

University of Erlangen-Nürnberg • Postfach 3520 • 91023 Erlangen, Germany

To
All organisational units at FAU (including ZUV)
(not Universitätsklinikum)

The Chancellor

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Your reference:
Your letter from
Our reference: P 1 – 141 - 01
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Reducing the backlog of claims at the Travel Expenses Office

Dear colleague,

For several years, the number of business trips taken by FAU employees has been growing continuously, however the number of employees processing claims has not. The problems presented in processing the backlog at the Travel Expenses Office have partly been intensified in the past by legitimate absences, which has led to longer processing times, currently of up to several months.

As the processing times are no longer feasible for all parties concerned, several measures will be taken to simplify the process, commencing on 1 October 2015, which we would like to explain to you in this letter.

1. Reorganisation of the Travel Expenses Office:

For improved cover during absences and specialisation in different types of expenses claims, the Travel Expenses Office staff will be reorganised into the following working groups:

International journeys (zuv-P1-ausland@fau.de):

Heike Bachmann	Phone: +49 9131 8570266	heike.bachmann@fau.de
Michael Geyer	Phone: +49 9131 8570272	michi.geyer@fau.de

Domestic journeys (zuv-P1-inland@fau.de):

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Business journey approval/external claims (zuv-P1-externe-genehmigungen@fau.de):

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2. Telephone availability

Following the positive reception of specific telephone contact times elsewhere at the University, this measure will also be introduced at the Travel Expenses Office in the University Administra-

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Room No. 02.010

tion. This will ensure the administrative staff are able to process travel expenses claims without interruption. To help manage the backlog of existing claims, telephone availability will initially be restricted to the absolute minimum of two hours per day (Monday to Friday between 9.00 a.m. and 11.00 a.m).

3. Revision of travel expenses claim forms

The Travel Expenses Office has revised and simplified the forms for approval of business journeys and travel expense claims

[\(http://www.zuv.fau.de/einrichtungen/personalabteilung/handbuch-personal/dienstreisen/formulare/\)](http://www.zuv.fau.de/einrichtungen/personalabteilung/handbuch-personal/dienstreisen/formulare/)

and published them online in the employee handbook. I would greatly appreciate your cooperation in only using the new forms from now on. Please understand that the Travel Expenses Office team may ask you to complete a new form if they have to query any details which are unclear from using the previous forms, otherwise we will face higher costs and longer processing times.

4. Relief for organisational units (chairs and institutes) by processing their own travel expenses claims

The circular from the Chancellor dated 2 November 2011 announced that all FAU organisational units can process travel expenses for business journeys funded by third-party funding (identified by classification numbers (Anordnungsstellennummer) starting with 7 or 8) themselves as long as they are authorised to use this third-party funding for expenses and assume the responsibility for processing the claim correctly under the Bayerisches Reisekostengesetz (Bavarian Travel Expenses Act).

To help address the backlog of travel expense claims, all FAU organisational units will **additionally be permitted to process all travel expenses claims themselves during the period from 1 October 2015 to 30 April 2016**, including journeys financed by state funds subject to the above restriction (**assuming the responsibility for legal compliance in processing the travel expense claims correctly**).

Due to legal restrictions, all travel expenses claim forms which are subject to taxation including daily allowances, overnight stays, third-party catering and participation fees must still be submitted in copy to the Travel Expenses Office after processing by the organisational unit to ensure that tax relevant items are calculated and forwarded to the Landesamt für Finanzen.

5. Completeness of travel expenses claim forms

All employees who have travel expenses claims can help to reduce the backlog. I kindly request that all employees with travel expenses claims sign the forms and include the original documents required for processing. Only complete forms help us to avoid time-consuming queries, additional research or, in the worst case, sending claims back to the applicant for correction.

6. Improving processing times

To process claims more quickly, especially claims which require extensive verification, we have introduced simplified provisions. For journeys which take place from **1 October 2015**, the following provisions will apply.

6.1 Cost comparison (flights/train journeys)

6.1.1 Combining business and private journeys:

The Bavarian Travel Expenses Act (Bayerisches Reisekostengesetz) stipulates that in case of travel by air and a combined business and private journey, a cost comparison of the price of the flight without the private stay must be submitted in addition to the actual cost of the flight **at the time the journey is considered for approval**.

The cost of the flight will only be reimbursed to a maximum of the comparison price. We ask for your understanding that without the cost comparison, we can only reimburse a maximum of 50% of the flight price as it is not possible to compare the price after the journey and there is no other method for determining the difference between the cost of the required business flight and personal travel. An offer printed from the internet is sufficient evidence. The circular from 22 October 2013 regarding combining business and private journeys still applies

(http://www.zuv.fau.de/einrichtungen/personalabteilung/handbuch-personal/dienstreisen/formulare/RS_Verbindung_privateReisen_Dienstreisen.pdf).

We also ask for your understanding that we are required to follow these legal requirements strictly as especially the combination of private and business journeys receive close scrutiny from the Bavarian State Parliament and Court of Auditors and, above all, we are required to conserve limited public resources as a public institution.

6.1.2. Starting or ending the business journey at a location other than the place of employment from Monday to Friday between 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m.

We are also required to request a cost comparison for flights or train journeys which start or end at a location other than the place of employment. The cost of the journey will only be reimbursed to a maximum of the comparison price. Without a cost comparison, only a maximum of 50% of the price of the flight or train journey may be reimbursed. An offer printed from the internet is sufficient evidence. It is not possible to determine a cost comparison after the journey.

6.2 Sharing rooms with others who are not part of the business journey

If you are travelling with other people who are not part of the business journey and you have booked a larger room, you must provide a cost comparison for a single room at the accommodation. The accommodation costs will only be reimbursed to a maximum of the comparison price. Once again, only a maximum of 50% of the price of the accommodation may be reimbursed without a cost comparison. An offer printed from the internet is sufficient evidence.

6.3 Using car rental refuelling services

If you use car rental refuelling services which cost more than average fuel prices, reimbursements will be recalculated using the average price for petrol or diesel published by the ADAC at <https://www.adac.de/infotestrat/tanken-kraftstoffe-und-antrieb/kraftstoffpreise/kraftstoff-durchschnittspreise/default.aspx>. We ask for your understanding in this matter to help conserve limited public resources.

7. Existing options for reducing financial pressure on employees

As the long processing times for travel expenses claims can cause unacceptable financial hardship for employees, organisational units can offer partial reimbursement of travel expenses to the employee to avoid this. This requires that the business journey has been approved and not yet begun.

8. Further measures

The Landesamt for Finanzen is currently piloting the BayRMS IT system. This online application which was designed for the Bavarian government will enable employees to file travel expenses

claims and approval requests to the Travel Expenses Office online and the data can be transferred to the accounting system BayRKS which is already used in the Travel Expenses Office. As soon as the BayRMS application has been tested successfully, the University Administration, the General Staff Council and the Data Protection Officer will work towards the goal of introducing the BayRMS application at FAU. Combining journey approval and travel expenses claim processes will help to accelerate both processes.

We hope that the measures we are now implementing and the planned introduction of an IT-supported approval and travel expenses processing system will drastically reduce processing times. The Travel Expenses Office aims to reduce the processing time for travel expenses claims to four to six weeks within the next year.

Kind regards,

Dr. Sybille Reichert