SGSSS Expenses Policy
Including travel, accommodation, Internship, and other expenses

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1. Scope
1.1 This policy applies to the rules on claiming travel, accommodation, subsistence and other expenses incurred in connection with SGSSS purposes.
1.2 The policy applies to all students (currently completing a PhD in the social sciences at a Scottish higher education institution (HEI)). The policy also applies to academic participants in SGSSS events, meetings and training.
1.3 This policy applies to all expenditure not related to the individual funding status of the student. For information related to funding status, please contact your funding body.
1.4 For the avoidance of doubt, this policy supersedes any other SGSSS guidance on claiming expenses.
1.5 The policy will be reviewed annually from September 2019. The updated policy will be published on the SGSSS website and GradHub.

Summary
- Expenses can be claimed by any social science doctoral student at any Scottish HEI that is part of the SGSSS.
- ESRC funded students should claim using the RTSG form
- Expenses can only be claimed where a place has been confirmed at the SGSSS event prior to attending, and the student has attended the event.
- Students can only claim travel where they have travelled more than 30 miles from their home address and the university where their doctoral research is registered.
- Students should use the lowest cost public transport they can find. Exceptions to this require exceptional circumstances and must be agreed by SGSSS before the event. Exceptional circumstances may include an impairment or disability; or caring responsibilities.
- Internship expenses must be claimed via the student’s institution.
- All claims for expenses should be made within three months of the expense being incurred through our online claim form (accessed via www.sgsss.ac.uk/expenses).
- We do not anticipate any claims for subsistence as food and drink is normally provided for SGSSS events.
- Please contact team@sgsss.ac.uk if you have any questions.
2. Principles

2.1 Responsibility for compliance with this policy rests with staff or students making claims for the reimbursement of expenses and their approving budget holder, whether that is SGSSS or an HEI, on behalf of SGSSS.

2.2 The SGSSS assumes no obligation to reimburse expenses claims that are not compliant with this policy.

2.3 The SGSSS will reimburse claimants for expenses which they wholly, necessarily and exclusively incur in the course of official SGSSS purposes. Only actual costs which are incurred as part of SGSSS purposes will be reimbursed. Items of a personal nature which are urgently required on work-related travel will not be reimbursed unless there are exceptional circumstances.

3. Individual Responsibility

3.1 This policy attempts to assist claimants and authorisers to understand what can and cannot be claimed for and what is considered reasonable. In the interests of value for money and to support the appropriate use of public funds, claimants are expected to be prudent in their spending. Authorisers are required to be diligent in their review and approval of expenses to avoid the SGSSS incurring any unnecessary expense.

3.2 Claimants and authorisers must aim to ensure that economy, efficiency and effectiveness are achieved in respect of all expenses incurred without compromising personal safety.

4. Attendance at Events

4.1 Claiming Travel Expenses (Events)

4.1.1 Travel pertaining to the conditions below can be claimed by any social science doctoral student at any Scottish HEI that is part of the SGSSS: Aberdeen; Abertay; Dundee; Edinburgh; Glasgow; Glasgow Caledonian (GCU); Heriot-Watt (HWU); Highlands & Islands (UHI); Napier; Queen Margaret (QMU): Robert Gordon (RGU); St. Andrews; Scotland’s Rural College (SRUC); Strathclyde; Stirling; West of Scotland (UWS).

4.1.2 Travel can only be claimed to attend an SGSSS event (including Advanced Training; Spring into Methods; Business Booster; Pathway Training; Hub Festivals; Summer School; Induction; Student Symposium and Impact Showcase) where a place has been confirmed at the event prior to attending, and the student has attended the event.

4.1.3 Student Representatives may also claim for travel expenses when attending meetings and events where they have been invited on SGSSS business (see 6. Student Representation).

4.1.4 Students can only claim travel where they have travelled more than 30 miles from their home address and the university where their doctoral research is registered.

4.1.5 It is generally expected that claims will be from an address near to where the doctoral research is registered. Exceptions to this are for part-time students or those who may be undertaking an internship or other activity. If the address is outside Scotland, permission must be sought prior to making a claim.
4.1.6 Students should use the lowest cost public transport they can find. Exceptions to this require exceptional circumstances and students are expected to contact team@sgsss.ac.uk before the event to confirm we are happy to fund the exception. Exceptional circumstances may include an impairment or disability; or caring responsibilities.

