

The University of Manchester – Expenses policy (draft) April 2026

General rules

- The University is obliged by law to follow the rules imposed by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC). These include a requirement that all expenses payments are "wholly, necessarily and exclusively" for work purposes.
- The expenses claim system is intended to reimburse actual expenditure incurred by employees while on University business. Accordingly, the University does not pay a daily subsistence rate or similar system.
- The expenses claim system is not to be used to reimburse expenses claims for goods or services (e.g. computers, software, travel, furniture, books, components etc.) that can be purchased using the procurement systems, Purchasing card or Travel Management System. Colleagues should seek advice from procurement before incurring any personal expenditure. Note all goods bought with University funds remain the property of the University.
- HMRC and our research funders also require that original receipts are provided with all claims. This gives the necessary proof that the expenditure was incurred and was for bona fide University business, in addition to ensuring the correct VAT treatment where appropriate.
- Expense claims without receipts cannot be charged to research grants in line with their funding rules. Any unsupported claims on research grants will not be approved.
- All expense claims must be submitted within 3 months of incurring the expenditure. This is to encourage good practice not only for employee personal finance but also for University controls, in particular in relation to research grants. Claims over three months old will be rejected.
- Employees can only claim for expenses or fees that they have directly incurred. Employees cannot claim for personal payments that they have made to another individual to cover that individual's business expenses. All expenses must have been paid for by cash, cheque, credit or debit card or similar means. The University cannot reimburse expenses originally paid for by vouchers, Nectar Points or other loyalty card schemes. Where both methods were used for a single transaction, only the actual cash paid will be reimbursed.
- The University will not meet any costs relating to a family member of an employee, including spouse, partner or child who accompanies the employee on a business trip. Such costs must be paid directly, and cannot be charged to the University and then reimbursed.

Receipts

- The only proof of any bona fide business expense is an original receipt, and any claim not supported will not be paid by the University.
- All claims for expenses must be fully supported by an image of the original receipt attached in the system. The original receipt should be retained until the expense has been paid or in accordance with the funders specific requirements.
- Receipts must show the date of issue, the supplier's name and be fully itemised. Restaurant receipts must list all the meals and drinks claimed for. Handwritten receipts may not be accepted.
- There may be exceptions if a full explanation why a receipt is missing but, in this case, you will need to include some other proof of payment (redacted extract of bank statement). If you do not provide a valid receipt, your claim may be rejected. Even if the claim is paid, tax regulations may require the amount to be subject to income tax and National Insurance.
- The costs will also become ineligible for external grant funding and not reimbursed if an itemised receipt is not provided.

Exchange rates

- Expenses incurred in a foreign currency will be converted to Sterling at the rate prevailing at the date of the original transaction. Where an individual has bona fide proof (bank/credit card statement) which clearly shows the exchange rate at the time of exchange, this should be accepted. However, if such evidence is not available, the system will use the exchange rates as published on www.xe.com or a similar website. As foreign exchange can be obtained free of commission charges at most UK banks, the Post Office and some supermarkets, the University will not normally reimburse such costs. Bank transaction fees will also not be reimbursed.
- Frequent travellers may benefit from a university Frequent Traveller Credit Card [Frequent Traveller Credit Cards | Directorate of Finance | StaffNet | The University of Manchester](#)

Authorisation

- Expense claims will be authorised by automated workflows to the claimants Line Manager followed by the relevant Oracle budget holder/approver of the activity code used. Claims must never be approved for payment by the claimant's spouse, partner or close relative. Further information about the approval process can be found in the training materials.
- The authorisation of both line manager and budget holder ensures:
 - Line manager is of higher rank or profession, that the staff member is valid, the expenditure was incurred wholly, necessarily, and exclusively for work purposes and appropriate activity code used.

- The budget holder/approver is confirming the finance code is valid, there are sufficient funds and the expenditure is compliant with the Finance Procedures and any other Policies that may apply.

Rejection of claims

- Expenses claims for goods or services (e.g. computers, software, travel, furniture, books, components etc.) that can be purchased using the procurement systems, Purchasing card or Travel Management System will be rejected. Colleagues should seek advice from Procurement before incurring personal expenditure.
- In exceptional circumstances where expense policy cannot be adhered to, claims must include a full explanation why the goods or services were not purchased in the normal way
- You will be informed of any disallowed element via email.

Externally funded projects

Expenses charged to externally funded projects must comply with both the University's financial regulations and the specific terms and conditions set by the funder. Only costs that are necessary, reasonable, and directly attributable to the project may be charged. Claimants are responsible for ensuring that all expenditure is eligible under the relevant award agreement, supported by appropriate documentation, and incurred within the approved project period. Where funder requirements are more restrictive than University policy, the funder's rules will take precedence.

