

OFFICE OF THE IMMIGRATION SERVICES COMMISSIONER

TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE POLICY

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OISC Travel and Subsistence Manual

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Because of the nature of our business, OISC will necessarily expect to spend substantial amounts on travel and subsistence (T&S). As such, it is an area we need to manage and control carefully. This manual has been produced by Human Resources to help you if you are involved in claims for T&S either as a claimant or a line manager. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have read and understood these guidelines before you incur expenditure and submit claims.

1.2 The OISC's travel and subsistence policy reflects the broad principles of our sponsor unit, the Home Office. However, the rates payable have been determined separately in discussion with the Inland Revenue and therefore the guidance and rates payable in this manual supersede previous guidance issued from the Home Office.

2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES GOVERNING TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE

2.1 The rules provide for the reimbursement of extra expenses 'necessarily' incurred in carrying out official duty and in certain other specified circumstances. The general principle is that: **where no extra expense is incurred no reimbursement is due.**

3. WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM US

3.1 We aim to provide an efficient and helpful service and to pay advances and claims promptly. We will give you:

- good advice
- friendly guidance
- prompt payments

4. WHAT WE NEED FROM YOU AS....

4.1 ... a Claimant

- get your line manager to approve travel over £50 on OISC business before you go;
- If an advance is required, apply at least two weeks prior to your visit;
- be aware of the relevant rules before incurring the costs and submitting your claim;
- make sure the costs are actually and necessarily incurred on OISC business;

- make your claims and clear advances immediately after finishing your audit or official visit (claims made after four weeks may be refused); and
- make sure you use the correct rates and that your claim is arithmetically correct.

4.2

... a Line Manager and Countersigning Officer

- consider whether the trip is necessary, who needs to go, how often and how long the visits should last. If you are content, then authorise the travel and any advances;
- make all your staff aware that they have a responsibility to keep costs as low as possible;
- make sure that staff take advantage of using Calder Conferences to book hotels;
- where car hire is being considered, encourage staff to use AVIS who hold a cleared contract and have a proven safety and service record;
- check that the costs are actually and necessary incurred on OISC business, then authorise the travel claim;
- make sure that you countersign the claim. This confirms that:
 - you gave the necessary authority before the journey was made where the cost is more than £50;
 - any large or unusual items of travel expenditure have been explained, costs are reasonable and are supported by receipts where necessary;
- clear any outstanding advances before you authorise new ones;
- help to make the budgeting and the control of travel and subsistence costs as economic, efficient and effective as possible.

5.

Safety

The OISC is committed to maintaining the safety of its staff.

When planning journeys staff should consider their own safety as well as the cost/value for money of the trip.

Staffs are not encouraged to book the cheapest fare if as a consequence of it, they arrive back in London in the late evening if a different fare would enable them to get home earlier.

Likewise there may be occasions when it will be preferable for staff to travel during the day and stay overnight rather than travel in the evening.

Notwithstanding the above, if staff has concerns about their safety eg. due to Location, the length of time for connections, the time of day etc. whilst on OISC business, they should take action to limit the risk eg. use taxis rather than wait for public transport

The OISC will refund any additional travel cost as long as;

- Receipts are provided
- An explanation as to why the individual thought that their personal safety was compromised as is reasonable

6. CLAIMS: RULES AND PROCEDURES

6.1 Except where flat rate allowances are being paid your claim should refer to actual expenses incurred and should be supported by receipts.

If you claim any unusual item of expenditure you should explain the reasons for the expense in a supporting note.

6.3 Your claim must be countersigned by your line manager or, in their absence, by another senior officer.

6.4 You should apply on an OISC expense claim form. All relevant sections of the form must be completed. Failure to do so will result in the form being returned to the countersigning officer. This could result in a delay occurring in the consideration and payment of the claim.

7. IMPRESTS

7.1 An imprest is an advance of money issued to meet expected future expenditure and it is issued solely for the official purposes stated on your application form. It is in no sense a loan, personal or otherwise, and you must under no circumstances convert the money to use for personal or private purposes. Imprests will only be granted for amounts of £50.00 and above.

7.2 You may be granted an imprest to meet expected expenditure on a forthcoming duty. It will not normally be issued more than 2 weeks before the start of the duty, and not normally after the start of the duty. You must aim to submit a claim form within 2 weeks of the end of the duty for which the imprest was given and no later than 4 weeks. Failure to do so will result in recovery of the imprest from your salary. If there is unwarranted delay in the clearance of imprests, the issue of further imprests may be prejudiced. No more than 2 outstanding imprests will be permitted at any one time.

