**Expenses**

**What is the Granta Expenses Policy?**

“Keep expenses to a minimum, while maintaining reasonable and sensible levels of safety, convenience, comfort, and efficiency”.

There are no hard and fast rules.  Use common sense.  Ask yourself how you would you act if it were your money or business.  If in doubt, ask.

There are **guidelines and tips** below, followed by instructions on **how to claim** **expenses**.

**Guidelines and Tips**

In a software company like ours, travel and related expenses are the second largest cost item after salaries.  With some thought and preparation we can keep costs low and get our job done effectively.

Air Travel

* Economy fares.  Your preferred airlines only if as good as alternatives.
* Travel search engines help find best fares or hotels.  Some good ones:
  + [www.skyscanner.net](http://www.skyscanner.net)  - excellent for low cost airlines in Europe, travel in/out of Stansted or Luton airports.
  + Kayak – aggregates results from many search engines
  + Travelocity, Opodo, or Expedia – long haul and major local airlines, but misses ‘low cost carriers’ such as Southwest, EasyJet, Ryanair, etc
  + <http://matrix.itasoftware.com/> - professional level search engine for flights, excluding low cost
* Often preferable to actually book flights direct with the airline found on the search engine rather than through the engine itself (save booking fees, better flexibility for change, more frequent flyer miles)
* And sometimes, it is best to book air travel, rental car, and hotel all on the same site.
* USA, for low cost, high flexibility, not in many search engines: [www.southwest.com](http://www.southwest.com)
* For UK-based staff, Trailfinders are a reliable agent to help book long-haul travel for you.
* Stay over a Saturday night for long-haul travel (e.g. Europe-US, Europe-Asia) to reduce costs unless the stay for the extra nights outweighs any savings.
* Make good use of the trip: don’t got for one day – go for a week or more to the USA for instance. Allow time for recover from jet lag.
* Ways to avoid the high cost of not staying over Saturday night:
  + Book a ‘holiday’ – flight+car, flight+hotel on e.g. Expedia
  + Back to back: if making two trips a few months apart.  First ticket comes back at end of second trip.  Second ticket is used for return of first trip and outward on second trip.  (Recommend getting the two tickets from different airlines.)
  + Special offers – sometimes you get lucky and an airline relaxes the Saturday night rule.
  + Use your own frequent flyer miles and get some reimbursement from the company.
* Book reasonably far in advance, but only once travel dates are known, all likely appointments are made, and unlikely to change.

Rental cars

* Granta does not carry car insurance (fire, theft, damage, 3rd party liability, and collision damage waiver (CDW), etc) – you need to get this as part of your rental package.  In the USA, this insurance is not normally included as most US residents already have this insurance personally.  To get it, book your car on a UK or home country based site of the car rental company – that way it is included automatically.  You can do this when you are already in the states.
* Granta carries personal medical insurance and personal effects insurance so it is not normally necessary to take this insurance on car rentals.
* Insurance details are held here: [\\grantafiles\admin\insurancedocumentation](file:///\\grantafiles\admin\insurancedocumentation)
* Fill the car with fuel before returning it to the rental company as they charge a premium for re-fuelling.  Expense the cost of fuel.

Own car use

* Granta does not carry car insurance – you need make sure you are insured while travelling on your employer’s business
* Current mileage rates are shown in the expense claim form.  These based on rates set by HMRC or your national tax authority and aim to cover the cost of insurance, wear and tear, and fuel.

Hotels & subsistence

* USA:
  + US Government GSA per diem rates are a useful guide to reasonable expenses within the USA: [www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21287](http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21287)
  + Courtyard Marriott, Hampton Inn, Holiday Inn Express is a rough approximation of acceptable hotel standard – typically in the region of $100/night.
* UK and Europe: hotels such as Travelodge, Premier Inn, Ibis or similar in Europe.
* Large cities (London, New York, Chicago, Tokyo, etc) are usually more pricey
* If attending a trade-show or a Granta seminar, then Marketing Department’s events manager will normally try to book a suitable hotel at preferential rates – check with Marketing.
* The company will reimburse small gifts when staying with friends and avoiding hotel charges.

General

* When paying an expense for multiple members of staff at once, it is good practice that the most senior pays and claims it on their expenses. (This avoids the beneficiary also being the approver.)
* The company will not normally reimburse parking, speeding, or other fines

Phone & communication:

* Reasonable use of mobile and landline phones on company business will be reimbursed though not for personal use. As a guideline, expenses for heavy travellers, making frequent international calls, etc should not be more than £50 ($80, 60€) per month.
* Use the third party services provided by Granta (see Grantadesignltd contacts in Outlook for details).
* If travelling in the US, Canada, France, Spain or Germany use the 800 number to make calls. See GrantaDesignLtd contacts in Outlook

*Got a good tip for this guide? Corrections? Please share it.* [*accounts@grantadesign.com*](mailto:accounts@grantadesign.com)

**How to Claim Expenses**

Expense claim form can be found:

1. In Excel under Office button>New>My templates... (you must be connected to the network and have Workgroup templates set up in your copy of word); or
2. \\grantafiles\Admin\Templates\Workgroup\Purchases & Expenses\EXPENSE CLAIM FORM 2012.xltm

Filing in the form:

* Use a separate form (worksheet) to separate major trips or events or projects (fine to bundle miscellaneous expenses on one form).
* Enter one line per receipt, in date order, with currency value and numbering receipts as you go
* Note other people you paid for in the description e.g. “Cambridge Chop House (PC, DC, RP, and two visitors from Honeywell)”
* Support all expenses by itemised receipts (not just the credit card slip) and attach receipts to the claim in date order.  Occasionally you may not be given a receipt, if that is the case then mark “no receipt” with brief reason why.
* For foreign currency claims, choose exchange rates to be representative and reasonable in the EXCHANGE RATE tab.  Rates that our greater than 3% from the mid-point rate at the time of the expenses should be explained and may be queried.  Mid-point rates can be obtained from many sites, for example [www.oanda.com](http://www.oanda.com).   Credit card rates are acceptable (if within range above); when using these rates supply your credit card statement as evidence and enter CC in the currency column.

Sign the form and submit it for signature approval by your manager.  Get it to the accounts department who will check it, make any necessary modifications, raise any queries, and pay it. Accounts aim to pay all expenses twice a month.

Expense claims should be submitted within 30 days from the return of your trip. For June expenses, we require them to be submitted by the end of the first week of July. Expenses over 90 days old will be paid at the discretion of the Company.

**MANAGERS – Signing off expense claims**

* Are expenses are reasonable and valid?
* Does the claim form seem to be filled in correctly?

Any questions? Ask your manager or the Accounts Team ([accounts@grantadesign.com](mailto:accounts@grantadesign.com))