

Travel and Expenditure Policy

Introduction

The Travel and Expenditure Policy sets out how University employees, students and contractors (referred to as 'the Traveller' in this policy) should make appropriate and cost effective travel arrangements. Developed on best practice principles, the policy contributes directly towards the University's Strategy to strengthen operational efficiency and effectiveness and foster a culture of continuous improvement.

This version of the policy (dated January 2021) has been updated to correct weblinks, role titles, limits and to reflect changes in the suppliers and processes referenced within. It has also been updated based on the need to respond to Covid-19. This is an interim policy update, with a fuller update reflecting the longer-term changes from Covid-19 expected to be approved and published during the 2021/22 academic year.

Interim Travel Policy Position under Covid restrictions

There are currently significant restrictions on travel as a result of the Covid-19 Pandemic. At the time of drafting this policy the FCO now advises against all but essential international travel, and similar restrictions are expected to remain in place for some time. If you are due to travel on University business please follow the guidance and advice which can be found on the [Covid-19 Travel Information Page](#) with all travel, including UK and international travel being approved at Faculty Pro Vice-Chancellor (PVC) or Service Director level.

Purpose and Scope

This Policy provides guidance to University Travellers on:

- Booking methods
- Financial authority and approvals
- Reimbursement of travel expenses
- Duty of care
- Risk assessments
- Subsistence or other expenses incurred in connection with University business
- The receipt and provision of business and corporate hospitality
- The use of mobile telephones; and
- Other non-pay expenditures incurred in connection with University business.

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General Principles

The University is committed to the 'Nolan' principles as defined by the Committee on Standards in Public Life 1994 - 1997: selflessness; integrity; objectivity; accountability; openness; honesty and leadership.

Effective budgetary control is the responsibility of senior managers across the University. Principal Budget Holders will ensure that expenditure under their control provides value for money (VfM), within the agreed financial budget(s).

It is the responsibility of every claimant and authorised signatory to ensure that University expenditure is necessary, appropriate and proportionate to the activities for which the funding is designated.

This Policy will apply irrespective of the source of funding. The University may withhold payment of any expenses incurred not in accordance with this Policy. It will seek reimbursement of any expenses paid and later found to be invalid.

This section defines the Travel and Expenses Policy, procedures and guidelines for Northumbria University. Travellers undertaking business travel or staying in accommodation are required to adhere to this Policy. Complying with this Policy allows the University to negotiate and make significant savings on all aspects of travel costs.

As part of the University's Duty of Care, the University is required to have knowledge of the location of each member of staff when travelling on business. It is important therefore, that staff comply with the requirements of this Policy, so the University will be able to assist individuals more easily if an emergency situation arises. Moreover, line managers are responsible for ensuring that this Policy is applied within their own area. Failure to comply with the policy may result in disciplinary proceedings.

Glossary of terms and abbreviations

Authorising Manager	An authorised signatory is a Principal Budget Holder, Senior Signatory, or Nominated Signatory as defined in paragraph 5 of the Policy.
Budget Holder	A nominated member of staff who has been given prior consent to authorise a set value of financial money.
CIBT	The University's approved supplier for visas / global visa's.
CRG	Control Risk Group at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office
ESTA	Electronic System for Travel Authorisation
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office.
ICE	This is an in case of emergency contact number.
Lowest priced logical ticket	This is the lowest priced journey that delivers the traveller to their destination within the timeframe necessary to meet the business need
Restricted Economy Ticket	This is an airline ticket that has restrictions in place, however in most instances amendments can be made for a fee and the ticket will be non-refundable
TMC	Travel Management Company, which has been appointed as the University's travel provider.
VfM	Value for Money

Policy aims

The aims of the Policy are:

- To provide clear information which supports safe, convenient, comfortable, sustainable and cost effective travel for the University traveller. To reimburse Travellers for reasonable and necessary expenses, which they incur in the authorised conduct of University business.
- To help travellers adhere to the University's reporting and accounting standards.
- To ensure travellers use the University's Travel Management Company (TMC) to reduce administration, aid cost efficiency, provide traveller tracking and aid emergency response.
- To support expenditure control using good judgment and the services of nominated travel providers and negotiated discounts, where applicable.
- To reduce, where possible, costs to both the University and the impact on the environment it is important in each instance to assess if business travel is necessary.

Video conferencing and telephone conferencing facilities should always be considered before booking any business travel. Travellers are asked to plan and make requests for journeys, accommodation, conferences, training etc. as far in advance as practicable. Advance bookings are considerably cheaper than purchasing nearer to the time of travel and the use of budget airlines can significantly reduce the cost of air travel. These options should be used where possible.

If you have any questions in regard to the Policy or its application, please do not hesitate to contact Human Resources and/or Procurement.

The Policy is in line with the University's Financial Regulations. It applies to all Travellers and to any other person responsible for expenditure on behalf of Northumbria University.

The Chief Financial Officer is responsible for the implementation of this Policy and will arbitrate in any cases of dispute.

The Policy can also be viewed on the [Travel Portal](#).

Contractors

All contractors working on behalf of Northumbria University need to comply with the content of this policy to ensure that their incurred expenses are reimbursed and wherever possible/reasonable bookings should be made through the TMC.

1. Financial Authority and Approvals

a. Delegated Financial Authority

In order to maintain accountability and transparency, all expenditure should be reviewed, approved and authorised in accordance with the [Financial Regulations](#).

b. Corporate Credit Cards

The University operates a Corporate Credit Card Scheme. This scheme is restricted to members of the University's Management Group and regular international travellers. The Company Corporate credit card should be used only for the purpose of expenses incurred whilst travelling on University business.

All transactions should be substantiated with receipts. The University reserves the right to seek reimbursement for any item of non-receipted expenditure.

Where accommodation costs are paid using a corporate credit card, authorised signatories are required to assess whether such claims are reasonable.

