

**Category:** Finance and Procurement

**Version:** 11

**Document Type:** Policy

**Document Status:** Published

**Approved On:** 23 November, 2021

**Audience:** Staff, Research, Academic, Affiliate

**Effective Date:** 25 November, 2021

**Review due by:** 25 November, 2024

**Policy Approver:** Vice-President Administration & Finance And Chief Operating Officer

**Policy Steward:** Executive Director, Business Services And Chief Technology Officer

## Employee Travel Policy (MPF1300)

### 1. Objective

The objectives of this policy are to:

- (a) specify the principles governing University business-related travel;
- (b) empower employees to incur travel or travel-related expenses where there is a clear and genuine need;
- (c) ensure travel risks are identified and controlled, University's duty of care is maintained;
- (d) maintain legal and tax obligations and sustainability commitments; and
- (e) achieve value for money.

### 2. Scope

2.1. This policy applies to University employees, including honorary, visiting or adjunct appointees, who are undertaking University business-related travel.

2.2. This policy does not apply to travel undertaken by students. For student travel, refer to the Student Travel and Transport Policy ([MPF1209](#)).

### 3. Authority

This policy is made under the [University of Melbourne Act 2009 \(Vic\)](#) and the [Vice-Chancellor Regulation](#) and supports compliance with the following legislation:

- (a) *Fringe Benefits Tax Assessment Act 1986* (Cth) (FBT Act); and
- (b) *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (Vic).

### 4. Policy

4.1. The University recognises travel as an important enabler for its teaching, learning, research and engagement activities.

4.2. In facilitating employee travel, the University is committed to:

- (a) maintaining its employer duty of care;

- (b) meeting its legal and tax obligations;
- (c) achieving value for money in relation to travel expenditure; and
- (d) minimising the environmental impact of employee travel.

4.3. Travellers and travel arrangers must use the University's endorsed booking system in accordance with sections 5.11 – 5.12.

## 5. Procedural principles

### Travellers' responsibilities

5.1. Prior to making a travel commitment, travellers must communicate with their supervisor about their intended travel plans. This communication must include:

- (a) purpose of travel, including demonstrating that University business is the dominant purpose of travel;
- (b) subject to the nature of risk, travel risks and risk controls, including communication plans, emergency plans, fitness for travel, high risk activities, and relevant travel advisories;
- (c) if relevant, impact on personal and team workload, and faculty/school activities such as teaching and research supervision;
- (d) associated leave plans, including any plans to incorporate personal travel with University business-related travel;
- (e) confirmation that the funding source is clearly identified and has funds available to cover the travel;
- (f) where applicable, confirmation that Special Studies Program (SSP) related travel complies with the relevant provisions of the Academic Appointment, Performance and Promotion Policy ( [MPF1299](#) ); and
- (g) class of travel to be booked, in accordance with sections 5.26 – 5.27.

5.2. Travellers must ensure that they comply with the University's policies and that any expenditure they incur while travelling is for legitimate University business.

5.3. Travellers are responsible for ensuring:

- (a) travel is covered by insurance (refer sections 5.21 – 5.23);
- (b) personal expenses are not paid for using University funds;
- (c) business-related travel expenses are incurred, and accounted for, in accordance with the Financial Code of Conduct Policy ( [MPF1338](#) );
- (d) contact details in Themis are current;
- (e) travel documents are current and valid for the travel;
- (f) travel is booked or logged through the University's endorsed booking system in accordance with sections 5.11 – 5.12;
- (g) they are aware of all relevant travel advisories including those issued by Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

(h) fitness for travel in accordance with section 5.19; and

(i) awareness of legal, personal safety and cultural sensitivities of their host country and/or organisation.

5.4. Travellers may only travel to or remain in high risk, level 3 destinations if:

(a) they have taken into account relevant travel advisories including those related to personal circumstances and personal characteristics;

(b) they have completed the *Travel to high risk destination risk assessment form*, assessed and controlled travel risks such that any residual risk is acceptable to the traveller and their supervisor; and

(c) their Dean, or appropriate equivalent, is informed of travel plan and associated risk controls and has approved the intended travel.

Note: Itineraries including any personal travel to high risk destinations will not be supported or approved by the University, even where the dominate purpose of travel is University business-related travel.

5.5. Travel to high risk level 4 destinations is prohibited. In exceptional circumstances the Provost or Chief Operating Officer may authorise an exemption for travel to or for a traveller to remain in a high risk level 4 destination. The traveller must meet all the requirements under section 5.4 and the Dean, or appropriate equivalent, endorses the proposed exemption to the Provost or Chief Operating Officer.

5.6. Travellers receiving funding for travel from an external body must ensure that their travel complies with the conditions of the relevant external body.

