UNIVERSITÄT BIELEFELD

Personnel Services Department
- Department Civil Servants,
Appointments and Travel Expenses (PS.1)

Travel expenses fact sheet

June 2026

Generell information:

Business trips should only be carried out if it is not possible or not sensible to carry out the official business more cost-effectively, in particular by using digital communication options.

Prior to every business trip, a business **trip authorisation** must first be obtained.
Proof (invitation, programme, appointment, etc.) must always be attached to the application for business trip approval, even if general business trip approval has been granted. Please note that a link is unfortunately not sufficient proof of the event. Furthermore, information on the means of transport and the account assignment (WBS element or cost centre) must always be provided. If travelling by private vehicle, a justification must be given under "Comment"; Bielefeld University's travel policy must be observed.

The subsequent travel expense report is settled in accordance with the business trip application. This means that if, for example, travelling by train was specified in the business trip application, only this will be settled.

Business trip applications and travel expense reports are processed for employees and auxiliary staff via the digital **travel expense workflow**.
The receipts to be scanned in with the travel expense report (please in PDF format) are considered originals. By maintaining this procedure, which deviates from the regulations of the LRKG, the long-term retention periods of third-party funding providers are ensured and employees are released from the otherwise necessary personal retention obligation for auditing purposes. If the scanned receipts are not legible, the original receipts must be submitted to the travel cost centre on request. The original receipts can be destroyed once the travel expenses centre has completed the accounting process.

Travel expenses for guests are settled using the relevant web form; the faculties and institutions are responsible for checking the receipts.

Further training:

Travel expenses for training events must initially continue to be settled in paper form. The application, authorisation and settlement of training courses may be included in the workflow at a later date.

General business travel authorisation

Even if general business trip approval has been granted, the relevant documents (e.g. invitation, programme, appointment agreement) must be submitted in the business trip application for each cost-relevant business trip.
A business trip application must only be created if costs are claimed. If it is a verbally ordered or authorised business trip in the Bielefeld city area or to the locations of the University Medical Center OWL and the teaching practices of the medical school OWL, please enter this in the comment field.

Payment on account:

Employees of the university can apply for an advance payment for expected travel expenses of over 200,- € (payment of 80% of the requested amount).

Exclusion period:

The travel expense report must be submitted promptly after the end of the business trip, **at the latest within 6 months (cut-off period)**.

Travelling expenses:

In addition to **economic efficiency and economy**, **climate protection** must also be taken into account when choosing a means of transport.

In principle, regular (public) transport should be used for business trips. The necessary costs of the lowest class are reimbursed:

- Train (2nd class) incl. seat reservations, 1st class can be reimbursed if the journey takes more than 2 hours
- Tram, bus etc.

Aeroplane:

In principle, the necessary costs of the lowest class (economy class) are reimbursed; if the flight takes at least 5 hours, a higher class of transport can be reimbursed.

The costs for domestic flights within Germany are generally not reimbursed; reimbursement may be made in justified exceptional cases.
A justified exceptional case exists if,

- there is a time saving of at least one hour by travelling by plane
- the traveller performs care tasks
- there is a physical disability.

When choosing an aeroplane as a means of transport, direct connections are generally preferable. In the case of short and medium-haul flights, a possible price saving is no justification for an unnecessary stopover. If it is a long-haul flight, the price savings and CO2 emissions should be weighed up.

Please also refer to the travel guidelines of Bielefeld University.

Train tickets:

The University receives a **discount** of currently 5 % from the railway. This discount can be claimed when **travelling on business** by quoting the University's key account number (BMIS customer number: 4200408) when purchasing tickets.
University employees have the option of obtaining **rail tickets** via a company credit card on the University's account.
These train tickets must be uploaded to the travel expense report.
Further information can be found on the homepage or can be obtained from your faculty/organisation.
The cost of a railcard will be reimbursed if it is economical for business trips. In principle, only the purchase of a **Bahncard Business** can be considered, as only with this (and no longer with the regular/private Bahncard) is it possible to use the major customer discount of currently 5%.

Important: Before purchasing a BC Business, approval for the purchase must be obtained from the travel cost centre.

A private Bahncard can only be reimbursed **after full amortisation** if this alone is economical (e.g. due to the higher price of the Bahncard Business).
Even if reimbursement is not an option, a private railcard must be used for business trips.

Taxi:

The use of a **taxi** must be justified (e.g. lack of public transport, **extensive business luggage** - no private luggage, several passengers, time constraints).

Car hire:

A **hire car** must also be justified.

Use of private vehicles:

When using a **private car**, the business traveller receives a mileage allowance of 35 cents/km.
For taking other business travellers with them in a private car or heavy business luggage (over 40 kg), there is an allowance of 5 cents/km per person and kilometre.
The distance allowance for the use of a private bicycle is 23 cents/km.
If a private vehicle is used for a distance of more than 200 km (one-way journey), a written justification is required. There is no fictitious reimbursement of railway costs in the case of non-necessary car use.