2. Responsibility and Compliance

The University's appointed TMC (refer to Glossary) is contracted to operate within this Policy. Travellers, Principal Budget Holders and nominated signatories are responsible for complying with this Policy. The Principal Budget Holder and any authorised signatory are responsible for accurately reviewing expense reports and exception reports for compliance.

All business travel and accommodation should be booked through the TMC and when appropriate, the online booking tool should be used to comply with University policy and duty of care. All travel arrangements should be discussed with the Traveller's line manager and approved in principle by email prior to contacting the TMC.

While this Policy is comprehensive, it is nevertheless impossible to anticipate every situation that may be encountered by the Traveller in the course of their business travel. All Travellers are expected to exercise good business judgment while travelling on University business.

a. Risk Assessment

Any University traveller must access the appropriate travel safety awareness training described in the [Travel Hub](#). Such training should be undertaken each academic year. All Travellers are required to conduct an appropriate risk assessment prior to travel using the knowledge gained from the training.

The [Travel Hub](#) explains which travel risk assessment is appropriate. The travel risk assessment is a template that guides the traveller through embedded links to real time information on risk, culture, and preparation needed for travel. To identify low/medium/high/extreme risk categories of destinations (major cities and regions across the world) the traveller will need to use the links to the University Insurer's global travel consultancy (there are links embedded in the travel risk assessment templates). The University insurer's global travel consultant and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office also provide "live" travel updates that

travellers must register to receive for their intended destinations. More details can be found on the [Travel Hub](#).

Travellers should create contingency plans in case they are faced with theft or have their trip impacted by Covid-19. NOTE: travel insurance covers Covid-19 medical assistance BUT NOT curtailment/rearrangement costs of travel.

b. Security app for mobile devices

The University has procured mobile security app's for staff and student's use both on campus and during travel. In addition the TMC have app's to provide updates on booked travel throughout your trip. Travellers are required to register with the appointed service provider prior to travel and follow the instructions for

- keeping line management informed of progress
- changes to itineraries
- use should the traveller be personally threatened (e.g. assault, travel accident)

c. Travel to High or Extreme Risk Countries

Guidance on risk management for high/extreme risk travel is in the [Travel Hub](#). Approval may be granted following evidence that the Traveller has taken the necessary steps to ensure their travel plans take into account their personal safety. Approval can only be given by designated senior management employees of the University, it is the responsibility of the Traveller and approver to ensure the Traveller's safety at all times. An Approval Guide is in the [Travel Hub](#).

The Foreign & Commonwealth office define 'essential travel' as: "... urgent family or business commitments to attend to. Circumstances differ from person to person.... make an informed decision based on the risks."

The university will require a very strong case to be made by any traveller to demonstrate their proposed travel to a specific destination at a specific time is 'essential travel'.

d. Emergency Situations

Should a serious incident occur whilst the Traveller is travelling on University business, either nationally or internationally, they must contact the emergency response provider on their Travel Insurance Summary. University staff can refer to guidance on the [Travel Hub](#)

Travellers should be aware that in the event of a serious security incident mobile telephones may not be operable. In this situation, landline telephones should be used. Line Managers or the Security Service will contact family members, if required.

It is also important to store an ICE (In Case of an Emergency) number in your mobile telephone so that should you not be in a position to contact someone yourself, then a third party could do so on your behalf. A good idea is to take a photo of your ICE number and save it as your screensaver on your phone.

e. Corporate Social Responsibility/Duty of Care

All air, hotel and rail requirements must be booked through the TMC via their online web portal and/or the designated telephone number. Expenses for travel NOT booked via TMC will not be refunded unless mitigating circumstances are supported by the travellers' line manager.

Northumbria University will not send its Travellers to any country where the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has issued a "do not travel" alert and will also do everything it possibly can to remove staff from any high alert areas. A link to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office can be found on the online booking tool. Travellers should always check this if considering travel

to an international destination for business. Northumbria University has a Duty of Care to its Travellers to ensure that they travel safely.

f. Insurance

The University's travel insurance covers all travellers on Northumbria University business. Alternative cover is required for a spouse/partner/child if they are accompanying staff on a business trip.

A Travel Cover Summary is available on the [Insurance Pages](#). Full policy wording available from fi.insurance@northumbria.ac.uk

Our insurers appreciate that during business trips, especially overseas, there will be social activities and these are insured for the business period.

Any member of staff wishing to extend their business trip for holidays or to engage in 'hazardous activities' (1) during their social hours will need to arrange their own insurance.

(1) – Hazardous activities are where a reasonable person would need to make a risk assessment e.g. the activity includes winter sports, bungee jumping, white water rafting.

3. Travel Procedure

Travellers must discuss and agree all travel, accommodation (and where necessary) subsistence with their line manager prior to making a booking. Providing travellers do not exceed the set limits, all travel and accommodation will be pre-approved. If a particular trip exceeds the set limit as displayed on the online booking tool then this will require approval by the appropriate authorised signatory, as clear justification will be required as to why the trip has exceeded the set limit.

a. Travel Arrangements

Travellers should consider the following before requesting any travel or accommodation.

- Cost of travel and accommodation
- Cost of any support required e.g. translators
- Key events in destination country / city that may disrupt travel or increase costs e.g. festivals; travellers urged to avoid such times if possible
- Time and duration of complete journeys
- Requirement for flexibility within the itinerary
- Alternate options such as video conferencing /Skype / hosting webinars
- Meeting clients and prospective customers (students are legally defined as customers) in safe environments
- Carbon impacts from the mode of travel

Travellers are also expected to consider whether the journey is essential or alternative options, where other Travellers are travelling to the same destination on the same dates for example.

As it is considerably cheaper to book travel online the [online booking system](#) should be your preferred method of booking wherever possible. Only in the case of complex and/or multi sector itineraries should bookings be made via the telephone/email. The University's TMC will redirect you to the online system for simple point-to-point booking, hotel reservations and rail tickets, unless there is a valid business justification for bookings to be undertaken by the TMC.