Expense Category	Expense Type	Can you claim for this on expenses system?	Guidance wording- proposed	Limit/rate
Accommodation	Accommodation – UK Accommodation - Overseas	No – with exception of Tourist/resort/city taxes payable on arrival at a hotel.	<p>When booking accommodation in Manchester, Hyatt Regency Manchester should be used in the first instance. The hotel offers preferential rates to The University of Manchester. Do not book the Hyatt Regency Manchester through any other route (such as Corporate card or Key Travel).</p> <p>Alternative hotels in Manchester should only be booked if Hyatt Regency Manchester is unavailable.</p> <p>All other hotel accommodation must be booked through the official University of Manchester Travel Management Partner - Key Travel.</p> <p>Please visit the Directorate of Finance Travel page for more information on booking travel and accommodation through Key Travel.</p> <p>If you are unable to use Key Travel for any reason, please speak to Travel Helpdesk:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • travel.helpdesk@manchester.ac.uk • 0161 306 2535 	<p>£150 – UK Outside of London</p> <p>£300 – London</p> <p>Best value rule applies to the rest of the world</p> <p>All exceptions must be justified on the claim to evidence value for money and approved by the line manager</p>
Subsistence – Meals whilst away on University business.	Subsistence	Yes	<p>Subsistence should be claimed for university staff only. Any cost including non-University staff should refer to entertaining.</p> <p>Employees who make business journeys greater than five miles from their normal (designated) place of work or are away on University business for more than five hours are entitled to claim subsistence costs. This will typically include meals which may be claimed on the presentation of receipts.</p> <p>Employees who, as part of their employment, make business journeys of less than five miles from their normal (designated) place of work or are away from work for a period of less than five hours can only claim subsistence costs if the event is classed as a working event.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Breakfast £10</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Lunch £15</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Dinner £25 (£30 London)</p>

			<p>The University does not prescribe a daily rate for subsistence, costs can be reclaimed as long as a valid receipt is submitted to support the expenditure.</p> <p>The University will not reimburse hotel minibar bills.</p> <p>The University will not reimburse alcohol on subsistence claims. Our research funders will also not accept alcohol as subsistence.</p>	
Service charge/tips/gratuities	Included within subsistence and entertaining claims	Yes	Service charges automatically included in a restaurant bill may be reclaimed and reimbursed tax free. Tips and similar gratuities up to 10 per cent of the bill (15 per cent in the USA) are also eligible for reimbursement. Any amount over and above this must be borne by the employee.	<p>Service charge automatically included – no limit</p> <p>Tips/gratuities 10% of total bill (15% in the USA)</p>
Insurance	n/a	No	<p>The University will not reimburse any claim for additional insurance premiums purchased by employees for whatever purpose (such as motor, travel, equipment, working from home, etc.).</p> <p>Further information about insurance can be found on the Insurance Office pages of StaffNet.</p>	
Mileage – general rules			<p>A mileage allowance will be paid when employees use their own vehicle for approved business journeys.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public transport should be considered where practical. • For longer journeys, employees should assess whether a hire car would be more cost-effective. • Employees should share cars where possible. 	
			<p>Home-to-Work Deduction Ordinary commuting between home and an employee's normal (designated) place of work is not reimbursable.</p>	

			<p>Where a business journey begins or ends at home, employees must deduct their normal home-to-work mileage. Only the additional business mileage is claimable.</p> <p>Example: Normal commute: 12 miles Journey from home to meeting: 30 miles Claimable mileage: 18 miles Mileage from home to a permanent place of work is not normally reimbursed, except in limited circumstances such as authorised out-of-hours call-outs. All distances travelled must be recorded at the time of the journey. Any payment relating to home-to-work mileage is taxable under HMRC rules.</p>	
			<p>Driving for Work Employees are considered to be driving at work when travelling on University business. This includes journeys from the normal place of work to other work locations (e.g., meetings, conferences, teaching sites, fieldwork). It does not include travel between home and the normal place of work.</p> <p>Employees using their own vehicle for University business are responsible for complying with road traffic law and are personally liable for any penalties incurred. Drivers must demonstrate safe driving behaviours and comply with the University's Driving at Work Procedure.</p>	
			<p>Employee Responsibilities Employees using their own vehicle for University business must ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • they hold a valid driving licence for the vehicle used; • the vehicle has valid insurance that includes business use; • the vehicle is roadworthy, well-maintained, and has valid tax and MOT (where required). <p>All employees claiming mileage must complete a self-declaration confirming compliance with these requirements.</p>	
Mileage – Car	Mileage	Yes	Mileage can be claimed at 45p per mile.	45p per mile for first 10k mile in a year, 25p thereafter.

