



STEP Academy Trust

Staff Expenses Policy

Date of Policy: April 2019

Review: January 2022

Introduction

STEP Academy Trust Board of Trustees has agreed this Policy and as such, it applies to all Academies within the Trust.

Expenses

Wherever possible, staff should avoid the need to claim expenses by utilising internal procurement processes such as purchase orders and procurement cards. Where this is not practicable, staff employed by STEP Academy Trust, may claim reimbursement in respect of actual expenditure incurred by them arising from attending meetings, training and conferences and purchases made on behalf of their academy.

Travel Expenses

In keeping with the STEP non-negotiable “Heath and Sustainability”, staff are expected to make use of public transport where it is available, unless its use results in considerable inconvenience, expense or if it is not a viable option due to a disability or the need to take equipment or passengers. All staff are encouraged to undertake car-sharing where possible and when travelling to the same venue. When using their own vehicle in the course of their employment, staff must ensure that their car insurance policy covers business use. They must also ensure that the car is safe and legal to drive.

Staff must obtain their Headteacher’s agreement in advance for any journeys to be undertaken for which a claim will be made (for Central STEP staff authorisation should be obtained from their Line Manager).

Individuals are free to determine the method of travel which they choose to use but should do so in the knowledge of the basis which will be used for calculation of reimbursement. The decision as to whether public transport is impractical should be taken by the appropriate Headteacher/Line Manager. Decisions should be made in a fair and equitable manner to ensure fair treatment of staff within the Academy and throughout the Trust.

- Rail fares; the actual cost incurred for standard return second class tickets will be reimbursed. Staff should seek the lowest fare available for the journey and the time of day. Where the journey, on a single train, will be greater than one hour and employees are able to undertake specific work tasks whilst traveling, consideration will be given to purchasing first class tickets if the additional cost over a standard fare is not unreasonable. Wherever feasible, advance booking should be used to secure the cheapest fare. However, Line Managers/Business Managers should not unreasonably withhold full reimbursement when it has not been possible to book in advance. Used tickets or a receipt should be retained.
- Bus and underground fares; expenses can be claimed as incurred. Staff should keep any bus tickets or receipts as a record of the cost.

- Where travel by public transport is impractical, the rate of reimbursement for car mileage will be at a fixed rate as determined by the current Inland Revenue Rate. Mileage will be calculated according to the shortest route to and from the required destination (deducting any mileage that would normally be covered travelling from your home, to and from your place of work, as normal home to work commuting is not claimable).
- In the case of inter academy travel, the mileage as outlined on the Mileage Claim Form is the mileage that is claimable.
- Reasonable car parking expenses will be reimbursed on production of a receipt.

Other Expenses

A member of staff attending a meeting, training conference, or another school, which involves a need for overnight accommodation may be entitled to be reimbursed for reasonable costs incurred for accommodation. If the Trust is to cover the cost of accommodation then this has to be agreed by the Academy's Executive Head/Lead before any cost is incurred (for Central STEP staff, expenditure is approved by the relevant line manager and for the Chief Executive Officer approval is from the Chair of Trustees.) The recommended accommodation should be equivalent to a three-star standard or less and should be no greater than £120 per night in a major city and £100 elsewhere. The Trust does have a business account with Premier Inn Hotels. Where it is not possible to obtain accommodation within the outlined limits, the CEO is authorised to make exceptions based on the needs of the Trust. The reasons for agreeing to pay for accommodation costs should be detailed on the form Agreement to Pay Accommodation Costs (appendix A) before being signed off by the appropriate approver. Once the costs have been sanctioned, and before they are actually incurred, the appropriate purchase order needs to be raised so that the cost can be allocated within the budget.

In making a decision, the Academy's Executive Head/Lead will consider the following points:

- Is it necessary to attend the event at this venue?
- Is there a clear benefit to the Academy/Trust by having the member of staff attending the event (if the benefit in attending is solely for the member of staff's own personal development then reimbursement cannot be considered)?
- How long is the travelling time from to the venue using the fastest mode of transport? If the journey time is not considerable, then payment of overnight accommodation will not be considered. If, however, attendance at the venue is required for several consecutive days but the journey time criteria is not met, consideration should be given for paying for overnight accommodation if this would be more cost effective than paying for daily travelling costs.

Where overnight accommodation has been agreed, a member of staff is also eligible to claim for meals as follows:

- For breakfast and lunch, up to £15 for each meal can be claimed.
- For dinner, cost up to £25 can be claimed.

The costs claimed for meals is inclusive of non-alcoholic drinks.

Miscellaneous Expenses

- The Trust provides mobile phones only where a specific operational need arises. It is the policy that no private use is made of such mobile phones except in emergencies. Staff members will be required to reimburse the Academy for the costs of any non-emergency private calls.
- The Trust will not reimburse staff for the use of private mobile phones but will meet the cost of business calls made on private phones subject to evidence of the calls being provided with the Staff Expense Form.
- Purchases made on behalf of an Academy (e.g. perishable items for cookery) must be approved by the budget holder prior to purchase. If prior approval has not been obtained from the budget holder the Trust reserves the right not to reimburse the cost.
- If, when using the Academy minibus, a member of staff incurs a penalty charge notice the cost will not be reimbursed. This will also be the case if the minibus is being used for business purposes, unless there are extenuating circumstances.

How to Claim

1. A Staff Expense Form must be completed for each claim and a valid receipt enclosed with your claim form. Without a receipt the refund cannot be processed. The Staff Expense Form will have to be signed by the claimant and by the appropriate budget holder/Line Manager (or Chair of Trustees where appropriate) as confirmation that payment can be made. The form is in Excel format and is available from your Academy Business Manager or Finance Team.
2. Claims for car and motorbike mileage should be submitted on a monthly basis using the Mileage Claim Form. The Mileage Claim Form will have to be signed by the claimant and by the appropriate budget holder/Line Manager (or Chair of Trustees where appropriate) as confirmation that payment can be made. The form is in Excel format and is available from your Academy Business Manager or Finance Team.
3. In the case of claims for accommodation cost, the form, Agreement to Pay Accommodation Costs, signed by the Academy's Executive Head/Lead, also needs to be attached to the Staff Expense Form.
4. The completed Staff Expense Form or Mileage Claim Form needs to be handed to the Business Manager or Finance Team in order that reimbursement can be made.

Appendix A

Agreement to Pay Accommodation Costs

Section 1 (to be completed by applicant)

Name of applicant	
Details of course/conference etc. attending	
Benefits to Academy/Trust as a result of attending course/conference etc.	
Date(s) of course/conference etc.	
Name and address of venue	
Estimated travelling time to venue (less travelling time to work)	
Name and address of Accommodation	
Cost of accommodation	

Section 2 (to be completed by the Academy's Executive Head/Lead or Board of Trustees, as applicable)

Reasons for sanctioning payment	
<u>Signed by: Name</u>	<u>Signature</u>
Date	