The TMC will require the Travel Risk Assessment number as part of the booking, so outline consent of a TRA must be completed and entered onto the approval system before booking travel. For more details on booking travel, please refer to the [Travel Hub](#).

b. Traveller Profiles

All Travellers who undertake business travel on behalf of the University must complete and maintain their traveller profile on the online tool. This information will be held securely by our agent. Once a profile has been submitted only the Traveller and the University's preferred supplier can view it. The Traveller can amend this information at any time through the online traveller profile tool. In a potential crisis situation, the traveller profile will be used to assist the University and its agents. When travelling to countries which require a visa it will also enable TMC to submit passport information which is required at the time of booking.

It is the Traveller's responsibility to ensure they have a valid passport to travel overseas on University business and request the relevant business visa through the TMC. The University will not reimburse Travellers for any costs associated with the issue of an initial passport or renewal of an initial passport. Passports should have a minimum of six months' validity from the date of departure and be machine-readable for entry to the United States. The University will reimburse Travellers for the cost of a second passport should this be required for business reasons (e.g. visa applications for frequent travellers). Approval must be sought from the budget holder. Any questions regarding passport requirements should be directed to the relevant immigration service's website for the country the Traveller intends to visit.

c. Ticket Delivery

For air travel, the TMC will utilise ticketless/electronic travel where possible. In the event that a paper ticket is issued, this will be sent out by Royal Mail special delivery. Rail travel tickets may be collected from a ticket machine at your designated railway station selected at time of booking. Alternatively, these can be posted to a home address if required.

d. International Travel

For the purposes of this Policy, international travel covers all destinations outside the UK and Northern Ireland. Travellers anticipating travel to international destinations should first review the steps identified in the Travel Hub --- where an extensive signposted library of information is available, including latest position on Covid-19 and Brexit. Then travellers must notify/seek pre-trip approval from their Line Manager at least fourteen working days prior to the proposed departure date, whenever possible. Foreign countries require a passport and in some instances, a visa and potentially work permits. Equipment may need to be declared at customs - the onus is on the traveller to check this.

Travellers must check the Covid-19 entry requirements, any quarantine or testing needs and factor this into the return trip as well. With fluctuations in pandemic outbreaks, the situation can change at short notice, thus flexible/refundable bookings should be made.

e. Visa Service

The University appointed TMC provides visa advice and an arrangement service. This will include latest advice post Brexit. For Schengen Visas you will need to get an evidence of insurance letter showing your name. Contact fi.insurance@northumbria.ac.uk. All Travellers are required to conduct an appropriate Travel Risk Assessment, as well as obtain relevant VISAs and immunisations prior to travel. Full details are on the [Travel Hub](#).

f. Immunisation

Travelers should check on the [FCO website](#) and the latest information on the University insurer's global travel consultant for latest information relating to vaccinations. Check alerts on these sites too for most recent issues at the destination. Appropriate measures should then be taken to ensure the Traveller is suitably protected. Staff should follow the immunisation advice provided by HR on [Occupational Health](#) services or [Travel Hub](#).

Travel during the pandemic will need particular care to understand Covi-19 testing / vaccine requirements, with evidence of results to show to authorities e.g. airports, customs. All immunisations required to travel to a country on University business are a reimbursable expense that can be claimed via the Faculty or Service.

g. Travel booked by a Third Party

Should a Traveller have travel or accommodation booked on their behalf by an external party, and not through the University's TMC, the Traveller should provide the usual travel risk assessment with itinerary stated, to their line manager with the reasons on the TRA for not using the TMC. The travel risk assessment with itinerary should go through the same approval process as all other travel risk assessments. This is a duty of care requirement and it is the Traveller's responsibility to ensure that this requirement is met.

Third party booked travel should be notified to fi.insurance@northumbria.ac.uk so that the details can be loaded onto the TMC 'tracker' system.

h. En Route Changes

If travel plans change when the Traveller has already commenced their journey the TMC can make changes to travel arrangements. In most instances these can be managed through the online booking tool or by calling the TMC.

The TMC may be able to make changes without further cost to the business; this will be made clear during the call. Wherever possible itinerary changes should be minimised, since changes often result in substantial additional cost to the University. Where material changes are made, e.g. change of accommodation, please alert your line manager to the new contact details and/or locations you will be at.

When abroad, any illness preventing completion of the booked travel must be supported by a doctor's statement to obtain a refund of travel costs via insurance. In emergency situations refer to guidance on the [Travel](#) Insurance Summary. Disinclination to travel prior to or during the trip is not insured.

i. Air Travel

- 1) International Travel Schedule - Each Faculty and Service will prepare an annual detailed International Travel Plan and submit it to the International Office. The Plan should include the following detail for each international journey:
 - The purpose of the trip and intended outcomes
 - Names of all Travellers
 - The event they are travelling to, for example conference, research, business development, accreditation
 - Date of travel
 - Total cost (including best estimate of the cost of travel, hotel, per diem rates and out of pocket expenses)

The International Office will look to consolidate journeys by coordinating travel wherever possible. Once agreed, the Travel Plans will be shared with the TMC, so it can seek to optimise the University's expenditure on international travel.

All air travel requires approval from the line manager before a booking is made. All travel arrangements should be discussed with the Travellers' line manager and approved in principle by email, prior to contacting the TMC.

The air travel booking process has been configured to seek approval from a designated authorised manager/budget holder. Until this approval has been confirmed, no reservation will be confirmed.

Air travel reservations should be made through the online booking tool, where possible.

For more complex or difficult itineraries (known as multi-sector trips, e.g. London – Amsterdam – Dubai – Moscow – Newcastle upon Tyne) bookings should be made by calling the TMC.

Air travel reservations must not be made directly through airlines.

(i) Making a Group Air Reservation

Please refer to Group Booking advice found on the [Travel Hub](#).

(ii) UK Air Travel

Air travel within the UK should only be used where it represents best value for money. It should therefore only be used if it is cheaper than alternatives, taking into account the total cost of the journey including, for example, accommodation costs, or where it is demonstrably more convenient.

