

Non-allowable Expenses Procedures effective February 2024

Whilst the University's policies, procedures and [Code of Conduct](#) do not provide explicit guidance on what might represent an appropriate gift or expense, in various places they do provide guidance for making decisions to commit University resources.

The overarching principles are:

- Staff are expected to exercise reasonable judgement on what is appropriate at the time, particularly whilst travelling;
- Corporate credit cards must only be used for legitimate expenditure that is reasonably necessary for the operation of the University;
- Recurring charges must be reviewed and approved for ongoing business requirements prior to the renewal period;
- Use University resources in a responsible manner, and for their proper purpose; and
- Goods and services must only be purchased to support a University activity, and not for the benefit of individual staff members or external entities.

These procedures, which form part of the [Financial Management Policy & Procedures](#) is intended to support existing procedures by providing some practical examples of expenses that are considered non-allowable (or personal in nature), exceptions to these categories which are allowable, and reasonable expenditure thresholds for gifts and entertainment.

Expense Category	Non-allowable expense	Reason	Exceptions	Policy / procedure reference & notes
Benefit	Donations in any form	Personal expense		
Benefit	Fines including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parking • speeding • tow away charges • late or "no show" fees • cancellation fees 	Personal expense		<p>Drivers in charge of a University vehicle or vehicle hired on behalf of the University, are personally responsible for the payment of fines or infringements incurred whilst in possession of the vehicle.</p> <p>University travellers are personally responsible for late or "no show" fees.</p> <p>Related policy / procedures -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motor Vehicle Procedures • Travel Policy & Procedures
Benefit	Fuel charges including repairs or breakdown costs whilst using a private vehicle for approved University business	Claimed as an allowance		<p>The cost of any loss or damage to a private vehicle incurred while being driven on University business remains the responsibility of the vehicle owner.</p> <p>Staff and students can claim an allowance to compensate for the usage of a private vehicle.</p> <p>Related procedure - Motor Vehicle Procedures</p>

Expense Category	Non-allowable expense	Reason	Exceptions	Policy / procedure reference & notes
Benefit	Subscriptions to periodicals, digital or TV subscriptions e.g. Foxtel or Netflix or sporting clubs not related to University business	Personal expense	Work related subscriptions.	Some purchases may be for University purposes but be regarded by the Australian Tax Office (ATO) as providing a fringe benefit to the staff member (see Definitions). Staff must declare the percentage of the expenditure on the reimbursement form and only the business component will be reimbursed. Related procedure – Reimbursement Procedure
Benefit	Professional memberships	Personal expense	Professional Memberships approved by the School / Branch head (e.g. Engineers Australia, CPA) being essential for staff to perform the role they were employed for at the University*.	*Must be reviewed on an annual basis. Any others may be deductible through a personal tax return if appropriate to do so (independent tax advice is advised).
Benefit	Other memberships		Memberships to organisations which result in a reduced fee to attend conferences*.	*Must be reviewed on an annual basis. Any others may be deductible through a personal tax return if appropriate to do so (independent tax advice is advised).
Benefit	Office furniture / equipment for home office	Personal expense		Refer to ATO Working from home expenses
Benefit	Medical expenses	Personal expense	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vaccinations and other precautions recommended for University related business travel Flu vaccinations as part of the University's Flu Vaccination Program Role specific vaccinations as advised by HSW/position description. 	Travellers should seek Medicare cover reimbursement before claiming any out of pocket expenses. Related policy / procedures - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Travel Policy & Procedures Reimbursement Procedure Medical treatment while overseas must be claimed through the University's Travel Insurance .
Benefit	Personal clothing or apparel , including University branded merchandise	Personal expense	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as mandated by the University, Government regulations or location As part of an approved event e.g. Open Day. 	Mandated personal protective equipment must be purchased through the eProcurement System from preferred suppliers (unless urgently required whilst travelling). Related policy / procedures - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HSW Handbook Purchasing Procedures

