**FEBRUARY 2020**

**CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY BUSINESS TRAVEL POLICY**

**1. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear guidelines to ensure all people travelling on University business do so in a manner that is safe, considerate of their well-being, efficient, environmentally responsible and that the travel arrangements represent good value.

**2. SCOPE**

The policy sets out practices that enable the University to meet its statutory and procedural obligations, principally duty of care obligations arising from the Health and Safety at Work Act and the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act.

The policy applies to all University employees who travel on University business, whether domestically or internationally, irrespective of seniority, normal place or country of work (“Travellers”). This policy also applies to all external contractors to the University when travelling on University funded or directed business.

### 3. BUSINESS TRAVEL POLICY PRINCIPLES

The University travel policy is based on the following principles. All travel must be:

* Appropriate and consistent with University aims and objectives
* Cost effective
* Undertaken using reasonable and efficient routes and methods of travel
* Safe
* Environmentally and socially responsible

### The policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant University policies and regulations such as travel and subsistence; data protection; health and safety; driving for work; organisational code of conduct and electronic communications.

**4. TRAVEL PRE-REQUISITES**

**Purpose of travel:** Travellers and authorising managers must consider whether the travel is appropriate, consistent with University objectives and values, is not disruptive to other University activity and is worth the cost and effort.

Business travel is a significant contributor to scope 3 carbon emissions. Before travel is arranged, all other communication options to meet the purpose of the intended travel should be seriously considered.

Approval for all overseas travel must be sought in advance using the University on-line overseas travel form. Save where exceptional and unforeseeable circumstances exist, all applications for overseas travel must be submitted at least 21 working days prior to the planned date of the commencement of travel.

All travellers must complete the Overseas Travel E-module hosted on Learning Pool prior to commencing the overseas travel approval process.

It is a requirement that all line managers of travellers ensure that their staff have undertaken the e-learning module prior to travel.

All travellers are also encouraged to undertake the travel security training modules that are available to the University from its travel assurance services provider [here](https://travelprepare.drum-cussac.net)[[1]](#footnote-1).

**Traveller Health:** Prior to making any travel commitments,travellers should check health guidance and inoculation requirements for their destination, either through the University’s [travel assurance portal](https://www.drum-cussac.net/travel-advices/countries)1, the [FCO travel advice](https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice) or [NHS fit for travel guidance](http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/destinations.aspx) websites.

Travellers are responsible for ensuring they do not have any health conditions that should preclude them from travelling. If in any doubt, travellers must seek guidance from their GP. The University’s insurance policy will not cover any traveller’s medical expenses if they are travelling against medical advice or the traveller is pregnant and within one month of the expected delivery date. A GP’s advice to pregnant women may extend the period of no travel prior to the due date.

**Destination risk assessment:** The University destination risk assessment is based on the advice provided through the University [traveller assurance portal](https://www.drum-cussac.net/travel-advices/countries), which incorporates information from the FCO: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>.

Other than in exceptional circumstances, the University will not approve travel to destinations that the FCO rates as ‘Advise against all travel’ or ‘Advise against all but essential travel’.

**Activity risk assessment:** Activity risk must be assessed in accordance with the current University Health and Safety policy and related arrangements.

***In order to complete the travel booking and approval process, the Traveller will be required to confirm that they have checked the traveller health, destination risk and activity risk requirements for their destination and that all three elements comply with Cardiff Met’s travel policy requirements.***

**Insurance:** In addition to invalidating medical insurance if travelling against GP’s advice, the University insurers require travellers to report any loss, theft or damage to either the local Police or, where appropriate, the airline (or other carrier) within 24 hours and obtain a written report.

## 5. TRAVEL PRIOR APPROVAL

## All requests for approval to travel must be made through the University overseas travel booking form available here. The approval form requires a draft, costed itinerary from the University nominated Travel Management Company (‘TMC’).

No bookings or commitments to travel are to be made until appropriate approval is received through the travel prior approval process.

## 6. TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

## All travel bookings must be made in accordance with the procedural requirements in place at the time of booking. Unless specifically approved in advance by Procurement, all travel bookings must be made through the University’s nominated Travel Management Company (‘TMC’).

By placing all bookings through the TMC as required by this policy, the University will be compliant with the UK Package Travel Regulations (see Appendix 1 for further detail).