All domestic air travel should be ticketed in economy class with restricted economy being the first choice. Where there is more than one airline operating a particular route, Travellers should select the least expensive journey.

(iii) International Air Travel

All international air travel for flight durations of less than 5 hours should be booked in economy class. Flights of over five hours should normally be booked in Economy Comfort (Premium Economy) and, to minimise the effects of long haul travel, staff are expected to factor into their travel plans a rest and recovery period of normally eight hours on arrival at their accommodation and prior to attending meetings or commencing work activities. If waits at airports are longer than 90 minutes, and travelling long-haul, airport lounge access may also be booked with Economy Comfort travel. This lounge booking should be made via TMC. A small number of very frequent travellers will be able to obtain annual airport lounge access membership cards.

The lowest priced logical airfare should always be booked. Connections, alternative airports and low cost carriers should be utilised where there is a saving to the University that does not impact upon achieving business requirements.

In exceptional circumstances and where appropriate and cost effective, flights over five hours may be booked in Business Class. That is, if the Business Class fare is less than or equal to the combined cost of Economy Comfort plus the additional rest and recovery period (salary, hotel and subsistence) costs.

Where a member of staff has specific individual circumstances linked to a medical condition they will be referred to Occupational Health for an assessment. Occupational Health will then recommend any adjustments required to enable the member of staff to travel. Options regarding travel arrangements can then be explored by the member of staff, in order to facilitate the adjustments. In these circumstances, if Economy Comfort travel cannot accommodate the required adjustments and Business Class is requested, a clear business case should be made to, and approved by, a relevant member of the Senior Management Group prior to making the booking. All Business Class travel will be reported to the University Executive on a six monthly basis.

Travel Assessments conducted by Occupational Health should be reviewed on an annual basis if the member of staff travels regularly.

(iv) Upgrades for Air Travel

Upgrades at the expense of the University are not permitted. Therefore, upgrades must not be requested before a ticket is issued, as the University would be charged the cost of the upgrade. Any such requests will be highlighted in a monthly exception report. Travellers making requests for upgrades after a ticket has been issued, do so at their own discretion and must personally cover any additional costs.

(v) Cancelling Air Travel

Cancellations should be made through the online booking tool where possible or via telephone. It is important to cancel any trip that is no longer required as the airline will reimburse the University with any taxes or fares due. Disinclination to travel is not insured.

(vi) Preferred Airlines and Frequent Flyer Programmes

Travellers may retain frequent flyer programme benefits. However, participation in these programmes should not influence flight selection, which would result in incremental cost to the University beyond the lowest possible airfare. Any costs associated with personal frequent flyer programmes are the responsibility of the Traveller. The TMC are not responsible for having missed points added to personal frequent flyer programmes. Frequent flyer card numbers may be stored in the individual's online traveller profile.

(vii) Lost Baggage

The ultimate responsibility for retrieving and compensating for lost baggage lies with the airline on which the Traveller is flying. Baggage losses can be minimised by carrying valuables (laptops, jewellery, camera, phones and important documents) as hand luggage.

If baggage is lost en route please follow these procedures:

- Report the loss to the relevant airline before leaving the airport. Travellers should obtain a lost luggage report from an airline representative in the baggage claim area
- Itemise the contents of the lost baggage; (including receipts wherever possible) this should be detailed to the airline as soon as possible once realised that the baggage is missing to aid a speedy recovery
- In your claim for lost baggage you will need to include a copy of any airline tickets and baggage claim stubs;
- If the loss is through theft, the incident must be reported to the local police and a copy of the **crime report** obtained. This will enable an insurance claim to be made for the traveller's personal possessions and any university equipment stolen/lost. **Note: University travel insurance excludes cover for mobile phones**

If baggage is not delivered within a reasonable amount of time at the scheduled arrival destination, emergency essentials such as toiletries and a change of clothing may be purchased, however, good judgment should be applied to the cost of such goods.

j. Rail Travel

(i) Making a Domestic Rail Booking

Travellers should book their rail travel using the rail booking tool. Buying a ticket through other means including on the day at the station should be avoided where possible.

(ii) Domestic Ticket collection

Tickets can be printed at the station from a fast ticket machine. Method of collection is selected at the time of booking and cannot be changed once confirmed. If travelling on the same day as booking the tickets, please allow 30 minutes between booking and collection at the station.

(iii) Domestic Rail – Class of Service

Travellers should normally travel standard class on University business, any exceptions to standard class require the approval of the relevant member of the Senior Management Group and on the advice of the Principal Budget Holder where this is not the same role-holder.

(iv) Domestic Rail Cancellation Process

Cancellations should be avoided wherever possible as a refund may not always be available and the University may incur the cost. It is advisable to always check the rules at time of booking as this will indicate whether the ticket is refundable. Cancellations can be made through the online system.

If cancellation is unavoidable and tickets have already been printed, Travellers must return any unused tickets within 28 days of the outbound travel date, details can be found on the [Travel Hub](#).

(v) Exceptions

Some tickets are not available via the TMC and should be purchased at the station, for example, Oyster Cards and any travel which does not start at a mainline station, i.e. a London tube ticket only. Costs incurred for these will be reimbursed through the expense claims process.

(vi) Making a European Rail Booking

Eurostar can be booked online via the online booking tool. For all other European rail bookings Travellers should call or email the TMC. A ticket on departure can be arranged for Eurostar travel (These can be collected at point of departure).

(vii) European Rail – Class of Service

The TMC will always book the lowest priced logical rail ticket. Travellers should normally travel standard class on University business. Any exceptions to standard class require the approval of the relevant member of the Senior Management Group and on the advice of the Principal Budget Holder where this is not the same role-holder.

k. Road transport

The University policy is to minimise road transport journeys preferring public transport, cycling or walking where practically possible. All drivers are expected to be familiar with the current version of the Highway Code and adhere to legal requirements and recommendations.

