Association of British Neurologists

Travel Policy 2021
Foreword
Travel costs represent a significant cost to the Association of British Neurologists (ABN). Much of the ABN’s business is planned well in advance and it is good practice to seek, in advance, the best value fares and hotel rates.
This document provides guidelines and establishes procedures for members and guest speakers incurring travel and related expenses while on ABN business.
The ABN will reimburse all approved and reasonable expenditure incurred in undertaking ABN duties. The policy enables controlled reimbursement to take place and indicates the evidence and the authorisation required. Amendments to the policy, procedures and expense levels should only be made with Executive Committee approval.

The objectives of this policy are to:
- Provide timely reimbursements to members and guest speakers
- Control costs
- Prevent fraud
- Ensure that the ABN complies with its tax and legal obligations

It is the ABN Council’s responsibility (delegated to the Honorary Treasurer) to ensure that costs are controlled and that expenses cannot be deemed to be extravagant. To set firm limits for every eventuality will always be difficult and will never suit every occasion or circumstance for expense reimbursement.

The Charity Commission and HM Revenue and Customs require that all expense claims are appropriate, scrutinised and supported by receipts containing the details of the travel. We shall continue to meet this obligation.

Neil Robertson
Honorary Treasurer, ABN
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## Summary of fees and expenses

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| **3.1 Air**      | Economy fare booked in advance    | • Where car/train journey time would exceed 3 hours  
                        |                                   | • Ideally low cost carrier – EasyJet, RyanAir etc.  
                        |                                   | • Business class may exceptionally be funded on long haul by agreement with Treasurer. |
| **3.2 Rail**     | Standard class booked in advance  | • If overnight sleeper service then single cabin may be booked                                                                        |
| **3.3 Car fees** | 45p/mile toll and parking fees    | • Car permitted only when cheapest/most practical transport, and up to 50 miles only.  
                        |                                   | • Parking, toll and congestion charge fees will be reimbursed if travelling on ABN business. Fines will not be reimbursed. |
| **3.4 Taxi**     | Short trips up to 5 miles          | • Claimants may be asked to confirm that taxi is most cost effective or appropriate mode of transport for specific journey.             |
| **3.6 Hotel**    | Up to £125 B&B (UK out of London)  | • Most ABN meetings are scheduled to allow members to travel on same day as meeting so need for hotels limited.  
                        | Up to £180 B&B (London/International) | • Hotel permitted if train + hotel package is cheaper than advance rate day return peak train fare.  
                        |                                   | • ABN office can help to book hotels (020 7405 4060)  
                        |                                   | • Incidental expenses (drinks, videos, phone calls) will not be reimbursed. |
| **3.7 Lunch**    | off site £10                       | • Payable only on ABN business where lunch is not provided as part of meeting.                                                         |
| **3.8 Dinner**   | £35/day max                        | • Payable when overnight stay is required.                                                                                             |
| **3.9 Staying with friends** | £30/night        | • If staying with friends or relatives rather than hotel when travelling on ABN business.                                               |
| **3.10 Sundry**  | see main doc                       | • Cancellations, Excess baggage and vaccinations.                                                                                       |
| **3.11 UK Speakers’ fees and expenses** | No honoraria | Honoraria: ABN policy does not award honoraria to members speaking at ABN meetings. Fees for external speakers are not standard and must be agreed, as a rare exception, with Meetings Secretary & Treasurer.  
                        | Free reg on day of talk, reduced rate other days | • Registration: ABN members should ideally claim registration fees from employers. if not, members & other UK speakers pay no reg fee for day of talk and reduced rate for additional days.  
                        |                                   | • Travel: non ABN members see Travel points 3.1-3.10 above                                                                                |

For Overseas Speakers, check 3.12, Meeting bursaries, 3.13 and Travel bursaries 3.14
Introduction

Background

These expenses guidelines detail the expenses policy to be followed when reclaiming expenses from the Association of British Neurologists.

General principles

Travel and accommodation costs represent a significant annual cost to the ABN. Whilst video conferences have become the norm, face to face meetings remain the basis for a substantial proportion of ABN business.

Advance booking: Booking tickets in advance is highly recommended as longer rail and air journeys (typically over 90 minutes duration) can incur an enormous difference between the cost of travel on a pre-booked, off peak service and a fully flexible ticket purchased on the day of travel. Similar savings are possible with hotel accommodation, and the ABN is happy to book a hotel room if required and subject to availability.

Discount deals: The policy permits member and guest speakers to take advantage of deals linking first/business class travel with overnight hotel accommodation when the cost of such a deal does not exceed the cost of a pre-booked standard/economy day return fare at peak time.

Please note that accommodation claims must not exceed the maxima set out within the policy (see section 3.6). The ABN Office has been asked to check all claims and to authorise reimbursement as appropriate.

