



UCL

University College London

Foreign Advance Policy and Procedures

Updated June 2019

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Foreign Advances are available for overseas travel on behalf of UCL where other means of paying for the trip are not available. Staff may apply for foreign currency, traveller's cheques or for the sterling equivalent to be paid directly into their bank account. In general, staff should reclaim expenditure through the expenses procedure, in line with [UCL's expenses policy](#), with [hotels and other travel costs](#) being paid in advance through accounts payable. Staff making regular trips overseas on behalf of UCL may find it beneficial to hold a [UCL Corporate Card](#).
- 1.2. All advance applications are subject to departmental authorisation and Financial Services Office approval and must be made on the appropriate form. Applications can only be made by staff that are currently paid via UCL's Payroll. The liability for the advance remains with the member of staff who has taken out the claim.

2. Documentation Required & Additional Information

- 2.1. Where a member of staff requires currency or travellers cheques Departments should complete a Travel Service Application form indicating the value and type of currency or travellers cheques required plus an [Application for Foreign Advance Form](#) (FSO RA). If currency is not required then funds will be paid directly into their bank account and only the Foreign Advance form needs to be completed.
- 2.2. The application must be completed in full, providing the following details:
 - Department name
 - Organisation Number
 - Staff Member's name (Payee)
 - Total amount of advance
 - The Project and the Award numbers that the funds will be posted to
 - Full details of the advance, costing and supporting documentation of the grant if applicable
 - Closure date - within 2 weeks of the return date to UCL
 - Destination/s and Dates of travel, to and from
 - Signed by a departmental authorised signatory with the appropriate authorisation level
 - Payee's signature, UCL payroll and UPI numbers and email address
- 2.3. Once completed, the authorised Foreign Advance Form along with the completed Travel Service Application form (if applicable) should be taken/sent to the Financial Services Office (FSO), 1st floor, Bidborough House. If any of the documentation is incomplete or incorrect it will be returned to the department unprocessed.
- 2.4. The advance will be processed within 2 working days of receipt by the FSO and will then be sent to either Accounts Payable for processing via staff bank accounts or the FSO will order the currency/travellers cheques via Barclays Bank, Tottenham Court Road.
- 2.5. The FSO will now complete the General Expenses form instead of the department as all advances will now be paid from a Central Finance Account.
- 2.6. The advance should be for meals and other sundry expenses only. All flights and accommodation should be pre booked prior to travel using UCL's preferred travel

provider and paid for in advance by the department and therefore should not be included in the request for an advance.

3. Advance Reconciliation

- 3.1. Receipts must be received from the department by the agreed closure date in order to clear the advance. All receipts should be grouped together in separate expenditure types (meals/travel/accommodation etc) with the relevant codes for each provided. e.g.
 - Project Number (6 digits)
 - Task Number (3/5 digits)
 - Award Number (6 digits)
 - Expenditure Type (5 digits)
- 3.2. These will be reviewed, processed and closed within seven working days provided correct documentation, including receipts are submitted.
- 3.3. Once the FSO have agreed the totals and validated the accounts codes provided we will then debit the department's account/s by IDJ to clear our Central Finance Account which will then close the advance.
- 3.4. Where queries arise or additional information is required, departments will be emailed in the first instance and requested to provide the information. Where this is not forthcoming, departments and the individual staff member will be informed in writing by formal letter of the requirement to provide information.
- 3.5. If funds remain unspent from an advance, these must be repaid to UCL. Foreign currency should be converted back to sterling (proof of exchange rate must be provided) and travellers cheques should be dated, authorised by the payee and made payable to UCL. These should then be deposited with the FSO who will complete the appropriate paperwork to clear the advance.
- 3.6. If funds are spent in excess of the advance received then a [General Expenses Form](#) should be completed with the appropriate breakdowns of expenditure along with their corresponding account codes and forwarded to the FSO along with all advance paperwork. Once checked and authorised the paperwork will be sent to Accounts Payable for processing.
- 3.7. Reminders will be issued once a week after the closure date to the member of staff to whom the advance was made. Where no information is provided within three weeks of the agreed closure date, the staff member and department will be issued with a final request of expenditure. No further advances will be issued while a previous advance is outstanding.
- 3.8. If the advance is not cleared in a timely manner, UCL will seek to retrieve the sum advanced via the staff payroll and all future requests made by that member of staff will be denied.
- 3.9. Heads of Department/School Finance Directors will be notified on a regular basis of staff who have outstanding advances.
- 3.10. If a department has an excess number of advances which have not been cleared, Finance and Business Affairs has the discretion to refuse any further advances to that department.