(i) Use of Own Vehicles

The University is committed to achieving a significant and sustained reduction in carbon emissions. Use of private cars for long distance journeys will normally be the highest carbon option; therefore, this mode of travel should only be used by exception.

It is recognised that use of private cars will sometimes be the most cost effective option for short journeys, especially when more than one person is travelling (subject to latest local Covid-19 guidance from the government). Where a trip exceeds 200 miles consideration must be given to the use of public transport, or car hire, in order to reduce the cost to the University.

The University currently operates a process of self-declaration for Travellers using their own vehicles on University business. Work is in development to include all potential drivers on the university driver permit system whether using own vehicle or otherwise. Those who use their own vehicle are required to declare that they:

- Hold a valid UK driving licence
- Have appropriate business use insurance cover
- To the best of their knowledge the vehicle they intend to use is fit for purpose, has current road tax, is properly maintained, is in a roadworthy condition and where applicable has a current MOT certificate; and have not been advised that they are unable to drive on

medical grounds and they are not aware of any medical condition that would make it unsafe or prevent them from driving.

Claims for mileage should provide full details of the journey including starting point, places visited and the point at which the journey ended, and total business mileage. Mileage incurred while on University business will be reimbursed at the following rates:

- Car/Van
 - First 10,000 miles per tax year 45p per mile
 - Over 10,000 miles 25p per mile
- Motorcycle 24p per mile
- Bicycle 20p per mile

The cost of toll bridges and tunnels will be reimbursed if they form part of a business journey. Parking costs incurred in the course of travelling away from home and the normal place of work may be claimed. The cost of parking at your normal place of work cannot be claimed. Long-term airport parking can be extremely expensive: Travellers should consider using alternative options such as taxis, booking in advance or the use off-site car parks to reduce costs.

(ii) Car Rental

The use of hire cars can often be a cost effective alternative mode of transport and should be considered; particularly where more than one Traveller is travelling. The University has a car hire contract and details can be found on Northumbria University website Travel Hub/Travelling for Work/ car hire.

The university has a policy to use:

- Category B cars for sole driver usage, thereby reducing carbon emissions
- Category C cars for more than one person using the hire car.
- MPV / Mini MPV depending on number of people and amount of luggage
- Category F cars are only for prestige/executive hires

Any other type of hire vehicle would need senior management approval and be supported by good reason, e.g. health & safety grounds or amount of luggage.

The university motor insurance covers all drivers with a valid driver's permit driving a hire vehicle for university business. Any damage will result in a charge to the faculty/department up to the excess applied by the motor insurer. NOTE: charge will be made even if not the driver's fault e.g. damaged while parked.

Once a driver has an up to date drivers' permit, hire cars can be booked via their departments' resource administrator. Hire cars should be used in all cases where a vehicle trip exceeds 200 miles and public transport is not possible.

Additional fuel for business journeys should be purchased by the Traveller will be reimbursed on production of receipts.

(iii) Fines & penalties

Parking fines, driving offence fines and similar charges will not be reimbursed. Road users should be aware that the maximum fines are due to increase.

(iv) University Taxi Account

The University operates a taxi account. Each Faculty and Service is allocated a user code within this account, under the control and authority of the Principal Budget Holder. Only the following journeys are permitted:

- Early morning or late night business journeys when public transport is not easily accessible or when the cost of parking a car is more expensive
- Use of taxi journey for external guests and VIPs to and from events and activities at the University or other regional locations
- At the discretion of Principal Budget Holders to ensure staff safety, security or wellbeing

I. Home to Work

Journeys between home and your normal place of work are regarded as private journeys and the cost of such journeys cannot be reclaimed. Car sharing is encouraged (within local pandemic rules from the government) and there are options to gain discounted public transport (see staff benefits on the intranet). Journeys away from the University on business are regarded as business journeys. Your normal place of work is the start and finish location for travel claims except where it is more economical for the claim to start at your home address, or where it is necessary to travel directly from your home address (for example, to catch an early train at a local railway station.)

m. Accommodation Arrangements

Overnight accommodation should not ordinarily be arranged for Travellers travelling to a UK destination where the meeting/event commences after 11.00am and concludes before 5.30pm.

4. Accommodation Procedure

a. Making a Hotel Reservation

Hotel reservations should be made through the online booking tool and not directly with the hotel. Reservations should be made as far in advance as possible to enable the TMC to negotiate the most favourable rate.

If a hotel reservation needs to be made / changed or cancelled out of business hours (Mon-Fri 8.45-5:30pm), this should be done through the online booking tool. In the event that this is not possible, the Traveller should contact the TMC out of hours service.

b. Making a Group Hotel Reservation

Please refer to Group Booking advice found on the [Travel Hub](#).

c. Hotel Selection Guidelines

The University has a preferred hotel programme and Travellers should use this accommodation where available. If there is a need to book outside of the programme a justification (and online approval) will need to be supplied through the online booking tool system. All preferred hotels are deemed an acceptable level of comfort by the University. The accommodation available within the programme will be reviewed periodically. The TMC guarantees all hotels for late arrival.

d. Hotel Upgrades

Travellers are entitled to stay in a double room for single occupancy, where available. Travellers may accept room upgrades if the upgrade is at no additional cost to the University.

e. Hotel stays of longer duration

Staff staying a week or longer should make their requests as far in advance as possible which will enable the TMC to negotiate a more favourable rate.

f. Hotel Spending Guidelines

(i) UK Hotel and Accommodation Costs

Hotel costs should not exceed £180 per night in London, £85 in Newcastle upon Tyne or £80 per night elsewhere in the UK. The online booking tool will not allow Travellers to make a booking that exceeds these rates until line manager approval has been given. Charges for room and breakfast will be invoiced directly (subject to hotel acceptance) to the University and this information will be displayed on the confirmation documents.

The cost of Wi-Fi and hotel parking can also be covered by the University, this will need to be paid by the traveller and claimed via the expenses process.

The cost of all business calls will be refunded when included as identifiable items on an accommodation receipt.