Expense Category	Non-allowable expense	Reason	Exceptions	Policy / procedure reference & notes
Gifts	Flowers	Personal expense	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flowers for official University functions and ceremonies Flowers for donors and guest speakers on behalf of the University up to \$250 (inc. GST) Flowers sent on behalf of the University on the birth or adoption of a child up to \$110 (inc. GST) Flowers sent on behalf of the University for serious illness, hospitalisation, or death up to \$110 (inc. GST). 	<p>The name of the recipient/s must be recorded.</p> <p>Related procedure –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate Credit Card Procedures
Gifts	Gifts	Personal expense	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gifts given to staff departing the University up to \$150 (inc. GST) Gifts given to non-staff e.g. keynote speaker up to \$250 (inc. GST) Prize / participation award for staff up to \$50. 	<p>The name of the recipient/s must be recorded.</p> <p>Gifts given to staff outside these parameters requires pre-approval by the Chief Financial Officer and may be subject to FBT – see Definitions.</p> <p>Related procedures –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate Credit Card Procedures Gift Card Procedures
Gifts	Gift cards (physical or virtual gifts cards, includes vouchers)	Personal expense	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To a volunteer e.g. research participant to help cover costs, or a token fixed amount regardless of time A token of appreciation e.g. to a guest speaker as a thank you A staff award as part of a recognised University reward and recognition program up to \$50 A reward or prize to a student Approved students projects with nominal value. 	<p>The name of the recipient/s must be recorded (where possible). Only one gift card may be issued to an individual on each occasion and must be minor and infrequent in nature.</p> <p>Gifts cards given outside these parameters requires pre-approval by the Chief Financial Officer and may be subject to FBT – see Definitions.</p> <p>Related procedures -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate Credit Card Procedures Gift Card Procedures
Entertainment	Team building or group activities at an entertainment venue (e.g. escape rooms or bowling)	Personal expense		<p>Such activities at entertainment venues are recreational in nature and considered entertainment when provided to employees by their employer and attract FBT.</p> <p>Group training seminars or workshops are exempt from FBT.</p>

Expense Category	Non-allowable expense	Reason	Exceptions	Policy / procedure reference & notes
Meal & Entertainment	Coffee (or other beverages) includes coffee purchased on route to meetings	Personal expense	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop / conference with external guests As part of hosting an event – refer to Meal Expenses. 	<p>Coffee / beverages purchased for staff with staff meetings is a personal expense.</p> <p>Related procedures –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate Credit Card Procedures Reimbursement Procedure
Meal & Entertainment	<p>Entertainment of family or friends</p> <p>Also see Spouse, Partner, and dependants under Travel Expenses</p>	Personal expense	Official occasions where spouse/partner is expected to accompany staff member e.g. award presentation.	<p>Legitimate entertainment expenses on behalf of the University can include staff, associates* and students.</p> <p>Where split charging is not available, the staff member must pay in full using private funds and seek reimbursement of the business related portion; the corporate credit card must not be used. FBT is applicable to staff and associates*.</p> <p>Related procedure –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reimbursement Procedure
Meal & Entertainment	Meal expenses	Personal expense	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whilst travelling away (overnight) from home on behalf of the University including out of hours fieldwork in excess of a standard business day e.g. seeding or harvesting Legitimate entertainment of visitors on University business e.g. a meal at a restaurant External training workshops / overnight conferences Onsite catering for meetings that run over lunch. 	<p>All meal expenses must be reasonable and in line with ATO guidelines for the lowest salary band according to the destination.</p> <p>Excessive meal expenses including inappropriate alcohol costs, could result in the amount being charged back to the staff member/s.</p> <p>Meals consumed in relation to non-overnight business travel may be subject to FBT.</p> <p>Related policy / procedures –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Travel Policy & Procedures Corporate Credit Card Procedures Reimbursement Procedure
Meal & Entertainment	Staff functions for non-business related event or social activity	Personal expense	<p>Modest contribution to morning / afternoon teas for new staff and farewells.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ad-hoc team lunch / dinner to celebrate a project milestone or award End of year function. 	<p>Meal & entertainment costs provided for a business related purpose should be paid on a corporate credit card and will attract FBT for the staff attending unless held at the National Wine Centre (NWC).</p> <p>Farewell lunches / dinners are not considered legitimate University business and should be self-funded, unless pre-approved by a Head of School or Branch Head.</p>

