Policy Title	Members and Volunteer Expense Policy
Policy Owner & Author	BGA Honorary Treasurer
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Table of Contents

1. Introduction

1.1. Eligibility

This policy sets out the rules governing the reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses for BGA members and other volunteers when are engaged on BGA business.

The following groups are eligible to reclaim expenses under this policy:

- Executive Committee Members:
  - Trustees (Chair, Vice-Chair, Elected Members);
  - Honoraria (Secretary, Treasurer, Communications Officer);
  - Immediate Past-Chair;
  - Co-Opted Members;
  - Honorary BGA Members;
- Speakers & Presenters invited to present at BGA events (e.g., Touring Lecture);
- Finalists of the Cooling Prize Competition;
- Successful applicants of the BGA Knowledge Support Fund Award;
- Successful applicants of the BGA Research & Development Fund Award;
- Successful applicants of the BGA Rankine Student Sponsorship;
- BGA's nominations for the Young Geotechnical Engineers Conference (YGEC);
- Volunteers acting on behalf of the BGA. This includes but is not limited to:
  - The Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) Secretariat assigned to the BGA;
  - Nominated representatives of the BGA at national and international conferences;
  - The nominated regional group host of the Cooling Prize competition;
  - BGA meeting or social event organisers (e.g., Early Career Group Social events or the Rankine Lecture); and
- Others at the discretion of the BGA Chair and another trustee.

Those who are eligible to claim expenses are to first seek reimbursement through their employers in accordance with their employer's expense policy. Where employers will not reimburse the applicant, this policy shall then apply.

1.2. Background

It should be noted that the BGA is a registered charity, and members and other volunteers are expected to exercise discretion and responsibility when spending charitable funds. Expenses that have already been reimbursed from another source (e.g. an employer) may not also be reclaimed through the BGA.

It is a legal and regulatory obligation that only expenses that wholly, exclusively and necessarily occurred for BGA activities can be reimbursed. This policy and the associated approvals process is in place to ensure compliance with these requirements and to ensure that value for money can be demonstrated.

1.3. Policy Statement

For the avoidance of doubt, reasonable expenses will only be reimbursed where a member or volunteer was directly involved in the delivery of an activity, and it was agreed in advance that an expenses claim could be submitted under this policy.

Expenses for eligible members of the Executive Committee attending meetings will normally be paid for, as will those for members organising and presenting at BGA events. Attendance at BGA events, (such as the John Mitchell Lecture), receptions, dinners, and conferences will not normally have expenses paid, the exception being for students attending the Rankine Lecture. Expenses of those chairing or being a main speaker at such events will normally be reimbursed in accordance with this policy if this is agreed in advance.

Travel, accommodation and sundry expenses incurred while undertaking BGA business must be reasonable in amount and nature and have genuine consideration for the impact on all attendees and the environment, as well as the financial cost to the BGA. Examples of expenses that would not normally be considered reasonable would be kennel fees for pets, child care or chauffeur driven limousines.

To avoid any misunderstanding, BGA members and volunteers should confirm whether expenses will be reimbursed for a particular activity with one of the BGA trustees before incurring expenses. If the BGA Trustee is unsure, they are to refer the matter to the BGA Chair When possible it will be stated in advance if expenses are payable or not to the potential applicant.

It is imperative that the rules and procedures detailed are followed correctly. Expenses will not be paid unless the expense claim form is completed with invoices or other supporting documentation attached and authorised in accordance with this policy. By submitting your claim, you are declaring that it is in accordance with this policy. **Any claim that falls outside of this policy will be rejected and will not be paid.**

1.4. Policy Status

This policy does not form part of any contract and may be subject to change at any time.

This policy is written in the spirit of the ICE Group Member and Volunteer Expense Policy, of which the BGA is a specialist knowledge society of the ICE. Where there is discrepancy between this policy and the ICE Groups Member and Volunteer Expense Policy, the BGA Policy shall govern.

2. Administration Issues

2.1. Claim Form

Expenses should be claimed for using the BGA Expense Claim form.

Claims should provide sufficient detail to show the specific business reason for incurring the cost, to enable the cost code to which the expenses should be charged to be identified. For example, “Travel from x to London to attend Executive Committee Meeting on 21 March 2025” would provide sufficient detail. A claim with a generic description such as ‘travel to London’ would not provide sufficient detail to support a claim and will not be paid.

Coding of expenses is the responsibility of the BGA Honorary Treasurer.

