




Lawyers – income and work-related deductions

Lawyer's guide to income, allowances and claiming deductions for work-related expenses.

Last updated 13 May 2025

For a summary of common expenses, see [Lawyer deductions \(PDF, 434KB\)](#) .

Income and allowances

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Income and allowances

Income and allowance amounts you need to include in your tax return and amounts you don't include.

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Amounts you do and don't include

You must include all the income you receive as a lawyer during the income year in your tax return, this includes:

- salary and wages, including cash or bonus payments
- allowances
- compensation and insurance payments – for example, payments made under an income protection insurance policy to replace salary and wages.

Don't include as income any [reimbursements](#) you receive.

Your income statement or payment summary will show all your salary, wages and allowances for the income year.

Allowances

You must include all **allowances** your employer reports on your income statement or payment summary as income in your tax return.

An allowance is where your employer pays you an amount as an estimate of costs you might incur:

- to help you pay for a work expense – for example, mobile phone expenses

- as compensation for an aspect of your work such as working conditions or industry peculiarities – for example, working in a remote locality or being on stand-by
- as an amount for having special duties, skills or qualifications – for example, first aid qualifications.

Your employer may not include some allowances on your income statement or payment summary. Find out about declaring income and claiming deductions for [allowances not on your income statement or payment summary](#).

Allowances not on your income statement or payment summary

If you receive an allowance from your employer, it does not automatically mean you can claim a deduction.

Your employer may not include some allowances on your income statement or payment summary, you will find these amounts on your payslip. You don't need to declare these allowances as income in your tax return, unless you're claiming a deduction. Examples include travel allowances and overtime meal allowances.

If you spend the allowance amount on work expenses, you:

- don't include it as income in your tax return
- can't claim any deductions for the work expenses the allowance covers.

If you're not claiming a deduction, you don't need to keep any records of the amounts you spend.

If you spend your allowance on a deductible work-related expense, to claim a deduction you:

- include the allowance as income in your tax return
- include a claim for the work expenses you incur in your tax return
- must have records of your expenses.

If you can claim a deduction, the amount of the deduction is not usually the same amount as the allowance you have receive.

Allowances and claiming a deduction

The following table sets out allowances you may receive and when you can claim a deduction.

Allowance types, reason for the allowance and if you can claim a deduction

Reason for allowance	Example of allowance type	Deduction (Yes or No)
Compensation for an aspect of your work that is unpleasant, special or dangerous or for industry peculiarities	Harassment contact officer allowance Working in a remote locality Stand-by allowance	No These allowances don't help you pay for deductible work-related expenses
An amount for certain expenses	Car or vehicle allowance	Yes If you incur deductible expenses
An amount for special skills	A first aid certificate Health and safety representative allowance	Yes If you incur deductible expenses

Example: allowance assessable, no deduction allowable

Penny is a solicitor and is the health and safety representative for her office. Penny's employer pays her an allowance for each week during the year that she holds that position. The training Penny requires to be a health and safety representative is provided by her employer.

At the end of the income year, the allowance is on her income statement.

Penny must include the amount of the allowance in her tax return, but she can't claim a deduction for any expenses against the allowance because she has not incurred any deductible expenses.

The allowance compensates Penny for her special skills and additional duties. It's not to cover any expenses she might incur.

Example: allowance assessable, deduction allowable

Bronwyn is a law clerk. During the income year, Bronwyn uses her own car to travel from the office to the Court to drop off documents. Bronwyn's employer pays her 80c per kilometre when she uses her car for work purposes.

At the end of the year, her income statement shows she was paid an allowance of \$256 for using her car for work ($320 \text{ kms} \times \$0.80 = \256).

Bronwyn must include the car allowance as income in her tax return.

Bronwyn can claim a deduction for the cost of using her car for work purposes. She can't claim the amount of the allowance she receives. Instead, she must calculate the amount of the deduction based on the records she keeps whenever she uses her own car for work purposes.

In the past year Bronwyn has kept a record of the work trips she did using her own car, but she doesn't keep a logbook. Her records show she used her car to travel 320 kms for work purposes.

As Bronwyn has not kept a logbook, she uses the cents per kilometre method to claim a deduction. The cents per kilometre method rate for the 2024–25 income year is 88c per kilometre.

Bronwyn claims a deduction of \$282. Bronwyn calculates her deduction as $320 \text{ kms} \times \$0.88 = \282 .

Reimbursements

If your employer pays you the exact amount for expenses you incur (either before or after you incur them), the payment is a reimbursement.

A reimbursement isn't an allowance.

If your employer reimburses for expenses you incur:

- you don't include the reimbursement as income in your tax return
- you can't claim a deduction for the expenses.

Find out about lawyers':

- Deductions for work expenses
- Record keeping for work expenses

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Deductions for work expenses

Deductions you can and can't claim for expenses you incur to earn your income.

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For a summary of common expenses, see [Lawyer deductions \(PDF, 434KB\)](#) [📄](#).

To claim a deduction for a work-related expense you must meet the 3 golden rules:

1. You must have spent the money and you weren't reimbursed.
2. The expense must directly relate to earning your income.
3. You must have a **record** to prove it (usually a receipt).

If the expense was incurred for both work and private purposes, you can only claim a deduction for the work-related portion of the expense.

You can't claim a deduction if:

- you don't keep records of your work-related expenses
- someone else (such as an employer) pays for the expense or reimburses you for it.

Find out which expenses you can and can't claim as a lawyer:

- [Lawyer expenses A–F](#)
- [Lawyer expenses G–O](#)
- [Lawyer expenses P–S](#)
- [Lawyer expenses T–W](#)

To help you work out if you can or can't claim a deduction for other expenses, and the records you need, see [Employees guide for work expenses](#).