The cost of items of a personal nature, such as alcoholic mini bar items, newspapers or pay per view TV will not be met by the University and should be settled by the member of staff upon check out at the hotel.

If a Traveller stays with a friend or relative rather than at a hotel, they may claim up to £25 per night as an accommodation allowance. This is classed as a taxable benefit so is subject to income tax (this must be claimed via the expenses process).

(ii) International Hotel and Accommodation Costs

International hotels should be booked through the TMC, and where possible, charges for room will be invoiced directly to the University (subject to hotel acceptance). If per diem is given in advance this will include cost of breakfast.

In certain countries it is not always possible for the University to be invoiced directly and Travellers may have to settle their bill on departure either via corporate credit card or reclaim the costs through the expense claims process. The TMC will advise the Traveller if the University cannot be invoiced directly at the time of booking and the Traveller should verify prior to departure.

Travellers should use a hotel that is part of the University's preferred hotel programme to ensure that accommodation is in a secure and safe location and is of an acceptable standard.

The following table includes indicative rates that are acceptable to the University in the most frequently visited destinations. If these rates are exceeded approval will be required by the relevant budget holder;

Colombo (Sri Lanka)	£170 per night
Hong Kong	£250 per night
Jakarta	£200 per night
Kuala Lumpur	£170 per night
Moscow	£340 per night
Nigeria	£200 per night
Penang	£170 per night
Seoul	£208 per night
Singapore	£200 per night
Terre Rouge	£183 per night
Tripoli	£236 per night
Other major cities outside UK	£150 per night
USA	£220 per night

g. Hotel Cancellation Procedure

The cancellation guidelines for individual hotel reservations will be displayed at the time of booking. Travellers will be requested to indicate that they have read and understood this. It is advisable not to book advance purchase rates unless the travel is almost certain, as this type of rate is non-refundable. Should a Traveller need to cancel the hotel out of business hours this should be done via the online booking tool or contact the TMC on their out of hours' number.

Travellers will be held responsible for “no-shows” as the full hotel cost will be charged to the University. The Principal Budget Holder (or their nominated signatories) will be notified of any costs charged back to their cost centre, when a Traveller has booked rooms and failed to cancel as these are chargeable.

h. Hotel Frequent Guest Schemes

Many hotels have frequent guest schemes that reward Travellers with free accommodation in exchange for a given number of paid nights at the hotel. Travellers may retain rewards from such schemes for personal use; however, participation in these schemes will not influence the University's preferred hotel programme. Bookings should be made in line with this Policy and wherever possible the preferred hotel programme should be used. Any hotel bookings that exceed the University's approved rates (see section 7.6) will be reported via an exception report on a monthly basis to the line manager. Travellers must collect their points directly with the hotel during their stay. Loyalty card numbers may be stored within the online booking tool personal profile.

Any membership fees associated with joining these schemes are not reimbursable.

i. Subsistence

(i) UK Expenses

If Travellers are away from home and their normal place of work on University business in the UK they may claim for the cost of meals. Receipts must be submitted with claim forms.

For travel within the UK, Travellers leaving home prior to 7:00am are permitted to claim for the cost of breakfast and, if arriving home after 7:00pm are permitted to claim for the cost of dinner. Receipts must be submitted with claim forms.

The [UK subsistence rates](#) applicable for food and non-alcoholic drinks are:

- a) Duration of qualifying travel is 5 hours or more: £5
- b) Duration of qualifying travel is 10 hours or more: £10
- c) Duration of qualifying travel is 15 hours or more (and ongoing past 8pm): £25

An additional meal allowance not exceeding £10 per day may be paid if an allowance under a) or b) is paid and travel is ongoing at 8pm.

Claims will only be reimbursed on the production of receipts

(ii) International Expenses - Per Diem Rates

Travellers on journeys outside of the UK are entitled to an international per diem (daily) allowance. Per diem is intended to cover costs of lunch, dinner, drinks and travel between accommodation and places of work that are wholly and exclusively incurred whilst on University business.

The residual rate (excluding accommodation and breakfast) should be used as the basis for claims, as hotel and breakfast bookings should be made via the TMC.

Travellers may claim 100% or 50% of the rate in advance of travel to allow them to meet anticipated business expenses. A 50% claim should be made where meals are provided as part of a conference or similar event.

Colleagues should discuss with their line manager and/ or the budget holder which per diem rate is relevant to their trip.

Travellers must be aware to claim the correct per diem allowance based on hours in country (5, 10 or 24 hour rates – [International subsistence rates](#)). The per diem rate must not be exceeded.

Travellers in receipt of a per diem should ensure they do not claim amounts in addition to this via credit card or expenses for costs that are explicitly included within the per diem allowance (for example taxi/other transport to and from hotel accommodation and place of work).

The cost of personal purchases and other non-university activities should be met by the individual and not paid using per diem funds. Any monies that are unspent must be repaid to the University via Dawson and Sanderson within 30 days of return

j. Personal/Holiday Travel

The TMC serves the business travel needs of the University and therefore does not assist with personal travel (except when personal travel is in conjunction with business travel). The TMC are unable to assist with personal hotel, car and flight bookings.

k. Combining Personal Travel with Business Travel

Personal travel may be combined with business travel during the period of approved University business.. The TMC will seek authorisation for such requests from the University prior to booking travel. Check the Travel Hub for information regarding insurance cover for combined business and personal travel.

l. Use of University-Negotiated Hotel Rates for Personal Travel

The University has pre-negotiated corporate hotel rates for preferred hotels. These rates may also be used for personal travel. At the time of making personal bookings (directly with the hotel) you will need to state that you require the Northumbria University corporate rate. The TMC can not be used for booking personal travel.

m. Conferences

The University may fund the costs of courses, conferences or trade conventions which support the objectives and priorities of the Corporate Strategy and demonstrate value for money. For those travelling to academic conferences in the UK or overseas, attendees should receive approval from their line manager, and should apply first for external funds to support attendance where these are available. The booking of Conferences cannot be done using the TMC.

