



Australian Government  
Australian Taxation Office

# If you're a lawyer it pays to learn what you can claim



## To claim a deduction for work-related expenses:

- you must have spent the money yourself and weren't reimbursed
- it must directly relate to earning your income
- you must have a record to prove it.\*

You can only claim the work-related portion of an expense. You can't claim a deduction for any part of an expense that does not directly relate to earning your income.

\* You can use the [myDeductions](#) tool in the ATO app to keep track of your expenses and receipts throughout the year.

## Car expenses



- ✗ **You can't claim** the cost of normal trips between home and work, even if you live a long way from your usual workplace or have to work outside normal business hours.
- ✓ **You can claim** the cost of using a car you own when you drive:
  - directly between separate jobs on the same day (but not if one of those places is your home) – for example, from your law firm's office to your second job as a university lecturer
  - to and from an alternative workplace for the same employer on the same day – for example, from your office to visit a client in custody or attend court
  - from home directly to an alternative workplace – for example, travelling from home to a training venue to attend a work-related training course.

If you claim car expenses, you can use the logbook method or the cents per kilometre method to calculate your deduction.

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 or insurance costs.

## Travel expenses



- ✓ **You can claim** travel expenses if you travel away from your home overnight in the course of performing your employment duties – for example, travelling interstate to represent a client at the High Court of Australia. Travel expenses can include meals, accommodation, fares and incidental expenses that you incur when travelling for work.
- ✗ **You can't claim** a deduction if the travel is paid for, or you are reimbursed by your employer or another person.

Receiving a travel allowance from your employer does not automatically entitle you to a deduction. You still need to show that you were away overnight, you spent the money, and the travel directly relates to earning your employment income.

## Clothing and laundry expenses (including footwear)



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

- ✖ **You can't claim** the cost to buy, hire, repair or clean conventional clothing you wear for work, 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 – for example, suits, ties, cufflinks or business attire.
- ✔ **You can claim** the cost of buying, hiring, repairing or cleaning clothing if it is occupation-specific – clothing that distinctively identifies you as a person associated with a particular occupation. For example, a judge's robes.
- ✖ **You can't claim** a deduction if your employer pays for or reimburses you for these expenses.

## Self-education and study expenses

- ✔ **You can claim** self-education and study expenses if your course relates directly to your employment as a lawyer and it:
    - maintains or improves the skills and knowledge you need for your current duties
    - results in or is likely to result in an increase in income from your current employment.
- For example, training, seminars or conferences you attend to meet your 'continuing professional development (CPD) requirements.
- ✖ **You can't claim** a deduction if your study is only related in a general way or is designed to help you get a new job. For example, you can't claim for the cost of taking a personal development or stress management course.

## Working from home expenses

- ✔ **You can claim** a deduction for running expenses you incur directly as a result of working from home. You must:

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

### ✖ **You can't claim:**

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

## Other expenses

- ✔ **You can claim** the work-related portion of other expenses that relate to your employment, including:
  - renewing your annual practising certificates
  - parking fees and tolls when you drive your car for work-related purposes
  - Supreme Court Library fees
  - professional indemnity insurance
  - union and professional association fees
  - technical or professional publications.
- ✖ **You can't claim:**
  - costs met or reimbursed by your employer
  - admission fees
  - fines
  - club membership fees, even if it is to meet clients – for example, golf membership fees
  - entertainment expenses or social functions – for example, business lunches, galas or social nights
  - gifts or greeting cards you buy for clients
  - private expenses, such as personal grooming or childcare fees.

### **This is a general summary only.**

For more information, go to [ato.gov.au/lawyer](https://ato.gov.au/lawyer) or speak to a registered tax professional.