7.3 Any balance of imprest remaining after the expenditure for which it has been issued has been paid must be reimbursed to the OISC. A cheque made payable to the OISC should be attached to the claim form. You may not retain it to set against other expenditure at a later date without the consent of the OISC.

8 TRAVEL BY PUBLIC TRANSPORT

8.1 RAIL TRAVEL

8.1.1 The OISC will reimburse the cost of rail fares incurred in travelling on official business, including the cost of seat reservations where they are necessary. Where appropriate, home to office travel costs should be deducted.

8.1.2 If you travel overnight on official business you are entitled to occupy a sleeping berth.

8.1.3 The class of travel will normally be at the standard rate. The Deputy Commissioner in exceptional circumstances may approve first class travel.

8.1.4 When claiming reimbursement of rail fares you must attach the train ticket to the claim form. In the case of London Underground, where the ticket has been retained, please state this on your claim form.

7.2 AIR TRAVEL

8.2.1 Air travel may be used when there is a cost advantage because of savings of subsistence allowance and official time or where the urgency of the journey justifies any extra cost. It is the responsibility of staff and their line management to ensure the use of the most efficient and cost effective means of travel. This applies both to the choice of air travel and to the choice of particular flights – staff are expected to take advantage of cheap travel offers whenever available.

8.3 TRAVEL BY TAXI

8.3.1 Taxi fares may be reimbursed in the following circumstances:

- Where judged economic due to numbers travelling together
- For journeys for which there is no other suitable method of public transport, or
- Where heavy luggage has to be transported to or from the place of departure or arrival, or
- Where the saving of official time is important.

8.4 TRAVEL BY PRIVATE VEHICLE

8.4.1 If you travel by car, whether at public transport or standard mileage rate you can claim mileage in respect of the full journey (less home-office travel unless you have a season ticket). You can also claim for toll and reasonable parking charges.

Rates – mileage rates are shown in Appendix 1

8.4.2 Standard Mileage Rate

This is the higher mileage rate and is only payable where you use your own car and there is:

- (a) No suitable public transport
- (b) A saving of official time
- (c) A cost saving by using a car instead of public transport or
- (d) A need to carry office equipment or other items.

You need prior approval from your line manager if you are travelling more than 120 miles on a return journey or 60 miles one way. Your line manager can only give approval when it will not involve the OISC in extra expense or when there are other advantages e.g. more than one person travelling, saving of official time. Standard mileage may not be allowed when it is solely for your own advantage.

8.4.3 Public Transport Rate

If you choose to use your private car for an official journey, for your own convenience, we will pay the public transport rate or the appropriate rail fare if less. And your claim for subsistence will be for the amount that would have been paid if you had taken public transport by the most direct route.

8.4.4 Passenger Supplement

If you carry official passengers or heavy equipment (which is likely to cause abnormal deterioration to the inside of your car) you can claim a supplement – see Appendix 1

8.4.5 Motor Vehicle Insurance

When you use your car on official business you will need to provide evidence that your insurance policy covers using your car on official business.

You are not entitled to recover any money from the OISC because of any excess clause in your policy and you are required to notify the OISC of any change in your policy, which leaves you with less cover than required.

8.4.6 Parking Fines

You are responsible for ensuring that your car is parked legally at all times whilst on official business. The OISC will not accept any liability for the payment of parking fines.

8.4.7 Disabled Drivers

The OISC will reimburse disabled drivers at the standard rate for all travel on official business when the disability is such that the person cannot use public

transport and has to travel by car in all circumstances; and the insurance conditions for the standard rate are met.

9 SUBSISTENCE

9.1 Subsistence allowance is paid to reimburse you for all the necessary additional and reasonable costs you incur when working on official business away from home or your permanent place of work. Rates payable are detailed in Appendix 1.

9.2 Day Subsistence

If you are absent from the Office for more than five hours (after deducting home-office travel time) you can claim day subsistence.

A higher rate is payable if you are absent for more than ten hours. Rates are in Appendix 1.

Excess claims may be considered if, for example, staff had no option other than to have two meals whilst travelling by rail. On such occasions the Office will reimburse reasonable actual costs over the maximum contribution. The Office will not reimburse costs for any alcoholic drinks.

Receipted breakfast costs may be claimed in respect of journeys that start before 7.30 a.m.

You cannot claim day subsistence if the following apply:

- (a) You are already claiming with night subsistence. Day subsistence begins at the end of a 24 hour period and must exceed five hours. The amount is calculated by taking the difference between the starting time on the first day and the finishing time on the last day;
- (b) You are provided with all meals during a visit.

