

I n f o r m a t i o n on business trips and business errands

This information sheet provides answers to the most frequently asked questions regarding business trips and business errands. Further information is available from the HR Division. Questions regarding liability issues when using a private car for a business errand or business trip may be addressed to the university's legal department on ext. 2608.

1. What is a business trip?

A business trip is a journey to and from a location outside the normal place of work for business or work purposes. Business trips are usually assigned or approved in writing by the relevant supervisor/line manager or administrative unit.

2. What is a business errand?

A business errand is a short journey undertaken for business or work purposes outside the normal place of work, e.g. to a destination between the Saarbrücken campus and the Homburg campus. Business errands are assigned or approved beforehand (often orally) by the relevant supervisor/line manager or administrative unit.

3. What conditions have to be met for a business trip or business errand to be assigned or approved?

A business trip or errand can only be approved if it is necessary in order to carry out a specific, directly work-related activity. A business trip or errand is deemed necessary only when the purpose of the trip or errand cannot be achieved by other means (e.g. by phone or written correspondence).

If the reasons for travelling are not solely work-related, the university will normally only reimburse part of the travel-related costs incurred. In such cases, the university will cover up to 50% of the daily (per diem) allowance, up to 50% of accommodation costs and no more than the price of a second-class Deutsche Bahn rail ticket.

Sufficient financial means must be available to cover the costs of a business trip or errand. By specifying the travel funding source for the proposed business trip/errand, the approving party confirms that sufficient funds are available. If the supervisor or line manager approving the business trip/errand is not also the fund administrator, the fund administrator must also countersign the approval to acknowledge that funding will be provided for the proposed business trip/errand.

4. Who is responsible for approving a business trip or business errand?

Generally, business travel requests will be approved by the immediate supervisor or line manager or by the relevant authorized person.

Exceptions: If approval is sought for multiple business trips or business errands to be undertaken within a certain space of time, or if the business trip or errand is to be undertaken by personnel from the university's central administration, approval requests must be submitted to the Office of the Vice-President for Administration and Finance.

Business trips to areas of conflict may only be assigned or approved if the business trip is deemed absolutely necessary. The website of the Federal Foreign Office (www.auswaertiges-amt.de) provides information on countries experiencing conflict and special security advice.

Approval is not required for business trips or business errands undertaken by full university professors, junior professors or senior academic staff qualified to professorial level (*Hochschuldozenten*). It is strongly recommended that prior to undertaking a business trip or business errand, documentation pertaining to the proposed business travel is submitted to the Vice-President for Administration and Finance, as this ensures that the proposed business trip/errand is covered by the university's accident insurance policy.

5. When and how do I submit a business travel request?

As of 10 January 2022, business trip applications/applications for partial payment can only be submitted digitally via the Sepia portal: <https://www.personal.uni-saarland.de>

Instructions can be found in the Sepia portal.

6. What information do I need to provide in my business travel request?

To determine whether the approval criteria for a business travel request have been met and to estimate the likely magnitude of the travel costs, all fields in the attached business travel request form must be completed. Fill in the form as accurately as possible, paying particular attention to your travel destination, the route to be taken and the start and (expected) end of your trip/errand. By complying with these requirements, you will save yourself and others from unnecessary additional questions and avoid the inconvenience of further discussions and negotiations when claiming travel expenses.

7. What modes of transport can I use for my business trip or errand?

As travel expenses will only be reimbursed for the most cost-efficient means of transport, we recommend that you use the most economic means of travel for your business trip/errand. In most cases, this will involve travelling by rail. All available rail discounts (e.g. BahnCard, group saver fares) must be used.

Air travel may be approved for a business trip or business errand if this is justified by the destination or is necessary for special work-related reasons or for compelling personal reasons. Please specify why you want to use air travel when completing the business travel request form.

The person responsible for approving a business travel request may consent to the use of a private car for the proposed business trip/errand only if reasonable grounds exist, e.g. lower overall cost of travel. These reasons must be stated in a clear and understandable manner on the form (e.g. substantial reduction in the time spent away from the normal place of work, savings on accommodation costs, car sharing with other persons undertaking university business travel, transportation of equipment). Typically, the use of a private car is considered an option only when the business trip or errand involves destinations that are less than 100 km away.

Full university professors, junior professors and senior academic staff qualified to professorial level (*Hochschuldozenten*) may decide for themselves whether there are good reasons for using a private car for their business trips/errands.

8. What cover is provided if a private car is damaged on a business trip or errand?

In the event that a private car, whose use for a business trip/errand is justified and has been approved, is damaged while being used for business travel, liability shall be limited to any resulting reduction in the no-claims bonus plus any excess payment associated with an existing comprehensive insurance policy up to a total amount not exceeding €330.00. It is assumed that the car insurance policy provides cover of at least €100m.

Please note that if you are involved in a traffic accident, you must report the accident to the police without delay. This is essential in order for any material damage claim to be processed.

If the use of a private car is not justified, its use will not be approved. You may nevertheless still choose the means of transport for the proposed journey. If a private car is used for a business trip or business errand despite its use not being approved, the car owner shall bear all risk of loss and damage to the vehicle.

9. What do I need to consider when claiming business travel expenses?

NOTE: Submission deadlines are final! All claims for business travel expenses (including business trips for which a travel advance was paid) must be submitted via the Sepia portal within a period of six months. This period is non-extendable and begins the day after the date on which the business trip or business errand ends.

Please ensure that the information you provide on the travel expenses claim form is complete and correct. By providing all of the required information in full, you can avoid further questions and thus expedite reimbursement of your travel expenses.

10. Business trips and business errands: The key points in brief

- **Business travel requests** must be submitted via the Sepia portal: <https://www.personal.uni-saarland.de>
- **Claims for business travel expenses** must also be submitted via the Sepia portal.

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- If you are travelling abroad and have statutory health insurance cover, you are strongly advised to contact your health insurance provider and enquire whether you need to take out additional health insurance cover for foreign business travel. For further information, please contact the HR Division (Ms. Scherer, ext. 6646)
- If you plan to travel to a country or countries with an extreme climate or where there is a risk of infection, please contact the occupational medical officer in Saarbrücken or Homburg well before your planned date of travel (website of the Occupational Medical Service of Saarland University).