

Guidance on Committee Fees and Expenses

Travel costs are a substantial part of the Food Standards Agency's (FSA) expenditure. It is essential that all costs are managed efficiently and effectively. This makes it important that FSA Science Advisory Committee (SAC) members travel only when necessary and, where possible, use the most cost-effective method of transport. All expenditure on travel necessary for committee work should be justified and auditable in terms of the use of public funds and authorised only where it is in the FSA's interests. There should be no situation which might arise to give legitimate criticism that SAC members are benefiting at taxpayers' expense.

In summary:

- Members should only travel when there is a business need and video / teleconferencing is not suitable.
- Where travel is by train, standard class travel must be used.
- Where air travel is essential, approval is needed at least eight weeks in advance from the secretariat.
- Where members encounter issues with travel, they should make the secretariat aware as soon as possible.

Exceptions to the policy

Changes to the provisions within this Policy may be authorised by secretariat as a reasonable adjustment for members, where applicable.

Fee rates

Members may claim the following attendance fees for committee meetings and for meetings of working groups and subgroups. FSA Science Council members are paid an annual honorarium instead of an hourly fee. Please see Science Council's [code of practice](#) for further detail.

Chair £400/day

Full member £300/day

Associate member £150/day

Members may also make claims for work undertaken between or preparing for meetings, such as reading significant volumes of papers, and undertaking individual pieces of work for the committee.

Hours Worked

Full day fee

When a meeting is a full day (6 hours or more):

- A chair can claim £400,
 - A full member can claim £300,
 - An associate member can claim £150.
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- A chair is the person who is Chairing the specific meeting.
 - Time spent at lunch does not count towards the 6-hour period.

Hourly fee

When a meeting, or a piece of work undertaken by a SAC member is less than 6 hours on one day, members will be paid for the number of hours worked as described below:

- £67 per hour for the chair,
- £50 per hour for a full member,
- £25 per hour for associate member.

Where a member works less than the hour, the fee members can claim will be calculated based on the time worked, rounded to the nearest half hour.

For example:

- A member works for four hours fifteen mins. The member can claim fees for four and a half hours.
- A member works for four hours forty mins. The member can claim fees for five hours.

Reading Fees

- Reading fees will be capped at £400 per chair, £300 per full member and £150 per associate member, per meeting.
- Secretariat may be called upon to judge and approve the hours reading that an individual is claiming.

Exceptions to this;

- In certain circumstances, such as the Joint Expert Group (JEG) working model and certain sub/working groups, where a specific member is, or many members are, being asked to perform more work than these allowances, it will be secretariats' discretion as to how many hours this extra work can be capped at.

Travel and other expenses

Committee members are entitled to reimbursement of reasonable travel and subsistence expenses necessarily incurred on official committee business. Members must seek value for money and are encouraged to use the most cost effective and environmentally sustainable options for travel and accommodation. Members are encouraged to arrange their travel with as much notice as possible to take advantage of discounted fares and other benefits available to early bookers.

Guidance on the types and rates of expenditure that can be claimed for specific expenses is outlined below. Alcoholic drinks and newspapers are not reimbursable from public funds. Reimbursement of gratuities will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances where the secretariat agrees that they have necessarily been incurred.

Tax liabilities arise on elements of these payments, which have been regarded as part of a committee member's income and are therefore taxable. Arrangements have been made whereby the FSA meets the cost of this tax (see below).

Public transport (bus, underground, tram, etc.)

- There is no public transport rate for official business. Actual costs of travel are reimbursed. Any expenses incurred using public transport such as the London Underground, local bus services and so on should be claimed back through the expenses procedure and tickets or receipts should be submitted with all claims.

- Members are encouraged to use Oyster cards for travel on the London Underground and Bus network. Cards should be registered on-line with London Transport so that a print-out of journeys showing the cost of fares can be submitted with claims.
- Where London Underground has been included in the rail ticket, further expenditure on London Underground travel is not claimable.
- The cost of oyster cards will not be reimbursed.

Rail

- Members should take return tickets where appropriate and observe any other normal economies and seek ways of reducing costs, for example by avoiding open returns. The cost of sleeping car accommodation may be claimed where an overnight journey is necessary. The FSA will only be able to refund standard class travel costs. The actual ticket or print-out showing date of journey, destination and class of travel must be produced, not a debit/credit card sales voucher.

Car

A mileage allowance is payable for the use of a member's own car on official business. This is payable at the following rates for all car types:

- First 10,000 miles in any tax year 50 pence per mile.
- Over 10,000 miles in any tax year 25 pence per mile.

You will incur a personal tax liability from the payment of these mileage rates.

- Members wishing to claim mileage will need to register details of their car with the FSA's Finance Team. The secretariat will supply the necessary forms which must be completed and returned.
- Permission for car journeys exceeding 130 miles in any one day should be sought from the secretariat. Members will be expected to travel by public transport if that is cheaper.
- Please note that your car must be insured for business use. Comprehensive insurance will not be insisted upon, but members should note that no liability will be accepted in the event of any accident, damage, injury or death or in respect of risks not covered by their insurance policies.