You can use the **myDeductions** tool in the ATO app to store records and help keep track of your:

- work-related expenses (such as vehicle trips)
- general expenses (such as gifts and donations).

You can upload these records or share them with a registered tax agent at tax time to make lodging your tax return easier.

We have information in languages other than English to help people from non-English speaking backgrounds. A summary of common work-related expenses may be available in your language:

1. Select your language from the [other languages' homepage](#).
2. Select the heading **Individuals**.
3. Check the list to see if a summary is available.

Lawyer expenses A–F



Details on claiming lawyer expenses.

Lawyer expenses G–O



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Lawyer expenses A–F

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Admission fees

You can't claim a deduction for the cost of admission fees. This is because you incur the expense to enable you to start your employment, not during the course of your employment.

Annual practising certificate fees

You can claim a deduction for the cost of renewing your **professional memberships and accreditations** if you need it to work in your current employment.

You can't claim the initial cost of getting your professional memberships and accreditations as a deduction. This is because you incur the expense to enable you to start employment, not while earning your income.

Example: prerequisite expenses

Drew finishes his legal training in Townsville and is looking to start his career as a solicitor. To practise as a solicitor, Drew needs to apply to the Supreme Court of Queensland to be admitted as a lawyer and then apply for a practising certificate. Until he is granted both, he can't practise law.

Drew can't claim a deduction for the cost of his admission or practising certificate because he incurs it so he can start earning employment income. Once he is employed, he will be able to deduct the cost of renewing his practise certificate each year, as it allows him to continue earning his income as a solicitor.

Bags and cases for work items

If you use a **bag or a case** – for example a briefcase, to carry items for work, you can claim a deduction to the extent that it is used for work purposes. Work items may include laptops, legal documents and briefs

but do not include private and domestic items like gym gear, food or a personal phone or tablet. To be deductible, your job must require you to transport work items and the bag must be suitable for that purpose.

If the bag or case cost you \$300 or less, and you use it for work only, you can claim an immediate deduction for the whole cost of the bag in the year you buy it. If the bag or case cost more than \$300, you can claim a deduction for its decline in value over the bag's or case's **effective life**.

If you use the bag or case to carry both work and private items, you need to apportion the expense between work-related and private use, and you can only claim the work-related portion.

Example: bag deductible

Michael is a solicitor. Michael buys a leather satchel for \$450. He uses the satchel to carry confidential material and legal documents to court. Michael does not use the satchel for any other purpose.

As the satchel cost more than \$300, Michael can claim a deduction for the decline in value of the satchel over its effective life.

Example: bag not deductible

Francisco is a law clerk. He buys a holdall bag for \$250 and uses it every day to take his lunch, personal tablet and gym clothes to work.

Francisco can't claim a deduction for the bag, as he only uses it to transport private items to and from work.

Books and journals

You can claim a deduction for the total **books, periodicals and digital information** you buy (including technical journals and reference books)

if:

- it cost \$300 or less
- you use the publication mainly for work-related purposes, that is more than half (50%) of the time for work purposes
- the publication isn't part of a set you start to hold in that income year where the total set costs more than \$300
- the item isn't one of a number of identical or substantially identical items that together cost more than \$300.

If you subscribe and pay for a publication in advance for more than one year, you must claim your deduction proportionately over the whole subscription period.

Example: dividing the cost of a subscription

On 1 January 2024, Martin, a senior clerk employed by a legal firm, paid \$1,250 for a subscription for a monthly professional journal. The subscription is for 1 January 2024 – 31 January 2025 (397 days).

As Martin has paid in advance for more than 12 months, he must apportion his deduction over the income years 2023–24 and 2024–25. Martin's deductions are:

2023–24 (1 January 2024 to 30 June 2024)

$$\$1,250 \times (182 \div 397) = \$573$$

2024–25 (1 July 2024 to 31 January 2025)

$$\$1,250 \times (215 \div 397) = \$677$$

The total deduction allowed proportionately over the income years 2023–24 and 2024–25 is \$1,250.

You can claim the decline in value of your professional library over its effective life, if:

- the content of each individual item is directly relevant to your duties and cost more than \$300
- the item is part of a set or a number of items that are identical or substantially identical which cost more than \$300.

Car expenses

You can't claim a **car expenses** deduction for normal trips between your home and regular place of work. These are private expenses, even if you:

- live a long way from your usual or regular workplace
- have to work outside normal business hours (for example, weekend or early morning shifts).

In limited circumstances, you can claim the cost of **trips between home and work**, such as where you carry bulky tools or equipment for work or where you had shifting places of employment.

To be able to claim a deduction for the cost of trips between home and work while carrying bulky tools or equipment, all the following conditions must be met:

- the tools or equipment are essential to perform your employment duties
- the tools or equipment are bulky, meaning that
 - because of the size and weight, they are awkward to transport
 - they can only be transported conveniently using a motor vehicle
- there is no secure storage for such items at the workplace.

It will not be sufficient if you transport the tools or equipment merely as a matter of choice. For example, if your employer provides secure storage, your decision to transport items home will be a matter of choice.

You are considered to have shifting places of employment where you have no fixed place of work and you continually travel from one work site to another before returning home.

You can also claim a deduction for the cost of using your car when you drive:

- directly between separate jobs on the same day (provided neither of the workplaces is your home)– for example, travelling from the court to represent a client to your second job as a university lecturer
- to and from an alternative workplace for the same employer on the same day – for example, travelling from the office to meet a client in

custody or attend court

- from home to an alternative place of work – for example, driving directly to your appointment at your client's premises.

To claim a deduction, you must keep records of your car use. You can choose between the logbook method or the cents per kilometre method to work out your deduction if you:

- own the car
- lease the car (directly from the finance company)
- hire the car under a purchase agreement (with the car dealership or a finance company).

