

WHAT CAN YOU CLAIM ON YOUR TAX RETURN?

OFFICE SUPPLIES

You can include business stationery, printing costs (including printer ink), and postage. Even business equipment like computers, printers, programs and software, but you may have to claim these as capital allowances if you don't use cash basis accounting.

BUSINESS PREMISES

If you run your business from home, you can actually include part of your home utility bills, but you'll need to figure out what proportion of your home is used for business, and for how many days or hours of the month. If you work from home at least 25 hours a month, you can use 'simplified expenses', which is a flat monthly rate calculated by the government (look for this on gov.uk) If you work outside of the home, you can claim expenses for rent/hire, maintenance/repair, utility bills, property insurance, and security. Although you can't claim expenses for buying or building your business premises.

LEGAL & FINANCIAL COSTS

If you need to hire a professional like an accountant, a solicitor, a surveyor or an architect for business reasons, you can include the cost in your calculation. You can also include bank, overdraft and credit card charges, interest on bank and business loans, hire purchase interest and leasing payments. Note that if you're using cash basis accounting, you can only claim up to £500 in interest and bank charges.

MARKETING

The cost of marketing including newspaper advertising, directory listings, mailshots, free samples and website costs can be claimed.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

You can include the cost of membership to trade bodies or professional membership organisations if they're relevant to your business, and the cost of subscriptions to trade or professional journals.

TRAVEL

You can include business-related car or van costs, including insurance, fuel, hire charges, repairs, servicing and breakdown cover. It's difficult to calculate, so you can use 'simplified vehicle expenses', which is that government flat rate (find it on gov.uk). You can also include business travel by train, bus, plane or taxi and hotel rooms and meals during overnight business trips. Travel for meetings, site visits etc. is included, but you can't claim for the cost of travelling between home and work, so commuting to your business premises unfortunately doesn't count. Also note that if you take a journey for both personal and business reasons, you must be able to separate the business costs in order to include it. You can't claim for entertaining clients, suppliers and customers, or event hospitality.

INSURANCE

You can include the cost of business insurance, for example public liability insurance and professional indemnity insurance. There's more information about this on our FAQ pages.

STOCK & MATERIALS

You can include the cost of your stock, your raw materials, and the direct costs that arise from producing your goods.

CLOTHING

You can include the cost of uniform, necessary protective clothing, or costumes for actors or entertainers, but you can't include the cost of everyday clothing that you wear to work.

STAFF COSTS

Employee and staff salaries count as allowable expenses, as do bonuses, pension contributions, benefits, agency fees and employer National Insurance contributions.