

# Travel Policy

## Synopsis

To provide for the health, safety and wellbeing of staff and students, this policy specifies the requirements for any kind of travel away from an individual's normal place of work/study, for purposes related to the activities of the University. It also reflects the University's expectation that all colleagues routinely consider sustainable business travel options and reach decisions on whether (and how) to travel within the framework and ethos underpinning the Guiding Principles of Sustainable Travel and Travel Hierarchy.

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## Approval

Approved by: Senior Management Team

Date: 14<sup>th</sup> September 2023

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## Revision Record

Issue	Date	Reason for Review
Draft 1	October 2022	New document for consultation – replacing the previous Overseas Travel Policy and extending the scope to include travel within Scotland, England and Wales.
Draft 2	December 2022	Document includes feedback from initial consultation with key parties including Insurance, business continuity, careers (for placements) and a representative from Geology (for a wider diversity of fieldtrips).
Draft 3	6 <sup>th</sup> January 2023	To incorporate comments from UNISON, mainly to clarify various points and also, significantly, to address an inconsistency in the use of “UK” rather than “England, Scotland and Wales”.
Draft 4	23 <sup>rd</sup> January 2023	To integrate into the policy the findings and recommendations arising from the report of the Sustainable Business Travel Working Group.
Draft 5	20 <sup>th</sup> August	Amended as agreed at the H&S Committee on 2 <sup>nd</sup> August, prior to presenting to SMT, as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Section 5 amended to make clear that the lead traveller is responsible for ensuring the procedures described are followed.</li> <li>Section 6 amended to put more responsibility on the Head of School/Directorate and that Local Safety Co-ordinators should raise any concerns over the arrangements with them.</li> <li>References to FCO updated to FCDO (Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office).</li> </ul>
Issue 1	14 <sup>th</sup> September 2023	As agreed by SMT, with appendices removed and replaced with a webpage link. It entirely replaces the “Overseas Travel” policy.

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## 1.0 Purpose of the Policy

The University is committed to ensuring that the health and safety of staff and students is safeguarded when they undertake any work or study related activities under its control. It has also made a commitment to and achieving net zero carbon emissions before 2040, with an intermediate target of a 40% reduction in carbon emissions from business travel by 2025. The purpose of this policy is, therefore, to ensure that travel is planned in a way which follows the agreed principles to achieve the environmental targets, to ensure that risk assessments are carried out and that appropriate insurance and business continuity arrangements are in place when travel takes place away from the staff or student's usual place(s) of work or study.

## 2.0 Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all staff and students when undertaking any work or study related activities under the University of Aberdeen's control, which requires travel, regardless of their location or the mode of transport.

This includes travel to and from:

- University owned and/or occupied premises, outwith their usual place of work/study, within Scotland, England and Wales
- Premises owned and operated by others within Scotland, England and Wales (a host organisation)
- Locations away from buildings in the Scotland, England and Wales (i.e. fieldwork etc.)
- Travel outside Scotland, England and Wales for any work or study related purposes, including work placements.
- Exhibitions, conferences, training venues etc.
- Some social activities organised by the University (e.g. "away days", Christmas parties, retirement events etc.)

This policy does not apply to travel:

- To and from an employees or students usual place of work
- For purposes which are not work or study related
- Which is not required, or organised, by the University (i.e. undertaken by an individual entirely upon their own initiative, for which they take responsibility)

The Guiding Principles of Sustainable Travel do not apply where an external organisation pays for an employee to undertake an activity on their own behalf (e.g. as an external examiner). However, staff are encouraged to align their travel decisions with the Guiding Principles while recognising they may need to seek approvals from the external organisation. That organisation may also carry out the travel risk assessment, but this should be verified before travelling.

Note:

- Travel may be by any means, including by road, sea, air or a combination of these.
- Where students undertake work placements abroad, but within their home country, this may be considered their normal place of work for the duration of the placement.

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### 3.0 Definitions

Term	Definition
Field or survey work	Any work carried out by staff or students for the purposes of teaching, research or other activities while representing the institution.
Host organisation	The owner, occupier or employer who has any degree of control over premises or space which an employee or student is to visit.
Overseas	Outside Scotland, England and Wales
Placement	Any period of accredited work experience, paid or unpaid, which is offered by an Higher Education Institution (HEI) as an integral part of the student's course, where the student is enrolled at the institution during this period, where there is the transfer of direct supervision of the student to a third party or to the student themselves if acting in a self-employed capacity.
Travel	Movement by any form of transport, including on foot, to, from or between the location(s) of any work-related activity.
Business Travel	Any travel by University of Aberdeen staff (regardless of destination, mode or class) away from University campuses, taken in association with University business, and for which the University pays directly
Work/study related activity	Any activity carried out by an employee during their time at work, including teaching, research and provision of support services, undertaken by students, organised by or required by the University in relation to their studies or research and any social activity or event which is organised by the University for staff or students.