You don't own, lease or hire a car you use under a salary sacrifice or novated lease arrangement. This is because it's usually your employer leasing the car from the financing company and making it available for your use. You can't claim a deduction for car expenses but you can claim additional work-related expenses you incur that are associated with your work use of the car such as **parking and tolls**.

If you use the **logbook method**, you need to keep a valid logbook to help you work out the percentage of work-related use along with written evidence of your car expenses.

If you use the **cents per kilometre method**, you can claim a **set rate** for each work-related kilometre travelled. The maximum number of kilometres you can claim under this method is 5,000. You must be able to show how you work out your kilometres and that they were work-related.

If you claim your work-related car expenses using one of the above methods, you can't claim any further deductions in the same tax return for the same car. For example, petrol, servicing, and insurance costs.

To claim a deduction in your tax return, include the amount of your claim at **Work-related car expenses**. The **Work-related car expenses calculator** can help you work out the amount you can claim as a deduction.

You can't use the cents per kilometre or logbook methods to work out your claim for a:

- motorcycle

- vehicle with a carrying capacity of one tonne or more (such as a ute)
- vehicle that can transport 9 passengers or more (such as a minibus).

For these vehicles, you can claim the actual expenses you incur for your work-related travel. This includes costs such as fuel, oil, insurance, and loan interest along with the decline in value of the vehicle. You must keep receipts for all your expenses and records to show your work-related use of the vehicle. Although it is not a requirement for you to keep a logbook, it is the easiest way to calculate your work-related use of the vehicle.

To claim a deduction for actual expenses you incur for a vehicle not defined as a car, include the amount at **Work-related travel expenses**.

Example: home to regular place of work

Nigel is a lawyer. He receives a phone call at his home outside normal working hours as a client has been arrested. Nigel travels from his home to his office in response to this phone call.

Even though Nigel is called outside his normal working hours, Nigel can't claim a deduction from his home to the office. It is travel to a regular place of work and he does not incur the cost in earning his income. The expenses are private.

Example: home to an alternative place of work

Renata is lawyer. Her office is located in a suburb of Sydney. When Renata attends court in the city, she drives from her home directly to the court. After she has finished at the court, Renata drives back to her suburban office.

Renata can claim a deduction for the expenses she incurs when she drives from:

- home to the court

- the court to her suburban office.

Renata can't claim a deduction for the expenses she incurs when she drives home at the end of the day from her suburban office.

Example: bulky equipment

Charlie is a solicitor. He decides to do some work at home on some of his cases over the weekend. Charlie uses his car to carry home 5 containers of working papers which weigh around 50 kg.

Charlie can't claim a deduction for car expenses when he drives from the office to his home on Friday afternoon and from his home to the office on Monday morning. Although the documents are bulky, he has made a personal choice to carry the documents home.

Child care

You can't claim a deduction for the cost of **child care** (including school holidays and before and after school care) when you're working. It's a private expense, and the expenses have no direct connection to earning your income.

Clothing and uniform expenses (including footwear)

With a few exceptions, clothing can't be deducted as a work-related expense.

You can't claim conventional clothing (including footwear) as a work-related expense, even if your employer requires you to wear it and you only wear these items of clothing at work.

'Conventional clothing' is everyday clothing worn by people regardless of their occupation – for example, business attire worn by a lawyer.

You can claim a deduction for costs you incur to buy, hire, repair or replace clothing, uniforms and footwear you wear at work if it's in one

of the following categories:

- **protective clothing** – clothing that has protective features or functions that you wear to protect you from specific risks of injury or illness at work. For example, cleaning aprons, non-slip shoes or smocks worn to stop you coming into contact with harmful substances. Conventional clothes you wear at work are not regarded as protective clothing if they lack protective qualities designed for the risks of your work. This includes jeans, drill shirts, shorts, trousers, socks, closed shoes.
- **occupation-specific** – clothing distinctly identifies you as a person associated with a particular profession, trade or occupation. For example, a judge's robes or a chef's chequered pants. Items traditionally worn in a profession are not occupation-specific where the clothing is worn by multiple professions.
- **a compulsory uniform** – clothing that your employer strictly and consistently enforces you wear by workplace agreement or policy and distinctly identifies either
 - you as an employee working for a particular employer
 - the products or services your employer provides
- **a non-compulsory uniform** – a uniform that is not compulsory to wear and that your employer registers on the Register of Approved Occupational Clothing.

You can't claim a deduction if your employer buys, repairs or replaces your clothing, footwear or protective clothing.

Example: conventional clothing

Lena wears a business suit to work. It isn't compulsory for a staff member to wear a business suit, but the employer encourages staff members to do so.

Lena can't claim a deduction for the cost of buying or cleaning her business suits, even if her employer tells her to wear them. The suits are conventional clothing.

Example: compulsory uniform with logo

Mike's employer requires him to buy and wear company shirts. Each shirt has his employer's company logo embroidered on it. As part of his uniform, he also has to wear plain black pants and black shoes.

Mike can claim a deduction for the cost of buying and laundering the shirts as they are:

- distinctive items with the employer's logo
- compulsory for him to wear at work.

However, he can't claim the cost of buying or cleaning his black pants or shoes because the items are conventional clothing and the cost is private.

Mike can't claim a deduction for the cost of the embroidered company shirts if they were provided by his employer or he was reimbursed for the cost.

Club membership fees

You can't claim a deduction for club membership fees – for example, your annual golf club membership fees, even if it helps you to manage client relationships.

Drivers licence

You can't claim a deduction for the cost to get or renew your **drivers licence**, even if you must have it as a condition of employment. This is a private expense.