4.1.7 Mileage may be claimed for only if the option of public transport is not viable for the individual. Mileage will be paid at HRMC rates, however a fuel receipt must be provided. Reasons must be provided for this in advance to the SGSSS and will be reviewed on a case by case basis. It is likely that students will be required to car-pool to use this transport solution.

4.1.8 ESRC funded students should make their expenses claim through RTSG. Any funds used towards SGSSS events will not count toward your £750 RTSG allocation.

4.1.9 All other students should make their claim through our online form.

4.1.10 Claimants should submit expense claims within three months of the expense being incurred unless an acceptable reason for delay has been provided.

4.2 Claiming Accommodation Expenses (Events)

4.2.1 Accommodation pertaining to the conditions below can be claimed by any social science doctoral student at any Scottish HEI part of the SGSSS: Aberdeen; Abertay; Dundee; Edinburgh; Glasgow; Glasgow Caledonian (GCU); Heriot-Watt (HWU); Highlands & Islands (UHI); Napier; Queen Margaret (QMU); Robert Gordon (RGU); St. Andrews; Scotland's Rural College (SRUC); Strathclyde; Stirling; West of Scotland (UWS).

4.2.2 Accommodation can only be claimed to attend an SGSSS event that lasts for multiple consecutive days (for example Spring into Methods; Pathway Training; Hub Festivals; Summer School); where a place has been confirmed at the event prior to attending, and the student has attended the event.

4.2.3 If accommodation is provided or organised by SGSSS then this should be used before finding alternative accommodation.

4.2.4 In addition to clause 4.2.2 students can only claim accommodation where they have travelled 30 miles from their home address and the university where their doctoral research is registered.

4.2.5 Students should use the lowest cost accommodation they can find. **SGSSS will only fund accommodation up to a maximum of £65 per night.** Exceptions to this require exceptional circumstances and students are expected to contact team@sgsss.ac.uk before the event to confirm we are happy to fund the exception. Exceptional circumstances may include an impairment or disability.

4.2.6 ESRC funded students should make their expenses claim through RTSG. Any funds used towards SGSSS events will not count toward your £750 RTSG allocation.

4.2.7 All other students should make their claim through our online form.

4.2.8 Claimants should submit expense claims within three months of the expense being incurred unless an acceptable reason for delay has been provided.
4.3 Travel & Accommodation for SGSSS Purposes (Academic & Professional Services Staff)

4.3.1 We do not typically reimburse academic or professional services staff from member HEIs attending SGSSS events and meetings (e.g. Pathway Convenors Group, HEI Admin Network, Dean’s Network, Supervisory Board) as the time they spend in support of the SGSSS has been donated by their institutions and therefore we would anticipate that any travel related expenses also be covered by their HEI.

4.3.2 However, if academic or professional services staff from member HEIs are invited to speak at an SGSSS event or deliver a workshop, they may claim for travel expenses via our online form following the guidance provided for students above. Please note colleagues from the University of Edinburgh should make an expense claim as normal through e-Expenses and claim it back from SGSSS via internal transfer.

5. Internship Expenses

The SGSSS wants to ensure that students are not subject to greater expense by undertaking an internship; for example - by having to pay rent in two places at the same time.

5.1 Students can claim up to a maximum of £2,400 (for a 3 month internship arranged through SGSSS) to cover all reasonable travel and accommodation costs for the period of the internship. For example, commuting or relocation costs. Claiming Travel Expenses (Internships)

5.1.1 ESRC funded students should make their claim through RTSG. Any funds used towards SGSSS internships will not count toward your £750 RTSG allocation.

5.1.2 All other students undertaking an internship should submit claims for travel expenses to their own institution and NOT via SGSSS. The institution will reimburse expenses on behalf of the SGSSS.

5.1.3 Expenses that can be claimed are the costs of necessary travel between the student’s home address (i.e. where you ordinarily reside during your PhD studies) and the registered site of the internship. It is normally expected that any travel expenses incurred during the course of business (e.g. travelling to business meetings or events) should be negotiated with the host.

5.1.4 Students should use the lowest cost public transport they can find. Exceptions to this require exceptional circumstances and students are expected to contact their institution before the event to confirm they are happy to fund the exception. Exceptional circumstances may include an impairment or disability; or caring responsibilities.

5.1.5 If students require a large, upfront payment in order to purchase a travel season ticket that is more economical, the student is required to submit a cost projection to their institution with a screenshot of the ticket price. Once the ticket is purchased, a receipt must be provided to the institution for auditing purposes.