If a private car is used due to a business necessity, it must be demonstrated that the vehicle is absolutely necessary at the place of work to fulfil the business duties and that there is no reasonable alternative.

Accommodation costs:

Necessary hotel accommodation in German cities is reimbursed up to € 120. Costs exceeding this amount must be justified (e.g. cheaper hotels fully booked, trade fair/major symposia in the city).
For necessary overnight stays without proof of costs, there is a lump sum of € 20.
For overnight stays on business trips **abroad**, the country-specific rates apply (see homepage: List of daily allowances/overnight allowances abroad). Here too, the higher accommodation costs must be justified.
The costs for accommodation booked due to the proximity to the event location must be proportionate to the respective country-specific foreign accommodation allowances.
Breakfast included in the hotel bill will only be reimbursed if the bill is made out to Bielefeld University.
Breakfast costs will be reimbursed up to an amount of € 20. The costs of breakfast invoiced by an accommodation provider (e.g. hotel) may only be reimbursed in accordance with the LRKG if the breakfast was organised by the employer. This requirement is met if the employer has arranged for the booking of overnight accommodation with breakfast by the employees and the booking is made by the employees within the scope of the overnight accommodation options specified or regularly accepted by the employer.

Interruption of business trips with overnight stay at home:

If a business trip is interrupted by a private return with an overnight stay at home, the individual sections of the trip must be created as separate travel requests. This ensures correct accounting of travelling time, overnight stays and travel expenses.

Connection of business trips:

If two business trips with different account assignments and destinations are directly linked and the onward journey is made directly from the first to the second business trip, these are to be treated as one continuous trip. In this case, only one joint travel request must be created.

Combining a business trip with a private trip:

A combination of business trips with private trips exists if a holiday trip or another private trip is combined with an ordered or authorised business trip. In this case, business travel expenses are reimbursed as if only the business trip had been taken. However, the reimbursement of travel expenses may not exceed the costs incurred in the actual course of the journey. Therefore, please submit comparative offers showing the costs for the period of the business trip (e.g. costs for the flight, hotel costs) with the application for authorisation of a business trip, but at the latest when the business trip is settled.

Daily allowance:

A daily allowance is granted to cover additional meal expenses for business trips (more than 8 hours), unless this is expressly waived. **Receipts for catering costs** (e.g. restaurant bills, conference dinners) are therefore **not reimbursed**. If meals are provided free of charge, the daily allowance will be reduced.

Additional costs:

The following can be reimbursed:

- Conference fees (excluding conference dinner, social evening, catering)
- ntrance fees, if they are related to the business trip. If entrance fees are reimbursed, it must be explained under "Remarks" whether there was a connection to the business trip.
- Visa, passport fees, postage
- Telephone, internet (if the reason for the business trip is explained and outside the European roaming zone)
- Parking fees are generally only reimbursed up to an amount of €10 per day without justification; higher fees must be justified
- Necessary vaccinations according to STIKO recommendation

The following are not reimbursed:

- Travel accident/health/cancellation insurance
- Unproven course losses

Export control for business trips abroad, espionage protection:

If you have any questions regarding export control restrictions and espionage protection, please contact Ms Anna Balkenhol, Compliance Unit.

Apprentices:

Trainees at Bielefeld University will be reimbursed once a month for the D-Ticket at the current rate (currently 63.00) if they submit the travel expense invoice for training measures outside the training centre with the receipts within 6 months (cut-off period).

If, in the same month in which the D-Ticket has already been reimbursed, further business trips take place with a distance of up to 300 km, the travel costs for further trips within a calendar month will not be reimbursed, as the existing D-Ticket can be used for these trips.

In the case of training measures outside the training centre or family journeys home that are more than 300 km away, rail travel supplements or special fares (e.g. for ICE trains) may be reimbursed.

Travel expense invoices for training measures outside the training centre or family journeys home with a distance of more than 300 km must always be accompanied by comparative calculations with the actual travel data so that the cheapest costs of the supplements and special fares (e.g. ICE) can be reconstructed. Without the comparative calculation, only the costs for a D-ticket are notionally reimbursed.

When travelling by private car, trainees are notionally reimbursed the costs for the D-ticket if no costs for the D-ticket were reimbursed in the same calendar month.

Trainees do not receive a daily allowance.

In the case of business trips to take the examinations prescribed in the training regulations, trainees receive compensation in accordance with the travel expense regulations that apply to employees of the training provider (reimbursement of daily allowance; mileage allowance for journeys by car if these are justified in connection with Bielefeld University's travel policy; overnight accommodation one day before the examination if the journey time on the day of the examination must be before 06:00).