

Staff Expenses Policy & Procedures

Effective 1 January 2019

Policy

1. This policy applies to Staff of the General Dental Council [GDC].
2. The GDC will reimburse any reasonable costs that have been incurred wholly, exclusively and necessarily on GDC business with the aim of providing a reasonable standard of travel, accommodation and subsistence, consistent with sound accounting practice and the requirements of HM Revenue & Customs.
3. It is expected that Staff will make their travel and accommodation arrangements via the most economical means possible. However, Staff may if they wish, exceed the expenditure limits as set out in this policy, so long as they account personally for any such excess cost above the approved expenditure limits.
4. The submission of fraudulent claims is a matter of gross misconduct and will lead to disciplinary action.

Procedure

5. All claims for reimbursement of travel, accommodation and subsistence must be submitted on the Staff expenses claim form, which is available on the Finance page of the Intranet or the Finance Department.
6. Claims made should clearly set out the nature of the business trip and the reason the expenditure was incurred.
7. Itemised original receipts must support all claims [credit or debit card receipts are not acceptable]. Receipts should be attached to each relevant claim form in a secure manner. Claims without appropriate supporting documents will be invalid and unreceipted expenditure may be deducted from the claim payable.
8. Claims will be reimbursed within 21 days of the claim being received by the Finance Department. Payments will be made direct to the claimant's nominated bank account.
9. To assist the year end accounting process, all claims for November and December expenses must be submitted by the end of January. All other claims must be submitted within 3 months of being incurred.
10. The GDC does not intend to pay expense claims that are older than 3 months. Where there are valid reasons why a claim cannot be made within this period, the claimant should approach the Executive Director, Registration and Corporate Resources in advance, and seek their agreement to the late claim.

Staff Expenses

11. Claims will be reviewed by the Finance Department to determine that they are consistent with these procedures. Staff must be prepared to justify their choice of travel arrangements if challenged.
12. Claim forms must be signed by the claimant's line manager to authorise payment prior to submission to the Finance Department. The line manager's approval confirms that the expenses were incurred conducting legitimate GDC business. Managers are asked to consider whether any costs can be reclaimed from third party organisations when approving claim forms. No travel claims can be made for normal daily commuting i.e. from home to the normal daily place of work.

Advances for expenses

13. In exceptional circumstances an advance against expenses will be provided to fund a lengthy or expensive business trip. The advance must be authorised by the Chief Executive or the Executive Director, Registration and Corporate Resources.
14. An expense claim, relating to the trip in question, should be submitted as soon as possible after the trip is over. This will avoid any potential income tax liability for the Staff member on an interest free loan.

Rail Travel

15. For rail travel, you should travel standard class between the nearest station to your home or your normal place of work and the location of the meeting or event. First class rail travel can only be booked if it can be demonstrated that a first-class ticket is cheaper than standard class. **The ticket comparison must show the exact same journey type and the two class type prices** (i.e. screenshot of standard class ticket price at the time of booking the first-class ticket). Where possible, tickets should be pre-booked for specific journey times. Fully flexible tickets are more expensive and should only be purchased where there is a demonstrable need.
16. London Underground fares will only be reimbursed where that Staff member is not in the possession of an Oyster Travelcard or season ticket, covering the zones for the journey made. Oyster cards and contactless payment cards should be registered online at tfl.gov.uk. A journey statement must be printed with annotations added that specify GDC expenses. Alternatively, if an individual ticket has been purchased, the ticket can be provided in place of a receipt.

Air Travel

17. For air travel within the UK, the GDC will reimburse economy class or the equivalent fare, where appropriate.
18. International air travel should be booked at economy class, unless the flight time is in excess of five hours when business class travel may be booked.

Road Travel

19. Mileage allowance will be paid for Staff using a private car on GDC business at a rate specified below:

	Up To 10,000 Miles	Over 10,000 Miles
Motor Car	45p	25p
Motor Cycle	24p	24p

Cycles
Passengers

20p
5p

20p
5p

20. The above mileage rates are linked to the approved amount for mileage allowance payments published by the HM Revenue and Customs.
21. The GDC will not accept liability for loss or damage to Staff belongings on GDC business. Staff members claiming mileage allowance should ensure that the car used is insured for business use prior to making the journey. Any additional premium paid to the insurance company is not a claimable expense.
22. Car parking costs and congestion charges incurred while on GDC business will be reimbursed. Parking, speeding and other fines relating to motoring offences will not be reimbursed.
23. *Taxis, particularly in the Greater London area, should only be used in exceptional circumstances. Where possible, taxis should be shared with others. Please note that you will need to provide an explanation for any use of taxis. Costs may not be reimbursed should the explanation not be in-line with this policy.* Taxi receipt with the start and finish points and purpose of the journey should be provided with the claim.
24. Hire Cars: Should only be used in exceptional circumstances. The payment for hire of a car and associated costs for petrol and insurance will be made only when public transport is either not available, practical or the total cost of hiring a car is less than the cost of using public transport or a taxi.