You, the claimant, must ensure:

- That expense claim forms are submitted accurately and appropriately using the correct template and in a timely manner (ideally within three months of incurring the expense);
- Sufficient detail should be provided in the description to clarify the business activity to which the expense applies;
- Original receipts/VAT invoices/itemised bills should be submitted with your claim. These must show the date of issue, the supplier’s name and be fully itemised;
- Bank statements, cheque stubs, credit card slips, or credit card statements alone are not acceptable as supporting documentation and will not be accepted in any circumstance. Detailed receipts must be provided; and
- Details of journeys must be provided to allow verification of distance travelled for all business mileage claimed.

2.2. Lost or Missing Receipts

It is recognised that it is not always possible to obtain a receipt. In the event of lost or missing receipts up to a value of £20 you should seek duplicate receipts or produce alternative proof of payment. If no proof of payment is available this should be noted on the claim together with an explanation of why no receipt was obtained. Expenses over £20 will not normally be reimbursed without the original receipt/VAT invoice/itemised bill.

Persistent failure to produce valid receipts will result in enhanced scrutiny of subsequent claims and these will be rejected unless supported by valid receipts.

2.3. Authorisation

All expense claims must be checked an authorised by the BGA Honorary Treasurer in the first instance. The BGA Honorary Treasurer is responsible for:

- ensuring that the claims are completed correctly;
- supporting receipts are attached to the claim form;
- all expenditure listed on the claim form is in accordance with this policy; and
- coding of the expenses to the appropriate cost code.

Where the expense claimant is the BGA Honorary Treasurer, the BGA Chair or Vice-Chair shall carry out the responsibilities of the BGA Honorary Treasurer defined above. In all cases, there must be independent authorisation.

2.4. Reimbursement Timeframe

Expenses will be reimbursed by bank transfer, at least fortnightly. The bank transfer will be arranged by the BGA's nominated accountant.

If expense claim forms are not submitted on time (i.e. within three months of incurring the expense), and correctly completed, then expenses may not be reimbursed. Claims over six months old will generally not be reimbursed.

2.5. Currency

Claims to be reimbursed in GBP (£ Sterling) must be submitted in GBP. Exchange rates should relate to the period in which the expense was incurred or if more appropriate the rate at which currency was bought.

For those claiming in GBP, expenses incurred in a foreign currency should be converted to £ Sterling at the rate prevailing at the date of the original transaction. Where an individual has bona fide proof (an original receipt) which clearly shows the exchange rate at the time of exchange, this would be accepted. The conversion rate applied should be stated on the expense claim form.

International claims for payment in currencies other than GBP will be settled by bank transfer. For EU banks the SWIFT and IBAN number are required. For banks outside the EU the SWIFT and account number are required.

2.6. VAT

The BGA is not currently registered for VAT. However, where possible, VAT invoices/receipts should be requested when possible.

2.7. Breach of Policy

Breach of this policy may lead to formal disciplinary proceedings. Breach of policy includes failure to pass on any discount obtained in the course of incurring an expense.

Where there is evidence of criminal wrongdoing the matter will be referred to the relevant authorities.

3. Motor Vehicles

3.1. Mileage

The BGA encourages the use of public transport when it is practicable. However, if you need to travel on BGA business to places which are not readily accessible by public transport or where the use of public transport impacts work-life balance (e.g., excessively long journey times, or unsuitable departure times), use of a private motor vehicle is acceptable, and a mileage allowance may be claimed.

It is important that detailed and accurate mileage records are maintained where the cost of fuel is being reclaimed. Only actual miles travelled on BGA business should be claimed. Details of the date, purpose of journey, starting/finishing point, and total mileage claimed should be shown on the expense claim.

Motor Vehicles should only be used within Greater London where unavoidable or for exceptional reasons. Volunteers travelling in London should walk or use the underground, trains, or buses wherever possible.

Mileage allowances are paid according to the HMRC approved mileage rates. It is not envisaged that a claimant will travel more than 10,000 per tax year on BGA business. For volunteers using their own motor vehicle, the rates are:

- Cars and vans: 45p/mile
- Motorcycles: 24p/mile
- Bicycles: 20p/mile

This is your total personal allowance, and you may need to monitor compliance with this if you also claim business mileage from your employer.

3.2. Insurance

When volunteers use their own motor vehicle for BGA activities, they will be personally liable for any incident or accident, not the BGA. Drivers must ensure that their own private motor insurance policy is comprehensive and permits the use of their motor vehicle for business activity.

3.3. Parking

Where motor vehicle travel is used you may claim any reasonable parking expenses necessarily incurred. You should ensure that receipts or parking dockets are supplied wherever possible. Where parking charges are paid for by mobile phone, a copy of the receipt from the provider will need to be attached to the claim as evidence of the expenditure.

