



Essex Blades Travel and Accommodation Policy

Effective from 22nd July 2022

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1. Introduction to Essex Blades Travel and Accommodation Policy

The Students' Union Student Activities has introduced a travel and accommodation policy effective from 27th June 2022 to assist all Essex Blades clubs when travelling to BUCS matches and other competitions.

This policy will provide guidance on method of travel, the type and duration of accommodation and also the processes of booking and claiming back money. The purpose is to help reduce unnecessary costs to Sports Clubs and individuals and to ensure all Essex Blades Sports Clubs are treated consistently and fairly.

The Students' Union Student Activities staff team reserves the right to amend any and all of the rules and guidelines presented below at any time.

2. Travel

It is essential that any students that are travelling to a Sports event or competition to represent the Essex Blades do so using the cheapest possible method. This is to ensure the cost of the journey falls within the allocated Sports Club budget, or to reduce the cost for each individual Sports Club member.

Costs not budgeted for, will need to be covered by the individual or from the Sports Club account (if sufficient balance to do so and approved by the Club Treasurer/Committee).

2.1 BUCS Travel – Weekly Leagues and Cup Competitions

For many of the Essex Blades teams that compete in weekly BUCS fixtures, a return journey on the day of the fixture will be required.

The cost of travel to a weekly BUCS League or Cup match will be included in a student's playing membership.

Rare circumstances may result in BUCS teams needing to stay overnight before a BUCS fixture (e.g. National Cup). *Should this be the case, please refer to Accommodation at Sports events and Competitions in Section 3 of this document.*

The various methods of travel are listed below, in order of preference:

2.1.1 Travel by Car

Students driving to a BUCS fixture will be reimbursed 25p per mile, for the costs associated with the journey from and to CO4 3SQ, plus 5p per additional passenger (must be competing in a BUCS competition or other approved competition, cannot be a spectator) travelling with you to a fixture, up to a maximum of 45p per mile. When claiming back using an expense form, all details of the journey must be noted clearly. This includes the post code of the journey beginning and the destination post code.

Parking charges and Dart Charge (or a similar toll cost) can also be claimed back using the [online expense form](#).

Please note the departure postcode is usually set from University of Essex (Colchester Campus), postcode CO4 3SQ.

2.1.2 Travel by Train and Public Transport

If your club is not selected to travel by coach and you do not have members of the team who can drive, then you can travel to your fixture by train.

A member of the Students' Union Activities Team will contact team captains on a Thursday morning to ask whether any train tickets need purchasing for their team (including team coach where applicable*) for the following week's fixture and if so

for how many. **Captains must reply, confirming how many tickets need purchasing, by the end of the day.** The Students' Union Activities Team will then book the requested number of tickets for your team. You will receive confirmation when the tickets are booked, which can then be collected from any ticket machine at any train station using any debit card.

If you are travelling to a London university, you will have a train booked for you from Hythe (Colchester) to a London Overground station and then continue your travel via tube or bus. We ask that you then pay for this using a contactless card and then claim this back using the [online expense form](#). If no public transport is available, taxi journeys are permitted on short trips. Receipts must also be requested for taxi journeys to claim a refund.

***If a team player or coach decides not to travel by a group train ticket when one has been offered, they will not be able to claim for any travel expenses incurred and may be charged the cost of any pre-purchased group tickets"**

Students are not permitted to book their own train travel to away fixtures as the Students' Union Activities Team have a business account with Trainline and ensure a groupsave discounted is used on the journey.

2.1.3 Travel by Coach

If your team is eligible to travel to an away fixture via coach, team captains will be notified on the Thursday before the following week's fixture. Your team will generally be selected to travel via coach if two or more Essex Blades teams are travelling to the same university or nearby venues.

Coach bookings can only be made by the Students' Union Student Activities Team. Any bookings made by a Sports Club member are strictly prohibited. Charges from a booking made by a Sports Club member will need to be covered by that individual and will not be taken from the Sports Club account.