Overnight Accommodation

25. HRG UK provide a specialised hotel booking service for the GDC. Through HRG UK, the GDC and its travellers benefit from:

- Access to GDC, Government and HRG negotiated hotel rates (where applicable)
- Access to a 24 Hour emergency service – 365 days a year – 01252 881010
- Management information detailing expenditure and travel trends

There are user guides available on the intranet that provides information on how to use the service.

26. The GDC will reimburse the cost of overnight accommodation when the stay is necessary from a business point of view.
27. Overnight stays in London, are generally not deemed necessary for London based Staff. The cost of accommodation in these circumstances will only be reimbursed if there has been prior agreement with the Executive Director, Registration and Corporate Resources.
28. Reimbursement of the cost of accommodation including breakfast, other services and VAT, will be up to a limit of:

London	£180 per night
Other UK	£125 per night

The above limits should not be seen as expected rates, where possible you should seek accommodation at lower rates, to minimise costs to the GDC

29. Staff unable to secure appropriate accommodation at a cost within the guide prices provided, should seek agreement from the Executive Director, Registration and Corporate Resources prior to making any booking and note the reasons on the expenses claim form.
30. A £25 'friends and family' overnight allowance will be reimbursed if Staff are required to stay away from home on GDC business, and choose to stay with friends or family instead of using a hotel. This covers all costs including accommodation, evening meal and breakfast. No claim can be made by anyone staying in their own property. Please note under HMRC rules this is considered a 'taxable allowance' and therefore liable to Income Tax and National Insurance, which will be met on your behalf by the GDC.

Food and Drink

31. Expenses for Staff who are required to take a meal away from GDC offices or where they are travelling on business during meal times, will be reimbursed up to the following amounts:

Breakfast	£10 [only when <u>no</u> overnight stay involved and you had to leave home before 07.30]
Lunch	£10 [when attending external business meetings and where no lunch is provided.]
Dinner	£30 [alcoholic beverages can no longer be claimed as an expense and should be deducted from your receipt total before submitting your claim. Please note that any dinner-related purchases should only be for that evening's consumption. An itemised bill will be required.]

Please note:

- if you are dining with Council members or certain categories of Associates, you are not permitted to pay for their meal as they need to claim this individually as their Expenses are liable to Income Tax and National Insurance which is payable by the GDC. If in doubt, please check in advance with the Finance Department.
- the cost of lunch should not be claimed when you are working out of either GDC offices, regardless of your contracted base office.

Dual Office Working

32. The GDC has invested in video and telephone conference facilities to enable cross office working between our Birmingham and London offices. Staff should utilise these facilities as much as reasonably possible when asked to attend a short meeting (hour or less) in their non-contracted base location.
33. Where meetings need to be attended in person, staff should ensure that they look to optimise the efficiency of their travelling arrangements. This can be done by attempting to schedule any other meetings where attendance is required for the same day.
34. When travelling to the non-contracted office, "advance" of "off-peak" rail tickets should be booked wherever possible to reduce the cost of travel. (Optimum savings can usually be

made by booking 5 or more days in advance of travel.) Staff are also asked to consider the timing of any meetings they need to attend to enable travel outside of peak fares.

35. The GDC will not reimburse the cost of lunch for those staff working in either of the GDC offices.

Entertaining

36. Potential entertainment costs should be authorised **in advance** by the Chief Executive or Executive Director, Registration and Corporate Resources.
37. Claims for entertaining external contacts on behalf of the GDC will be reimbursed, subject to the following information being provided on the claim form:
- Name(s) of person
 - Organisation they represent
 - Purpose of entertainment

Telephones

38. The GDC will reimburse the cost of any business calls made on home or other private phones, provided that the calls were necessary for the GDC's business. Claims must be supported by itemised bills annotated with the nature of the call.
39. This reimbursement is for the cost of calls only, and not for any element of line rental, as this would result in an additional tax liability as a benefit in kind.
40. Where a Staff member needs to make regular calls whilst not in the GDC's offices the Executive Director, Registration and Corporate Resources will consider making available a GDC mobile telephone to the Staff member concerned.

Spouses and Civil Partners

41. The general rule is that the GDC will only reimburse the costs of a spouse or civil partner if it can be shown that the GDC specifically requested that the spouse / civil partner attends or the spouse / civil partner is performing a definite business function for the GDC.

Additional Allowances for Employees

42. Additional allowances and expenses necessarily and reasonably incurred for which a Staff member may claim, comprise the following:

- **Child care or baby-sitting expenses**

Provided the staff member does not already receive a care allowance and where a Staff member does not have a spouse, civil partner or other responsible adult to care for a child while they undertake work on behalf of the GDC, outside of their usual working hours, claims will be limited to reimbursing the actual cost paid to a registered child minder or the cost of a baby-sitter.

- **Care arrangements for an elderly or dependent relative**

These costs may be refunded in similar circumstances to childcare. Claims will be limited to reimbursing the actual amount paid to a person providing the care that the Staff member would have provided during their period of absence.