Taxi

Members should only travel by taxi where there is no viable public transport alternative, or the cost will be lower than parking and / or public transport costs. Exceptions may be allowed, for example, as a reasonable adjustment for members with a mobility disability or for health and safety reasons or for members travelling alone at night. FSA central contracts with taxi providers should be used where available. Expenses incurred using taxis and other forms of public transport or car parking costs may be reimbursed through the claim's procedure.

Air

For the FSA to meet its sustainability targets, the cost of flights outside the UK will not be reimbursed. Members flying to attend meetings from outside the UK are welcome to do so at their own cost. Members can claim travel and subsistence costs within the UK as per these guidelines. Other modes of transport (e.g. train) will be considered on a 'case by case' basis for members travelling from outside the UK.

Domestic air travel within the UK should only be used to travel from and to Northern Ireland if there is a business need. Where total journey time (one way) exceeds 4 hours, and where cost and time savings can be demonstrated, domestic flights within mainland UK can be considered. Where air travel is essential, flight bookings must be approved by secretariat at least eight weeks in advance. The FSA will make flight bookings for SAC members. All air travel must be in economy class.

Accommodation

The maximum allowance for various locations is as follows:

- Central London: Up to £180 per night including breakfast & VAT.
- Outside of London: Up to £100 per night including breakfast & VAT.

Note: Where room only is the only option, the cost of breakfast will be reimbursed up to a value of £5.

If the secretariat usually books accommodation for you, this will be done through the Agency's agents Redfern Travel.

Other expenses

Other reasonable incidental expenses necessarily incurred on Committee business (for example, for childcare, parking, postage and telephone calls) may be reimbursable. In certain circumstances, reimbursement for locum cover may be reimbursable, for example for vets and GPs who are required to provide 24-hour cover. This should be discussed and agreed in advance with the secretariat.

All items of 'other expenses' should be detailed separately in claims and supported by receipts, wherever possible.

Submitting claims

Members must complete the FSA 'Committee Fees and Expenses Claim Form' to be remunerated for fees and expenses necessarily incurred as a SAC member. Members should use the electronic version and return with a digital signature.

Claim forms must be submitted within 30 days of the relevant meeting otherwise the claim may not be processed by Finance.

Receipts (or a copy of the relevant statement with highlighted transactions if the total bill includes personal expenditure) must be attached to the appropriate claim form before it is sent to the secretariat. Claims without receipts will not be paid. However, individual claims of under £10 for expenses on items such as Oyster Cards, where receipts cannot be obtained, will be reimbursed without a receipt, at the discretion of the Committee Secretariat. Please ensure you retain copies of your claim forms and receipts, should they be required for tax return purposes.

Payment of claims

Claims are processed on behalf of the FSA through its payroll processes and are paid in accordance with monthly salary timetables i.e. the last working day of each month, via the BACS system into members' bank accounts. Advice slips are forwarded by email.

Tax on fees and expenses

Fees paid to members will be subject to income tax and national insurance contributions depending on individual members' circumstances. Deductions for

tax and national insurance contributions will be made by the Agency before you receive payment. Payments for travel and related expenses are also liable to income tax and national insurance contributions, but members can opt for the Food Standards Agency to pay any tax on expenses on their behalf, providing they do not re-claim it from HM Revenue and Customs at a later date.

Members of pensionable age may be exempt from or have reduced liability to national insurance contributions. There may be other cases where payments to members take them over their maximum liability for national insurance contributions. In these instances, members are advised to contact the Department for Work and Pensions for further guidance. It is the responsibility of individual members to correctly raise VAT on their fees and expenses if they are deemed to be acting as a trader registered for VAT. If you require further guidance on this, please contact your local VAT office.

Newly appointed members are required to complete the 'Committee Member Payroll Registration Form' and 'Committee Member Reimbursement of Expenses Registration Form'.

Subsistence Rates

24-hour subsistence allowance (not taxable)

Up to £25 (based on actual receipts). Plus up to £5 breakfast if not included in room rate (based on actual / receipts).

Family and friends allowance(taxable)

This allowance may be claimed to cover the expenses associated with staying with family and friends. This is a 24-hour flat rate allowance.

Receipts are not required. The allowance cannot be claimed in addition to the 24-hour subsistence rate above.

£25 flat rate allowance.

Day subsistence allowance (not taxable)

More than 5 hours and **no official food provided** : One meal (snack/refreshment).

Up to £5 (based on actuals/receipts)

Payable when away from the normal workplace for over 10 hours.

Up to £10 (based on actuals/receipts).

Evening meal allowance (not taxable)

Payable when away from the normal workplace for over 12 hours and after 8pm.

Up to £15 (based on actuals / receipts).