Expense Category	Non-allowable expense	Reason	Exceptions	Policy / procedure reference & notes												
			<p>Up to \$85 (excl. GST) per staff member, but including FBT. Refer summary table in next column.</p> <p>Exceptions to this amount must be approved by a Head of School or Branch Head.</p>	<p>Staff are permitted time off to attend an end of year function if during work hours, but not time off in lieu of not attending.</p> <p>Where possible, University staff functions and events should be held at the NWC, as FBT does not apply to the staff attending (see cost breakdown in table below), this also includes catering services provided by the NWC on University grounds – refer to guide (note, the FBT exemption does not apply to other suppliers even if the event is held at the NWC).</p> <p>Summary of cost per person</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Excl. GST</th> <th>Incl. GST</th> <th>FBT amount</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>NWC</td> <td>\$85.00</td> <td>\$93.50</td> <td>\$0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other venues</td> <td>\$40.95</td> <td>\$45.05</td> <td>\$44.05</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Related procedures –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Credit Card Procedures • Procurement Procedures 		Excl. GST	Incl. GST	FBT amount	NWC	\$85.00	\$93.50	\$0.00	Other venues	\$40.95	\$45.05	\$44.05
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NWC	\$85.00	\$93.50	\$0.00													
Other venues	\$40.95	\$45.05	\$44.05													
Meal & Entertainment	Tippling	Personal expense	Certain situations or locations where it is culturally expected and appropriate.	<p>Tippling will only be accepted where it is culturally expected (e.g. USA). Tippling in Australia is not expected.</p> <p>Tips and gratitude's may be paid with the corporate credit card where a set percentage service charge is added to the bill.</p> <p>Inappropriate or excessive tippling will require justification and may result in reimbursement to the University by the staff member.</p> <p>Related policy / procedures –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel Policy & Procedures • Corporate Credit Card Procedures 												
Technology Costs	Mobile phone (including accessories*) and home internet expenses	Personal expense	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional costs incurred by the staff member due to University related business (approval required) • International SIM on approved international travel • Mobile phones / plans paid for by the University. 	<p>Mobile phone / internet expenses will only be reimbursed if an extra cost has been incurred and substantiation of the extra cost is provided (e.g. University related calls / data usage have caused additional costs over the Claimants usual plan).</p> <p>*includes headphone/earbuds, compatible smart watches.</p> <p>Related procedure – Reimbursement Procedure</p>												

Expense Category	Non-allowable expense	Reason	Exceptions	Policy / procedure reference & notes
Technology Costs	Cloud based storage	Personal expense	Storage costs supported by a Strategic Procurement exemption.	Box is the University's preferred supplier for online storage and available for all staff and students – refer to the ITDS webpage .
Travel Expenses	Premium economy, business or first class airfare	Standard University travel is economy class	Premium economy, business or first class may only be booked with the written approval of an Authorised Delegate (see Definitions).	Any class of travel other than economy class must be pre-approved by an Authorised Delegate and booked directly with FCM Travel. Related policy - Travel Policy & Procedures
Travel Expenses	Seating preferences	Personal Expense	Any seating allocation which incurs an additional cost requires written approval from an Authorised Delegate (see Definitions) e.g. medical reason.	Standard seating must be selected unless approved otherwise. Related policy - Travel Policy & Procedures
Travel Expenses	Excess baggage and customs	Personal expense	Excess baggage and / or customs charges directly associated with University owned goods.	Related policy - Travel Policy & Procedures
Travel Expenses	Frequent flyer and airline lounge memberships including single entry passes	Personal expense	Staff travelling at least 5 times a year and at the discretion of, and written approval of , an authorised delegate (see Definitions).	Loyalty and frequent flyer programs must not be paid using University funds (including consulting accounts). Airline lounge memberships (e.g. Qantas Club or Virgin Lounge) are at the personal cost of the traveller (exceptions permitted). Discounted rates are available for staff to purchase (see Travel webpage) Related policy - Travel Policy & Procedures
Travel Expenses	Hotel minibar and in-house movies	Personal expense	Bottled water from the minibar.	Related policy - Travel Policy & Procedures
Travel Expenses	Laundry and dry cleaning	Personal expense	Travelling more than 4 nights / 5 days (i.e. standard business week) or required due to climatic conditions.	Related policy - Travel Policy & Procedures
Travel Expenses	Commuting between home and the University	Personal expense		The Australian Tax Office considers commuting between home and normal place of work (where you earn your assessable income) to be a private expense.