Entertainment and social functions

You can't claim a deduction for the cost of any **entertainment, fundraising or social functions**. This applies even if they are compulsory, or you discuss work matters at the event. Entertainment and social functions include the cost of:

- work breakfasts, lunches or dinners

- attendance at sporting events
- gala or social nights
- concerts or dances
- cocktail parties
- other similar types of functions or events.

These are private expenses because these events don't have a direct connection to your work duties.

You also can't claim the cost of travelling to and from functions.

Example: entertainment costs

Rachael attends a social breakfast organised by the Australian Bar Association. These breakfasts are held every other month to encourage lawyers within the region to meet socially with colleagues.

Even though her employer encourages staff to attend, Rachael can't claim a deduction for the cost of attending the breakfast as it is a private expense. That is because there is no direct connection to her work duties.

Fines and penalties

You can't claim a deduction for any **fin**es or **penalties** you get when you travel to work or during work. Fines may include parking and speeding fines or penalties.

First aid courses

You can claim a deduction for the cost of **first aid training courses** if you are both:

- a designated first aid person
- need to complete a first aid training course to assist in emergency work situations.

You can't claim a deduction if your employer pays for or reimburses you for the cost of the course.

For more lawyer expenses:

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Lawyer expenses G–O

Details on claiming lawyer expenses.

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Glasses, contact lenses and anti-glare glasses

You can't claim a deduction for **prescription glasses or contact lenses**, even if you need to wear them while working. These are private expenses.

You can claim a deduction for the cost of anti-glare glasses if you wear them to reduce the real and likely risk of illness or injury while working as a lawyer.

You can only claim a deduction for the work-related use of the item.

Gifts and greeting cards

You can't claim a deduction for the cost of gifts and greeting cards you buy for clients. This is a private expense.

Grooming expenses

You can't claim a deduction for hairdressing, cosmetics, hair and skin care products, even if:

- you receive an allowance for grooming
- your employer expects you to be well groomed.

All grooming expenses and products are private expenses.

Insurance expenses

Insurance expenses aren't work-related expenses; however, you may still be able to claim a deduction for:

- insurance premiums you pay to cover yourself for loss of employment income
- the cost of professional indemnity insurance.

Example: apportioning insurance deduction

Dee takes out an income protection and personal injury policy through her insurer. She pays \$250 a month, \$175 of this is for the income protection cover and \$75 is for the personal injury cover.

Dee can claim \$175 a month for the insurance policy. The remaining \$75 is not deductible, because it is capital in nature.

Example: when professional indemnity insurance is not deductible

Ezra is required to have professional indemnity insurance in his role as a lawyer. As part of his salary package, his employer has agreed to pay his insurance each year he is employed at the firm.

As Ezra didn't incur the expense he can't claim a deduction.

Laundry and maintenance

You can claim a deduction for the costs you incur to wash, dry and iron clothing you wear at work if it's:

- protective (for example, a hi-vis jacket)
- occupation specific and not a conventional, everyday piece of clothing such as a business suit
- a uniform either non-compulsory and registered by your employer on the Register of Approved Occupational Clothing or compulsory.

This also includes laundromat and dry-cleaning expenses.

We consider that a reasonable basis for working out your laundry claim is:

- \$1 per load if it only contains clothing you wear at work from one of the categories above
- 50c per load if you mix personal items of clothing with work clothing from one of the categories above.

You can claim the actual costs you incurred for repairing and dry-cleaning expenses.

If your laundry claim (excluding dry-cleaning expenses) is \$150 or less, you don't need to keep records. However, you will still need to

calculate and be able to show how you worked out your claim. This isn't an automatic deduction.

Example: laundering a deductible compulsory uniform

Angela is a lawyer in a legal firm. Her employer requires that she buys shirts with the company logo to be worn at work. She is also required to comply with dress standards and wear smart black pants or a skirt.

Angela can claim a deduction for buying and laundering her work shirts as the logo makes them unique and distinctive to the organisation where she works.

Angela can't claim a deduction for her work pants and skirts even though she only wears them to work. Black pants and skirts without a logo or other distinctive feature are not unique to the organisation.

Angela works for 40 weeks of the income year and washes her shirts twice a week in a mixed load with other clothes. As Angela washes her uniform in a mixed load she can claim 50 cents per load of laundry where her uniform is included in the wash.

Angela calculates her laundry claim as follows:

$$2 \times 40 \text{ weeks} \times \$0.50 \text{ per load} = \$40$$

Example: conventional clothing not deductible

Gavin is a solicitor in a law firm. As part of his work duties, Gavin meets with clients and attends court hearings. Gavin is expected to maintain a professional appearance, so he buys business shirts and suits that he only wears to work.

Even though Gavin wears these items to work, he can't claim a deduction for the cost of buying or laundering of the shirts and

suits he buys, as they are conventional clothes and not occupation specific, protective or a uniform.

Meal and snack expenses

You can't claim a deduction for the cost of **food, drink or snacks** you consume during your normal working hours, even if you receive a meal allowance. These are private expenses.

You can claim:

- [overtime meal expenses](#), but only if you buy and eat the meal while you are performing overtime and you receive an overtime meal allowance under an industrial law, award or agreement
- the cost of meals you incur when you are travelling overnight for the purpose of carrying out your employment duties (**travel expenses**).

Example: buying food at work not deductible

Scarlett is a solicitor and works evenings drafting documents and conducting legal research. During her shift, Scarlett gets a 30 minute break. While she is on her break, she buys dinner and some water and peanuts to snack on throughout the rest of her shift.

Scarlett can't claim a deduction for the snacks or evening meal. The cost of the food and drink she buys is private and has no relevant connection to her employment activities.