For any travel in non-EU countries where the University has local offices, travel booked by the country offices for travel within those countries will be exempt from the Package Travel regulations. Consequently, whilst booking though the TMC is still the preferred method, it is permissible for bookings to be made by the local office staff for travel within that country. The country office staff must ensure that any TMC used ‘within country’ holds a national bookings protection scheme licence (such as ABTA in the UK.) All locally-booked travel must comply with all other requirements of this policy.

**Travel options:** In most instances, the TMC will provide various travel and carrier options. The traveller should select the option that combines best value with a reasonable route and travel duration unless there are significant business drivers for using an alternative.

**Permitted class of travel** Air, rail etc – see relevant sections.

**Cancellations:** Any cancellations of a booked itinerary are likely to incur charges. Except where a cancellation is necessitated by a University directive or the risk rating of the destination increases, all reasonable efforts must be made to avoid such charge. It is the traveller’s responsibility to inform the TMC of any cancellation at the earliest opportunity. Where any cancellation arises from the travellers’ own itinerary changes is not communicated to the TMC promptly, the traveller will normally be personally responsible for the cancellation charges.

**Insurance cover:** the University corporate insurance policy covers staff whilst on business travel. This cover includes medical expenses, personal property, business equipment, money, personal injury and liability, travel disruption and evacuation and legal expenses.

**Travelling with a carer:** Where a traveller with a disability has need for support staff to travel with them, the funding for travel of support staff will be treated in accordance with ‘***reasonable adjustments’ (Equality Act 2010*).** Suchscenarios will be judged for suitability and appropriateness on a case-by-case basis.

**Combined business and personal travel:** Combined business and personal travel, including travel with a spouse or partner, is acceptable, subject to prior approval of the Dean of School / Head of Unit, subject to:

1. the cost of the business part of the travel is not increased as a result of the non-business travel elements
2. appropriate leave is approved by the traveller’s line manager prior to making the travel arrangements
3. any companions travel and related costs must be invoiced separately and paid for privately at the time of booking. The University insurance does not cover a travelling spouse or partner

Extensions which exceed the business element of travel must be discussed in advance with Finance to ensure compliance with HMRC travel guidance.

The University insurance will only apply to the business elements of the travel and personal travel insurance should be arranged to cover any personal elements of the trip.

## 7. TRAVEL METHODS & REQUIREMENTS

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## Air Travel

The selection of the itinerary by the traveller should not deviate from the most economic itinerary without a clear business benefit for an alternative or to avoid significant personal disruption. Choice must be regardless of the carrier or traveller’s membership of any loyalty schemes.

**Lowest fare:**

Connecting flights will be used where reasonably practical to obtain the lowest fares. However, where this is considered, stopovers should not normally exceed 2 hours and will be normally be within a 2-hour range of the start or end of the journey.

**Reasonable alternative flights:** will be assessed by the following criteria:

* One change is acceptable as long as the total journey is not increased by more than 2 hours (dependent on destination) and the stopover is near the beginning or end of a long haul flight.
* The hours of the flight are not considered unsociable i.e. the traveller does not have to leave home before 6.00am or return after 10.00pm.
* The alternative airport is within 1-hour travel (time by land) of the preferred airport. Travellers will not be expected to change airports for connecting flights.

**Class of travel**

1. All flights below 7 hours should be in economy class
2. Flights 7 hours or above should be in economy class with sufficient rest period at either side of the trip.  If this rest period is not possible due to business or personal reasons, then business class will be considered.  The budget holder will decide if business class is appropriate and in line with the relevant budget.
3. Any travel required that is not on the approved list (once it is approved), will need a business case.

Instances where the economy class travel may be waived are where:

* 1. any airline promotion results in a fare available in a higher class cabin that is the same or lower than the best available economy fare
  2. the traveller is appropriately required to travel with a person from another organisation who has proper access to a higher class travel
  3. advice from a qualified medical practitioner dictates

Other than the exceptions set out above, any travel proposed to be undertaken in any cabin other than economy must be subject to prior PVC / VCEG approval.

**Cabin upgrades**

Any cabin upgrade to a premium economy or Business class that is not free of charge, MUST:

1. meet one or more of the class of travel criteria
2. result from a business itinerary where all reasonable efforts have been made to allow reasonable recovery time after arrival at destination
3. in principle prior approval of the relevant line manager on a case by case basis

Any cabin upgrade will not include First Class other than in exceptional circumstances that are subject to prior approval of line VCEG member.

**Non-refundable and fully restricted tickets**: are to be the first choice option, along with the consideration of using alternative airports. Restricted tickets must be used if the saving is greater than 20%, unless there is a strong likelihood of them being changed for a justifiable reason.

