incurred for the extra journey.

3. Individuals may not claim for personal Oyster card top up, as this is taxable.

**Travel by taxi**

1. As taxis are often less cost-effective than public transportation, taxi travel is discouraged. However, there may be occasions where public transport is not available or appropriate. For example, when travelling early morning or late in the evening where personal security is an important factor or where there are disability considerations. In such circumstances reasonable taxi fares will be reimbursed.

2. Travelling by taxi is also permitted where this is the most cost effective method (for example, when several people are travelling to the same venue).

3. When it is expected that the taxi fare will exceed £30, permission must be sought in advance from the relevant budget manager.

4. Where an individual has to pay for a taxi fare a receipt must be obtained.
Air travel

1. Air travel should be booked via the College’s preferred travel provider as far in advance as possible. Individuals may need to travel within the UK when travel by train may not be the most cost effective or time effective option, or outside the UK, to attend conferences and events in connection with the work of the College. In such circumstances, air travel may be arranged.

2. Air travel within the UK or Europe, and flights of less than 5 hours in duration must always be in economy class. The booker should always ensure that the best value fare available is obtained (taking into account that the use of air travel may preclude the need for an overnight stay and the payment of hotel and subsistence costs).

3. Long haul (flights of over 5 hours duration) may be booked in premium economy (or equivalent).

4. Long haul (flights of over 5 hours duration) may be booked in business class if the cost is fully funded.

5. International journeys must be approved in advance by the relevant Director upon completion of an International Travel Application, available on the intranet. Where the costs are to be funded by the College, it is necessary to justify the cost. A quote must be provided. Consideration should be given as to how the journey fits in with the College’s Strategic Plan.

Private transport (car, van, motorcycle or bicycle)

1. Individuals who use their own vehicles will receive reimbursement at the College’s approved mileage rate, as set out in the table below. It was agreed to increase the reimbursement rate from 40p to 45p at July 2011 Trustee Board in line with the HMRC’s new maximum allowance. This has taken effect from 1st September 2011.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>per mile</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cars and vans</td>
<td>45p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor cycles</td>
<td>24p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycles</td>
<td>20p</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Where a private vehicle is used for convenience, the total claim for the journey should not exceed the standard class rail fare.

3. All private vehicles must be insured for business use and maintained in a roadworthy condition and at the owner’s expense.

4. Reasonable receipted parking fees, congestion charges and tolls will be reimbursed. Parking fines or excess charges will not be reimbursed.

5. Please note that where an individual shares their vehicle with another individual making the same business trip, Inland Revenue guidelines allow the vehicle owner to claim a tax allowance of an additional 5p per mile for each passenger carried - but this will not be paid by College as expenses. Any claim must be made through the individual's tax return.
6. The College wishes to encourage cycling as this is consistent with its sustainable strategy and is likely to have health benefits to individuals. Where individuals use their own bicycle to travel on College business, reimbursement will be at the rate set out in the table above.

7. The College is not permitted to reimburse the cost of any gifts, meals etc provided to family or friends in exchange for transportation.

B. Subsistence

Meals may only be claimed when it is necessary to be away from the normal workplace for a full day (including travel), or away from home overnight (i.e. when accommodation is also claimed).

1. For between 4 and 10 hours absence from home, if no meal is provided, you may claim for the actual cost of a meal taken, not including alcohol, up to a maximum of £10 per day, subject to providing receipts.

2. For a full days absence from home (between 10 and 24 hours), if no meal is provided, you may claim for the actual cost of meal(s) taken, not including alcohol, up to a maximum of £25 per day, subject to providing receipts.

3. Meals purchased at or near an individual's home or place of work after 6.30am will not be reimbursed.

C. Accommodation

1. Accommodation (except for 30 Euston Square) should be booked via the College’s preferred travel provider. If you are staying outside London it may be possible for them to book a combined package for travel and accommodation which will either be cheaper or will enable you to stay at a higher grade hotel for less.

2. The actual costs of hotel stay is limited as follows: to a maximum of £105 per night in London, £90 per night in Edinburgh and £80 per night for the rest of the country. All rates are inclusive of VAT. Extras, such as video rental or telephone calls, will not be reimbursed.

3. When staying in London, individuals are encouraged to stay in 30 Euston Square (0208 453 4600).

4. If it proves impossible to find a hotel for the amounts above or less, the Honorary Treasurer will consider requests for higher levels of reimbursement on being given details of the circumstances. Every effort should be made to ensure that excess charges are not incurred as a result of late booking.

5. Overnight accommodation will only be provided where it is not practical to travel home (for example, where the journey home is in excess of two hours or would be made late at night). In these instances please agree with the relevant budget manager in advance.
D. Locum Expenses - Doctors only

Locum fees cannot be claimed for attendance at UK Council or Trustee Board. Backfill and locum expenses were paid during the Trustee Board's pilot period but were never intended to be paid once the Board assumed full responsibility. As the Board is now fully established, GP members are unable to claim backfill/locum expenses for attending Trustee Board meetings. However, they can still claim if attending other Committee meetings (with the exception of College Council).

This is a complex area, and one which causes the most problems. It is also one that concerns the Charity Commission and Inland Revenue so it is important to get it right. It is understood that the complexities of practice finances can cause problems so the guidelines below should be followed.

(i) In order that the locum expenses continue to be treated as reimbursement of expenses and not as remuneration it is essential that the member claiming expenses does not personally benefit from the claim (this has to be a financial loss and an invoice from the practice must be attached to the expense claim to confirm so).

(ii) Actual costs will be reimbursed subject to the current limits applied by the Trustee Board and set out in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session Payments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Per half day (4 hours) not including visits</td>
<td>£200.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for self employed</td>
<td>£401.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for practice partner</td>
<td>£275.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(iii) There are three mechanisms by which locum cover is usually provided:
a. A doctor from outside the practice
b. A part time doctor from within the practice undertaking additional work
c. The remaining partners in a practice covering the absent doctor

(iv) In (iii) a. the member making the claim should pay for the locum, obtain a receipt, make the claim and pay the reimbursement into his/her personal account. Copies of all transactions should be kept for Inland Revenue purposes. The College will not pay claims against invoices from locums.

(v) In (iii) b. the member making the claim should pay the personal account of the practitioner concerned, obtain a receipt, make the claim and pay the reimbursement into his/her personal account. The doctor undertaking the locum should declare the income to the Inland Revenue.

(vi) In (iii) c. the member should also pay the personal account(s) of the partner(s) undertaking the work. Money must change hands. Reimbursement should not be paid into the partnership account where the member making the claim may benefit. Income must be disclosed.

(vii) In all cases, it is not appropriate for the practice to pay for locums which are being reimbursed to individuals by the College.
(viii) Additional sessional payments for travel time on the day before an activity or day following an activity will only be payable in exceptional circumstances and with the prior agreement of the Honorary Treasurer.

E. RCGP Examination for Membership - Panel of Examiners

A financial loss payment of £401 can be claimed in respect of activities undertaken in relation to the examination. This payment replaces reimbursement for locums.

Honorary Treasurer
Revised: December 2013