

UK PARTICLE PHYSICS PROGRAMME OVERSEAS TRAVEL AND EXPENSES CLAIMS – GUIDANCE FOR TRAVELLERS (v05Feb2012)

1. INTRODUCTION

The Science & Technology Facilities Council (STFC) supports the UK experimental Particle Physics (PP) programme. The UK PP programme includes the requirement for University and Council staff to undertake overseas travel (eg to CERN, J-PARC, FNAL, and ILL). All such STFC-supported travel and related expenses come under these administrative support arrangements and are coordinated and paid through the travel and claims systems operated through the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory, in accordance with the agreed UK PP programme and budget allocation.

These guidelines inform you of the procedure for approval, booking and reimbursement for overseas travel. They are intended to be consistent with the corresponding conditions (CEM 16) that apply to STFC staff, as far as is practicable. (For STFC staff, CEM 16 remains the authoritative document.)

2. OVERVIEW

All overseas travel for your project/running experiment must be approved in advance by the relevant Budget Holder. You will be reimbursed allowable expenses.

Key Travel

The UK Research Councils, through their Shared Service Centre (SSC), have selected Key Travel (KT) to provide all their travel and accommodation requirements (except for national car hire). University staff travelling on STFC-supported projects or on STFC-related business may make use of KT through the STFC account¹, and STFC encourages such use. This has the advantage that ticket costs will be charged directly to the appropriate project by KT, and there is no need to make a subsequent claim for them.

Several university groups have a designated person(s), usually a group administrator or PA, set up as authorized KT “bookers”, and university staff who wish to use KT should book through their authorized booker. More senior members of the community with significant travel requirements may wish to be set up as KT “bookers /travellers” so that they can book their own travel directly, and those who wish to do so should discuss with the appropriate budget holders.

¹ Some Universities have their own arrangements with Key Travel, but for tickets to be charged directly by KT to an STFC project (without the need for a subsequent travel claim), bookings must be made using credentials linked to the STFC account with KT.

Value for Money

Journeys should be planned carefully to ensure they are undertaken cost-effectively. In particular, you should take into account the whole cost of a journey, not just the travel costs but also any additional accommodation costs (eg an extra over-night stop associated with a cheap flight).

For overseas air travel, Economy Class should always be used, except in the most exceptional circumstances, which should be discussed with the budget-holder. The Budget Holder for your project / running experiment will tell you about any specific arrangements for agreeing journeys and authorising claims.

You are expected to stay in accommodation of a reasonable standard in terms of cleanliness, sanitation, personal security and emergency procedures; in addition, meals should be readily available either at or within reasonable distance of the accommodation.

KT has access to specially negotiated rates (eg with airlines) and can advise on alternative travel arrangements.

3. TRAVEL PROCEDURES

3.1 Overseas Visit Authorisation

All overseas travel relating to projects and running experiments funded under the Particle Physics programme must be approved in advance by the relevant budget holder. As soon as you know that you will be going on an overseas visit, you must complete the overseas Visit Notice, which can be found [here](#).

If you wish to use KT to arrange your travel, you can do so as described above.

Please note that the STFC provides travel/medical insurance cover for its own employees only. It is the responsibility of University and other non-Council employees to arrange travel / medical insurance with their Host Institute or University Employer.

Please ensure that the following information is provided on the form:

- * Project number
- * Task number
- * Duration of Visit (number of nights)
- * Purpose of Visit
- * Estimate of costs (eg flight, hotel accommodation, hire car etc)
- * Authorisation (signature) by the nominated Budget Holder for your project / running experiment. In some cases this responsibility will have been delegated to other named individuals (eg for each collaborating group or a specific project code). Where the Budget Holder or nominated signing authority is away, or based at a different location, an **accompanying email** from that person giving approval is acceptable.

The **Project number/Task number** combination to be used will be provided to you by the Budget Holder for your project/running experiment. The Budget Holder is normally the UK Spokesperson or Project Manager, or the delegated budget holder for the relevant sub-projects within the project/running experiment.

If you are in doubt about any of the information required, please contact the PA PPD Director, RAL PPD at <mailto:PAPPDDirector@stfc.ac.uk>.

