

Department of Finance
Office Notice 02/2013
Revised Expenditure Approval Procedures
(Revocation of Office Notice 01/11)

1. The purpose of this office notice is to revise and update expenditure approval authorisations already outlined in Office Notice 01/11.
2. **Routine expenditure:** Any routine spending (i.e. recurring payments which do not fall onto any of the categories set out at paragraphs 7 to 11) is to be approved on JD Edwards in accordance with the approval limits set out in paragraph 4. Please contact the Finance Unit if in doubt as to whether expenditure should be classified as “routine”.
3. **Non-routine expenditure:** All non-routine expenditure must be approved at Principal level or higher.
4. **Revised approval levels:**
 - All routine payments between €0 and €63,500 are to be approved by an Assistant Principal or higher.
 - All non-routine payments up to €250,000 and all routine payments between €63,500 and €250,000 are to be approved by a Principal or higher.
 - All payments between €250,000 and €1m are to be approved by an Assistant Secretary/Director or higher.
 - All payments greater than €1m should be approved by a Head of Division or the Secretary General.

A Head of Division may vary these arrangements, in respect of a business unit where a large number of routine transactions occur, by notifying the Finance Unit in writing.

5. **Processing of orders and management of commitments**

In all cases, expenditure commitments should not be created unless a budget is in place. An order should be raised on the JDE Financial Management system as soon as a commitment is created. A list of super-users is available from the Business Administration Unit should you be unclear as to how to enter a purchase order.

6. **Filling of vacancies:** Proposals for replacing any staff whether by recruitment, promotion or involving payment of an allowance must be submitted via the Assistant Secretary, Head of Division and Personnel Officer to the Secretary General for prior approval. Re-allocation of assignments among existing staff within a Division will remain a matter for the relevant Assistant Secretary or Head of Division **however** any such changes should be notified immediately to HR. It is the responsibility of HR to ensure that staff costs and Business Unit changes are notified promptly to Salaries Section to protect the integrity of financial management information.
7. **Overtime:** In any case in which attendance outside normal hours is required, the use of time in lieu arrangements should be considered as a first option. Paid overtime, where deemed necessary, should be pre-approved in accordance with Office Notice 10/2008 by emailing the template attached to that Office Notice to the “Overtime Requests” mailbox.
8. **Consultancies and external service providers:** Office Notice 03/08 still applies, so all proposals for the engagement of consultants or other external service providers, where the cost is likely to exceed €10,000, should be submitted for prior authorisation via Assistant Secretary and Head of Division to the Secretary General. This includes the renewal or extension of existing contracts. Definitions of these terms are to be found in the Guidelines on the Engagement of Consultants and External Support in the Civil Service ([here](#)). Model contracts should be used and the creation of a consultancy contract should be recorded on a central register.
9. **Use of Hotels for meetings/training:** Business unit managers are reminded of the extensive meeting and training facilities available to the Department in Tullamore, Dublin and at other Government offices around the country. In so far as is possible these facilities should be used, any exceptions requiring the approval of the Division Head or Assistant Secretary and subject to funds being available in the cost centre budget.
10. **PR/Advertising:** Any proposal for such expenditure, *where the cost is likely to exceed €10k*, should be submitted for prior approval via the Assistant Secretary and Head of Division to the Secretary General.
11. **Office Refreshments/Entertainment:** Refreshments should not be ordered for meetings unless there are special circumstances. All other entertainment should be kept to a minimum and should be pre-approved by the Assistant Secretary. Signed approvals should be recorded on the official form in Office Notice 02/2011 which should be copied to CSD Accommodation Unit.

Refer to paragraph 14 for arrangements in relation to expenses of the Minister, Minister of State, Minister’s Private Secretary and Advisors.

12. **Foreign and Home Travel:** Expenditure on foreign travel and the use by staff of their own motor car for any official travel must have prior written approval at Principal level. A copy of the signed approval should be scanned with other relevant receipts and attached to the claim when it is submitted on CoreEss. Such approvals must identify the expected total cost for all staff involved in the travel and, in the case of travel within Ireland, the reasons for not using public transport. No long haul travel at state or public expense, whether from Department of Finance funds or otherwise, is to be undertaken without the express permission of a Head of Division. Office Notice 10/2008 refers. You are reminded that there are strict timeframes for the submission and approval of T&S claims (Office Notice 02/2010). You are also reminded of the restrictions in relation to use of and payment for taxis (Office Notice 03/2009).

Refer to paragraph 14 for arrangements in relation to expenses of the Minister, Minister of State, Minister's Private Secretary and Advisors, including appropriate accounting arrangements for ministerial and official travel as outlined in D/PER Circular 02/2013.

13. **Credit Card purchases:** Expenditure on credit cards should follow the guidelines and approval procedures set out above for the expenditure. The procedure for the subsequent submission and payment of Credit Card bills is set out in Office Notice 09/2009.

Refer to paragraph 14 for arrangements in relation to expenses of the Minister, Minister of State, Minister's Private Secretary and Advisors.

14. **Foreign and Home Travel, Entertainment and Credit Card purchases by Minister, Minister of State, Private Secretary or Minister's Advisors:** Whilst it is appreciated that the work of these offices may not always offer an opportunity to obtain pre-approval for such expenditure, nonetheless pre-approval should be sought where possible and where this is not possible the expenditure should be retrospectively approved by the Head of CSD, in respect of Minister and Minister of State, and by the Personnel Officer in respect of the Private Secretary and advisors. In line with the requirements of DPER Circular 02/2013, the travelling expenses of a Minister, Minister of State or Department/Office Official for journeys within or outside the State should, with limited exceptions, be charged to the Vote on which the salary of the individual is borne.

15. **Assistant Secretaries/Directors** continue to be budget holders with overall responsibility for expenditure in their areas. They should ensure, inter alia, that:
- all Budget Holders are aware of the procedures contained within this Office Notice and apply approvals accordingly;
 - a Financial Management Co-ordinator is in place to monitor spend, ensure spend is appropriately charged to the Business Units in the area and provide financial commentary/other information as required;
 - ensure that all staff are familiar with the categories of budgets available within the area and that spend is not committed unless a pre-approved budget is in place
16. The above Notice should be read in conjunction with other relevant Departmental policies and procedures including Public Financial Procedures.
17. **Office Notice 01/11:** Office Notice 01/11 is hereby cancelled.
18. **Queries:** Any queries concerning this office notice should be directed to the Finance Unit.

John Moran
Secretary General
Department of Finance