

# **This document is not legally binding!**

University of Potsdam  
The President

## **Travel Expenses Policy on the Application of the German Travel Expenses Act (Bundesreisekostengesetz - BRKG)**

### **1. Legal Basis**

This policy pertains to all employees of the University of Potsdam. The following regulations shall apply:

- German Travel Expenses Act as of 25 May 2005 (BGBl. I S. 1418)
- General Administrative Regulations of the Federal State of Brandenburg on the Federal Travel Expenses Act (BbgBRKGVwV) as of 2 August 2005
- Reimbursement of travel expenses and separation allowance for attending courses in Germany, amended version of the guidelines and compensation regulations (11 August 2005) of the circular of the Ministry of Finance on 23 November 2001 (ABl. p. 855)
- Decree on settlement/ reimbursement of travel expenses pursuant to § 3 of the German Travel Expenses Act (BRKG) for institutions under the responsibility of the Brandenburg Ministry of Science, Research and Culture as of 10 August 2012

### **2. Scope**

This policy pertains to all employees of the University of Potsdam.

Business trips that are exclusively funded by third parties shall be governed by the regulations of the external funding institution. For any other business trip, proceed according to this policy.

### **3. Definitions**

#### Business Trips

A business trip is any journey to a site other than one's workplace for business purposes in one's working capacity that was either assigned or approved in writing by the competent hierarchical authority (§ 2 BRKG).

A business trip at the place of residence or work can be assigned verbally.

A business trip within Potsdam, to Berlin, to Gülpe Research Station, to the surrounding area up to a distance of 50 km and journeys between the individual university campuses can be assigned with a permanent permit on a general or individual basis. Such business trips can be made on the basis of a verbal instruction without a separate individual permit or business travel application.

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## **4. Assignment/ Approval of Business Trips**

### 4.1. Conditions

Business trips may be assigned/ approved if business purposes outside the workplace can otherwise not be completed and financial resources are available. The approval shall be granted after it has been co-signed by the office in charge of the budget item. In the interests of budgetary efficiency, assigning/ approving business trips shall be strictly based on their need and the number of participants. A special explanatory statement has to be submitted if several persons participate in the same business trip.

After launching the travel expenses online portal “Reisen.UP”, applications for business trips by employees belonging to the user group must be made exclusively in electronic form. The group of users includes every employee of the University except assistants, temporary lecturers, and guests. People who do not belong to the user group continue to submit applications in paper form.

Applications must be forwarded to the responsible supervisor / project manager for approval before commencing the business trip. It is essential that the applications are completely filled out to avoid unnecessary delays.

### 4.2. Competences for business trips in Germany and abroad

#### 4.2.1. Business trips are assigned and approved as follows:

- by the President for full-time or part-time Vice-Presidents
- by the Chancellor for the deans and the heads of the central operational facilities
- by the President for the Chancellor
- by the deans for the professors
- by the Chancellor for the heads of divisions
- by the heads of the respective structural units for their employees
- by the respective project manager for the employees who exclusively work in third-party funded projects and do not teach. This shall also apply to business trips abroad.

#### 4.2.2 Approving Authority

Business trips abroad of employees with teaching commitments during the lecture period that last longer than one week, must be electronically forwarded for approval to the Chancellor via the Division of Human Resources and Legal Affairs - Head of the Division - not later than 14 days before departure. In other cases, the heads of the structural units will assign business trips abroad.

### 4.3. Means of Transport

The superior responsible for assigning/ approving a business trip may direct the use of a particular means of transport due to business-related reasons, in particular in the interests of an economical and cost-efficient conduct of a business trip or to ensure the wellbeing of the traveler.

In the interest of the business traveler and to avoid ambiguities when invoicing the expenses, the approving/ assigning person must make a clear decision about the means of transport.

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### 4.3.1. Use of Regular Transport Services

Due to a corporate discount agreement between the state of Brandenburg and Deutsche Bahn, tickets for Deutsche Bahn shall be booked under the customer number 310 02 29 for all approved business trips within Germany. The discount is currently 5%.