For those colleagues travelling to UK conferences and educational events, it should be noted that multiple attendees at the same event should be by exception only. For approval for attendance at events and conferences a clear contribution to university objectives will need to be evident. Where colleagues are the Northumbria representative at a UK event a short report of the event should be provided to the relevant line manager.

n. Complaints Procedure

Should Travellers experience any problems with their journey, these should be reported to the TMC so they can assist with the complaint and, where necessary, obtain refunds and compensation if applicable.

5. Other Expenditure

a. Purchase of low value sundry items

Where it is not possible to use a University purchase card or virtual card the University will reimburse the cost of low value items purchased by Travellers on behalf of the University, this includes purchases made via the internet and telephone.

Except in emergency situations, the maximum claim for items purchased in the UK is £250 per claim. Each item claimed for should be supported by original receipts or suitable documentation for electronic ordering.

b. Subscriptions

The University does not pay for personal subscriptions to professional organisations and clubs.

c. Reimbursement for Business Telephone Calls

If Travellers are required to make business calls using their home or personal mobile telephone, they may claim the VAT inclusive call costs. Claims must be supported by the original bill.

6. Corporate Gifts

This section of the Expenditure Policy should be read in conjunction with the principles outlined in the University's [Gifts and Hospitality Policy](#) which can be found on the Northumbria University website.

a. General Principles

Gifts must be reasonable and appropriate and must not exceed normal business courtesy. The primary purpose of gifts should focus on establishing cordial relationships with business partners and/or presenting the University in a favourable manner. Gifts should never be used as an inducement.

Guidance on Gifts and Hospitality is available on the University website [here](#).

b. Offering gifts

All offers of gifts should be in line with the Gifts and Hospitality Policy. Cash should not be offered as a gift. Anyone considering giving or receiving gifts is strongly encouraged to undertake the "Business without Bribery" training module available on the University e-learning portal.

Prior to purchase the approval of the Faculty PVC or Service Director or, in the case of members of the University Executive, the Vice-Chancellor, is required for:

- All gifts of gift cards or vouchers, irrespective of value or recipient*;
- All gifts intended for a foreign public official, irrespective of value; and all gifts with a value of over £50.

*Cash equivalents, such as vouchers or discount cards, should not be given to, or received from, external parties except in specific circumstances where a modest token of gratitude is appropriate, e.g., volunteering activities such as research participants

In the case of members of the University Executive, all gifts offered are to be approved by the Vice-Chancellor .

Any gifts offered by the University should not exceed £100 in value.

c. Record Keeping

All hospitality purchased should be coded to the appropriate General Ledger code(s) to show that it is "Corporate Hospitality".

Staff should record any gifts and hospitality given to, or received from, third parties on the University's Gifts & Hospitality eRegister, including any that were declined. Token or very low value gifts (e.g., estimated at less than £10 in value) do not need to be recorded on the Gifts & Hospitality eRegister unless it is perceived as a possible inducement or becomes a regular pattern of giving.

7. Corporate Hospitality and Business Entertainment

This section of the Policy should be read in conjunction with the principles outlined in the University's Gifts and Hospitality Policy. Organisers are strongly encouraged to undertake the training module on "Business without Bribery" on the University's e-learning portal.

Expenditure on corporate hospitality and business entertainment can take many forms. This policy covers both **external and internal** activities procured using corporate credit cards, expenses, purchase cards, virtual cards, purchase orders, or petty cash, and the use of the University's internal catering and hospitality system.

a. General Principles

The primary purpose of hospitality should focus on establishing cordial relationships with business partners and/or presenting the University in a favourable manner. Guidance on Gifts and Hospitality is available on the University website [here](#), which includes a link to the Gifts and Hospitality eRegister.

Costs relating to the provision of hospitality will be reimbursed where it is necessary to build or to maintain effective relationships or lasting business benefits with local, national and international clients.

(i) Offering Hospitality

Hospitality is defined by the offering or providing reception and treatment of guests or strangers, the quality or disposition of receiving and treating guests and strangers in a warm friendly environment which may involve drinks subsistence or corporate events.

Where possible, prior to purchase the approval of the Faculty PVC, Service Director or, in the case of members of the University Executive, the Vice-Chancellor, is required for:

- All hospitality intended for a foreign public official, irrespective of value and whether provided in the UK or abroad;
- All hospitality over the value of £50 per person.

Staff offering hospitality and entertainment should ensure that:

- The hospitality is not offered as an inducement or reward
- The list of attendees and a record of the intended benefits to the University is kept and can be provided when requested
- Appropriate prior authorisation is given by the Faculty PVC, Service Director or member of the University Executive
- The most senior manager present should settle the bill and claim reimbursement;
- All receipts should be produced prior to reimbursement

(ii) Receiving Hospitality

Line managers should at all times be mindful of any potential or perceived risk resulting from the receipt of hospitality, which might compromise – or be seen to compromise - the integrity of staff and the University.

Staff receiving hospitality or entertainment should ensure that the following criteria are met:

- That the hospitality is not intended as an inducement, which should be reported to the Head of Governance;
- Hospitality over the value of £50 per person should be approved in advance by their immediate line manager, Faculty PVC, Service Director or member of the University Executive.
- Staff should not accept hospitality from existing or potential suppliers who are involved in a tender procedure, for the duration of the tender process, to avoid allegations of improper influence.
- In situations where the position is unclear, the request should be referred to the Head of Governance prior to a final decision.

b. Guidelines and Rates

- The ratio of staff to external guests should ideally be one to one, but it is recognised that this might not always be possible;
- The cost of including spouses of University staff are not allowable unless it is necessary that official visitors are accompanied by their spouses;
- The cost of meals (including drinks) should be subject to the following maximum levels:
 - Lunch £30 per person
 - Dinner £45 per person
 - An element of flexibility can be exercised when offering hospitality to VIP guests, if approved in advance.
- Drinks are subject to the following considerations:
 - Staff are not permitted to drink alcohol at lunchtime, modest amounts may be provided to external guests if requested.
 - Alcoholic drinks with dinner and at hospitality events are permitted in moderation, with wines selected from the lower-priced section of the menu.
 - Alcoholic drinks should not amount to more than 30% of the total bill.
- All receipts should be produced prior to reimbursement.

c. Record Keeping

All hospitality purchased should be coded to the appropriate General Ledger code(s) to show that it is "Corporate Hospitality".