Newspapers and other news services, magazines and professional publications

The cost of newspapers and other news services, magazines and professional publications are generally private expenses and not deductible.

You can claim a deduction for the cost of buying or subscribing to a professional publication newspaper, news service or magazine if you can show:

- a direct connection between your specific work duties and the content
- the content is specific to your employment and is not general in nature.

If you use the publication for work and private purposes, you can only claim the portion related to your work-related use.

Example: professional publication deductible

Tania is an employee taxation lawyer in a large company. Tania subscribes to the *Taxation in Australia* journal to keep up to date with changes.

Tania can claim a deduction for the cost of subscribing to the journal. The content of the publication is specific to Tania's employment and there is a direct connection between her work duties and the publication.

Overtime meal expenses

You can claim a deduction for the cost of a meal you buy and eat **when you work overtime**, if all of the following apply:

- you receive an overtime meal allowance under an industrial law, award or agreement
- the allowance is on your income statement or payment summary as a separate allowance
- you include the allowance in your tax return as income.

You can't claim a deduction if the allowance is part of your salary and wages and not included as a separate allowance on your income statement or payment summary.

You generally need to get and keep written evidence, such as receipts, when you claim a deduction. However, each year we set an amount you can claim for overtime meal expenses without receipts. We call this the 'reasonable amount'. If you receive an overtime meal allowance, are claiming a deduction and spent:

- up to reasonable amount, you don't have to get and keep receipts

- more than the reasonable amount, you must get and keep receipts for your expenses.

In all cases, you need to be able to show you spent the money and how you work out your claim.

Example: deduction for overtime meal

Moana normally works an 8-hour shift. During the preparation for a case she is asked to work for an additional 3 hours to complete some research. Moana is given a meal break and paid a meal allowance of \$20 under her enterprise agreement. The allowance is shown on her income statement.

Moana buys and eats a meal costing her \$21 during her overtime. The reasonable amount for overtime meals is \$32.50.

Moana must declare the overtime meal allowance as income in her tax return.

Moana can claim a deduction of \$21 as the amount she spent on the meal she eats while on duty for extended hours is incurred in earning her employment income.

As Moana's deduction is less than the reasonable amount, Moana does not have to keep written evidence for her claim. However, she needs to be able to show how she works out her claim and that she spent the money.

For more information, see *TD 2024/3 Income tax: what are the reasonable travel and overtime meal allowance expense amounts for the 2024–25 income year?*

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Lawyer expenses P–S

Details on claiming lawyer expenses.

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Parking fees and tolls

You can't claim a deduction for parking at or near a regular place of work. You also can't claim a deduction for tolls you incur for trips between your home and regular place of work. These are a private expense.

You can claim a deduction for parking fees and tolls you incur on work-related trips.

Example: parking fees

Spencer drives his own car to work each day and parks in the secure parking centre next to the legal firm where he works.

Once a month Spencer drives his car to a training facility to complete mandatory training, required for his role as a solicitor. He pays for parking and isn't reimbursed by his employer.

Spencer can't claim the cost he incurs parking at his regular place of work. However, he can claim his parking at the training facility as he incurs the cost on a work-related trip.

Phone, data and internet expenses

You can claim a deduction for **phone, data and internet costs** if you use your own phone or electronic devices for work purposes.

If your phone, data and internet use for work is incidental and you're not claiming more than \$50 in total, you do not need to keep records.

If you claim more than \$50, you need to keep records to show your work use. For example, an itemised bill where you can identify your work-related phone calls and data use.

You can't claim a deduction if your employer:

- provides you with a phone for work and pays for your usage
- reimburses you for the costs you incur.

You can't claim a deduction for any phone calls to family and friends, even while travelling for work. This is because these are personal phone calls.

If all or part of your work-related phone, data and internet expenses are incurred as a result of **working from home** and you use the **fixed rate method** to claim your working from home deductions, you can't claim a separate deduction for these expenses.

For more information, see:

- **Mobile phone, mobile internet and other devices**
- **Home phone and internet expenses**

Example: calculating the apportionment of phone expenses

Lily uses her mobile phone for work purposes. She is on a set plan of \$49 a month.

Lily receives a monthly itemised account from her phone provider including details of the individual calls she has made.

Lily prints out her account once a year and highlights the work-related calls she made. She notes on her account for the first month about who she is phoning for work and privately - for example her employer or parents.

Of the 200 phone calls Lily makes in a 4-week period, 30 phone calls (15%) are for work. She applies that percentage to her monthly plan amount (\$49 a month).

Lily calculates her phone calls for work purposes as follows:

Total work phone calls ÷ total number of phone calls = work use percentage for phone calls

$30 \div 200 = 0.15$ (that is 15%)

Lily can claim 15% of the total bill of \$49 for each month for work purposes

$\$49 \times 0.15 = \7.35

Lily worked for 38 weeks of the year (8.8 months), so she calculates her work-related mobile phone expense deduction as follows:

$8.8 \text{ months} \times \$7.35 = \$65$

Example: work and private use

Audrey uses her computer and personal internet account at home to access her work emails and do research for her cases. She also uses her computer and the internet for private purposes.

Audrey's internet use diary showed 10% of her internet time was for work-related activities and 90% was for private use. As her internet service provider charge for the year was \$1,200 she can claim:

$$\$1,200 \times 0.10 = \$120 \text{ as work-related internet use}$$

If anyone else was accessing the internet connection, Audrey needs to reduce her claim to account for their use.

Professional library

You can claim a deduction for the decline in value of a professional library over its effective life.

Reference books can only be included in your professional library if the contents of the book are directly relevant to your employment duties. For example, if you are a family law solicitor, a reference book on divorce settlements and child custody would be relevant to your duties.