**Ticket restrictions:** Travellers should make themselves aware of different restrictions applicable as well as costs associated with changes to tickets for their business trips. The TMC provides advice and training on

**Advance booking:** All travel should be booked at least 14 days in advance or as soon as the travel requirements are reasonably known and approved, whichever is earlier.

**Last minute bookings:** Booking air travel at full coach fare or waiting to book flights at the last minute solely for the purpose of using upgrade certificates is not acceptable. Last minute bookings should only be processed due to pressing and legitimate business reasons.

**Changing flight arrangements:** Changing flight arrangements during the course of a trip will incur itinerary amendment charges and may result in lost savings on advanced travel purchases and changes should be kept to a minimum. Any changes must be notified to the TMC without delay.

**Baggage costs and restrictions**: All due consideration must be given to avoiding additional charges arising from cabin or checked baggage that is not included with the lowest viable fare for any journey.

On certain routes and airlines, the TMC will be able to offer ‘academic’ and ‘charity’ fares. These are not available to the public and can often include higher checked baggage weight allowances. Such fares must be considered where additional baggage is a necessity.

**Unused tickets:** When tickets are not or only partially used the unused tickets should be returned to the TMC as soon as possible so that the ticket can be changed or refunded.

**Blacklisted airlines**: any proposed air travel itinerary that includes utilising any airline that is on the blacklisted airlines listings published by the UK Civil Aviation Authority, the EU Commission or the USA Federal Aviation Administration, will not be approved other than with prior express permission and in exceptional circumstances.

**Airport transfers:** airport transfers are defined as the use of any travel service to and from an airport other than public transport.

Within the UK for a UK domestic or short-haul flight within Europe : Airport transfers are generally not permitted unless the cost can be demonstrated as being lower than the cost of public transport or the combined cost of car use and parking charges.

Within the UK – long haul flight : Airport transfers are generally not permitted unless the cost can be demonstrated as being lower than the combined cost of car use and parking charges or:

1. the flight departure is before 06:00
2. the flight arrival back into the UK occurs later than 22:00
3. the nature of the journey requires more than one suitcase or other similar checked-in baggage per traveller

Overseas: the principles of what is permitted in the UK, depending upon the duration of the flight, should be applied but with the additional consideration of traveller safety and the suitability and safety of local public transport.

**Airport lounges:** The University will pay the costs of a travellers’ access to airport lounges on a journey by journey basis where:

1. there is a connection between flights of at least 2 hours duration
2. the journey is long-haul and involves multiple stops or connections
3. there is a delay of at least 2 hours to the scheduled flight departure time.

In order to comply with HMRC guidance, receipts are required to support expense claims and the University will not cover the cost of annual memberships or subscriptions to airport lounges or airline clubs.

**Frequent flyer and other incentive schemes:** Any individual membership of a loyalty or incentive scheme must not influence any travel decisions.

##### Domestic air travel Domestic air travel is defined as all travel within the UK and Republic of Ireland and should only be used where the cost/time benefit can be demonstrated. This should take into account the associated costs (e.g. car parking, Heathrow express etc) and rail travel should be considered as an alternative for all UK domestic travel. All domestic air travel is to be in Economy class. All air travel will be at the lowest applicable airfare. First and business class travel is not permitted.

**Hotel, hostel and other accommodation**

All overnight accommodation must be appropriate for the purpose of travel and meet the following criteria except where the accommodation is provided as part of a conference package or where a host organisation has provided access to competitive, locally-negotiated rates. Appropriate accommodation is defined as a hotel of not more than a three star rating in the UK and the equivalent overseas except where genuine safety or security reasons dictate otherwise. Serviced apartments available via any nominated TMC are also considered acceptable.

Occasionally, hotels of higher star rating may offer promotional pricing that is lower price than a typical acceptable three star hotel. Provided the Traveller can evidence the price differential, booking a higher star hotel is acceptable.

Hostel accommodation is permitted provided all reasonable due diligence is undertaken on the hostel prior to booking.

**Online accommodation brokers (**eg AirBnB & HomeAway) Whilst it is recognised that broker sites can offer a diverse range of accommodation styles and locations and can often be price competitive, at this time, any assurance of quality and suitability is considered inadequate and is often based solely upon user ratings.

These brokers currently do not make checks or inspections of fire precautions and escape routes, access security, electrical and wiring standards, insurance cover nor the presence, suitability and operability of safety devices such as CO2 monitors. Neither are any suitability checks undertaken on the property owners.

