Political Studies Association

Expenses Policy

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Political Studies Association (PSA) Board of Trustees acknowledges the amount of effort contributed by members at all levels of PSA activities. Therefore, it is our policy to offer claimants full reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses incurred on the Association's behalf, providing that the nature of these expenses has been agreed in advance. However, as a charity, we have a duty to our members to show that this policy is fair and equitable and not open to abuse.

The PSA's expenses policy should be read within the wider context of the guidance issued by the Charities Commission on trustee expenses and payments which can be found at here.

This policy should be read in conjunction with any additional guidance, funding conditions or scheme-specific rules issued by the PSA (such as Specialist Group funding or Excellence & Impact Grants). Where there is any conflict between this policy and scheme-specific guidance the scheme-specific guidance will take precedent.

All claims must be submitted within three months of the event to which the expenditure incurred relates. As the Association is a Charity, claimants are encouraged to keep expenses to a minimum. Any Expenditure above £150 must be pre-approved by the relevant staff member.

Travel costs between home and the normal place of work can never be claimed. With all other travel expenses consideration must always be given to using the most cost-effective method of travel, include where possible advance booking.

Where expenses are incurred in foreign currencies, the amounts should be shown with the currency in question clearly marked. Reimbursement will be the amount in incurred in GBP. The rate of exchange will be the rate in force on the date of the claim, as calculated by the PSA office.

2. ADMINISTRATION

All out of pocket expense must be claim by submitting an expense form, which will be process in following way:

- The completed form must be supported by invoice or receipts, sent with the form.
- All claim forms must include date of activities and what it relates to.
- All claims will be authorised by the relevant staff member before payment is made.
- Expenses will be reimbursed via bank transfer.
- For large claims, claimants can request that the supplier invoices PSA directly to not be out of pocket.

The PSA will endeavour to process all expense claims within 14 days of receipt and should be submitted after the date of the activity. Should any expense, particularly the advance purchase of tickets, cause financial difficulties please contact finance@psa.ac.uk to see whether an alternative arrangement might be possible.

3. TRAVEL EXPENSES

3.1 General

If you are attending a meeting as a PSA representative the Association will reimburse the expenses incurred, subject to the terms of this policy.

The PSA will reimburse travel expenses from home to and from the place of a meeting. Dates of meetings are usually known sufficiently in advance to allow the claimant to take advantage of cheaper advance fares. Wherever possible, the cheapest available option should be taken as soon as possible.

For conference and events please claim after the event in case of non-attendance. If events are cancelled by PSA out of pocket expenses will be reimbursed subject to booking fees.

All travel expenses claims must be supported with a receipt. Reimbursement cannot be made without a receipt unless there is a clear reason why this cannot be provided.

3.2 Use of alternative forms of transport for persons with disabilities

In circumstances where disabled persons are unable to travel by public transport or their own vehicle, taxis may be used. Please notify finance@psa.ac.uk beforehand where possible.

3.3 Rail travel

Only **standard class** travel rates will be reimbursed unless, exceptionally, a first-class advance option is cheaper than any available standard class option. Supporting evidence will be required.

For travel on the London Underground or other inner city transport systems, please use contactless where possible and ensure you can obtain receipts of travel.

3.4 Travel by Car

The driver, not the PSA, is personally liable for any incident, thus drivers should ensure their own private motor insurance policy is comprehensive and permits the use of their own vehicle for the purpose of travel on PSA business.

If an individual's own car is used, a mileage rate will be paid at HMRC rates **please note the total claim for any journey made must not exceed the standard-class rail fair.** A receipt should support claims for parking or other incidental expenses.

The PSA will not reimburse parking fines, congestion charge fines or fines for other motoring related offences.

Method of private transport	First 10,000 miles	Thereafter
Car/Van	55p per mile	25p per mile
Motorbike	24p per mile	24p per mile
Bike	20p per mile	20p per mile

3.5 Travel by taxi

Use of public transport is encouraged and should be used wherever possible. It is recognised, however, the use of a taxi may, in the following circumstances, be the most effective mode of transport:

- Where equipment or heavy baggage is being carried.
- When no public transport is available, especially in the early morning or late at night when public transport is either not running or running irregularly.
- Where the claimant is pregnant.
- Where the claimant has a temporary or permanent disability.
- When a group of people are travelling together such that a taxi would be as cheap as public transport.

Travel by taxi should be kept to a minimum and should not be used for long journeys. Claimants should obtain an official receipt from the taxi driver to substantiate their travel expense claim.

3.6 Air travel

It is recognised that air travel will be necessary or may be better value for money on some journeys. A receipt should be requested at the time of ticket purchase. Claimants should seek to minimise the cost of air travel by booking tickets in advance, taking advantage of early booking discounts where available. Wherever possible, we encourage individuals to choose rail over air travel, due to the significant environmental benefits.

In the case of overseas travel the PSA will also give consideration as to how the journey fits with its overall strategy and what outcomes are expected to be achieved.

4. ACCOMMODATION

4.1 Overnight accommodation

The PSA will reimburse overnight accommodation costs and any related sustenance claims only when necessitated by the timing of the event to which the claim relates.

Claimants are reminded of the need to demonstrate value for money and reasonableness of expenditure when selecting accommodation.

The cost of overnight accommodation and breakfast should not normally exceed:

- London: up to £200
- Higher-cost UK cities: up to £150
  (including Oxford, Manchester, Cambridge, Bath, Bristol, Edinburgh or York and Brighton)
- All other UK location: £100

Exceptions to these rates and international overnight stays should be discussed prior with finance@psa.ac.uk.

5. FOOD AND OTHER SUSTENENCE

A receipt should support all claims for meals. Meals are defined as food and beverages to accompany the meal only. The PSA will reimburse meals if you are away from home for more than 4 hours on PSA Business. Claim limits are as follows:

- Up to three hours: £5
- Lunch: £10
- Dinner due to an overnight stay: £25
- Maximum per 24 hour period: £40

The PSA does not reimburse any expenditure for alcohol.

6. OTHER EXPENSES AND EXCLUSIONS

6.1 Entertainment expenses

The PSA will not normally reimburse entertainment expenses. However, in the rare case where this may be appropriate, permission must be sought in advance from the Finance Team at finance@psa.ac.uk.

6.2 Other Expenses

Other expenses will be considered on a case-by-case basis and should be in line with the annual budget, and pre-approved by relevant staff.

6.3 Exclusions

The PSA will not reimburse any incidental expenditure, such as tips for waiters, etc. The Charity will not be responsible nor pay for any fines or penalties incurred whilst working on The Charity's business. This includes fines for speeding, parking, congestion charge offences, railway penalty fares and any other type of travel offence.

7. CONTACT DETAILS

For advice on any item relating to expenses, please contact the Finance Team at finance@psa.ac.uk.

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