If the reference book cost **\$300 or less**, you can claim an immediate deduction for the full cost of the book in the year that it was purchased.

You can't add textbooks you buy and claim as [self-education expenses](#) to your professional library.

Example: claiming decline in value of an item that cost more than \$300

Marie is an in-house lawyer. She buys a legal book costing \$350 to add to her professional library.

Marie can't claim a deduction for the full cost of the book. This is because the total cost to be added to her professional library is more than \$300. Instead, she must claim the decline in value of the book over the effective life of her professional library.

Removal and relocation expenses

You can't claim a deduction for the cost to **transfer or relocate** to a new work location. This is the case whether the move is a condition of your existing job or you are taking up a new job.

Example: relocating due to transfer

Caitlyn is a lawyer in Sydney. She is temporarily transferred to a position in the Melbourne office for 2 years by her employer.

Caitlyn can't claim a deduction for her relocation costs, rent or other living expenses.

Repairs to tools and equipment

You can claim a deduction for repairs to **tools and equipment** you use for work. If you also use them for private purposes, you can only claim an amount for your work-related use.

Self-education expenses

You can claim a deduction for **self-education expenses** if they directly relate to your employment as a lawyer and at the time you incur the expense, it:

- maintains or improves the skills and knowledge you need for your current duties - for example, self-education and training courses you attend to meet your continued professional development (CPD) points
- results in or is likely to result in an increase in your income from your current employment.

You can't claim a deduction for a self-education expense if at the time you incur the expense, it either:

- doesn't have a connection with your current employment
- only relates in a general way to your current employment
- enables you to get employment or change employment.

For example, you can't claim expenses incurred in obtaining your Bachelor of Law if you are working as a legal secretary.

If your self-education expenses are deductible, you can claim expenses such as **course or tuition fees**, student and amenities fees, textbooks, academic journals and stationery expenses. You will also be able to claim a deduction for the decline in value of any depreciating assets which cost more than \$300 that you use for your work-related study.

If you study at home, you may also be able to claim **work from home running expenses**, but not occupancy expenses.

You can claim a deduction for transport expenses for:

- travel between your home and the place of education and then back home
- the first leg of the trip
 - when you travel from home to the place of education and then on to work
 - when you travel from work to a place of education and then home
- travel between work and the place of education and then back to work.

You can't claim a deduction for the repayments you make on your study or training support loan. Study and training support loans include:

- Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) (FEE-HELP and HECS-HELP)
- VET Student Loans (VSL)
- Australian Apprenticeship Support Loans (AASL)
- Student Financial Supplement Scheme (SFSS)
- Student Start-up Loan (SSL).

While course or tuition fees may be deductible, fees you incur under the Higher Education Contribution Scheme Higher Education Loan Program (HECS-HELP) scheme are not deductible.

Example: maintains or improves specific skills or knowledge

Beryl is a solicitor at a large company. She enrolls in an online course on effective client interviewing. The skills are required as part of the duties she performs at work.

The course deepens her knowledge on interview skills and communications issues and directly ties into the work she does from day to day.

Beryl can claim a deduction for the cost of the course.

Example: improves specific skills or knowledge

Dean is a qualified legal practitioner in commercial law. He wants to improve his knowledge and skills and has decided to complete a Masters of Commercial Law.

Dean can claim a deduction for the course and associated expenses as the course enables Dean to maintain or improve the skills and knowledge specific to his current income-producing activities.

Example: self-education you can't claim

Jamie is a lawyer in a small firm. Jamie decides that he'd prefer to teach law to high school students, so has decided to return to university to complete a teaching degree. While studying to become a high school teacher, Jamie continues working at the law firm part time.

When he completes the degree, although he will be employed as a law teacher, his job will have changed significantly.

Jamie can't claim a deduction for his self-education expenses as the degree will allow him to obtain a new job. Although he will be teaching law, there isn't a sufficient connection with his present employment activities.

Example: education doesn't maintain or improve skills for current role

Christine holds a Bachelor of Law and has been employed in a law firm for 2 years as a legal clerk. Christine decides to further her career and complete a Practical Legal Training program to be admitted as a lawyer.

Christine can't claim a deduction for the expenses she incurs to complete the program as it doesn't directly relate to her current employment as a legal clerk.

Example: no sufficient connection with current role

Sam is a practising solicitor at a Melbourne law firm. Her employer advises they want her to take on some accounting duties in the future, so Sam completes a Diploma of Accounting.

Sam can't claim a deduction for the self-education expenses as there isn't a sufficient connection with her current employment activities as a solicitor.

Seminars, conferences and training courses

You can claim a deduction for the cost of **seminars, conferences and training courses** that relate to your work as a lawyer.

The costs you can claim includes fares to attend the venue where the seminar, conference or training course is held and registration costs. If you need to travel and stay away from home overnight to attend such an event, you can also claim the cost of accommodation and meals.

You may not be able to claim all of your expenses if attending a seminar, conference or training course is for both work-related and

private purposes. If the private purpose is incidental, such as a catered lunch or a reception for delegates, you can still claim all your expenses. However, if the main purpose is not work-related, such as attending a conference while on a holiday, you can only claim the direct costs. Direct costs include the registration costs.

Where you have a dual purpose for attending the seminar, conference or training course you can only claim the work-related portion. For example, you add a holiday of one week to a training course that runs for one week.

Example: deductible seminar

Timothy is a practising lawyer and a member of a professional law association. Timothy decides to attend a seminar hosted by the association in order to keep up with new legislative changes.

Timothy can claim a deduction for the seminar fees.

Example: course not deductible

Jenny is a lawyer in a legal firm. She has been struggling to keep up with her work commitments and becomes stressed. Jenny decides to undertake a time and stress management course.

