

TRAVEL POLICY

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A. Rationale and Scope

The University of New England (UNE) recognises that staff may be required to undertake travel as part of University related activities.

This policy applies to all staff appointed to UNE or other individuals undertaking *Official Travel* as part of *Official University Business*. Travel shall only be undertaken on the basis of this policy and the guidelines established by the Vice-Chancellor in support of this policy.

This policy has been established to support the needs of the *University Traveller* and affirm the University's commitment to ensure:

- i. travellers have access to clear and consistent policy, procedure and guidelines under which travel on behalf of the University is to be undertaken,
- ii. conditions of travel and traveller responsibilities and accountabilities are clearly defined,
- iii. travellers are provided reasonable access to safety, security and convenience measures whilst travelling on Official University Business,
- iv. pursuant to contractual arrangements, travellers receive entitlements that are commensurate with reasonable limits and are fairly compensated for appropriate out-of-pocket expenses incurred,
- v. criteria exists for the *approval* of travel and related expenditure and management responsibilities and accountabilities are clearly defined,
- vi. travel and related expenditure is consistent with the University's strategic objectives, and used in an effective and transparent manner,
- vii. an open and accountable system for the work undertaken and the expenses incurred in the course of undertaking official travel is established and implemented, (including but not limited to compliance with Australian Tax Office requirements),
- viii. official travel is undertaken and completed in the most efficient manner to meet the objectives of the Official University Business and arranged at the lowest practical cost.

B. Definitions

University; is the University of New England (UNE).

Official University Business (OUB) under this policy; constitutes activities directly associated with the functions of the University including but not limited to teaching & learning, research, conference, consultancy, administrative and other official duties, and special study programs undertaken on behalf of the University.

Official Travel (OT) under this policy constitutes intrastate, interstate and overseas travel directly associated with Official University Business that has been approved in accordance with the University's Schedule of Financial Delegations unless otherwise stated in this policy, regardless of funding source.

Approval for official travel is given by the Head of Cost Centre as confirmation that the proposed travel is consistent with the definition of Official University Business and the associated responsibilities and accountabilities have been agreed.

Funds availability check: Notwithstanding the granting of *approval* to travel, the Director, Financial Services Directorate will ensure that a funds availability check is performed to verify that sufficient funds exist before committing to any proposed travel expenditure.

Staff member is a University employee.

University Traveller is a person *approved* to travel under this policy which *may* include but not necessarily be limited to staff members, consultants, individual contractors, higher-degree research students, volunteers, job applicants, members of University Council or any other authorised traveller undertaking travel as part of Official University Business.

Travel Expense: Expenses directly associated and/or incurred in respect of Official Travel, regardless of funding source including but not limited to; transportation expenses (i.e. airfares, rail and sea tickets including departure tax), meals, incidentals (laundry, calls, internet), ground transportation (i.e. car hire, mileage, car parking, taxi, transfer), excess baggage, visas and medical costs (i.e. inoculations, vaccinations and medication where specifically required).

Entitlements: Defined as sums established under this policy deemed reasonable for travel expenses whether paid direct to third parties, acquitted and reimbursed to travellers, or provided in advance.

C. Responsibilities and Accountabilities

i. Traveller Responsibilities/Accountabilities

It is the responsibility of travellers who are to travel on OUB to ensure that:

- a) policies and procedures for travel are followed,
- b) approval is obtained prior to the travel being undertaken,
- c) adequate planning is made to minimise costs and travel is planned only around OUB,
- d) acquittal of the official travel is made within 28 days of return from official travel,
- e) receipts and documentation for all entitled travel expenditure is obtained and submitted within 28 days of return from official travel,
- f) expenditure of non-official nature is not charged to the University.

ii. Approving Officer Responsibilities/Accountabilities

When approving travel itineraries and associated costs, the approving officer must ensure that:

- a) OH&S provisions have been considered and coverage under the University's Insurance Program has been established¹,
- b) the travel is for official University business and any personal travel or deviations for personal convenience have been identified,
- c) to the extent practical, total University cost is minimised, all relevant expenses are anticipated and captured in advance of travel and funds are known to be available,
- d) the duration and timing of travel is reasonable to meet the OUB commitment.

D. Policy

i. Approval for Official Travel

All Official Travel must be *approved* in writing before it is undertaken. In exceptional cases, approval of travel may be conveyed orally wherein-after written confirmation of the approval shall be required.

Official Travel is further regulated as follows:

- a) provision of *approval* for all official travel requests is the responsibility of the Head of Cost-Centre² ;
- b) all international travel requires further *approval* by the Vice-Chancellor³;

¹ DFAT advisories form a part of this determination

² Where the traveller is a Head of Cost-Centre or Senior Executive member, *approval* is the responsibility of their immediate supervisor. In the case of the Vice-Chancellor the *approval* rests with the University Secretary & Legal Counsel.

c) all proposed expenditure for official travel will be subject to a funds availability check.

ii. Approved route, mode and travel times

Itineraries for Official Travel shall be determined on the basis of the most direct route, by the most efficient means and at departure times sufficient to meet the Official University Business objective.

iii. Class of Travel

Other than where a staff member's employment contract allows for travel at a higher class, or where the staff member's travel is externally funded and the conditions of the funding body stipulate travel is permitted at a higher class, or unless otherwise authorised by the Vice-Chancellor, all University travellers shall travel economy class.

iv. Fare structure

Once the class of travel has been established; travel shall be provided on the basis of the most direct route and least costly fare structure regularly available, including discounted fares or their equivalent.

v. Charter

With the exception of travel by privately-owned motor vehicle, all travel should be undertaken with registered passenger companies. Where destinations are not readily accessible by registered passenger companies, and/or it is economical to do so, the use of charter or private aircraft for the ferrying of passengers *may* be authorised⁴ on an exceptional basis.

vi. Combined Official and Personal Travel

Combined official and personal travel is acceptable:

- a) when the personal travel component is incidental to the official requirement (or ancillary to it);
- b) any additional cost is paid for by the staff member and
- c) the appropriate type of personal leave is charged.

vii. Spouse/Companion Travel

The University *may* reimburse, pay for and/or arrange travel for a spouse or other individual accompanying a staff member on official travel if:

³ The Vice-Chancellor may delegate this authority

⁴ Subject to the University Aviation Policy and Procurement guidelines.

- a) there is a bona fide business, compassionate or medical purpose for an accompanying spouse or other individual and authorisation of the Vice-Chancellor has been obtained or
- b) the spouse or companion is a staff member and on University related business or
- c) contractual terms dictate.

viii. Travel Acquittal & Claims

All Official Travel shall be acquitted and all claims for travel expenses submitted in a timely manner.

ix. Substantiation

All approved expenditure must be substantiated.

x. Entitlements

With the exception of any personal component of travel or unless otherwise stated, University Travellers will be entitled to reasonable sums for *official travel* related expenditure.

E. Compliance

All University Travellers are required to comply with the provisions of this policy and as such actions taken in respect of official travel will be subject to the University's monitoring and compliance framework.

-End of policy document-