			<p>The general rules for mileage should be followed.</p> <p>If the total number of miles, exceeds 10,000 in a year the mileage rate will be capped at 25p per mile.</p>	
Mileage – EV (Salary Sacrifice Scheme)	Mileage	Yes	<p>Mileage can be claimed at 8p per mile. This rate is for employees who have an Electric Vehicle on the Salary Sacrifice Scheme.</p> <p>Personally owned Electric Vehicles can claim using the car mileage rate.</p>	8p per mile
Mileage – Motor Bike	Mileage	Yes	<p>Mileage can be claimed at 24p per mile for business journeys.</p> <p>The general rules for mileage should be followed.</p>	24p per mile
Mileage – Cycle	Mileage	Yes	<p>Employees are able to claim a cycle mileage rate of 20p per mile for business journeys.</p> <p>The general rules for mileage should be followed.</p> <p>In additional, employees using their own cycle must read, understand and complete the Staff Business Journeys by Own Cycle Declaration.</p> <p>(Please note: the journey must be on a employees own cycle - not a hire or pool bike.</p> <p>Employees cannot claim for journeys when using a bike through the 'Cycle to Work' Scheme during the 12 month payback period.</p> <p>The bike is technically not owned by the employee during this period).</p>	20p per mile
Mileage – Passenger (Car Share)	Mileage	Yes	<p>Employees are able to claim a car share mileage rate of 5p per passenger.</p> <p>This rate should only be used with the standard car mileage. It is not available to employees claiming EV, motor cycle or cycle rates.</p>	5p per mile

			Passengers should be UOM employees and should be named on the expense claim.	
Car Hire & Fuel – General rules			For longer journeys hiring a car is likely to be more cost effective than using your own car. The cost of fuel for a hire car can be recovered on presentation of a receipted claim unless it has been paid for using a purchasing card.	
Car Hire & Fuel - UK	Car Hire & Fuel	Car Hire – No Fuel for hire car - Yes	For UK Car Hire, the University has negotiated contracts with Several Suppliers. All UK Car Hire must go through Oracle iProcurement. Please refer to this document for important information as well as the process for booking with your chosen car hire company.	
Car Hire & Fuel - Overseas	Car Hire & Fuel	Car Hire – Yes (if hire via Key Travel or Purchase Card is not available) Fuel for hire car - Yes	Car hire should be booked via Key Travel or purchasing card where possible.	
Car Parking & Tolls	Car Parking & Tolls	Yes	Charges incurred whilst on business journeys can be recovered via an expense claim. Tickets should be retained wherever possible.	
Car parking tickets & fines	n/a	No	Parking tickets and other charges arising from illegal or inappropriate driving cannot be claimed. The charge must be paid by the individual.	
Public Transport	Bus/Tram Ferry Train - overseas	Yes (UK train tickets should be booked via Key Travel)	Obtain a receipt or retain your ticket if the fare paid is £5 or more. If you pay for several tickets under £5 but the total cost is more than £5 it is important to indicate how many tickets make up the total. It is recognised that tickets are sometimes retained by ticket machines, e.g. London Transport.	

			<p>Please indicate if this is the case when claiming individual tickets costing more than £5. Payments may be taxed if receipts are not provided for journeys costing more than £5.</p> <p>On foreign trips you may recover the cost of local transport as described above.</p>	
Taxis	Taxi	Yes	<p>Taxi fares for business journeys in the UK and overseas can be recovered. Full journey details must be recorded, stating both start and finish points and the reason for the journey.</p> <p>Receipts must be obtained wherever possible.</p> <p>Taxis in the Manchester and Salford area should, preferably, be booked with one of the taxi firms with which the University maintains an account.</p>	
Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Assessment - eye test and glasses	Eye Test & Glasses (Display Screen Equipment)	Yes	<p>DSE users can have an eye test at any registered optician they choose. To claim back the cost, they must get a receipt from the optician and submit it through the University's expenses system.</p> <p>If the optician confirms that glasses are needed specifically for DSE (screen) work, employees should ask for this in writing. They can then claim the cost back through the expenses system, up to a maximum of £90.</p> <p>A receipt and proof of confirmation that glasses are needed for DSE work should be submitted with the claim.</p>	Up to £90 for glasses specifically for DSE use.
Telephone and internet expenses	<p>Business Telephone Calls</p> <p>WIFI & Internet Charges</p>	Yes	<p>The University does not reimburse the cost of personal telephone, mobile phone, fax or similar telecommunication charges.</p> <p>The cost of telephone calls made on University business by employees from home or with a mobile phone may be claimed, but all such claims must be supported by an annotated itemised bill.</p> <p>Employees who need to use a mobile phone extensively for University purposes must obtain one from IT Services.</p>	