Jenny can't claim a deduction as the course doesn't directly relate to maintaining or increasing her knowledge, capabilities or skills needed in her current position.

Stationery

You can claim a deduction for the cost of logbooks, diaries and pens that you use for work.

You can't claim a deduction if your employer reimburses you for these expenses.

Supreme Court library fees

You can claim a deduction for Supreme Court library fees you pay on an annual basis. You can't claim a deduction if you pay Supreme Court library fees only once upon admission to practice.

Suspension from practice

You can't claim a deduction for the cost of defending your right to practice.

For more lawyer expenses:

- Lawyer expenses A–F
- Lawyer expenses G–O
- Lawyer expenses T–W

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Lawyer expenses T–W

Details on claiming lawyer expenses.

Last updated 13 May 2025

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Taxi, ride-share, public transport and car hire

You can claim a deduction for **transport costs** if you travel in the course of performing your work. For example, taking a taxi from your regular workplace to attend court.

You can't claim a deduction for transport expenses you incur to travel between home and work, these are private expenses.

You can't claim a deduction if your employer reimburses you for these expenses.

Tools and equipment

You can claim a deduction for **tools and equipment** you use to perform your duties as a lawyer.

You can only claim a deduction for the work-related use of the item.

If the tool or equipment cost you \$300 or less, you can claim a deduction for it in the year you buy it, if:

- you use it mainly to produce non-business assessable income
- it's not part of a set that together cost more than \$300
- it's not identical, or substantially identical to, other items that together cost more than \$300.

You can claim a deduction for the cost over the life of the item (that is, decline in value), if the tool or equipment:

- cost more than \$300
- is part of a set that together cost more than \$300
- is identical, or substantially identical to, other items that together cost more than \$300.

If you bought the tool or item of equipment part way through the year, you can only claim a deduction for the decline in value for the period of the income year that you own it. You also need to apportion your deduction if you use the item for private purposes. To work out your deduction use the **Depreciation and capital allowances tool**.

You can also claim a deduction for the cost of **repairs to tools and equipment** that you use for work purposes.

You can't claim a deduction for tools and equipment your employer or a third party supplies for use.

Example: bag for a work laptop

Marie is a lawyer. Her job requires her to regularly attend meetings with clients. She has to take her work laptop, mobile phone and the client's file with her to the meetings and keep them secure to protect sensitive information. She frequently works from home and sometimes travels directly to a client meeting before heading into the office.

Marie buys a lockable laptop bag for \$565 that she uses to carry her work laptop, mobile phone, chargers and client briefs. She carries her cash and cards, personal mobile phone and other personal items in her handbag.

Marie can claim a deduction for the decline in value of the lockable laptop bag over its effective life, as her job requires her to transport the laptop, phone, chargers and client briefs. The bag is suitable to carry all of the items.

Marie can't claim a deduction for the cost of her handbag. It is a private expense.

Example: allowable deduction for decline in value

Matthew buys a laptop for \$1,000 that he solely uses for work purposes. As the laptop costs more than \$300, he can claim a deduction for its decline in value over its effective life.

Matthew keeps a 4-week representative diary to demonstrate the 100% work-related use and a receipt for the laptop.

Travel expenses

You can claim a deduction for **travel expenses** you incur when your work requires you to both:

- travel for work

- sleep away from your home overnight in the course of performing your employment duties.

Expenses you can claim include your accommodation, meals and expenses which are incidental to the travel (incidentals). For example, if you're required to travel interstate for 3 nights to attend a work-related mediation.

You can't claim a deduction for travel expenses where you don't incur any expenses, because:

- you slept in accommodation your employer provides
- you eat meals your employer provides
- your employer or a third party reimburses you for any costs you incur.

You also can't claim a deduction for travel expenses if:

- you are not required to sleep away from your home overnight in the course of performing your duties, for example if you fly interstate for work and return home the same day
- you choose to sleep near your workplace rather than returning home, for example if you rent accommodation near your workplace and stay there because you live a long way from where you work.

Receiving an allowance from your employer doesn't automatically mean you can claim a deduction. In all cases, you must be able to show:

- you were away overnight
- you have spent the money
- the travel directly relates to earning your employment income
- how you work out your claim.

If you receive a travel allowance you must include it as assessable income in your tax return unless all of the following apply:

- the travel allowance is not shown on your income statement or payment summary
- the travel allowance doesn't exceed the Commissioner's reasonable amount (the reasonable amount is the amount we set each year for determining whether an exception from keeping written evidence

applies for accommodation, meal and incidental expenses which are covered by a travel allowance)

- you spent the whole allowance on deductible accommodation, meal and incidental expenses, if applicable.

You must keep written evidence (such as receipts) for all your overseas accommodation expenses regardless of whether you receive an allowance. You don't have to keep written evidence for other travel expenses if both of the following apply:

- you received a travel allowance from your employer for the expenses
- your deduction is less than the Commissioner's reasonable amount.

If your deduction is for more than the Commissioner's reasonable amount you need to keep receipts for all your expenses, not just for the amount over the Commissioner's reasonable amount.

Even if you're not required to keep written evidence such as receipts, you must be able to explain your claim and show you spent the amounts. For example, show your work diary, that you received and correctly declared your travel allowance and bank statements.

Example: more and less than the reasonable amount for different travel expenses

Justin is required to go interstate for a court hearing and is away from home for 5 nights. He has received a travel allowance covering the cost of accommodation, meals and incidental expenses. His airfares are paid directly by his employer.

Justin can claim a deduction for the cost of his accommodation, meals and incidental expenses as he incurs the expenses in the course of performing his employment duties.

Justin can't claim a deduction for his airfares as he was reimbursed by his employer.

