



# **Essex Blades Travel and Accommodation Policy**

*Revised September 2024*

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# **1. Introduction to Essex Blades Travel and Accommodation Policy**

The Student's Union Essex Blades Sports Office has introduced a travel and accommodation policy, revised August 2024, 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 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 Essex Blades Sports 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 either the individual or from the Sports Club account (if sufficient balance to do so and approved by the Club Treasurer).

### 2.1 BUCS Travel – Weekly Leagues and Cup Competitions

For many of the Essex Blades sports 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 and BUCS Playing Membership Fee.

Rare circumstances may result in BUCS teams needing to stay overnight before a BUCS fixture (e.g. National Championship Competitions). *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 (valid passengers must be competing or officiating 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 Essex Blades Sports 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 Essex Blades Sports will then book the requested number of tickets for your team. You will receive a 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 Essex Blades Sport team have a business account with Trainline and ensure that a groupsave discount 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 at similar times.

Coach bookings can only be made by the Students' Union Essex Blades Sports 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 individual(s) and may result in that Sports Club/Team being banned from taking coaches to future matches. Further disciplinary action may be taken by the Students' Union.

**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 Essex Blades Sports team will only fund costs for individuals\* or teams who earn BUCS points. This is usually a top 4 finish for individuals and a top 8 team finish. We cover train fares (from Colchester) to and from the event as well as fuel expenses (from and to CO4 3SQ) up to 25p per mile, plus 5p per additional passenger (must be competing or officiating 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 reimbursed, as detailed in this document, by the Students' Union Essex Blades Sports 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 through club membership/sessions fees, costs will need to be covered by individuals within the club.

Costs such as Entries, Affiliations, Accommodation and Travel can initially be paid by the Students' Union, via Invoice and Bank Transfer and then charged directly to the relevant club fund. Payment will only be made once club/individuals have paid their income into the club account.

The Students' Union Essex Blades Sports office can set up tickets for events/competitions to help club committees keep track of income.

## 3. Accommodation at Sports events and Competitions

### 3.1 Weekly BUCS Leagues and Cups

Accommodation for BUCS league or cup matches is rare - however in exceptional circumstances it may be 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 starting before 6.30am, will be considered for accommodation provision, where departure times are considered unsuitable for competition preparation.

The Students' Union will contribute a maximum of £35 per night, per person (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(s) 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 Treasurer.

### 3.2 BUCS Nationals & Individuals

**The Students' Union Essex Blades Sports Team will reimburse individuals and teams that achieve BUCS Points\* in Individual & Team Championships. The reimbursement will include the costs of entry fees, up to £35 contribution per person per night for accommodation and the contribution towards travel costs (within the travel policy – see 2.2).**

**\* BUCS Points will be confirmed by BUCS to the Essex Blades Sports Office but proof of results can be sent directly to [bucs@essex.ac.uk](mailto:bucs@essex.ac.uk)**

Individuals who do not achieve BUCS Points criteria 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 Essex Blades Sports staff aware of this.

Travel and accommodation can be booked, where requested, by the Students' Union Essex Blades Sports staff 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.

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

### 3.3 Non-BUCS Competitions and Trips

For clubs who compete in Non-BUCS competitions and trips, all related expenses are covered by individuals within the club, unless this has been specifically budgeted for by the club through memberships/session fees/fundraising.

Club Committees will need to provide the Students' Union Essex Blades Sport staff with at least 5 weeks' notice of any accommodation which needs booking.

The Students' Union Essex Blades Sports staff will book the accommodation and travel, on behalf of the sports club/team once details of trip have been provided and any costs will be charged directly to the sports club funds. Details to be provided include:

- Accommodation venue to be booked
- Number of people/rooms – including specific lists of people and room sharing info (if required)
- Expected pick up/drop off dates/times and locations
- Number of people requiring transportation.

Before the Students' Union pay for anything, competition/trip participants will need to pay any agreed costs into the club fund (which can be done using the ticket system – which Essex Blades Sports staff can set up).

## 4. Booking Process

### 4.1 Travel

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

The Students' Union Essex Blades team can 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 Students' Union Essex Blades team (from [bucs@essex.ac.uk](mailto:bucs@essex.ac.uk)) by the Friday before the following week's fixture.

Requests for coaches, for non-BUCS competitions (or BUCS Individual events) can be made by emailing [blades@essex.ac.uk](mailto:blades@essex.ac.uk) where we will get a quote for your trip.

Club Committees will need to provide the Students' Union Essex Blades team with at least 5 weeks' notice of any transport which needs booking.

### 4.2 Accommodation

All accommodation bookings for Sports Events must be authorised by the Students' Union Essex Blades Team before any agreement is made with the company. Bookings that are made without authorisation from the Students' Union Essex Blades Team, will be the responsibility of the individual(s) who made the booking.

The Students' Union Essex Blades team will contribute up to £35 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/individual(s) 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 Essex Blades team. An invoice for payment should be sent to [suinvoices@essex.ac.uk](mailto:suinvoices@essex.ac.uk) and [blades@essex.ac.uk](mailto:blades@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 Essex Blades 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 £35 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 Essex Blades 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 fuel 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 Treasurer, via the online sign off process. BUCS Expense forms will be processed and signed off by the Students' Union Essex Blades and Finance teams, where they meet the approved sign off.

Expense refunds will be processed weekly and where submitted prior to 10am on Thursdays, 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](mailto: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](mailto: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://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](mailto: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