5.7. Travellers who are honorary appointees or visitors of the University may only undertake University business-related travel in the following circumstances:

(a) if the University business-related travel is funded by an external body, the travel is permitted by the relevant funding body;

(b) if the University business-related travel is funded by the University, the cost of the travel is approved by a Level 2b or Level 3a Delegate (as relevant); or

(c) the travel is self-funded.

## **Supervisors' responsibilities**

5.8. Supervisors must ensure that employees undertake travel in accordance with this policy and in a manner that ensures that the University is:

(a) able to maintain its employer duty of care; and

(b) fringe benefits tax (FBT) compliant.

5.9. To fulfil their obligations under section 5.8, if a traveller communicates with their supervisor about their intention to travel under section 5.1, the supervisor must:

(a) discuss the issues set out in section 5.1 with the traveller;

(b) direct the traveller to book business related flights and accommodation through the University's endorsed booking system in accordance with section 5.11 – 5.12;

(c) ensure they can confirm that the travel is being undertaken for legitimate University business, and if there is a personal component to the travel, that the dominant purpose of travel is for University business;

(d) ensure that any University business-related travel expense charged to or paid by the University is in accordance with the [Vice-Chancellor's Delegations Manual](#) , and the requirements of any relevant funding body; and

(e) be satisfied, subject to the nature of risk, travel risks and risk controls, communication plans and emergency plans have been appropriately identified, assessed and controlled such that that any residual risk is acceptable to the supervisor;

(f) in the case of travel to high risk level 3 destinations, ensure the traveller has taken into account relevant travel advisories, including those related to the traveller's personal circumstances and personal characteristics, completed the [Travel to high risk destination risk assessment form](#) , assessed and controlled travel risks such that any residual risk is acceptable to the traveller. Such travel will require approval from the Dean or equivalent

## Deans' Responsibilities

5.10. In the case of travel to high risk destinations the Dean shall:

(a) for high risk level 3 destinations, ensure the traveller has taken into account relevant travel advisories, including those related to the traveller's personal circumstances and personal characteristics, [completed the Travel to high risk destination risk assessment form](#) , assessed and controlled travel risks such that that any residual risk is acceptable to the traveller before approving.

(b) for high risk level 4 destination travel policy exemption, ensure the traveller, supervisor and head of department/school have taken into account relevant travel advisories, including those related to the traveller's personal circumstances and personal characteristics, completed the [Travel to high risk destination risk assessment form](#) , assessed and controlled travel risks such that any residual risk is acceptable to the traveller before forwarding to the Provost (Academic Staff) and the Chief Operating Officer (for Professional Staff) for consideration and potential exemption.

## The University's endorsed booking system

5.11. To assist the University achieving the objectives of this policy, travellers and/or travel arrangers must ensure that business related flights and accommodation are booked and managed through the University's endorsed booking system.

5.12. Notwithstanding section 5.11 above:

(a) if an external body funds University business-related travel and a condition of the funding prevents the travel being booked in the University endorsed booking system then:

i. the external body may arrange flights and accommodation; and

ii. the traveller is responsible for ensuring all relevant details relating to their flights and accommodation are recorded on the University's endorsed booking system and

(b) if specific components of travel cannot be booked through the University's endorsed booking system, travellers must:

i. exercise practical judgment in determining an alternative booking method for those components, taking into account the factors set out in section 4.2; and

ii. ensure all relevant details for the travel are recorded in the University's endorsed booking system, or otherwise communicate the alternative arrangements to their supervisor in accordance with section 5.1.

## Records and travel diaries

5.13. Travellers are not required to complete a travel diary. This is on the strict condition that they comply with sections 4.3, 5.1, 5.2 and 5.14 of this policy. Strict adherence to these sections of this policy will enable the Chief Financial Officer to complete an annual employer no-private-use declaration. An employer no-private-use declaration states that all relevant travel is strictly 100% business-related. This alleviates the need for employee travel diaries and associated declarations for FBT compliance purposes.

## **Private travel and the dominant purpose of travel**

5.14. To meet compliance obligations under the FBT Act, travellers may only undertake private travel incidental to University business-related travel if:

- (a) they can demonstrate that the University business component is the dominant purpose of the travel; and
- (b) all private expenses are paid for from the traveller's personal funds.

Note: Itineraries including any personal travel to high risk destinations will not be supported or approved by the University, even where the dominate purpose of travel is University business travel.

## **Payment for University business-related travel and related expenses**

5.15. The preferred methods of payment for University business-related travel and expenses are any of:

- (a) University credit card;
- (b) University purchase order; or
- (c) where agreed, through a per diem arrangement.

5.16. Where payment cannot reasonably be made using the University's preferred payment methods, the traveller's supervisor may approve reimbursement for University business-related travel expenses.

5.17. Payment for University business-related travel expenses as described in sections 5.15 and 5.16 must be incurred and managed in accordance with the Financial Code of Conduct Policy ([MPF1338](#)), and a failure to comply will attract the consequences described in section 4.2 of that policy.