Receipts

Claimants are expected to retain evidence to support the expense claim and submit electronic copies/photos via the ABN online form. This should include the receipt or e-booking document as well as the ticket used. In some cases a print of the grid showing the range of fares available at the time of booking may be appropriate. Credit card receipts alone are insufficient. Claims with only receipts attached will not be reimbursed.

When more than one source of funding is being used for a particular journey, this should clearly be stated and the relevant proportion of the claim attributed to the ABN identified. If uncertain, the advice of the Treasurer should be sought in advance.

Authorisation

Claims should be entered on the ABN online form (link) identifying the meeting to which a particular claim applies. Claim forms should be submitted as soon as possible and certainly no later than three months after the event. Claims received after this interval may not be accepted.

All expense claims will be checked by the ABN Office to ensure that they comply with the guidance. Expenses that are within policy will require no approval. Retrospective reviews will be regularly performed on a sample of expenses claims and their related receipts to confirm compliance with policy.

Advice and Assistance

Any queries on particular claims should be directed to the Finance Administrator at the ABN Office. Alternatively, written queries may be directed to the Treasurer. Where a claimant is uncertain if a claim is acceptable, assistance should be sought BEFORE the cost is incurred.

Dawn Moore
Finance Administrator
Association of British Neurologists
27 Boswell Street
London WC1N 3JZ
dawn.moore@abn.org.uk
T: 020 7405 4060
Expenses Types

Air Travel

Domestic flights are permitted where the alternative journey time would exceed 3 hours or the cost is below that of rail travel.
All air fares should ideally be booked with a low cost carrier (eg Easy Jet, Ryanair etc).

- Economy air fares will normally be offered.
- Business travel is permitted on intercontinental journeys using the most economical fare.
- Part payment: Claimants may elect to pay the difference in order to travel by business or first class. In such cases, the relevant pre-booked economy fare should be identified in advance and agreed with the Treasurer so that the appropriate allowance can be determined.

Rail Travel

Rail tickets will normally be reimbursed at the rate applicable to advance purchase, standard class fare. If overnight sleeper services are used, then a single cabin may be booked.

Standard class vs First class deals: For long rail journeys, typically over 90 minutes, some advance purchase standard class fares for peak rate travel can exceed the combined cost of first class off-peak travel and linked hotel accommodation. In such cases claimants may request off-peak first-class travel and accommodation.

Peak rate services: due to the timings of many ABN meetings, travel on peak rate services will often be required. There is usually a saving to be made if these tickets are booked well in advance and it is often more cost effective to book two single tickets, ie for the outbound and return elements of travel, separately.

Pre-booked tickets: when a pre-booked ticket is arranged, the onus is on the claimant to use the ticket on the appropriate service. If the claimant elects to travel on an alternative service, the claimant will be expected to pay the difference, unless the change in plans was dictated by urgent ABN business. If a meeting appears to be running over time such that the member might miss a booked train, that member should bring this to the attention of the meeting chair as soon as possible. The chair will then be expected to permit that member to leave. Chairs should make every effort to keep to schedule.

Car Mileage

A car may be used on ABN business when this form of transport is the overall cheapest or most practical means of travel, and not further than 50 miles. Claimants may only use a private car for business purposes if they have full comprehensive insurance cover, specifically including use for business purposes. Car mileage will be reimbursed according to the ABN-approved rate (currently 45p per mile).

When more than one person is travelling in the car on approved ABN business, a single additional passenger rate of 5p per mile can be claimed by the driver of the vehicle. The names of those members travelling in the car must be stated on the claim. Long distance taxis should not be used.

Parking/Tolls and Congestion Charge

The ABN will reimburse parking and toll fees incurred on approved business travel where the cost of travel including the amount claimed for mileage is less than other forms of travel or where the car is the most practical means of travel.

Only standard daily Congestion and ULEZ charges are reclaimable via expenses, provided they are incurred whilst travelling on ABN business. The ABN will not pay any additional costs, eg where the driver omitted to pay the standard charge and was subsequently penalised.

Taxis

The ABN will reimburse the cost of taxis for short journeys of up to 5 miles within a town or city to facilitate transport where necessary between a mainline station/place of work/airport. Claimants may be asked to confirm that the use of a taxi is the most cost effective or appropriate means of conducting approved ABN business.
Most ABN committee and council meetings are timed to allow members to get to and from meetings in a single day. Accommodation claims are generally limited to one of the following situations:

- the claimant needs to stay overnight to attend another ABN meeting the following day
- a meeting is scheduled to start before 0930h or finish after 1900h.
- a meeting runs over several days.
- it is impractical to get to a meeting without travelling overnight.
- the combined cost of off-peak travel and hotel accommodation is less than that of an advance purchase ticket on peak time services, and the claimant chooses to exercise this option (see section 3.2 above).

**Hotel accommodation:** where applicable, will normally be reimbursed up to the following maxima per night, including B&B:

- outside London but in the UK: £125
- in London or International: £180

**Incidental expenses:** eg drinks, videos, telephone calls expenses incurred whilst staying in a hotel will not normally be reimbursed.

