

# **A University guide to Practice Placement Expenses for NHS Wales bursary students**

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## 1. Definition of Practice Placement Expenses

NHS Wales commissioned students who must undertake a practice placement as part of their course may be entitled to have the cost of journeys between their term-time residence and the practice placement site (which is not part of their university/college) reimbursed. These are known as Practice Placement Expenses. Any expenses claimed must be in line with the rules of the NHS Wales Bursary Scheme.

Practice placements involve training in hospitals, community health services or other relevant settings (in accordance with the profession being studied) rather than a classroom. The daily cost of travel to the practice placement site must be greater than the normal daily travel cost from the term-time residence to the university/college.

Students can also claim excess accommodation costs if, whilst on practice placement, they live away from their term-time address and are obliged to meet both the costs of their placement accommodation and of retaining their term-time accommodation.

Costs associated with placements overseas cannot be claimed.

### **Part time students**

Even though their bursary rate is calculated pro rata, part time students are entitled to the same practice placement expenses as a full time student.

## 2. Who is entitled to claim?

Students who have been awarded an NHS Wales bursary and also students that have chosen to fund themselves through student finance are entitled to claim Practice Placement Expenses. Students who have been awarded a bursary will receive a Notification of Award (NOA) which will outline the amount of bursary they will receive for the academic year.

## 3. Transport

### 3.1 General guidance

All students should use the cheapest form of transport available for their journeys, taking full advantage of any free and concessionary schemes. Students are expected to travel by public transport where it is reasonably practical to do so. If travelling by public transport they may claim the cost of their fares. Students must always use the most direct route available when travelling to and from their placement.

Where it is found that the purchase of a monthly/weekly pass will be cheaper than paying a daily return journey rate for the duration of the placement, the full monthly/weekly amount of the pass must be reimbursed.

Students will need to keep all receipts (i.e. bus/train tickets) and submit these with their claim form as proof of the journeys they have undertaken.

Students can make a claim for the difference between the cost of daily travel from the normal term-time accommodation to the practice placement site and back.

The cost of the daily return journey to the placement must be more than the cost of the daily return journey to the university.

#### Example A:

Term-time residence to normal place of study = £5.00 per day

Term-time residence to placement site = £4.00 per day

No claim is allowed as the cost of travelling to the placement does not exceed the normal daily travel costs to the place of study.

#### Example B:

Term-time residence to normal place of study = £6.00 per day

Term-time residence to placement site = £10.50 per day

A claim of £4.50 per day allowed. As the cost of travelling to the placement is greater than the normal daily travel cost, the difference between the two amounts can be claimed

#### Example C:

Term-time residence to normal place of study = £6.00 per day

Term-time residence to placement site = £6.00 per day

No claim is allowed as the cost of travelling to the placement does not exceed the normal daily travel costs to the place of study.

## 3.2 Use of motor vehicles

Students are expected to use public transport. If they choose to use their own motor vehicle they may only claim the cost of travelling by public transport where this is less than the appropriate mileage costs.

Students must always use the most direct route available when travelling to and from their placement.

When other cheaper forms of travel are unsuitable or unavailable for practice placement travel, students must gain agreement from their university, in advance of the placement, that their own motor vehicle can be used and this must be certified on any claims made by the student.

It is the student's responsibility to obtain confirmation from their insurers that they have adequate cover for all risks associated with the use of the motor vehicle whilst travelling to and from the placement. This should also cover carrying any passengers if the student will be taking other students with them.

Students travelling by private motor vehicle should be made aware that they do so at their own risk. The provision for reimbursement of the costs of travel by private motor vehicle do not constitute any acceptance of liability by their university, Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW), NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership (NWSSP) Students Awards Services (SAS) or any other NHS body for the risks arising from the use of the private motor vehicle concerned.

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If a student will also be driving other NHS funded students to the placement site, they may claim an extra amount per mile for each additional student. These students must also be eligible to claim placement travel expenses and the driver must be insured to carry passengers. The passenger's details, including their SAS reference number, will need to be provided.

Mileage cannot be claimed if a family member or partner drives the student to and/or from practice placements.

### Checking mileage claims

To confirm that a student is claiming the correct mileage for their practice placement journey students must state on the claim form which recognised route planner tool they used, such as, RAC, AA or Google maps. The route planner used should be noted on the claim form along with details of any change in the route taken e.g. due to road works/closures. Please check this route against what the student has stated before you approve the claim.

### 3.3 Car parking and tunnel/bridge tolls

Students may claim back the cost of car parking and tunnel/bridge tolls if, combined with their mileage, this makes the daily cost exceed the normal daily cost to university. Where this is the case students can make a claim for the difference. Receipts (electronic or paper) must be supplied by the student in order to claim these costs.

Car parking & tolls cannot be reimbursed where mileage is not being claimed.