Once the form is completed and authorised, please send it to PA PPD Director at RAL for processing. It may be sent via mail, Fax or e-mail (but please send via one route only):

PA PPD Director
Particle Physics Department
Science & Technology Facilities Council
Rutherford Appleton Laboratory
Harwell Oxford
Didcot
Oxon, OX11 0QX
United Kingdom

Tel: 01235 445448
Fax: 01235 445672
Email: PAPPDDIRECTOR@stfc.ac.uk

3.2 Long-Term Attachment (LTA)

Requests for LTA should be made on the [LTA application form](#). Further details on LTAs are given [here](#).

Travel carried out by people on LTA (eg a conference, or a short visit back to UK for a meeting) counts as "overseas" travel in terms of process: i.e. requires a [Visit Notice](#), and completion of the Overseas Claim form.

3.3 Advances

With the advent of SSC, STFC has decided that it can no longer operate a system of advances for overseas trips for non-employees.

3.4 Claims for Expenses

You should normally submit claims within one month of the travel. Claims will be rejected and returned to you unless the Visit Notice has been submitted correctly and authorised in advance. Since late claims may be difficult to check, claims not made within three months may be disallowed.

To claim expenses from an overseas trip you must complete the [claims form](#).

When completing a claims form please note the following:

- Remember to include the correct Project number and task number;

- The amount to be claimed should be totalled and entered in the Grand Total box and, where appropriate, should be converted to £ Sterling (unless claim is to be paid into an overseas bank account).
- As well as your name and email address, you must include your bank details² (new from 22/2/12).
- The exchange rate used should also be shown.
- Any receipts should be stapled to the form to ensure they do not get lost.
- Remember to sign the form!
- **With effect from short visits starting on or after 14th February 2011, all overseas expenses, including trips to CERN, but not LTA, are on an “actuals” basis, and the use of “per diems” is no longer permitted. More detailed guidance is given at Annex A.**

Please ensure that claims forms are filled in correctly and completely. Incorrect or incomplete forms (e.g. missing bank details, signature, project/task number etc) will lead to delay in payment, as the claim will be returned to you to provide the missing and/or correct information. You can check an [example](#) of correctly completed claims form.

If you are in doubt about any of the information requirements stated above, please contact PA PPD Director, RAL PPD at <mailto:PAPPDDirector@stfc.ac.uk>.

If you have any queries relating to expense claims generally or allowable expenses, please contact the PA PPD Director, who will forward it appropriately.

The completed claim form, supported by original receipts, should be signed by the claimant and forwarded to PA PPD Director at RAL. (At present the original form and receipts must be sent through the post, and submission via e-mail or fax is not accepted. The option of “e-submission” of the form and receipts is, however, being explored.) The form will be checked and countersigned against the original visit notice and forwarded to SSC for payment.

Contact details:

PA PPD Director
 Particle Physics Department
 Science & Technology Facilities Council
 Rutherford Appleton Laboratory
 Harwell Oxford
 Didcot, Oxon, OX11 0QX

Tel: 01235 445448
 Fax: 01235 445672
 Email: PAPPDDIRECTOR@stfc.ac.uk

² People have expressed concern about this. You are being asked for no more information than would be on a cheque.

UK PARTICLE PHYSICS PROGRAMME: Guidance for overseas claims

A.1 The general principle for short-term visits overseas is the same as for claims for UK travel: **expenses actually and necessarily incurred will be reimbursed**, supported by receipts. The principal areas (eg accommodation, meals) are covered below, but it is not practicable to cover every eventuality, and the successful operation of these arrangements relies on the good sense and integrity of claimants. (These notes will be updated in the light of experience.) HMRC issues rates for overseas expenses, and the most recent version (October 2010) can be found [here](#). These should be drawn on as a guideline, and travellers are expected to make use of work-place facilities (eg the CERN canteens³) during the working day.

A.2 Accommodation:

A.2.1 Travellers can expect to stay in hotel accommodation of a reasonable standard:

- En-suite facilities
- Individual room
- Desk or working area, with internet access
- On-site restaurant (although many good-standard USA hotels may not have one)
- Within reasonable travelling distance to destination
- In an area that is reasonably quiet
- In an area that is secure

The on-site (“hostel”) accommodation at CERN meets these criteria, and represents good value (~60CHF per person per night, no breakfast). Visitors to CERN are encouraged to use it whenever possible.

Claims for hotels/hostels should be supported by receipts.

A.2.2 Travellers may also stay in a “commuter flat” (e.g. in CERN), in which case there are normally no accommodation charges for the traveller to claim as the costs of the flat are met directly from project budgets. Travellers staying in a “commuter flat” may claim for minor consumables where these would normally be supplied at no extra cost in a standard hotel.