For booking at the counters of Deutsche Bahn or travel agencies, you will need the BMIS (bank management info system) account number.

You can also book online on bahn-corporate, the online portal of Deutsche Bahn for corporate customers.

Please find the application form here:

[http://www.intern.uni-potsdam.de/u/dezernat3/formulare/index\\_05.html](http://www.intern.uni-potsdam.de/u/dezernat3/formulare/index_05.html)

The costs of a BahnCard / BahnCard Business will be reimbursed if the use is more economical than other fare reductions and you purchased it for university-business related reasons (BahnCard 2nd class). Only the BahnCard Business can be combined with the corporate discount of the state of Brandenburg of currently 5 %.

The costs for a privately owned BahnCard can be reimbursed if the costs for such card have completely paid off due to its use for business purposes and this use was more economical than other fare reduction. Any partial reimbursement is not possible.

### 4.3.2. Use of a motor vehicle

Journeys by a motor vehicle (independent of the type and cubic capacity of the vehicle) will be reimbursed with a lump-sum mileage allowance of € 0.20 per kilometer, limited to a maximum amount of € 130.00, for the entire business trip (so-called small mileage allowance). This allowance also covers the costs of taking additional business travelers as well as the transport of official and personal luggage.

The employer is not liable for property damages.

In addition, parking fees can only be reimbursed up to € 5.00 per day. Higher parking fees will be reimbursed only in duly justified exceptional cases.

If there is a significant business-related reason for using a motor vehicle, the allowance is € 0.30 €/driven kilometer (so-called long mileage allowance).

This applies particularly if:

- business cannot be pursued when using regular transport services or if such services are not available;
- heavy (at least 25 kg) and/or bulky business luggage (except personal luggage) has to be taken along and the use of a motor vehicle enables the traveler to pursue business at different locations on one day that could not be pursued within the same time when using regular transport services;
- the traveler has a disabled person's pass for people with severe walking disabilities;
- the use of a motor vehicle is an economically viable alternative.

The assignment or approval must establish the significance of the business-related interests in writing or electronically before commencing the business trip.

Only if significant business-related interests have been recognized, compensation for damage to property can be claimed in accordance with § 32 BeamtVG (Law on the pension scheme for public officials and judges in the Federal Republic of Germany) in conjunction with the respective

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administrative regulation and the guidelines for equitable relief in the event of property damage. As a consequence, strict standards must be applied for such recognition.

### **Taxi and/or rented cars**

The costs for these means of transport will be reimbursed if there are good reasons.

Good reasons for using a taxi are in particular:

- in individual cases, urgent official/business-related reasons
- compelling personal reasons (e.g. health reasons)
- regular public transport is not running or delayed or
- taxi rides between 11:00pm and 6:00am for arrival or departure and at the place of business.

Without good reasons, taxi rides will be reimbursed with a mileage allowance of 0.20 €/km.

Good reasons for renting a car are given if regular means of transport cannot be used to complete the official business and a vehicle has to be used or a company vehicle is not available. Basically, any costs incurred in connection with renting a vehicle of the lower middle class (e.g. VW Golf) can be reimbursed. Approval of proper reasons shall be obtained prior to the business trip. The same conditions apply here as for using a car.

### 4.3.3. Business travel by air

The costs for travelling by air will be reimbursed if using an aircraft was necessary due to business or economic reasons. If possible, the airlines' bonus programs shall be used.

The University does not reimburse for first-class flights within Germany and Europe (§ 2 Auslandsreisekostenverordnung- Foreign Travel Expenses Ordinance).

The business travel application must state the reason for travelling by air.

### 4.3.4. Compensation in case of work-related accidents

The right to compensation in case of work-related accidents shall not apply if business travelers use their own motor vehicle, although the employer has authorized the use of another means of transport.