Brokers such as AirBnB and HomeAway do not accept liability in the event of death or injury when using accommodation advertised through their site.

As a consequence, the University does not currently consider the use of an accommodation broker to be suitable and the TMC will not offer such accommodation.

**Rail travel**

All rail travel, whether in the UK or overseas, must be booked through the TMC.

The University expects Travellers to use standard class travel unless:

a) The cost of First Class is no higher than Standard Class

b)The member of staff is required by the University or other sponsoring organisation to travel with someone from another institution who is not travelling in Standard Class or equivalent.

**Airport / venue transfers**

Where possible and practicable, public transport should be utilised taking into consideration cost, time and personal safety.

Transfer services may only be used in the UK where:

1. a number of staff are travelling and the cost of the transfer is lower than the combined cost of rail or car hire and / or parking charges.
2. the amount of baggage required by the traveller makes public transport impracticable
3. the return air journey into the UK arrives during the evening or after a flight of such duration that public transport is not practicable and self-drive car hire may be an inappropriate duty of care risk.

Where appropriate, the TMC should be consulted as to the most practical and safe options available for overseas transfers, and where possible, these should be pre-booked as part of the travel itinerary.

**Taxi**

The use of taxis in the UK or overseas must be undertaken with all due regard to the traveller’s safety and wellbeing.

Domestic use:

Within the city of Cardiff, a taxi should only be used where it is not practical or safe to use public transport, any University pool car or use of a staff member’s own vehicle.

Elsewhere in the UK, a taxi should only be used where it is not practical, safe or cost effective to use public transport or a self-drive hire vehicle that has been used for the journey to the location.

Overseas Use:

Where no other appropriate form of transport is available or suitable (e.g. late night travel, no practical public transport links or potential risk to personal safety). Where possible overseas taxis should be pre-booked with the TMC but if not, the University will reimburse the cost of taxi fares incurred whilst travelling on University business. If booking taxis for an overseas location is not possible via the TMC, efforts should be made to identify reputable or licenced taxi operators.

Travellers should refer to the ‘Taxi Safety for Travellers’ guidance on the People Services pages.

**Hire car**

UK: For UK car Hire, it is anticipated that the traveller will book through the University’s existing vehicle hire arrangements. Staff are reminded of the need to comply with the University’s Driving for Work policy.

Overseas: All overseas car hire should be booked through the TMC.

**8. TRAVELLER ASSURANCE**

Traveller assurance services (‘TAS’) are provided through a UK University arrangement with Drum Cussac, managed through a dedicated University portal and delivered to travellers via a mobile application.

Traveller Assurance Services comprise:

* travel and destination information available prior to travel
* 24/7 travel risk, security and disruption alerts and updates
* traveller ‘SOS’ functionality with a 24/7 security and safety support service
* non-emergency travel advice
* and the ability to provide traveller location information

**To enable these services to be delivered effectively, it is a condition of staff travel approval that travellers must have the Drum Cussac mobile app uploaded and activated on their device at all times when travelling on University business.**

Should a traveller’s mobile device become lost, stolen or inoperative whilst on business travel, the traveller must use all reasonable endeavours to contact the University as soon as possible to advise of the loss or defective device. In such circumstances, the traveller must make all reasonable efforts to maintain regular contact with the university using other means.

Once a travel itinerary is confirmed and booked, the TMC transfers the air travel and accommodation aspects of the confirmed itinerary to Drum Cussac. This enables the University to have a single portal that identifies where travellers are due to be at any time during their travel. The key stages of the booked itinerary also drive an automated SMS process that asks travellers to confirm their safe arrival at key stages of the itinerary.

**EMERGENCY HELP AND SUPPORT**

The traveller SOS functionality, when activated from the mobile app homepage, alerts the TAS provider, who will provide initial incident support and advice. The TAS provider will also commence a communication cascade to the TMC 24/7 helpdesk and the University emergency contact telephone line, the latter then assuming responsibility to alert nominated relevant University senior managers and, if enabled in the traveller’s profile, nominated next of kin.

Any travel risk or security event will be handled in accordance with the relevant University Incident Policy

The Traveller SOS functionality must not be activated for travel arrangement queries or trivial issues. The app includes a home page link to place a telephone call to the Travel Assurance management company for in-journey non-urgent advice.

Travel health advice may be obtained via the University insurers [travel health support service](https://www.umal.co.uk/travel-emergencyassistance.php).