A.2.3 A flat-rate private accommodation (‘friends and family’) allowance of £25/night is available where a traveller chooses to stay overnight with family or friends. The allowance is intended to reimburse all out-of-pocket expenses arising and no receipts need to be submitted when claiming the allowance. However, travellers may not claim the cost of dinner, because this is assumed to be covered within the allowance, but may claim for receipted breakfast/lunch costs.

HMRC has decided that, wef April 2009, this allowance is subject to tax and National Insurance, which complicates significantly its administration. STFC employees claiming this allowance should follow the procedure described in CEM 14. Non-STFC employees should claim the net allowance (i.e. £25/night), and STFC is currently (December 2010) working out how to deal with the tax and NI element, which will not involve any payment by the claimant. It is however important that claimants of this allowance keep a note of the details to facilitate the dealings with HMRC.

³ Since CERN is the high-volume destination for UK PP, the case of CERN is cited several times in this Annex. Such comments pertain to CERN trips only, and are not intended to apply to other destinations.

A.3 Meals:

A.3.1 Travellers may claim for three meals of reasonable standard a day. Travellers are expected to make use of work-place facilities (eg the CERN canteens) during the working day.

Claims for meals should be supported by receipts wherever possible. The CERN canteens do not normally issue a paper receipt, but a receipt (“quittance”) is obtainable on request, and should be sought whenever practicable.

It is acceptable for one person to pay and claim back the cost of a meal for several other potential claimants on the same budget. An explanatory comment should be given on the claims form, with the names of those people whose meal cost is included in the claim, supported by a receipt. If several claimants will claim against a single receipt covering their meals, a copy of the receipt is acceptable as supporting documentation.

A.3.2 Incidental tea/coffee etc purchased during the day may be claimed, where practicable supported by a receipt.

A.3.3 Travellers who purchase groceries for meals (e.g. when staying in the CERN “commuter flats” or to eat during shifts) may claim, against receipt, for the purchase of these groceries. Claims without receipts may be made for meals or supplies purchased from automatic dispensing machines.

A.3.4 Where some or all meals are provided, for example as part of a conference package or training course, no additional claim for those meals should be made.

A.4 Tips:

A.4.1 STFC recognises that in many foreign countries tipping is a key part of the service culture and is expected rather than discretionary; such costs will therefore be reimbursed. Claimants should annotate the receipt to show the value of the tip left; if there is no receipt they should state the amount of the tip on the travel claim form.

A.5 Incidental and additional expenses:

A.5.1 As a general rule, receipts should be obtained to support all claims for expenditure. However, expenditure of less than £5 per day in total will be paid without receipts if the expenditure is described, and seems reasonable.

A.5.2 In addition, travellers on short-term visits overseas may also claim a flat-rate, non-taxable Personal Expenses Allowance of £10 per night. (Note that this is in addition to the reimbursement of expenses “actually and necessarily incurred, supported by receipts.” So significant expenditure necessitated by delayed travel, for example, can be claimed explicitly.)

A.5.3 The unavoidable additional costs of child-minding and the care of dependent relatives and pets may be claimed, where such additional expenditure arises from the need to travel or stay away on official business. Receipts are required. Reimbursement of these expenses is subject to tax and National Insurance, and therefore the process described under A.2.3 should be followed: STFC employees should follow the procedure described in CEM 14; non-STFC employees should claim the relevant net costs, but keep the details so that STFC can handle the tax and insurance elements. Because such payments can be considerable, the budget holder should be consulted beforehand so that alternatives can be considered.

A.6 Local transport:

A.6.1 The cost of local transport (eg to and from airport, and to and from accommodation to place of work) can be claimed. Receipts (eg bus tickets) should be provided where possible, and are required for taxis. For trips to CERN, travellers should note that a free bus ticket is available on arrival at Geneva airport, and many Swiss hotels in the Geneva area provide their guests with a free Geneva Transport Card during their stay.

The cost of necessary car rental may be claimed. The use of the traveller's own vehicle for "local transport" (typically from accommodation to place of work) may be claimable at the mileage rate allowable for UK claims. Claimants should note that expenses associated with the use of a private vehicle can be complicated, and it is the claimant's responsibility to keep such records and details as may be necessary. In particular, this type of claim is not allowable if the place of work (eg CERN) qualifies as a "permanent workplace" as defined by HMRC⁴, as would be the case for LTA.

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⁴Some flavor of the issues involved may be seen [here](#).