Damage to the coach will be charged to the responsible individuals and will result in that Sports Club/Team being banned from taking coaches to future matches. Further disciplinary action may be taken by the Students' Union Activities Team.

If a team player or coach decides not to travel by a coach when one has been offered, they will not be able to claim for any travel expenses incurred.

2.2 BUCS Nationals and Individual Championships

The Students' Union Activities Team will fully support individuals* or teams who can evidence they are likely to finish in the Top 8 in their BUCS competition/event. We cover train fares (from Colchester) to and from the event as well as petrol expenses (from and to CO4 3SQ) up to 25p per mile, plus 5p per additional passenger (must be competing in a BUCS competition or other approved competition, cannot be a spectator) travelling with you to a fixture, up to a maximum of 45p per mile.

Any transport costs can be reclaimed back through the online expense form at [Student Activities Expense Claim Form \(typeform.com\)](https://typeform.com)

*If an individual achieves BUCS points in their competition/event, their travel costs will be covered, as detailed in this document, by the Students' Union Activities Team. Please keep receipts and complete the online typeform at [Student Activities Expense Claim Form \(typeform.com\)](https://typeform.com) where applicable.

2.3 Non-BUCS Competitions and Sports Club Trips

Unless budgeted, covered by individuals within the club.

Paid for by the SU, after everyone has paid their money into the SU club fund

3. Accommodation at Sports events and Competitions

3.1 Weekly BUCS Leagues and Cups

Requiring accommodation for a weekly BUCS league or cup match is rare - however in exceptional circumstances it is necessary. Bookings will be made on a case-by-case basis, with general guidelines below.

A team competing in a BUCS League or Cup match that involves a journey of over 175 miles each way (minimum 350 miles in total) may have overnight accommodation provided for them, where start times are unsuitable for suitable competition preparation

The Students' Union will contribute a maximum of up to £25 per person per night (including players, coaches and essential support staff) towards accommodation for weekly BUCS Leagues and Cups. The remainder of this cost will need to be covered by the individual or can be agreed to be taken from the Sports Club's account 1) if there are sufficient funds and 2) if this has been signed off by the Club President and Treasurer.

Should individuals wish to stay in accommodation for additional nights or stay in accommodation that costs more than the £25 per person limit, it will be their responsibility to cover the additional costs. Additional costs above the £25 per person limit will need to be paid for before the journey. A delay in payment will result in a delay to the booking being made.

The Students' Union Activities Team recommends the overnight stay takes place before the match, rather than following the match.

A small deposit may be required for accommodation to ensure attendance.

3.2 BUCS Nationals & Individuals

The Students' Union Activities Team will fully support individuals and teams who can evidence they are likely to finish in the Top 8 in their BUCS competition/event. This support includes the cost of entry fees, up to £25 contribution per person per night for accommodation and the contribution towards travel costs (within the travel policy – see 2.2). A small deposit maybe taken from the individual at this stage, fully returned after attendance at the event.

Other individuals who do not meet the above criteria (evidencing a top 8 finish) and wish to enter BUCS National competitions will be required to cover any costs associated with the competition (entry, travel, accommodation). *

Club Committees who wish to support their members with entry, accommodation and transport costs will need to make the Students' Union Activities Department aware of this.

Travel and accommodation can be booked, where requested, by the Students' Union Activities Team as soon as official BUCS entry status is confirmed by BUCS Event organisers, using the booking process listed in item 4.2 of this document.

A multiple night stay at accommodation will be allowed for competitions taking place over several days.

*If an individual achieves BUCS points in their competition/event, their accommodation costs will be covered by the Student Union Activities Team with a contribution of up to £25 per person, per night. Please keep receipts and complete the online typeform at [Student Activities Expense Claim Form \(typeform.com\)](https://www.typeform.com) where applicable.

3.3 Non-BUCS Competitions and Trips

For those clubs who compete in Non-BUCS competitions (e.g. Cheerleading/Dance) and trips, any related expenses are covered by individuals with the club unless this has been budgeted for by the club.

Club Committees will need to provide the Students' Union Activities Team with at least 4 weeks' notice of any accommodation which needs booking.