### 3.4 Additional travel whilst on placement

Additional mileage/travel costs may be claimed if a student must travel to other clinical placement sites, and/or to patients' home addresses (if the student is not given free transport).

Any community mileage incurred must still exceed the cost of the student's daily mileage to and from their normal place of study. Community mileage on its own will not be reimbursed if it is not in excess.

#### Example A:

Daily travel to normal place of study = 35 miles per day

Community mileage plus mileage to and from placement site = 25 miles per day

No claim allowed as it is not in excess of the normal daily travel.

#### Example B:

Daily travel to normal place of study = 35 miles per day

Daily travel to placement site PLUS community mileage = 40 miles per day

A claim of 5 miles per day allowed.

### 3.5 Use of hire cars

The use of hire cars can only be claimed for if this was the only practical or the cheapest way of conducting the placement. If this is the case then the university must supply the student with a letter which officially certifies that this is the only practical or cheapest way of travelling to and from the placement. This should always be agreed with the student in advance of the placement. Receipts for the hire car must always be submitted to you with these claims.

When a hire car has been used students can only claim:

- the cost of hiring the car (receipts required)
- the cost of any petrol that the student has put into the car (receipts required)
- the cost of any car parking/tunnel tolls (receipts required)

Students cannot claim the mileage rate per mile when using a hire car.

### 3.6 Use of taxis

The use of taxi's can be considered by HEIs in in 'Extreme Circumstances'. 'Extreme circumstances' is defined as 'no public transport available and use of own transport is not an option when a student is required to attend an early or late shift on placement'. HEIs to advise HEIW of future placements where access to public transport can be problematic.

Where taxis are used not in 'extreme circumstances' the student will only be reimbursed at the public transport rate.

The university must supply the student with a letter which officially certifies that the use was unavoidable and has been agreed. This letter should also outline the reason why this method of transport was used. Receipts should always be submitted with these types of claims.

Students who have the use of a mobility car are expected to use this to travel to and from practice placements and claim the normal travel mileage rates. They will not be reimbursed for cost of taxis for these journeys.

The cost of air fares , refreshments, sleeper berths, phone calls and any other expenses which are related to the student's placement will not be reimbursed.

## 4. Accommodation costs

Accommodation costs can be claimed up to £65 per night, this limit is on a temporary basis and will be reviewed in November 2022.

Relevant proof must always be supplied to you in order to support accommodation claims. Universities should not process claims where evidence has not been provided. If for some reason a student cannot obtain the required proof then their claim cannot be considered.

If a student has to live away from their normal term-time accommodation during a period of practice placement, they may claim for the cost of any temporary accommodation on or near their practice placement site if it was not practical for them to travel there from their usual accommodation each day. As a rule of thumb students who are required to travel for more than an hour from their university base to access placement should be offered accommodation. A student may only claim for periods when they are undertaking a practice placement. Any breaks in the placement will not be reimbursed as dual accommodation costs only apply while the student is actually attending a placement.

However, if their temporary accommodation is their parental/family/own home, they will not be able to make a claim for their accommodation costs. In addition any periods where a student is not being charged for either of the places of accommodation cannot be claimed for.

Students may claim the cost of one weekly return journey between their normal term time accommodation and their temporary accommodation.

Students may also claim the cost of daily travel from their temporary accommodation to their placement site, provided the cost of that travel is greater than the cost of daily travel from their normal term time accommodation to their usual place of study.

Students must provide evidence of the cost of their temporary accommodation. This must show the name of the student, the address of where they stayed and the dates the stay covered. This information should be on an invoice, receipt or letter headed paper..

The University is able to book and pay the accommodation costs on behalf of the student and reclaim direct from HEIW in the normal way

Students cannot claim a higher rate of bursary whilst on practice placement.

## **5. How do students make a claim for practice placement expenses?**

### **5.1 Student responsibilities**

A claim form should then be submitted to the student's university or college with all required receipts and accommodation evidence (if applicable). Students should be advised to take a photocopy of their claim and all supporting evidence, as they will need to refer to this should any problems arise.

Claims must be submitted within 3 months of the last day of the placement or they will not be reimbursed. If a student submits a claim to the university outside of the time limit it should be returned to them and not processed.

### **5.2 University administrator responsibilities**

Once a claim form has been submitted by a student it must be checked in full by the university administrator to ensure that the most cost effective form of transport has been used and that the claim is accurate and in accordance with the practice placement experience undertaken and submitted on the latest version of the form available.

Once checked and verified, the claim should then be certified by reading, signing, stamping and dating the declaration.

If any changes are made to the student's claim by the university administrator, the student should be made aware of this, prior to their claim form being processed.

Please keep students informed of your timescales for submitting Practice Placement Expenses claim forms to manage their expectations of when their claim will be assessed and paid.