3.4. Fines and Penalties

Parking fines and motoring penalties are the responsibility of the driver and will not be reimbursed by the BGA under any circumstance.

3.5. Tolls

When motor vehicle travel is used you may claim any expenses necessarily incurred in respect of tolls. Receipts should be provided, where possible. If not, you must provide other evidence to support the amount being claimed.

3.6. Hire Cars

In exceptional circumstances you may need to hire a car for BGA business purposes under a self-drive contract. Prior approval is necessary from a BGA Trustee. If you hire a vehicle, it is essential you take out insurance and arrange for a collision damage waiver. You must state clearly on the relevant insurance proposal form that you will be using the car for business purposes. Make it clear, if appropriate, that you may be carrying books, documents or other equipment. You are responsible for all costs incurred that are not covered by the insurance.

4. Public Transport

4.1. Foreword

The BGA expects its members and volunteers to use standard class rail travel and economy class air travel where possible. You are expected to travel by the most economic means possible, considering any saver and discounted fares available.

If you are unsure if you public transport is considered 'reasonable', you are to speak to a BGA Trustee prior to making a booking.

4.2. Air Travel

The following guidelines should be used:

- UK: Economy class must be used in all cases. Full consideration should be given to rail alternatives where this is both feasible and cost effective;
- Outside UK: Economy class should be used wherever possible, especially for journeys of up to 5 hours duration. Lower cost airlines should be used wherever practicable.
- For flights in excess of 5 hours: You may travel by economy plus or, in exceptional circumstances, business class, obtaining the most economical fare.

Out of policy expenditure, including all business class flights, will be treated as exceptional and must be authorised by a BGA Trustee, ideally the BGA Chair or Vice-Chair.

Appropriate evidence to support out of policy expenditure (e.g., a copy of the itinerary and a justification as to why you cannot travel at a different time) must be provided to the BGA Trustee prior to booking your flights.

4.3. Rail Travel

Standard class travel should be used and where possible take advantage of any advance or off peak 'saver' or discounted fares. Those with annual season tickets and/or railcards should take advantage of associated fare reductions.

Oyster and contactless payment cards are a convenient and economical method for use when travelling within the Greater London and ancillary zones. However only specific journeys taken can be claimed via expenses. Individual journeys must be detailed on the claim. Oyster and contactless card users should register their card on the TFL website where it is possible to download a journey history showing the charges incurred. For further information visit: Oyster online - Transport for London - Contactless and Oyster.

Claims for Oyster or other travel card "top-ups" will not be reimbursed under any circumstance.

Claims for reimbursement will be restricted to the cost of travel in standard class unless it can be shown that a first class or other discounted fare is cheaper. If anyone in possession of a standard class ticket chooses to pay for an "on the day" upgrade to first class, this cost will not be reimbursed.

Members or volunteers with a travel season ticket are encouraged to use it for BGA business journeys wherever possible, including those who may have a season ticket from their employer. As there is no additional expense incurred under such circumstances a claim for reimbursement may not be made.

Wherever possible you should use your season ticket in conjunction with zone extension tickets and claim only the price of the zone extension. Similarly, you are asked to take advantage of all relevant travel discounts available in connection with your season ticket e.g. Network, Senior or 26-30 railcard, as appropriate.

4.4. Taxi Fares

Member or volunteers will be reimbursed for reasonable BGA business use of taxis. However, due to the significant cost difference, you should use other forms of public transport in preference to taxis wherever this is feasible and practicable, particularly within Greater London. Details of your journey, including the reason a taxi was required, must be given on your claim form.

4.5. Other Forms of Public Transport

Members or volunteers may on occasion be required to use other forms of public transport. The ticket must be attached to the expense claim form.

4.6. Travel Insurance

Members or volunteers travelling on behalf of BGA business are entitled to claim the cost of their travel insurance back, if they do not already hold business travel insurance.

4.7. Visas and vaccinations

Where overseas travel is a BGA business requirement, the BGA will reimburse the member or volunteer's visa application.

If you are travelling overseas, you are advised to look at http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk for general immunisation advice and contact your GP for any necessary immunisation.