The Students' Union Activities Team will book the accommodation (details e.g., venue to be booked, number of rooms etc. provided by relevant club committee) and transport (e.g. train/coach etc).

The Students' Union Activities Team will claim back any costs from the club's finances.

Before the Students' Union Activities Team pay for anything, each individual involved in the competition and trip will need to pay in the required sum of money into the relevant club's account.

4. Booking Process

4.1 Travel

For all Sports Events and Competitions where students will be representing the Essex Blades, the Students' Union Activities Team must be made aware of the method of travel, even if a booking for the mode of transport is not required (e.g. travelling by car).

The Students' Union Activities Team will book train tickets for your travel to an away fixture. Please see section 2.1.2.

If your team is selected for coach travel, you will be emailed by the Student Activities Team (from bucs@essex.ac.uk) on the Thursday before the following week's fixture.

Requests for coaches for non-BUCS competitions (e.g. Cheerleading and Dance competitions) can be made by emailing blades@essex.ac.uk where we will get a quote for your trip.

Club Committees will need to provide the Students' Union Activities Team with at least 4 weeks' notice of any transport which needs booking.

4.2 Accommodation

All accommodation bookings for any Sports Event or Competition must be authorised by the Students' Union Student Activities Team before any agreement is made with the company. Bookings that are made without authorisation from the Students' Union Student Activities Team, will be the responsibility of the individual who made the booking.

The Students' Union Student Activities Team will contribute up to £25 per person (includes coaching and support staff) for BUCS matches that require an overnight stay as per Sections 3.1 and 3.2. Bookings that exceed this amount will require the team to cover the remaining costs before the booking is confirmed.

Members of the Sports Club Committee can research accommodation prices, and request a booking with the company but payment should be made by the Students' Union Student Activities Team. An invoice for payment should be sent to suinvoices@essex.ac.uk addressed to *University of Essex Students' Union*.

Refundable bookings, where possible, should be requested with both the accommodation provider and the Students' Union Student Activities Team as early as possible to ensure the lowest price is secured and that accommodation is available.

Club members will be required to deposit any balance owed into their Sports Club account at the Students' Union before a booking is paid for. Balances owed could include accommodation that is outside of the up to £25 per person limit for BUCS, a

non-participant (e.g. spectator) or for a non-BUCS competition for which costs are not usually covered by the Sports Club Budget.

Any outstanding member balance may result in a delay to the Students' Union Student Activities Team making payment.

5. Claims Process

The Students' Union should be making payment for travel and accommodation, but in the case of additional charges occurring, please follow the claims process below.

Complete the [online expense form](#), attaching all relevant receipts. Receipts are required to make any claim for a Sports' expense, except for petrol for a car journey, which is done using post codes. Unfortunately, a refund will not be processed without a receipt.

The expense form must then be authorised and signed by the Sports Club President or Treasurer, via the online sign off process. BUCS Expense forms will be processed and signed off by the Students' Union Student Activities Team, where they meet the approved sign off.

Expense refunds will be processed weekly and where submitted prior to 10am on Thursday, will look to be processed and included in the following Wednesday payment run (with payment). **Please note it can take between 3-5 working days for money to reach a recipient's bank account. If funds haven't reached your account within these timescales, please email suexpenses@essex.ac.uk for an update.**