**Traveller location information services**

A key element of the University’s TAS is traveller location services. The TAS provides for three forms of traveller location services:

1. Prompted ‘safe arrival’ location information triggered by key stages in the travellers’ itinerary uploaded into the DC platform by the TMC.
2. Location ‘check-in’ triggered voluntarily by the traveller via the DC mobile app homepage. This check-in can be activated as and when deemed appropriate by the traveller.
3. Live location tracking

These location services are in addition

**Prompted location notifications** – the mobile app enables the traveller to receive automated, prompted ‘arrived safely’ notification requests. These requests are triggered either from key stages in the traveller’s itinerary (which is held in the TAS system) or from the University issuing mass notification update requests (known as ‘roll call’). Travellers MUST respond to these travel update requests as soon reasonably practical. The response is via a simple SMS response (or optionally by email) and confirms that they are travelling in accordance with their itinerary.

Responses to automated updates or roll-calls do not identify the traveller’s specific location – the portal display records the exact time of the receipt of response but only displays the location as within the country as dictated by the itinerary.

**Active location services–** provides GPS-based real-time location updates, either through ‘continuous’ tracking or voluntary check-in through a function button on the app. Active (or continuous) tracking is not mandatory except where travel is through or to high-risk locations.

Where continuous tracking is required or considered appropriate, the traveller is able to set the update frequency and location accuracy settings on the mobile app.

Active location and prompted location both require the traveller’s mobile device to have ‘location services’ active for the duration of the journey. If the mobile app ‘SOS’ function is activated, this will automatically enable location services on the traveller’s mobile device.

The University considers responses to the ‘safe arrival’ notifications to be suitable for most travel where risk assessment identifies the travel to be low risk. Travellers on low risk travel may opt to permit active tracking should they wish.

In instances where the risk assessment identifies specific risks that can be mitigated by the use of the active location service, the budget holder may approve the travel with the agreement that the active location service will be enable for the duration required.

Where a member of staff uses their personal mobile device for the Drum Cussac mobile app, the University will assume responsibility for the data costs of all active tracking. All such costs can be claimed back through the staff expenses scheme when supported by a suitably redacted version of the phone travellers itemised mobile device bill.

The University is aware that the app services, including tracking and location updates, is reliant upon access to a data network. The University is monitoring technology developments that would enable some communication and location services via GPS devices.

The Drum Cussac mobile app does not consume much battery power and typically consumes less than 5mb per day even if active tracking is enabled.

**Policy compliance**

This policy is in place to provide a safe and responsible approach to business travel. Any abuse or deliberate disregard of any aspects of the policy are likely to lead to disciplinary proceedings.

*The University’s Financial Regulations and related procedures such as Travel and Subsistence Policy are currently being reviewed to ensure consistency with this Business Travel Policy. In the interim, in the event of any conflict between the provisions of this policy and other policies, procedures or regulations, this Business Travel Policy shall take precedence.*

**APPENDIX 1**

**The Package Travel and Linked Travel Arrangements Regulations 2018** (‘PTR’)

The PTR covers travel arrangements which involve 2 or more types of travel services or components i.e. transport, accommodation, car hire, another tourist service (e.g. admission tickets, passes, equipment hire). These travel arrangement will be considered a "*package*". The Regulations do not cover trips which do not involve more than 1 element, or are for less than 24 hours (unless there is overnight accommodation).

The Regulations were designed to protect consumers. However, in some circumstances they may also apply to and protect business travellers.

The legislation is currently considered ambiguous in regards to business travel and, in the current absence of any case law to provide clarity on this matter, the University’s lawyers have recommended that the University proceeds on the basis that the PTR could apply to our business travel activity. The PTR could result in the University incurring unexpected liability should things go wrong or the travel suppliers fall into insolvency.

Where the PTR apply they:

* make the travel agent / organiser responsible if the travel services are defective (such as poor quality) and for death injury and illness claims so the traveller does not have the problem of dealing with overseas suppliers and can sue the travel agent / organiser directly for the negligent services of an airline, hotel, transport provider (the liability of the agent will be unlimited)
* oblige the travel agent / organiser to consider a price reduction or compensation where things go wrong
* make the travel agent / organiser have in place a tour operators public liability policy insurance; and
* require that the travel agent / organiser provide financial security for its own potential insolvency and if the package includes an air travel component then an ATOL licence administered by the Civil Aviation Authority.

**By routing all travel arrangements through a TMC, any obligation or liability arising from the PTR would be borne by the TMC rather than the University.**

1. Site registration and login in required. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)