



Material expenses policy

Version	1.1
Effective from:	15 December 2020
Created by:	Accounting and Finance service unit
Approved by:	Rectorate
Approved on:	2 December 2020

1. Regulatory area

This policy applies to all staff of the University of Vienna, in addition to the Code of Conduct passed by the Rectorate in May 2013. It specifies allowable expenses and the eligibility of the reimbursement of expenses incurred within the framework of the conditions defined in this policy. Travel expenses are not subject to this policy.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all areas of the management of finances of the University of Vienna. Any expenses must be incurred in connection with university purposes and adhere to the principles of efficiency, economy and expediency (section 2 of the Universities Act). The preferred option is that suppliers of goods and services invoice the University of Vienna directly. The reimbursement of expenses on production of receipts is only admissible to an extent that is absolutely necessary,

except for expenses that are specified as claimable in the relevant funding agreement, project agreement, donation agreement or sponsoring agreement and supplementary written agreements.

All items listed in this policy are non-exhaustive. Comparable cases are also subject to this policy. When taking actions, employees of the University of Vienna must consider at all times that expenses paid by public-sector institutions or public funds are under scrutiny by the public and the Austrian Court of Audit.

3. Authorising exceptions

In the event of non-compliance with this policy's provisions due to special circumstances, an exception must be authorised according to the four-eyes principle, regardless of the amount of the expenses and according to the regulations for granting authorisations. The head of the Accounting and Finance service unit reserves the right to reject the payment of invoices that obviously violate this policy, and, if need be, after consultation with the members of the Rectorate responsible for financial matters.

The University of Vienna is entitled to reclaim the financial means used in violation of this policy from the person responsible.

4. Hospitality costs and representation costs

Hospitality costs are expenses for consumption in restaurants as well as the purchase of food and beverages for university events. Representation costs are intended to establish and maintain business contacts, to increase the popularity of the University of Vienna or to improve its public image.

If hospitality and representation costs are reimbursed by means of third-party funds, the external funder's guidelines must be observed.

Tips must not exceed 10 % of the invoiced amount. The maximum amount allowed for tips is EUR 300.00. The University of Vienna does not reimburse any tips that exceed these maximum amounts.

4.1. Provision of hospitality to non-university members

Hospitality costs incurred within the framework of conferences, congresses and other academic events hosted by the University of Vienna as well as hospitality costs for representation purposes can be financed from the University's budget, provided that the budget holder gives his/her approval.

The reference value are costs amounting to EUR 60.00 per capita, including costs for food, non-alcoholic beverages and alcoholic beverages to a reasonable extent, but excluding tobaccos. Costs incurred for accompanying persons (family members, partners,...) are not claimable.

In the event of occasions of university-wide importance (e.g. invitation of high-ranking laureates), this reference value can be raised and costs for accompanying persons can be paid to a reasonable extent, provided that the principles of efficiency, economy and expediency are adhered to.

The claim for the invoice must show the names of all attendees of the meal and the purpose of the entertainment to document the representation purpose.

4.2. Gifts for non-university members for representation purposes

As a general rule, gifts for non-university members are not permissible if they are made in direct connection with actual or initiated business affairs, or even if such suspicion might arise (cf. Code of Conduct of the University of Vienna). This applies in particular to public officials as defined by anti-corruption legislation. A public official is any person who acts as an organisation body or whose actions are based on an employment relationship with an organisation, and whose conduct is subject to examination by the Austrian Court of Audit. This is the case for the University of Vienna.

University of Vienna promotional items may be given to non-university members to a reasonable extent.

In the framework of congresses, conferences, workshops or similar events, visiting lecturers or speakers may receive gifts (bouquet of flowers, bottles of wine, chocolates, promotional items of the University of Vienna,...) as a small gesture. The reference value are costs amounting to EUR 60.00 per capita (this also applies to presents given during business travels).

For third-party funded projects, the rules of the relevant funding body apply.

4.3. Donations for representation purposes

Donations made to organisations and associations are only permissible if they are closely and academically related to the relevant field of research. This also applies if a donation instead of a membership fee has to be made.

For third-party funded projects, the rules of the relevant funding body apply.

5. Refreshments, festivities and convivial internal university gatherings

Any internal working meals, festivities and convivial university gatherings at the University of Vienna must comply with the principles of economy and expediency.

Expenses incurred for the provision of meals and/or refreshments on the occasion of or during internal official meetings, inspections and similar circumstances are claimable, provided that their value is reasonable and proportionate to the circumstances. The reference value are costs amounting to EUR 60.00 per capita. Alcoholic beverages are claimable to a reasonable extent. The University of Vienna does not reimburse claims for tobaccos. Costs incurred for accompanying persons (family members, partners,...) are not claimable.

Tips must not exceed 10 % of the invoiced amount. The maximum amount allowed for tips is EUR 300.00. The University of Vienna does not reimburse any tips that exceed these maximum amounts.

The claim for the invoice must show the names of the attendees of the meal and the purpose of the entertainment.