The prerequisite for granting of work-related accident insurance coverage (§ 31 Civil Servants Pension Act) does not exist in such cases. Compensation for property damage as well as the allocation of equitable relief according to the "Guidelines for Equity Reliefs" incurred when on business shall be also excluded.

## **5. Reimbursement of travel expenses**

Upon application, business travelers are reimbursed for necessary business-related travel expenses. The assigning superior shall decide which travel expenses will be reimbursed subject to the availability of funds.

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### 5.1. Reimbursement options

1. complete reimbursement of travel expenses
2. travel grant - waiving reimbursement for parts of the travel expenses
3. recognition of accident relief without reimbursement of costs - waiving reimbursement of travel expenses

The entitlement to the reimbursement of travel expenses shall lapse if the expenses are not claimed in writing or electronically within **6 months** after the end of the business trip.

**The date of receipt by the Division of Human Resources and Legal Affairs shall be decisive.**

The period of 6 months begins with the day the business travel finished. If the cutoff period was exceeded, **the reimbursement of travel expenses will be excluded.**

**Any advance payment must be paid back if the application for travel expenses reimbursement was not made within the cutoff period.**

### **Overnight Accommodation Expenses**

Overnight accommodation costs are reimbursed either as a lump-sum payment if there were no costs or less than € 20.00 or the incurred necessary costs. (According to BRKG (7) in conjunction with sections 7.1.3 and 7.1.4 BbgBRKGVwV, hotel costs up to an amount of 60 Euro are deemed necessary.)

Accommodation costs exceeding 60.00 EUR will be reimbursed only if their necessity has been plausibly justified. Otherwise only 60.00 Euro will be reimbursed. If accommodation costs include board fees, the amount of € 60.00 will be increased by the respective share of board fees in the daily allowance according to BRKG (6.2).

(The HRS booking portal link on the intranet provides a good guide for booking hotel rooms. Please note the federal rates indicated by the Brandenburg logo: this room rate will be accepted for the settlement of business trips.)

When booking a hotel, always make sure that invoice states the address of the University of Potsdam (employer's assignment) and not the private address. Only in this way the business traveler will suffer no financial disadvantages.

### **Reimbursement of other costs (incidental expenses)**

Eligible incidental expenses are for example:

- postal, telegram, and telephone costs incurred for purposes of business
- parking fees if there is a significant business-related interest in using a motor vehicle –
- without such significant business-related interest up to € 5.00/ day
- costs for sending luggage (up to 15 kg hand luggage), luggage storage and luggage insurance

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- entrance and registration fees for business-related events such as business-related exhibitions, fairs, congresses, and meetings

Non-refundable incidental expenses are for example:

- personal travel equipment/ outfit (e.g. suitcases and bags)
- usual social and representative obligations
- accommodation registers, city maps, maps
- taking out an accident, travel cancellation or health insurance of any kind.

### **Reimbursement of costs by third parties or through third-party funds**

Cash payments or non-cash benefits granted by third parties during business travels must be declared in the billing form and the supporting receipts and documents must be attached. Non-cash benefits are for example benefits in kind such as flight, train or bus tickets, meals and / or accommodation, etc.

### **Third-party funds**

Travel expenses that are exclusively funded by third parties are reimbursed on the basis of the BRKG unless the third party has made other provisions.

### **Combination of business and private travel**

If business trips are connected with private trips, the travel expense allowance is calculated as if only the business trip had been carried out (BRKG sec. 13). If the private part of the journey exceeds five working days, only the additional costs incurred in completing the business-related activities are included in the travel allowance. If business travel occurs during the vacation or on the way to or from the vacation destination, only the additional travel expenses incurred for the business part will be reimbursed.

## **6. Settlement of Business Trips**

Business trip should be billed completely on the relevant form by the applicant immediately after the end of the business trip and submitted together with the approved business travel application to the Division of Human Resources and Legal Affairs - Department for Travel Expenses. Statements by members of the faculty must be submitted via the Administrative Director. Compliance with the cutoff period of 6 months is to be observed.