Room rates, particularly in London, fluctuate wildly so it is better to book as early as possible, or allow the ABN office to advise or book for you. Late deals, though possible, are not widely available in London. Because of varying room rates, it may not be possible to stay in your preferred hotel on any given night whilst remaining below the allowed maxima.

**ABN Preferred Hotel:**

- The Grange Whitehall Hotel [book via the ABN office]

**Lunch / Subsistence**

Meetings held at the ABN will normally have lunch provided so a claim will not normally arise. Where approved ABN work is being done on another site, a claim for a lunch allowance limited to the actual receipted expenditure up to a maximum of £10 per day will be allowed.

**Evening Meal**

Where an overnight stay is required (as in 3.3 above), the cost of an evening meal can be claimed up to a maximum of £35 per day.

**Stay with Friends / Relatives**

If staying with friends or relatives, rather than in a hotel, the maximum rate that can be paid is £30 per night for accommodation and evening meal. It is acceptable to claim for this stating the name and address of the person with whom you stayed. This statement is in lieu of a formal receipt.

**Sundries**

- **Cancellations:** Where claimants incur a cost from pre-booking a ticket to attend an ABN meeting and, for a legitimate reason have to cancel their attendance, they will be entitled to enter a claim to have the actual cost incurred repaid. This should be accompanied by a letter outlining the reason for cancellation. The Treasurer will need to be satisfied that the cancellation was reasonable.

- **Excess Baggage:** The ABN will only reimburse excess baggage costs which result from carrying equipment on behalf of the ABN.

- **Vaccinations:** The cost of receiving vaccinations required for overseas travel on behalf of the ABN can be reclaimed from the ABN.
**Speakers’ Expenses**

- **Honoraria:** It is the policy of the ABN Meetings Committee that honoraria are not given to members of the ABN speaking at ABN meetings. If an external speaker who requires a lecture fee is proposed, this must be discussed in advance, as a rare exception, with the Meetings Secretary and the Treasurer.

- **Eligibility:** The ABN may contribute to expenses incurred by invited speakers at its meetings. This does not extend to session chairs, poster discussants or participants in non-core sessions such as satellite symposia and Special Interest Group meetings.

- **Registration:**
  
  **UK speakers:** registration fees are waived for the day on which they are speaking and a discounted rate is available for those wishing to attend additional days. ABN members are asked to claim first via their employer if possible.
  
  **International speakers** will be offered free registration to the full meeting.

- **Travel and accommodation:**
  
  **Non member and international** speakers
  
  Travel expenses will be paid in line with criteria detailed in 3.1-3.5

  Accommodation: speakers may request that one night’s accommodation costs (or exceptionally costs incurred instead of an overnight stay which facilitate an early start and so enable them to attend an early session) be covered up to the maxima defined in 3.6 above if:
  
  a) the speaker is attending purely to present and will not be attending the meeting for additional days and/or
  
  b) it is impractical to get to the meeting in time for their session without travelling overnight (typically if asked to present at a session which starts before 0930h or finishes after 1900h).

  **UK based ABN member speakers**
  
  a) **Annual meeting:** members cover their own travel and accommodation costs or claim from their employing authority, on the assumption that they would be attending the meeting even if they were not speaking.
  
  b) **Autumn meeting** and other 1 day speaking events: ABN will cover travel and accommodation expenses, as detailed for non-member and international speakers above, recognising that the members invited to speak at such meetings are less likely to attend routinely unless as a speaker.

**International Speakers**

Invited international speakers can add to the prestige and the scientific value of a meeting. However, this usually comes at a significant cost. As a general principle, international speakers and eponymous lecturers should be invited to offer ‘added value’ over and above the invited lecture, perhaps by hosting a seminar or by giving a short lecture programme. Meeting organisers should be aware of this when considering whom to invite and advise the Meetings secretary and the Treasurer accordingly.

**Meeting Bursaries**

Meeting bursaries are available for ABN members and apply only to specific international meetings identified by the ABN Executive Committee. Applicants should be established members for at least 2 years before applying. Those applying for a bursary should note that this includes the following:

- economy airfare
- economy travel to and from the airport (by means of public transport; taxis should ideally be avoided)
- bed & breakfast accommodation for the duration of the meeting ONLY
Bursaries up to £750 should be requested in advance of travel via the ABN office. Costs will be reimbursed once the member has returned to the UK. It is important to keep all receipts and tickets.

Travel Bursaries

Travel bursaries are available for ABN members only. Applicants should be established members for at least 2 years before applying. The ABN supports up to 5 applications per annum (£1,000 maximum per application) to facilitate educational and research visits to developing countries. Successful applicants are required to submit a formal report of their visit and where appropriate present research at the ABN’s scientific meetings.

Applications with itemised costing and details of the planned visit should be sent to the ABN Office.

Applications for awards will be reviewed twice a year in the first week of January and July and successful applicants notified shortly after. Please note, we are unable to provide bursaries for international meeting attendance except those covered in 3.13 above.