According to section 3, para. 1, sub-section 14 of the Austrian income tax act (Einkommenssteuergesetz, EStG), every employee who receives an annual financial benefit from participating in convivial university gatherings (e.g. works outings, company parties) amounting to a gross amount of EUR 365 is exempted from payroll tax and social insurance contribution. In addition, any benefits in kind to employees (especially Christmas coupons) are tax-exempt up to an amount of EUR 186.00.

Therefore, the budget holder must ensure that these amounts per employee are not exceeded. The Human Resources and Gender Equality service unit must be informed about any monetary benefits exceeding this amount. The Human Resources and Gender Equality service unit must process these expenses in the payroll as benefits in kind for which the University has to pay social security contributions and payroll tax.

These benefits must not be an individual reward and must be provided to all employees, or at least to a group of employees.

6. Special expenses that may be claimed and special expenses that cannot be claimed

In the event of reimbursement, the Accounting and Finance service unit can only reimburse receipts for the current and the previous year (e.g. only receipts from the years 2017 and 2018 will be reimbursed in the year 2018).

The following sections explain frequent and/or critical issues in connection with expenses and assets of the University of Vienna:

6.1. Costs of an ÖBB Vorteils card (customer card of the Austrian Federal Railways)

Costs of ÖBB customer cards incurred by the University of Vienna are a benefit received from the employment relationship. Therefore, the Human Resources and Gender Equality service unit must pay tax on this benefit in kind through payroll.

6.2. Costs of an annual season ticket for public transport

The costs of an annual season ticket for Vienna's public transport operator Wiener Linien are borne by the University of Vienna provided that they serve university business purposes. Only the Human Resources

and Gender Equality service unit can reimburse these costs since they represent a benefit in kind for the employee, for which he/she has to pay social security contributions and payroll tax.

Only if the number of journeys for university purposes exceeds 25 per person and month, it is regarded as a benefit in kind for which social security contributions and payroll tax must be paid (see payroll tax guidelines by the Ministry of Finance). The employee and employer must document the number of journeys per person and month.

6.3. Local public transport/taxi at the place of work

Local public transport should be the preferred means of travel for journeys at the place of work. The associated costs (especially of single journey tickets) can be reimbursed. If local public transport cannot be used or it is unreasonable to use it, taxis may exceptionally be used in justified cases. Receipts for taxi journeys require the following information: Purpose and destination of the journey and names of the persons using the taxi service.

Please note: The use of private vehicles on university business is only permissible during university business travels.

6.4. Vaccination

Vaccination costs, provided that they are incurred for university business purposes, are reimbursed by the University of Vienna. For third-party funded projects, the rules of the relevant funding body apply.

6.5. Private meals without representation purposes

Private meals without representation purposes are not reimbursed from the university budget.

6.6. Expenses for personal use

Expenses for personal use, especially those related to travels, are not reimbursed.

6.7. Relocation costs

Relocation costs for future or current employees are usually not reimbursed. If the University of Vienna covers relocation costs in individual cases, they are taxable income from employment and therefore subject to pay-as-you-earn tax liability, including non-wage labour costs.

6.8. Deposits for accommodations

The University of Vienna does not pay deposits for accommodations of employees and students of the University of Vienna, scholarship holders or persons not affiliated with the University. In accordance with item 3, exceptions for international student programmes, e.g. Erasmus+, are permissible.

6.9. Reminder fees

Reminder fees charged due to the claimant's default of payment cannot be reimbursed.

6.10. Administrative penalties

Administrative penalties are only reimbursed in especially justified cases.

6.11. Recognition of employees

Recognition of employees on special occasions which are related to their work at the University can be reimbursed to a reasonable extent. This especially includes long-service awards for staff who reach 25 years continuous service with the University, staff who celebrate their 60th or 65th birthday and retirements.

Expenses incurred for the appreciation of other special occasions, including presents on the occasion of birthdays, weddings or degree awards, etc. are not paid by the University.

6.12. Costs of continuing education and training

Continuing education and training must serve university business purposes. At the University of Vienna, the Human Resources and Gender Equality service unit offers a wide range of continuing education and training courses for employees. If special continuing education and training courses are only offered by external educational institutions, the principles of efficiency and expediency have to be especially observed.

6.13. University assets in the event of resignation

University assets, such as laptops, mobile phones, academic literature, etc. remain the property of the University of Vienna and must be returned when the employment contract with the University is terminated, unless the employee pays an amount equivalent to the current market value. This applies regardless of the fact that items have been purchased with the global budget, third-party funds or any other funds.

6.14. Bereavement

In case of bereavement, it is at the discretion of the unit to choose the type of expression of condolences for employees, students and former employees of the University of Vienna. Alternatively, a donation to a charitable organisation can be made. The principle of expediency has to be observed in this case.

6.15. Claiming expenses without production of receipts

The reimbursement of expenses without production of original receipts is not permissible. Only in exceptional cases, replacement receipts for small expenses which are produced may be reimbursed.

7. Entry into force

This policy enters into force upon its approval and remains effective until revoked.

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Approved on: 2 December 2020

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