10.5.1 Night Subsistence

You cannot claim night subsistence if the following apply:

- (a) you book into accommodation with full or half board facilities. In these circumstances you should claim incidentals allowances only (current rates at appendix 1)
- (b) You attend a residential course. You should claim the incidentals allowance only (current rates at appendix 1)

9.4 Accommodation

You have the choice of booking accommodation through Calders or booking directly yourself. Whichever choice you make you will be responsible for paying the cost of the accommodation. You will be reimbursed for the costs subject to the current limit and production of receipts. If the limits are likely to be exceeded than you should obtain prior permission from your line manager or above.

9.4.1 Staying with Friends and Relatives

Should you decide to stay overnight with friends or relatives while on official business you may claim a flat rate allowance for each 24 hours, which will be to cover all your expenses while you are away from the office. This includes all meals, incidental expenses and daily travelling costs. You will not be required to support your claim with receipts

In addition to the flat rate allowance you may claim travel expenses at the start and end of the period of audit. You may not claim any other expenses. Details of the current rates are at appendix 1.

10 DETACHED DUTY

If you travel daily from home to OISC on detached duty, you may claim your Excess travelling expenses (standard class, normally at quarterly or annual season rates).

You can claim excess travelling expenses for a maximum of 24 months.

11 SEASON TICKET ADVANCES

11.1 If you purchase a season ticket for home to office travel, you may ask the OISC for an advance of salary within the limits and subject to the conditions set out below.

11.2 Eligibility

The scheme is not open to casual staff and employees must have been in post for a minimum of three months at the time of application.

11.3 Conditions of Advance

Advances may be made to assist in the purchase of quarterly or longer period season tickets; and up to four advances may be made in any period of 12 months.

A further advance will not be made until an existing advance has been fully recovered.

Advances will be made with pay for the month immediately preceding the first day of validity of the season ticket.

11.4 Conditions of Repayment

When you apply for an advance you will be required to acknowledge acceptance of the following conditions: -

- (a) That the advance is solely for the purchase of a quarterly or longer period season ticket
- (b) That the advance will be repayable on demand but that, without prejudice to the OISC's right to demand payment at any time, the intention is to allow repayment to be made over a prescribed period
- (c) That, in the event of your ceasing to be employed by OISC, any outstanding

balance of the advance will immediately become repayable without demand and may be set off against any payments due to you including certain pension benefits.

- (d) In the event of you surrendering the season ticket for any reason, repayment of the balance outstanding of the advance will be required immediately.

11.5 Repayment procedure

11.5.1 An advance will normally be repayable in equal instalments within the life of the season ticket. Recovery will be made by deduction from your pay usually in equal monthly amounts, and usually commencing in the month following that in which the advance is made. The deductions will be calculated by dividing the amount of the advance by the period of validity of the season ticket. Odd amounts may be rounded up with an appropriate adjustment to the first or final instalment. For example, for an annual season ticket commencing in March, the advance will be made with February's pay and recovered by 12 equal deductions from your pay for each month from March to the following February.

11.5.2 In cases where an advance becomes repayable before the expiry of the normal payment period, the payment should be sent without delay to the OISC Finance Manager.

11.6 Applications

11.6.1 You must complete form ACC92, available from the OISC Finance Manager or Human Resources, in duplicate and pass both copies to the officer who would normally certify your travel claims. He or she will certify on the form that, so far as he or she is aware, you are likely to remain in the OISC for the full period of validity of the season ticket for which an advance has been requested. The certifying officer will send the top copy of the application form to the OISC Finance Manager, who will authorise the advance and arrange payment. The certifying officer will retain a carbon copy of the application form.

11.6.2 The OISC must be satisfied that an advance had been used for the purpose for which it was given. You must therefore produce the season ticket to the certifying officer on the commencement of the period of validity, or as soon as possible after that and at any other time when requested. The certifying officer will enter the details on the copy of the application form and send it promptly to the OISC Finance manager for linking with their copy.

11.7 Payment by Credit Card

If you purchase a season ticket by credit card, you may still be eligible for an advance; but the advance will not be made earlier than one month before payment of the credit card bill is due.

11.8 Taxation

Income Tax will be charged on the basis of gross pay due, ignoring both the advance itself and the deduction in respect of the advance.

12 TRAVELLING TIME

12.1 Eligibility

12.1.1. 'Travelling time' is time spent on official travelling outside conditioned hours. Time spent on official travel within conditioned hours counts as work and is paid for accordingly. Conditioned hours are 38.5 including 30 minutes for lunch which equals 7 hours 42 minutes per day.

12.1.2 Staff are entitled to payment or time off in lieu according to the normal rules whether or not the attendance falls within conditioned hours, at weekends or on Bank, public or privilege holidays

Staff would normally be expected to take TOIL. Payments in principal to be approved by the line manager in advance.