The total deduction Justin claims for accommodation is more than the reasonable allowance. However, the amount he incurs on meals and incidental expenses is less than the reasonable amount. Justin must get and keep written evidence to support his total claim for all of his accommodation expenses.

Justin doesn't need to get and keep written evidence for his meal and incidental expenses, but he needs to be able to show how he works out his deduction and that he spent the amounts he has claimed.

Example: allowable deduction less than the reasonable amount without written evidence

Bobby works for a law firm in Brisbane. He is required by his employer to meet a client in Sydney for 3 days. Bobby's employer paid for his flights and accommodation in Sydney and provided a travel allowance for his breakfast, lunch and dinner. The travel allowance is shown on his income statement.

Bobby spends \$20 on breakfast, \$30 on lunch and \$45 on dinner, a total of \$95 per day on meals.

Because Bobby has spent less than the reasonable amount on each of his meals, he can claim a deduction for the \$95 per day that he spends. He isn't required to get and keep receipts for his meal expenses.

Bobby can't claim the cost of his flights and accommodation as he has not incurred these expenses.

Example: work-travel with private component

Jessie's employer requires that she travels interstate to Perth to meet with a client. While she is there her employer allows Jessie to extend her stay to explore the city and tourist attractions.

Jessie has kept the receipts for all of the expenses she incurred during the trip.

Upon her return, Jessie's employer reimburses her for the work-related travel costs. This includes her flights, accommodation, meal and any incidental expenses she incurred.

Jessie can't claim a deduction as she has been reimbursed for all of the costs incurred for the work-related travel by her employer. The expenses Jessie incurred during her extended stay are not deductible as they are private in nature.

Example: deduction claim is less than the reasonable amount

Josephine works for a personal injury law firm in a regional town. Josephine's employer requires her to travel to their head office for an internal training program. Josephine's employer provides her with an accommodation allowance to cover her accommodation costs while she works away from home for a few days. Josephine doesn't receive an allowance for meals or incidental expenses.

The amount Josephine claims as a deduction for the accommodation costs she pays is less than the reasonable allowance amount. This means she doesn't have to keep records for her accommodation expenses.

However, as Josephine does not receive an allowance to cover her meal and incidental expenses, she must keep records and other written evidence to support her deduction for her meals and incidental expenses.

For more information, see *TD 2024/3 Income tax: what are the reasonable travel and overtime meal allowance expense amounts for the 2024–25 income year?*

Union and professional association fees

You can claim a deduction for union and professional association fees you pay. You can use your income statement or payment summary as evidence of the amount you pay if it's shown on there.

Working from home expenses

You may be able to claim a deduction for **working from home expenses** you incur as an employee. These can be additional running expenses such as electricity, the decline in value of equipment or furniture, phone and internet expenses. You must:

- use one of the methods set out by us to calculate your deduction
- keep the records required for the method that you choose.

There are some expenses you can't claim a deduction for as an employee, including:

- coffee, tea, milk and other general household items consumed while working from home which your employer may provide you at work
- costs that relate to your children's education , for example, iPads, desks, subscriptions for online learning
- expenses your employer pays for or reimburses you for, including setting up your home office
- the decline in value of items provided to you by your employer – for example, a laptop or a phone.

Generally as an employee, you can't claim **occupancy expenses** (rent, rates, mortgage interest and house insurance premiums), unless your home is your 'place of business'.

Use the **Home office expenses calculator** to help you work out the amount you can claim as a deduction.

For more information, see:

- *PS LA 2001/6 Verification approaches for electronic device usage expenses*
- *TR 93/30 Income tax: deductions for home office expenses*
- *PCG 2023/1 Claiming a deduction for additional running expenses incurred while working from home - ATO compliance approach*

For more lawyer expenses, see:

- **Lawyer expenses A–F**
- **Lawyer expenses G–O**
- **Lawyer expenses P–S**

Find out about lawyers:

- Income and allowances
- Record keeping for work expenses

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Record keeping for work expenses

Records you need to keep as evidence of your expenses and exceptions to keeping some records.

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To claim a deduction, you need to get and keep records to prove you incurred the expense. You will also need to be able to show how the expense relates to earning your employment income.

For a summary of work-related expense records, download [Keeping records for work-related expenses \(PDF, 999KB\)](#) [📄](#).

For most expenses you need a receipt or similar document from the supplier that shows all of the following:

- the name or business name of the supplier
- the amount of the expense or cost of the asset
- the nature of the goods or services that you purchase
- the date you purchase the goods or services
- the date the document was produced.

They must be in English where you incur the expense in Australia.

If your total claim for work-related expenses is more than \$300, you must have written evidence for all of your claims. For some expenses, you might also need a record such as diary or similar document.

However, there are some record keeping exceptions available in some circumstances.

For information about the specific records you need for work-related expenses, see:

- Actual cost method for working from home expenses
- Clothing, laundry and dry-cleaning expenses
- Computers, laptops and software
- Expenses for a car you own or lease
- Expenses for a vehicle that isn't yours or isn't a car
- Fixed rate method for working from home expenses
- Home phone and internet expenses
- Keeping travel expense records
- Mobile phone, mobile internet and other devices
- Overtime meal expenses
- Self-education expenses
- Taxi, ride-share and public transport expenses
- Tools and equipment to perform your work

You can use the myDeductions tool in the ATO app to help keep track of your:

- work-related expenses (such as vehicle trips)
- general expenses (such as gifts and donations).

You can upload these records when you prepare your tax return, or share them with a registered tax agent at tax time to make lodging your tax return easier.

Find out about lawyers':

- Income and allowances
- Deductions for work expenses

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Our commitment to you

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If you follow our information and it turns out to be incorrect, or it is misleading and you make a mistake as a result, we will take that into account when determining what action, if any, we should take.

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