### 4.0 Legislative Requirements

The Health and Safety at Work Act, and subordinate regulations, apply to the University's activities within Scotland, England and Wales. A key requirement is that to carry out risk assessments for all its activities, which includes travel.

Local laws must be followed in countries overseas, including Northern Ireland, where the above legislation does not apply.

Provided that the general principles of health and safety management are followed, such as the carrying out of a suitable and sufficient risk assessment, it is likely that the local health and safety related legislation will be complied with. However, it is recommended that advice is sought on local laws when travelling abroad.

The Climate Change Act commits the UK government to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 100% of 1990 levels (net zero) by 2050. This includes reducing emissions from the devolved administrations (Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland). The University's own targets contribute to this.

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## 5.0 Procedure

In the interests of the health, safety and wellbeing of staff and students who are required to travel for work or study related activities, the lead traveller is responsible for the arrangements must ensure that they do the following before they travel.

Before arranging travel of any kind, the person responsible is expected to consider what travel is required, and the way in which it is undertaken, taking into account of the importance of business travel, its environmental impact, and consideration of alternative ways of undertaking the activity.

The Guiding Principles of Sustainable Travel and Travel Hierarchy are available on the University of Aberdeen [Sustainable Business Travel](#) webpage to inform those decisions.

### All Travel Within Scotland, England and Wales

1. Carry out a risk assessment(s) which cover the activity and the travel to and from the location where it is to take place.
2. Where the destination is a building or site under the control of another organisation, make reasonable enquiries with regard to the health and safety arrangements and welfare facilities at the location, proportionate to the risk – see references section for visits guidance.
3. Ask all those who are due to travel whether they have any health condition which may affect their safety while travelling or away from home.
4. Ensure that any insurance requirements are met (including that staff have business cover if driving in their own vehicles).
5. Complete the insurance details on the University Insurance StaffNet pages, if any travel involves an overnight stay or an internal flight, at least a week ahead of travel.

Note: Due to the nature of some activities, such as fieldtrips to locations not previously visited, and because unforeseen situations can arise, risk assessments may need to be revised/reviewed while away from the University. Staff leading such activities should, therefore, be competent to carry out a dynamic risk assessment as and when necessary. Contact your Local Safety Co-ordinator or the Health and Safety Team for advice if required.

### All Overseas Travel

Where the activity required overseas travel the following must be done, in addition to the above:

1. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) “travel advice” must be checked to ascertain if travel to the destination country is advised against.
2. If the FCDO advises “against all travel” or “against all but essential travel” permission must be sought from the University Secretary and Chief Operating Officer before any booking is made.
3. If permission is granted to travel to a destination country in either of the above categories, travel must only be booked through the University Approved Travel Agency and the advice of the Travel Agent, and the Airline, adhered to.

If the University Approved Travel Agency is unable to book the travel an alternative booking may be agreed if agreed via the Head of School / Director and the University Secretary.

4. If the FCDO does not advise any restrictions on travel, then bookings may be made. The University Approved Travel Agency must be contacted for a quote, in the first instance. If a

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cheaper flight is available, it may be booked only if the University Approved Travel Agency cannot match the price.

5. For flights and/or accommodation bookings made through the University Approved Travel Agency, then records are kept detailing:
  - Who made the bookings
  - Their contact details
  - The destinations
  - The itinerary

If this agency is not used similar information must be recorded so that it can be used if there is a need to contact anyone on the trip if there is an incident or a need to inform them of any changes in the advice for travellers. Details of your itinerary must be left with the office/Admin. Team of your School/Directorate, and they must be advised of any changes.

6. Complete the insurance details on the University Insurance StaffNet pages, at least a week ahead of travel, and a record kept of the reference number\* and 24-hour emergency telephone number in case it is needed while away.
7. Any staff or students who are concerned about travelling abroad, for university related activities, raise their concerns at the earliest opportunity with their Head of Schools, Director or HR Partner (for staff).

Note:

- \*It is strongly recommended that travellers also use the link provided to register for advice and guidance and other assistance services provided by the insurer.
- It is also strongly recommended that travellers with a smartphone download the SafeZone App and enable the “Emergency Notifications” to allow them to be contacted by the University in an emergency.

## 6.0 Responsibilities

### University Court

The University Court has ultimate responsibility for overseeing health, safety and wellbeing matters at the University.

### Senior Management Team

The Senior Management Team has delegated authority from the University Court and as such, should ensure that reports from the University Health & Safety Committee provides reassurance that significant risks are being appropriately controlled.

### Heads of Schools / Directors

Heads of Schools / Directors must ensure that the procedures in section 5.0 are followed in the areas under their control and, in particular that appropriate:

- Ensure that that local arrangements for risk assessments for travel are in place for their School / Directorate and meet the requirements of the University policy.
- Ensure that any local arrangements for risk assessments and the keeping of records of those travelling are communicated to staff and students of the School (or Directorate).