12.2 Payment for travelling time when attending training courses

12.2.1 Staff are entitled to paid travelling time when attending internal and external training courses in certain circumstances. This could be where the course is held away from London and travel has to be undertaken outside normal conditioned hours and in addition to a normal days attendance at either work or on a course.

12.2.2 For the purpose of calculating travelling time, staff on courses are regarded as having completed their conditioned hours when the hours of the course are not more than one hour less per day than their conditioned hours.

12.3 Payment for travelling time

12.3.1 No period of time qualifies for payment of both overtime and travelling time.

12.4 Rates of travelling time

12.4.1 Subject to the rules in this chapter, staff are entitled to claim as follows for travelling time:

Weekdays:

Payment or time off in lieu at plain time rate.

Saturday:

Payment or time off in lieu at the rate of time and a half;

Sunday or a public or Bank holiday:

Payment or time off in lieu at double time;

Privilege holidays

Time off in lieu

12.5 Calculating Travelling Time: Guidelines

- * do not count travelling time of less than half an hour on any one day;
- * aggregate travelling time of half an hour or more on any one day with any other such periods falling within the same overtime period. Round down the total to the nearest quarter of an hour.

EXAMPLE: count a total of one hour 25 minutes as 1¼ hours travelling time.

12.5.1 Home to office journeys

- * When an official journey begins and/or ends at home deduct from the travelling time the time normally taken on the home to office and/or return journey.

ANNEX 1

TRAVEL ALLOWANCES AND SUBSISTENCE RATES

1. STANDARD RATE OF MOTOR MILEAGE ALLOWANCES

1.1 Private Cars

	Engine Capacity		
	Up to 1500cc	1501-2000cc	Over 2000cc
Up to 5000 miles	35.7p	43p	46p
Over 5000 miles	19p	23p	31p

1.2 Motor Cycles and Motor Cycle Combinations

£0.24

2. PUBLIC TRANSPORT RATE

Motor Cars/Motorcycles 23.8p per mile

PASSENGER SUPPLEMENT

2p per mile for first passenger carried; plus

1p per mile for each additional passenger

4. EQUIPMENT SUPPLEMENT

2p per mile for the distance over which the equipment is already carried.
(This may only be paid within any limits imposed by 8.4.2.7).

5. PEDAL CYCLE ALLOWANCE

(Paragraph 7.7)

6.2p per mile

SUBSISTENCE RATES:

1. DAY SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCE

Period of absence	Rates per day £
More than 5 hours	4.25
More than 10 hours	9.30

2. NIGHT SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCE

Subsistence type	Rates per day £	
	London	Elsewhere
A. Receipted hotel B&B	70.00 (max)	60.00 (max)
B. Flat rate – i.e. lunch, dinner and interim travel (paras 6.3.7 and 6.3.8)	21.00 (max)	21.00 (max)

3. RESIDENTIAL COURSE ALLOWANCE / INCIDENTAL EXPENSES

Residential Course Allowance / Incidental Expenses -	Rate per night £
Note: this allowance is non-taxable	£5.00

4. STAYING WITH FRIENDS/RELATIVES

Class	Rates per night £
All grades	25.00

ANNEX 2

HOTEL BOOKING SERVICE

OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATION ON OFFICIAL BUSINESS

OISC staff travelling on official business may use the booking agent mentioned below. This is by virtue of our being sponsored by the Home Office who negotiated the contract arrangements. There is no charge to the OISC or to the individual member of staff for the service.

Booking Agent

The agent is Calder Conferences, 12a Cheltenham Crescent, Harrogate, North Yorkshire HG1 1DH

Telephone: 0113 258 2277
Fax: 0113 258 3344

The Service

Calder Conferences undertake to find, rapidly, good quality hotel accommodation anywhere in the UK, normally within the Night Subsistence Rates to include full English breakfast, service and VAT. Hotels are generally of 3 star standard and all provide en-suite facilities, telephones in rooms, tea and coffee making facilities. Many provide facilities for staff with disabilities; any special requirements should be notified to the agent when booking.

Booking Procedure

Telephone Calder Conferences at the above number advising them that we are sponsored by the Home Office and giving the following information:

- Name
- Required location
- Arrival and departure dates
- OISC details
- Contact telephone number

Calder Conferences will then make a provisional booking, advise you of this by phone, and if you accept will give you a reservation number which you should quote on arrival at the hotel. Calder Conferences will confirm the booking with the hotel.

Payment of Hotel Bills

It is the responsibility of the individual member of staff to pay the hotel bill on departure.

Cancellations

Amendments or cancellations of bookings which have been made through Calder Conferences should be notified through Calder Conferences during working hours, but direct to the hotel

after 6pm. (The individual member of staff, not Calder Conferences, must meet any charges arising from non-arrival or late cancellation.)