When billing business trips within the Federal Republic of Germany, which are financed from the budget, it shall be governed by the following regulation pursuant to the decree of the Ministry of Science, Research and Culture (MWFK) as of 10 August 2012:

### 1. Receipts up to € 10.00

Relevant supporting documents relating to expenses up to € 10.00 per day for a business trip - also of several days need not be proven and retained or kept.

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Irrespective of this, these expenses must be specified in detail in the travel expense report according to their purpose and amount and justified if necessary. Only those expenses will be eligible that are refundable according to the BRKG regulations and directly caused by the business-related activities.

### 2. Receipts totaling more than € 10.00

Relevant supporting documents relating to the expenses must be submitted or handed in later to the Department for Travel Expenses in cases of

- one-day business trips of more than € 10.00 but less than € 60.00 or
- business trip of more than one day with costs of more than € 10.00 and less than € 60.00 per day, up to a maximum of € 200.00 for the entire business trip;

in all other cases they must be submitted or handed in later immediately with the travel expense report. Nevertheless, the expenses must be specified in the travel expense report in terms of purpose and amount and, if necessary, justified.

If relevant supporting documents relating to the costs are to be provided only upon request, business travelers are obliged to retain them for a period of six months after filing the application; in case of omission the right to reimbursement of travel expenses may be refused (BRKG, sec. 3 (1), sentence 4).

Relevant supporting documents relating to the expenses are, for example, train and bus tickets, flight tickets, accommodation or hotel bills, car rental statements, parking / taxi receipts, tickets for business-related events, extracts from bonus programs, fuel tank receipts when using a company car, tolls, telephone costs, etc.

For business trips abroad a statement about the relevant official exchange rates of the respective country has to be submitted. If such a statement is not available, the current exchange rate for the document date on the Internet will be used ([www.oanda.com](http://www.oanda.com)).

Statements on travel expense trips funded by third parties or third-party funds must also be submitted to the Human Resources Division via the Faculty's Head of Administration. Regulations deviating from this policy must be documented. The respective project manager shall be responsible for such documentation. All original documents must be submitted together with the forms (individual tickets and other incidental costs must be affixed). The expenses are calculated by the Department for Travel Expenses.

A claim for travel expenses will only be settled if the business trip was approved and, if applicable, reimbursement of costs was confirmed.

Advance payments for a business trip should be settled 4 weeks after the end of the trip. Participation fees can be reimbursed up to the full amount as long as they do not include any costs for accommodation or board.

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### **7. Further Education Trips**

Further education trips are journeys to the expansion necessary professional knowledge and skills. Any costs incurred will be reimbursed upon application according to the separation allowance provision. (Circular of the Ministry of Finance of 23 November 2001 / OJ S 855 / revised version of the instructions and compensation provisions as of 11 August 2005)

### **8. Trips by members of the staff council and representatives of severely disabled people**

Trips by members of the staff and youth representation to fulfill the tasks required under the legal provisions on staff representation are not business trips within the meaning of the BRKG. They do not require any approval but the representation has only to report such trips. The staff and youth representation decide themselves about travels within the framework of the assigned budget but without deciding on the entitlement to reimbursement of travel expenses that must be to be verified by the relevant department.

### **9. Forms**

The forms for business trips can be downloaded on the University homepage. Only these forms are valid and shall be used exclusively.

[http://www.intern.uni-potsdam.de/u/dezernat3/formulare/index\\_05.html](http://www.intern.uni-potsdam.de/u/dezernat3/formulare/index_05.html)

For information about the travel expenses online portal visit:

<http://www.intern.uni-potsdam.de/u/dezernat3/formulare/reisekostenOnline.html>

### **10. Concluding provisions**

This guideline shall have immediate effect and replaces the guideline of 05 February 2012. The guideline is published in the Official Gazette of the University of Potsdam.

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President  
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