HFBK
Hochschule für bildende Künste Hamburg

FAQs on planning and billing business trips (from WS 2025/2026)

Dear colleagues,

The Hamburg Travel Expenses Law, which forms the basis for the approval and accounting of business and training trips, has recently undergone extensive changes. These changes affect travel arrangements, but also have an impact on the application and accounting process. The forms have been updated and now require more detailed explanations in some cases.

Before you plan your next trip, please take some time to familiarize yourself with the regulations and changes outlined below. The new forms contain a "mouseover" feature that provides you with information while you are filling them out.

If you have any questions, please contact Hannelore Voget (tel. 040-23 85 82-261) or the functional mailbox reisen@hfbk.hamburg.de

Your Human Resources Department

I am planning a business trip or training trip. What legal requirements apply?

The basis for this is the Hamburg Travel Expenses Law (HmbRKG). Further important information can be found in the administrative regulation (VVHmbRKG), , which can be provided by Hannelore Voget upon request.

What is the difference between a business trip and an official errand?

Business trips are trips undertaken to perform work duties outside the official place of work (i.e., outside HVV fare zones A and B).

Official errands are short trips or journeys within the place of work or residence to perform official duties outside the regular place of work. This also applies to trips to offices of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg (FHH) that take place within the HVV fare zones.

Will I be reimbursed for the costs of training trips?

Participation in a training course that is exclusively in the interests of the employer is considered a business trip or official travel. This is the case, for example, if the training course is mandatory and you are required to attend. Travel expenses, including transportation costs, will be reimbursed in accordance with the provisions of the Hamburg Travel Expenses Law.

If the training is only partially in the interests of the employer, the HFBK is required to adjust the percentage of reimbursement (reimbursement rate) for travel expenses and thus transportation costs according to the extent to which the training is in the interests of the employer. The reimbursement rate is determined when participation is approved.

No travel expenses will be reimbursed for training or further education trips that are exclusively in the personal interest of the employee.

Do I need to apply for a business trip or training trip?

Before embarking on a business trip or training trip, the "Business Trip Request" form must be completed and approved. For official errands, verbal approval is sufficient, unless there

are exceptions such as the use of a private car.

What do I need to consider when traveling abroad?

The Foreign Travel Expenses Regulation (ARV) and the Federal Travel Expenses Act apply to business trips abroad.

For trips to the EU, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland, or the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, you will need a so-called A1 certificate. In this case, please contact the Human Resources department.

How do I book the necessary travel arrangements?

Once your business trip has been approved, you can book your tickets for transportation and hotel accommodation—e.g., via the providers' websites or by telephone. If you have a business or private BahnCard, you must use it when purchasing your ticket.

TVP employees may be able to use Deutsche Bahn's corporate customer portal. Please contact the Human Resources department for more information.

Under what conditions am I allowed to use the first class on the train?

As a general rule, you will be reimbursed for the necessary travel expenses incurred in the lowest transport class (usually 2nd class). For train journeys lasting at least four hours, or if required for business reasons, the travel expenses for 1st class can be reimbursed. Fare reductions and other discounts must be taken into account. Rail travel can always be used, even if the costs are higher than for other means of travel (airplane or car).

When will I get a reimbursement for my Deutschlandticket or BahnCard?

The cost of the Deutschlandticket or private BahnCard will be reimbursed once the purchase has been fully amortized, i.e., once the existing BahnCard is also the most cost-effective alternative compared to the other BahnCards on offer.

To purchase a BahnCard for business purposes, the HR department must carry out a cost comparison in the form of a forecast to demonstrate its cost-effectiveness.

Can I use bonus miles and bonus points for personal use?

Bonus points that you receive for using your private BahnCard for a business trip are, of course, yours to keep. Mileage credits from airlines or bonus points from Deutsche Bahn AG (if you have a BahnCard financed by your employer) earned during a business trip may only be used for business purposes. Bonus points can be accumulated and used for the same or a subsequent business trip. Points can only be used for ancillary services during a business trip (e.g., in-flight meals) if they are about to expire and can no longer be used for business purposes. If this is also not possible, these points/rewards may be used for private purposes in exceptional cases.

Am I allowed to fly?

Costs for domestic flights and short-range European flights are generally not reimbursed. In exceptional cases, the costs of the lowest class will be reimbursed if climate protection concerns are considered secondary to business or economic reasons for using air travel.

This applies to domestic flights,

- if the flight is necessary for reasons beyond the control of the business travelers and the intended purpose of the business trip cannot be achieved by other means (e.g., by telephone conference or video conference), or

- if the duration of the business trip is significantly reduced due to the use of air travel. A significant reduction is given if the use of air travel saves two overnight stays.