5. Subsistence

5.1. Meals & Refreshments

If you are required to work away from your normal workplace and your home for BGA business reasons, you are permitted to spend up to the following maximum amounts including VAT:

- Breakfast: £15. The cost of breakfast may be claimed where it is part of an overnight stay or if you are required to leave home prior to 07.00 to attend a meeting on BGA business that day;
- Lunch: £15. The cost of lunch will only be reimbursed if you are away from your home or your normal workplace for a period of more than 5 hours, and the travel extends over the whole of the usual lunch period (12:00 to 14:00). A claim may not be made if you are attending a meeting where lunch is provided or cover already by the BGA (e.g., Lunch at Kendal's Café ahead of Executive Committee Meetings); and

- Dinner: £30. The cost of evening meals will only be reimbursed where there is an overnight stay.

These allowances only apply if they are not included in hotel rates.

These amounts are not round sum allowances, and all claims for subsistence must be for actual expenditure incurred and must be supported with VAT receipts.

The BGA will only reimburse the cost of one glass of wine or one pint of beer per member / volunteer as part of an evening meal as part of a subsistence payment. The cost of alcohol is not eligible for reimbursement as part of a claim for lunch.

All subsistence claims should include a note of which meal the claim relates to. Claims for teas, coffees, and other light refreshments that do not accompany a meal allowed as defined above will not be paid.

Claims for subsistence on behalf of a group of members or volunteers only will be accepted if the claimant notes the names of all volunteers in attendance within the claim. If the cost is divided between the group, each claimant should provide a clear breakdown showing how they have calculated the amount being claimed.

Members or volunteers are not permitted to make a group claim involving BGA Trustee. If a BGA Trustee is present a group claim may only be made the BGA Trustee present. Alternatively, each member, volunteer and staff member should make their own individual claims, as above.

In the event that a receipt could not be obtained, or has been lost, then this should be noted on the claim form. Claims may be rejected when a receipt is not provided where there is a reasonable expectation that a receipt would have been issued, or the claim will be limited to HMRC benchmark rates.

5.2. Accommodation

Accommodation should be booked in advance wherever possible. . It is your responsibility to ensure a BGA Trustee has agreed to the impeding hotel charge before any bookings are made. The accommodation should be as needs dictate but normally be 3-4 star, consisting of a standard room with a private bath/shower.

The following maximum room rates shall apply, prices include VAT

Board	**London, Hong Kong, Sydney**	**Other Locations**
Room Only	£170	£125
Bed & Breakfast	£185	£140
Dinner, Bed & Breakfast	£215	£165

Exceptions to these rates must be approved in advance by a BGA Trustee. In very exceptional circumstances when no accommodation has been booked in advance, approval should be obtained for the expense as soon as reasonably possible, and a VAT invoice/receipt must be supplied with the expense claim form.

Reasonable laundry costs will be reimbursed for stays of more than three nights.

Incidental expenses (e.g., telephone calls, minibar, newspaper, access to fitness suites) will not be reimbursed.

If you choose to stay with a relative or friend, no allowance will be paid.

6. Entertainment

6.1. Gifts for Speakers

Members or volunteers involved in organising gifts for speakers at BGA event may claim back of the cost of obtaining such gifts. A reasonable cost of gifts for speakers is £100 for all events with the exception of the Rankine Lecturer where the gift allowance may increase to £400.

6.2. Social Events

Where the BGA organises social events, it is encouraged that one single member of the BGA covers the cost of the social event and claims reimbursement if the BGA is not charged directly via invoice. This member should ideally be the social event organiser and be a member of the BGA Executive Committee, or the BGA Early Career Group Committee.

It is the responsibility of the social event organiser, to ensure that the costs incurred by the social event are in accordance with the allocated budget. Any exceedances in claims above the budget without prior approval may be rejected.

7. Prizes and Awards

7.1. BGA Knowledge Support and Research & Development Funds

Members who have been awarded the BGA Knowledge Support Fund or Research and Development Fund are encouraged to claim their award entitlement within one year of the award being made. If it is anticipated that the funding will extend beyond one year's duration, the member is to seek approval to extend the funding duration by the BGA Treasurer.

Only claims that are listed on the BGA Knowledge Support Fund award letter may be claimed. For example, if accommodation and travel are the only items listed on the award letter, conference registration fees cannot be claimed.

Research and Development Fund awards may be invoiced directly to the BGA as an alternative to claiming via this expense policy.

The total amount claimable by the member will be stated on the award letter. If the total amount of claims exceeds the amount stated on the award letter, the amount stated on the award letter will be reimbursed.

7.2. Certificates and Medals

Certificates, Medals and associated costs (e.g., engravings, frames and cases) for BGA prizes and awards shall be reimbursed when incurred by the volunteer obtaining such certificates or medals. This volunteer will typically be the Secretariat.