6. Appendix A – Travel, Accommodation and Claims examples

A) BUCS Weekly Match – no stay

BUCS weekly match, train travel involving no stay

- On a Thursday morning, the Students' Union Activities Team contact team captains, of teams who **haven't** been selected to travel by coach, asking how many train tickets need purchasing for the following week's fixture
- Team captains email bucs@essex.ac.uk by 23:59, on the same day they were emailed by the Students' Union Activities Team, specifying how many train tickets need purchasing
- Students' Union Activities Team will then purchase the requested number of train tickets using our trainline business account
- You will receive confirmation when the tickets are booked, which can then be collected from any ticket machine at any train station using any debit card (debit card will not be charged)
- If the end point of your journey is an overground station (e.g. Kensington Olympia) your train tickets will cover the entire journey
- If the end point of your journey is an underground station (e.g. Aldgate), you will have to use your debit card to tap in and out at the barriers
- For any additional costs incurred (e.g. underground payments, taxi – keep receipts), use the online typeform [Student Activities Expense Claim Form \(typeform.com\)](https://www.typeform.com)
- Where applicable, expense form signed off by Treasurer/President via the online sign off process and then by SU Activities Team
- When expenses have been submitted by 10:00 on Thursday, they will be processed and included on following Wednesday's payment run
- **Money can take up to 3-5 working days to appear in the recipients' bank account**

BUCS weekly league/cup match with stay

- If a team is competing in a BUCS weekly league/cup match that involves a journey over 175 miles each way (Colchester to Manchester), may have overnight accommodation provided for them where start times prohibit travel on the day
- Team captain can look for suitable accommodation* online and inform Students' Union Activities Team of options
- Students' Union Activities Team will book the accommodation (up to £25 per person per night for one night's stay) and provide confirmation email from venue confirming booking
- Should individuals wish to stay in accommodation for additional nights or book accommodation, which is more expensive than £25 per person, per night, it will be their responsibility to cover the additional costs
- A small deposit per person might be required to ensure attendance
- If the stay requires train travel, the process in the example above will be followed

* The Students' Union Student Activities Team recommends the overnight stay takes place before the match, rather than following the match.

BUCS Individual

- If an individual* can provide evidence, they are likely to finish in top 8 in their BUCS/Comp (e.g. Snooker Championships), Student Union Activities Team will support them. This includes:
 - Cost of entry fees
 - Up to £25 per night for accommodation where applicable
 - Transport costs (25p per mile if travelling by car – **return journey starting from CO4 3SQ** - or cost of train travel) covered
 - Multiple nights accommodation is allowed when a competition runs over several days

*If an individual achieves BUCS points in their competition/event, their transport costs (if travelling by car 25p per mile – **return journey from CO4 3SQ** - or train costs) and accommodation up to £25 per night will be paid for by the Students' Union Activities Team. Please keep receipts and complete the online typeform [Student Activities Expense Claim Form \(typeform.com\)](https://www.typeform.com) where applicable.

BUCS National Competition (e.g. Beach Volleyball) involving stay and coach travel

- Team captain can look for suitable accommodation* online and inform Students' Union Activities Team of options
- Or
- Students' Union Activities Team will book the accommodation (up to £25 per person per night for one night's stay) and provide confirmation email from venue confirming booking
- Should individuals wish to stay in accommodation for additional nights or book accommodation, which is more expensive than £25 per person, per night, it will be their responsibility to cover the additional costs
- A small deposit per person might be required to ensure attendance
- If a coach/minibus is required, captain will need to inform Students' Union Activities Team of how many people need to be transported
- Students' Union Activities Team will liaise with coach company to secure booking
- Confirmation email will be sent to team captain, confirming pick up location, time and coach driver's details (e.g. name and mobile number)

Non-BUCS competition/event requiring accommodation and travel

- Member of committee to identify accommodation (**minimum of 4 weeks' notice**) which needs booking for competition (e.g. Cheerleading competition) and passes this information on to the Students' Union Activities Team

- Member of committee to make Students' Union Activities Team aware of what accommodation needs booking for how many people, nights and type of rooms (e.g. single/twin etc) and send over weblink of accommodation to blades@essex.ac.uk
- Member of committee to inform what form of transport (e.g. minibus) needs booking and for how many people – **provide 4 weeks' notice**
- Students' Union Activities Team to make committee member aware of cost of transport
- Committee member to make Students' Union Activities Team if they're happy with cost of transport or not
- Students, involved in the competition, to pay in the appropriate amount of money into the club account
- Students' Union Activities Team to make transport and accommodation booking, using club funds, and send over confirmation emails to committee member
- Students' Union Activities Team to provide contact details for driver (if using a minibus/coach) to committee member