This applies to short-range flights within Europe (within a radius of 750 km of Hamburg, travel time by train more than 6 hours),

- if the flight is necessary for reasons beyond the control of the business travelers and the intended purpose of the business trip cannot be achieved by other means (e.g., by telephone conference or video conference), or
- if the duration of the business trip is significantly reduced due to the use of air travel. A significant reduction is given if the use of air travel saves one overnight stay, or
- if the total costs are lower than when traveling by train. In any case, a cost comparison must be made between the total amount of travel expenses reimbursed to the business travelers and any authorized persons accompanying them. This cost comparison must be prepared by the business travelers when applying for approval of the business trip and attached to the application.

For long-distance travel by airplane, direct flights without additional takeoffs and landings that are harmful to the climate are to be preferred. Domestic feeder flights within Germany are to be avoided where possible. Seat reservations are only refundable in justified individual cases. Insurance (e.g., cancellation insurance) is not refundable.

Please note that when assessing cost-effectiveness, you must include the external costs of carbon dioxide emissions. These amount to

- Domestic flights within Germany: 30 Euros
- Flights within Europe: 60 Euros
- Flights outside Europe: 100 Euros

for the outward and return flight.

For one-way flights, half the flat rate is to be applied. Each flight route is to be compensated individually, including individual feeder flights.

How much is the mileage allowance when using private transportation?

Private means of transportation should only be used in exceptional cases. The mileage allowance for the use of a

- private car is 30 cents
- another motorized private vehicle is 20 cents

per kilometer traveled. The maximum reimbursement per business trip is 90 Euros. Exceptions to this limit are only possible in justified individual cases.

The total amount of mileage allowance may not exceed the cost of using regular means of transport.

How much is an overnight stay in a hotel allowed to cost?

Accommodation costs will only be recognized as necessary up to an amount of 90 Euros per night (100 Euros including breakfast) without further justification. The amounts stated may be exceeded by up to 25 percent if the organizer has reserved a block of rooms and indicated this in the invitation, or if a hotel room with an Ecolabel has been booked.

The following certificates are recognized as ecolabels: Green Sign Level 5, Green Key, Green Globe Certification, EcoLabelLux, Nordic Swan, HRS Green Stay, Certified Green Hotel, Tour Cert, Earth Check, Sustainable Hotels at Biohotels, Travelife.

Higher accommodation costs will only be reimbursed in exceptional cases. You must provide a plausible justification for this exceptional case when you submit your request for reimbursement at the latest.

You can book your accommodation via the usual portals or directly with the hotels. The Finanzbehörde has agreed on special terms with some hotel chains, which you can obtain from Hannelore Voget on request and take into account when making your selection.

What daily allowances and accommodation allowances do I receive for business trips in Germany?

For business trips of up to 14 days, you will receive the following daily allowances within Germany:

- 28,00 Euros for a full 24-hour absence,
- 14,00 Euros for absences of more than 8 but less than 24 hours,
- 14,00 Euros on the arrival and departure days of business trips lasting several days.

Meals provided free of charge are deducted from the daily allowance as follows:

- Breakfast: 5,60 Euros,
- Lunch: 11,20 Euros,
- Dinner: 11,20 Euros,
- Full catering: 28,00 Euros.

The daily allowance is reduced from the 15th day onwards.
You will receive a flat rate of 20 euros for any necessary overnight stays. Higher accommodation costs must be documented and will be reimbursed if they are necessary (see also: How much is an overnight stay in a hotel allowed to cost?)

And abroad?

For business trips abroad, daily allowances and accommodation allowances are based on the ARVVwV. These are adjusted annually on January 1 by the Bundesministerium des Innern.

What should I do if I cannot attend the planned trip?

If you are unable to undertake a business trip for work-related or compelling personal reasons beyond your control, or if you have to terminate the trip prematurely, you are obliged to keep the costs incurred to a minimum and to cancel any commitments already made.

Please contact the Human Resources department for reimbursement of any remaining expenses.

Can I combine my business trip with a private trip?

This is possible. If a business trip is combined with a private trip, the travel allowance shall be calculated as if the business trip had been carried out immediately before the business engagement from the place of employment to the place of business and immediately after the business engagement from the place of business back to the place of employment. The travel allowance may not exceed the actual costs incurred.

If a business trip is combined with vacation, time off, or compensatory time off totaling more than five working days, only the additional costs incurred for the completion of the business trip will be reimbursed as travel expenses or mileage allowance; daily allowances and overnight allowances will be granted for the duration of the business trip and for the additional travel time required for it.

Within what period of time must I apply for reimbursement of my expenses?

Travel expense reimbursement must be requested within a preclusive period of six months. Copies of receipts must be submitted with the reimbursement request. The original receipts must be kept for six months after the application is submitted and presented to the accounting department if necessary. Receipts in a foreign language must be accompanied by a German translation, and foreign currencies must be converted into Euros.