5.1.6 Students must provide proof of purchase for all travel. Expenses will not be reimbursed without this.
5.1.7 Mileage may be claimed for only if the option of public transport is not viable for the individual. Reasons must be provided for this to the institution and will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

5.1.8 For the avoidance of doubt, Internship travel costs can cover:
- If relocating, one trip to the region of the internship at the beginning of the internship, or
- Commuting to and from your place of work if you have not arranged accommodation close by
- Air travel to the region of the internship at the beginning of the internship, providing that it is less expensive (including all airport taxes, etc.) than the equivalent off-peak single train fare
- If relocated, one trip home at the end of the internship
- Air travel to home at the end of the internship, providing that it is less expensive (including all airport taxes, etc.) than the equivalent off-peak single train fare
- Travel expenses will be negotiated depending on the individual student’s needs

5.2 Claiming Accommodation Expenses (Internships)
5.2.1 ESRC funded students should make their claim through RTSG. Any funds used towards SGSSS internships will not count toward your £750 RTSG allocation.

5.2.2 All other students undertaking an internship should submit claims for accommodation to their own institution and NOT via SGSSS. The institution will reimburse expenses on behalf of the SGSSS.

5.2.3 Accommodation costs will be reimbursed to students for whom relocation is necessary in order to undertake the internship.

5.2.4 Students who require to relocate for the duration of the internship must secure reasonable accommodation independently. Accommodation will only be covered if it is a reasonable amount and necessary.

5.2.5 The size of accommodation rented should be reasonable for one person. Ideally, students should be looking to rent one room in a shared house, a studio or a one bedroom flat.

5.2.6 For the avoidance of doubt, Internship accommodation costs will only cover monthly rent and will not cover:
- Deposits
- Furniture hire
- Bills such as phone, internet and television license (unless these are already included within your rental package)
- Accommodation if you are staying with relatives
- Excessive accommodation costs (i.e. amounts deemed by the SGSSS to be unreasonable)
- Excessive accommodation (e.g. a two bedroom house/flat for one person)
- Council tax (students should not be paying council tax)

5.2.5 If you are intending to rent accommodation whilst on the internship, you will need to send a signed copy of your tenancy agreement to your institution as early as possible in order for the accommodation costs to be reimbursed. This will be paid out in a lump sum by your institution. You must have a formal tenancy agreement in place, which
states the names of the landlord and tenant, the subjects of the lease (address of the let), how much rent will be charged and the term/duration of the lease.

5.3 Claiming Additional Childcare Expenses (Internships)
5.3.1 For those who have children it is reasonable for them to be able to claim for costs related to childcare that is additional as a result of participating in the scheme (i.e. additional costs directly related to scheme participation, not costs that they would have carried anyway). Costs will be reimbursed as long as childcare is booked with a registered scheme/ care supplier etc. and on provision of receipts or invoices etc.

6. Student Representation
6.1 Attendance at SGSSS Events (Reps)
6.1.1 Student representatives (Reps) attending an SGSSS function in their capacity as a Student Rep will be able to submit an expense claim for all reasonable travel on SGSSS business via the online form. Receipts must be provided as proof of purchase.
6.1.2 Reps should use the lowest cost public transport they can find. Exceptions to this require exceptional circumstances and Reps are expected to contact team@sgsss.ac.uk before the event to confirm they are happy to fund the exception. Exceptional circumstances may include an impairment or disability; or caring responsibilities.
6.1.3 Reps can book accommodation if they are required to attend multiple consecutive days around an event. **SGSSS will only fund accommodation up to a maximum of £65 per night.**
6.1.4 Reps who require accommodation for single day events must seek the approval of the SGSSS Associate Director-Student Experience. This will only be granted in exceptional circumstances (e.g. a Rep is based in Aberdeen and an event in Glasgow finishes in the evening).

7. Subsistence
We do not anticipate any claims for subsistence while attending an SGSSS event. Food and drink is normally provided for extended events. If breakfast is included in an accommodation rate and is within the £65 maximum, this will be covered.

8. Any Other Expenses
8.1 Additionally we do not anticipate any other expenses; however, we are open to hear of exceptional circumstances and will make a decision on an individual basis.

9. University of Edinburgh Students and Staff
9.1 University of Edinburgh students and staff should also refer to the University of Edinburgh Expenses Policy (University of Edinburgh Expenses Policy).