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- Risk assessments are in place by persons who are competent to carry these out and, if necessary, carry out a dynamic risk assessment if circumstances change while away,
- Insurance is in place before travel takes place.
- Records are kept, to ensure those travelling can be contacted while away, if necessary.

### Line Managers / Supervisory Staff

Line Managers and / or supervisory staff organising activities which require travel for staff and/or students must ensure that:

- The procedure described in section 5.0 is complied with as appropriate for the type of travel and activity.
- Those involved are consulted, in order to ensure that any relevant health risks are identified and assessed.
- The results of the risk assessment, and the travel and insurance arrangements are communicated effectively to all those travelling.
- Appropriate arrangements are in place to deal with foreseeable events (e.g. travel disruption) and unforeseen events (such as the need to contact individuals to ask them to return or relocate to a safer location).
- The expectations of managers with respect to sustainable business travel and the travel Hierarchy are available [here](#).

### Staff & Students

Staff and students shall:

- Comply with this policy and any local arrangements to comply with its requirements to ensure the safety of themselves and others.
- Report any shortcomings, defects or concerns about risk control measures to their line manager / academic supervisor (or local safety coordinator if appropriate).
- The expectations of staff with respect to sustainable business travel and the travel Hierarchy are available [here](#).

### Local Safety Coordinators

Local Safety Coordinators (LSC) are authorised to raise any significant failings in the processes they identify, or are made aware of, to their Head of School / Directorate and their local Health and Safety Committee.

## 7.0 Monitoring and Review

This policy will be periodically reviewed, by the Health, Safety and Resilience Team, in conjunction with Insurance, to ensure it is kept up to date in terms of both the legislation and how it works within the University as a whole.

The Guiding Principles for Sustainable Travel and the Travel Hierarchy (in Appendices A and B) will also be reviewed by the Sustainable Development Committee on an annual basis.

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## 8.0 References

### Internal References

For further information with respect to the University's approach to Sustainable Travel, see the Sustainable Travel web page [here](#).

For advice on vaccinations or other health related matters information on the University's Occupational Health provider is available on StaffNet [here](#), or from HR.

Health and Safety related documents which are applicable university wide are listed below but school or directorate specific guidance may also be available (e.g. fieldtrip handbooks). These should also be used where applicable.

Document Number	Document Name (and link)
HS-SF-018	Travel Risk Assessment Template ( <a href="#">Overseas version</a> )
HS-PO-004	Risk Assessment Policy
HS-GN-003	Risk Assessment Guidance
HS-PO-027	Occupational Road Risk Policy
HS-PO-013	Lone Working Policy
HS-GN-010	Lone Working Guidance
HS-GN-011	Placements for Students Health and Safety Guidance
HS-GN-002	Guidance on Visits and Visiting

The SafeZone App is available to download and guides on the various safety features, including emergency notifications are available [here](#)

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## External Reference Documents

The following are recommended sources of advice and guidance from outside this organisation.

Source Organisation	Document Name (and link)
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/about-foreign-commonwealth-development-office-travel-advice">https://www.gov.uk/guidance/about-foreign-commonwealth-development-office-travel-advice</a>
Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCDO)	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/if-youre-affected-by-a-crisis-abroad">If you're affected by a crisis abroad - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a>
EAUC	<a href="#">Travel Better Package - EAUC</a> – designed to support the further and higher education sector in addressing flight emissions.
Energy Saving Trust	<a href="#">An introduction to the sustainable travel hierarchy - Energy Saving Trust</a> – an example of a well-recognised Travel Hierarchy.
.GOV	<a href="#">Driving abroad: Driving abroad on holiday - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a>
.GOV	<a href="#">Greenhouse gas reporting: conversion factors 2021 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a> – UK Government emission conversion factors for use by UK and international organisations to report on greenhouse gas emissions.
NHS Scotland / Public Health Scotland	<a href="#">Advice - Fit for Travel</a>
UCEA / ESHA	<a href="#">Guidance on Health and Safety in Fieldwork</a> – including offsite visits and travel in the UK and overseas.
USHA (UCEA and HEOPS)	<a href="#">Guidance on Health and Safety of Placements for Higher Education Students.pdf (gsa.ac.uk)</a>
DJG	<a href="#">DJG Exhibition Freight Services Limited Home (djgefsl.co.uk)</a>
DHL	<a href="#">DHL Global Logistics - International Shipping</a>
XE	<a href="#">Xe Currency Converter - Live Exchange Rates Today</a>
Financial Times	<a href="#">Currency Converter - Latest Exchange Rates and Currency News</a>
AIG	<a href="#">Travelguard</a>