Staff should record any gifts and hospitality given to, or received from, third parties on the University's [Gifts & Hospitality eRegister](#), including any that were declined. Token or very low value hospitality (e.g., estimated at less than £10 in value) does not need to be recorded on the Gifts & Hospitality eRegister unless it is perceived as a possible inducement or becomes a regular pattern of giving.

8. Hand Held Devices

All University staff/students should have undertaken training on IT security to protect their hand held devices and data --- available on the University training portal.

9. Internal Trading

Internal Trading includes the provision of catering, reprographics and stationery in the University.

Any internal trading request over £5,000 must be submitted and approved by the Principal Budget Holder before committing to the activity.

10. Staff Meetings, Development Days, Retirement and Ad Hoc Celebrations

a. Staff Meetings

Staff Meetings should be held on campus. The University's internal catering services should be used to provide refreshments at meetings with external guests in attendance, or at staff-only meetings scheduled over meal or break times, or where an agenda may require a whole morning or afternoon session. The use of externally-provided catering is not permitted.

b. Staff Development Days

Staff development events should normally be held on campus and reasonable hospitality (tea, coffee, light working lunch) may be provided. The University has several catering facilities and their use is encouraged, as is the use of Boardroom 1 and 2 or Training Suite, the Great Hall all located in Sutherland Building. There should be little need for external hospitality for staff or students. Off-campus away days should only be held if there is no suitable University space.

The cost of external events will be met only if approved in advance by a member of the University Executive and supported with the business purpose and benefits, indicative costs and the names of all staff involved. Approval should take cognisance of reputational consequences, value for money and alternative internal venues available.

It is not appropriate for alcohol to be served at daytime events.

c. Retirement, Leaving Parties and Personal Gifts

Expenditure on retirement and leaving parties should be limited to £10 per head. Claims should show the purpose of the event, internal location (external location not permitted) and the number of people attending.

Personal gifts such as leaving presents for staff or students may be funded by a collection of donations from individuals. Gifts to members of staff or students should not be made from University funds, other than in exceptional circumstances such as bereavement or serious illness (when the provision of flowers may be appropriate, and should be approved by the Principal Budget Holder).

A suitable leaving gift may be appropriate for people who have provided substantial unpaid service to the University, but this should be agreed on a case-by-case basis by a member of the University Executive or the Chair of the Board of Governors.

d. Christmas Parties

Christmas Parties should be modest and equitable across all Faculties and Services, with a maximum contribution by the University of £15 per head for food and drink. Events should be held on University premises and all relevant staff should be invited.

e. Other Ad Hoc Celebrations

Such events should be timely, modest and held on University premises. They should be approved in advance by the Principal Budget Holder and the University's contribution should not exceed £10 per head. All relevant staff should be invited.

11. Expense Claims and Payment

a. How to claim

An employee expenses claim form should be completed for all expenses incurred that are not directly invoiced to the University with receipts supporting the claim. This claim must be approved by the relevant authorised signatory. Claim forms on [My Forms](#).

Periodically, Human Resources will audit a representative sample of the expense claim forms. Any attempt to submit a false claim will be viewed as serious and may result in disciplinary action and potential legal proceedings.

Corporate Company Credit card users should not include Corporate card expenditure on expense claims. Cardholders should follow the guidelines issued to them for Corporate Company Credit card reconciliation of expenditure.

b. Approval of claims

Authorised signatories should review claims and ensure that:

- The journeys and/or expenses were properly and necessarily incurred on behalf of the University;
- The claim has been correctly completed and complies with this Policy;
- As far as the authoriser is aware, there has not been any previous payment against the claim from any source.
- All claims submitted are in line with the Travel Policy and all exceptions should be declared.

12. Administration Document History Revision History

Revision date	Previous revision date	Summary of Changes	Changes marked
09/10/2013	n/a	First draft and format of content	
10/10/2013	n/a	Draft format for grammar and spelling	
16/10/2013	n/a	Changes to format and some content changes	
05/12/2013	n/a	Changes to format and some content changes	
18/12/2013	n/a	Changes to format and some content changes	
20/12/2013	n/a	Changes to format and some content changes	
07/01/2014	n/a	Changes made to format	
05/02/2014	n/a	Changes to format and content changes	
10/03/2014	n/a	Changes to format and content changes	
14/03/2014	n/a	Changes to format and content changes	
26/03/2014	n/a	Changes to format and content changes	
08/04/2014	n/a	Changes to format and content changes	
16/04/2014	n/a	Changes to format and content changes	
24/04/2014	n/a	Changes to format	
19/05/2014	n/a	Approved by Employment and Finance Committee	
21/05/2015	n/a	Proof read	
29/06/2016	n/a	Track changes proposed	
05/07/2016	n/a	Approved by University Executive	

26/07/2016	n/a	Track changes agreed	
11/01/2021	n/a	Reflect the need to respond to Covid-19. Updated to correct weblinks, role titles, limits and to reflect changes in the suppliers (TMC and Corporate Card supplier) and processes (such as the reference to MyForms as opposed to paper form) referenced within. Corrections made to reflect current insurance and risk management knowledge. This includes Covid-19 precautions and those of Brexit.	
26/01/2021	n/a	Updated to reflect updates to the Gifts and Hospitality Policy and Procedure.	

Approvals

This document has gone through the following approvals.

Name	Title
Simon Newitt	Chief Financial Officer
University Executives	n/a
Employment and Finance Committee	n/a