Expense Category	Non-allowable expense	Reason	Exceptions	Policy / procedure reference & notes
Travel Expenses	Parking costs	Personal expense	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whilst travelling away from home on behalf of the University (excludes valet parking) When using private vehicle to attend off-site / after-hours meeting where you would not normally drive to work Using private vehicle to transfer University property e.g. marketing banners, when it makes practical and economic sense to do so. 	<p>Travel to and from work is a personal expense. Parking at your principal place of employment is a personal expense whether a casual, fixed term or continuing employee.</p> <p>Related procedures -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motor Vehicle Procedures Corporate Credit Card Procedures Reimbursement Procedure
Travel Expenses	Passports & visas	Personal expense	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visas required for University related business travel purchased through, or as advised by, FCM Travel Passport renewal fees* where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> international travel is a requirement in the persons position description, and; travels at least 5 times a year, and at the discretion of, and written approval of, an authorised delegate (see Definitions). 	<p>Traveller is responsible for own passport status – see exception.</p> <p>*FBT is applicable.</p> <p>Related policy - Travel Policy & Procedures</p>
Travel Expenses	Personal entertainment e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> movies / games health club (spa treatments & massages) optional conference activities not included in conference fee in-room internet and phone calls 	Personal expense	Business related costs.	Related policy - Travel Policy & Procedures
Travel Expenses	Personal items e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> medication toiletries reading material (paper, magazines, and books) 	Personal expense	<p>Specialist luggage required for University owned equipment.</p> <p>Laptop chargers and cords for University provided equipment when travelling.</p>	<p>Travelling on University business does not justify using University funds for personal items.</p> <p>Meals consumed in relation to non-overnight business travel may be subject to FBT.</p>

Expense Category	Non-allowable expense	Reason	Exceptions	Policy / procedure reference & notes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • electrical items • luggage or extra bags • headphones/earbuds • snacks 			<p>Related policy / procedures -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel Policy & Procedures • Corporate Credit Card Procedures • Reimbursement Procedure
Travel Expenses	Private travel incorporated into business travel	Personal expense		<p>Any FBT implications of private travel will be borne by the traveller.</p> <p>If the private travel component is 50% or more of the total travel, travellers must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the private days to less than 50% of the total travel, or • Pay 50% of the airfare upfront to FCM Travel at the time of booking. <p>Related policy - Travel Policy & Procedures</p> <p>Staff incorporating private travel must have approved leave submitted through Staff Services Online.</p>
Travel Expenses	Spouse, partner, and dependants	Personal expense	Dependant Travel Scheme	<p>Private travel costs of family/partners (with the exception above) are at the personal expense of the staff member. Where split charging is not available the staff member must pay in full with private funds and seek reimbursement of the business related portion. The corporate credit card must not be used.</p> <p>Funding support may be made available to eligible staff as a contribution to the travel costs of the dependant relative or a carer, or to employ a carer at the conference location.</p> <p>Related policy / procedures -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel Policy & Procedures • Reimbursement Procedure

DEFINITIONS

Authorised Delegate – approval of travel and related expenditure

Authorised delegates as listed in the Delegations of Authority Table in the [Travel Policy & Procedures](#)

Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT)

A fringe benefit is a benefit provided to an employee (or their associate*). Benefits can also be provided by a third party under an arrangement with the employer. An employee can be a current, future, or former employee.

Examples of when FBT is applicable –

- When private travel is 50% or more of the total trip when travelling on University business
- Meal & entertainment costs (e.g. sit down meals, alcohol or food and drink within a social context) such as a farewell lunch, celebratory event, or end of year function
- Gifts (individual or combined) to a staff member to the value of \$300 or more, such as bottles of wine, flowers, and gift cards, including vouchers for restaurants or services.

Special note: FBT is calculated on the taxable value of the benefits provided and is payable by the University. Consideration must be given to the *collective* value of all gifts, meal, and entertainment expenses, together with the FBT amount when planning an event for a team or individual. Where a benefit attracts FBT, the total cost may be doubled and charged back to the respective project.

Associate

*An “associate” is broadly defined in the Income Tax Act, examples of “associates” of an employee include;

- Spouses (married or de facto)
- Relatives (which includes parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, nephews, nieces, stepchildren or adopted children of the individual or the individual or the individual’s spouse)
- The spouse of a child of a relative
- A partner in a partnership in which the employee is a partner
- A trustee of a trust where the employee or associate of the employee is a beneficiary or potential beneficiary of that trust, and
- A company controlled by the employee or an associate of an employee.