Business Entertaining		Yes	<p>Business entertainment is only allowed when it clearly supports new business, existing business relationships, or a specific business project.</p> <p>A “customer” must be external (e.g. adviser, sponsor, external student, or collaborator from another organisation).</p> <p>Entertainment of employees, existing students, visiting lecturers/examiners, or anyone paid by the University does not qualify.</p> <p>The ratio of external customers to University staff must be at least 1:1 (equal or more customers than staff).</p> <p>Claims must record the purpose, names, and organisations of all attendees.</p> <p>If the event is considered social or does not meet HMRC rules, it becomes non-business entertainment, and the School will be charged tax on the cost.</p>	
Non Business Entertaining/Hospitality	Hospitality	Yes	<p>Hospitality provided to students and visitors that does not fall within the University’s business entertaining guidance will only be permitted where there is a clear and justifiable University purpose, such as formal academic events, recruitment activities, open days, conferences, examinations, or externally facing engagement activities.</p> <p>Hospitality must be appropriate to the nature of the event, proportionate in value, and must not confer a personal benefit on staff or students. Expenditure that is primarily social in nature, routine, or informal (for example, ad-hoc meals, celebrations, or refreshments outside a defined University activity) is not normally allowable.</p> <p>All such expenditure must be approved in advance.</p>	
Working Lunch	Working Lunch	Yes	<p>The University will only provide refreshments for formal meetings or those with outside visitors.</p> <p>A working lunch may only be reclaimed without deduction of tax and NI contributions if the refreshments are light (e.g. sandwiches, biscuits and non-alcoholic drinks), and taken in the place where the</p>	

			<p>meeting is held (in other words, the meal is only a break in the meeting)</p> <p>Meals held in a restaurant or with alcoholic drinks therefore do not qualify as working lunches.</p>	
Staff Entertainment	Staff Entertainment	Yes	<p>The University has approved a Non-Business Staff Entertaining Policy to provide a consistent approach to the funding of staff entertainment, together with HMRC guidance regarding the tax and NI implications.</p> <p>Staff are expected to pay for their own refreshments (tea, coffee, milk etc.) while at work</p> <p>The Policy allows each School/Faculty/Directorate or Department to contribute a fixed amount, currently set at £20 per head per annum, towards annual staff events at Christmas. This funding is not an entitlement and only applies to staff who attend the approved event.</p>	£20 per head for staff event at Christmas.
Conferences	Conferences-UK Conferences - Overseas	No	<p>Conference bookings should be made via requisition or purchase card.</p> <p>Travel and accommodation conference should be booked via Key Travel. There is an exception where there are preferential rates for booking a conference package with the organiser.</p> <p>Expenses incurred in connection with attendance at academic conferences can only be reimbursed where it can be shown that it is directly associated with an employee's duties, and is wholly, necessarily and exclusively for work purposes.</p> <p>Costs for subsistence, public transport etc should be claimed via expense system following the relevant guidance. Only identifiable costs incurred on bona fide university business can be claimed.</p> <p>Claimants should be especially careful when claiming expenses incurred during attendance at an overseas conference.</p> <p>Activities not directly associated with business (sightseeing tours etc.) cannot be reimbursed.</p>	

			<p>The University cannot pay for members of an employee's family or friends to accompany them to conferences and similar events.</p> <p>Please note that HMRC may ask to see proof that a conference is of an appropriate academic nature. Details such as agendas and other papers should be retained in case of such queries.</p> <p>Additionally, it is important that is shown there is no dual purpose to an overseas trip (i.e taking a holiday at the same time as a business trip for convenience) as only business elements may be reimbursed.</p>	
Thank you scheme		Yes	<p>The University operates a Staff Thank You Scheme, which provides a formal route for recognising colleagues through tokens of appreciation such as flowers or chocolates. All gifts must be approved in line with the Staff Thank You Scheme. Full details are available in the main policy display.aspx</p>	
Professional subscriptions		Yes	<p>The University will reimburse the cost of one professional subscription per year only where the membership is directly relevant to the employee's role and required for the performance of their duties. Subject to preapproval from line manager and budget holder.</p> <p>Claims must relate to professional bodies included on the HMRC list of approved organisations. Any subscriptions that are personal, optional, or not essential for the role will not be reimbursed. All claims must be supported by a valid receipt.</p>	