## **Sustainability**

5.18. Prior to making a travel commitment, all employees should consider the environmental impact of their proposed travel and explore alternatives to travel.

## **Fitness for travel**

5.19. Travellers must take reasonable steps to ensure that they are fit to travel and associated activities, including:

- (a) notifying their supervisor if there are any factors that may affect their ability to undertake the travel or associated activities; and where this is the case provide written clearance from a relevant medical practitioner confirming their fitness to travel.

5.20. Where possible, the University will make reasonable adjustments to:

- (a) facilitate University business-related travel for employees with disabilities; and
- (b) appropriately address the implications of any unexpected illness for employees while they are undertaking University business-related travel.

## **Insurance**

5.21. The University's travel insurance covers all University business-related travel made in accordance with this policy

5.22. In some circumstances, the University's travel insurance may cover accompanied travel which is permitted under section 5.36

5.23. If Travellers require advice about insurance cover they can refer to the Insurance information available [here](#) .

## **Travel documents**

5.24. Travellers are responsible for ensuring that travel documents are current and valid for the travel or obtained where and when required.

5.25. Costs associated with obtaining or renewing visas may be charged to the University as a University business expense where employees are required to travel for University business.

## **Class of travel**

5.26. Travellers must exercise practical judgment and book the best available fare for their circumstances, consistent with this policy and the terms of their employment contract.

5.27. When exercising judgment under section 5.23, travellers should take into account the following guidelines:

(a) the University's standard class of travel is economy class; and

(b) the relevant Level 1, 2b or 3a Delegate may approve fare classes other than economy if:

i. the proposed flight is longer than seven hours and there are circumstances requiring a fare class other than economy; or

ii. as a reasonable adjustment in accordance with section 5.20.

5.28. Section 5.27 does not apply to a traveller if their travel expenditure is permitted by the relevant funding body.

## **Frequent flyer membership**

5.29. Travellers undertaking University business-related travel may join an airline's frequent flyer scheme but are responsible for all associated costs.

5.30. The traveller may retain frequent flyer points and the benefits of membership accumulated by the traveller through University business-related travel for personal use. However, the traveller is personally responsible for any associated tax liability.

5.31. The traveller may use frequent flyer points to upgrade travel class at their discretion, however, this must be undertaken by the traveller directly with the airline.

5.32. University-funded lounge membership or access is only permitted on approval by a Level 2b or Level 3a Delegate.

## **Transport, parking and accommodation**

5.33. Travellers must exercise practical judgment in deciding on transport and accommodation that best suits their circumstances, taking into account cost effectiveness, risk and effective use of time.

5.34. Without limiting section 5.33 in relation to transport, travellers may:

- (a) use the following modes of ground transport:
  - i. taxis;
  - ii. private hire cars where the price is not determined using a metered fare; or
  - iii. online transportation network companies in cities where they operate legally; or
- (b) use rental cars and airport car parking if it is cost effective as compared with estimated taxi costs. Airport valet parking is not permitted.

5.35. Without limiting section 5.33 in relation to accommodation, travellers may book accommodation in online accommodation marketplaces (such as Airbnb), provided they take all appropriate measures to:

- (a) ensure their safety; and
- (b) assist the University in exercising its duty of care.

### **Spouse, partner and dependent travel (accompanied travel)**

5.36. Accompanied travel is permitted provided that:

- (a) supervisor approval has been received prior to making any commitments; and
- (b) any additional expenses incurred for the accompanied travel are privately funded.

## **6. Roles and responsibilities**

Role/Decision/Action	Responsibility	Conditions and limitations
Use the University's endorsed booking system	Traveller	As described in section 5.9
Consider the environmental impact of their proposed travel and explore alternatives to travel	Traveller	NA
Notify their supervisor about intention of travel prior to making travel commitment	Traveller	As described in section 5.1
Ensure insurance coverage	Traveller	NA
Ensure that travel documents are current and valid for travel	Traveller	As described in section 5.3(e)
Take reasonable steps to ensure they are fit for travel	Traveller	As described in section 5.17
Exercise practical judgment in booking the best travel fare for their circumstances	Traveller	Decision should be consistent with this policy and the terms of their employment contract

Exercise practical judgment in deciding on transport and accommodation	Traveller	Decision should take into account cost effectiveness, risk and effective use of time
Discuss travel plans with travellers	Supervisor	NA
Review travel plans and recommendations for High Risk Destinations	Supervisor, head of department/school	As described in section 5.8(f)
Approve fare classes other than economy	Level 1, 2b or Level 3a Delegate	As described in section 5.24(b)
Approve University-funded lounge membership or access	Level 1, 2b or Level 3a Delegate (as appropriate)	NA
Complete annual employer no-private-use declaration	Chief Financial Officer	If satisfied that all travellers have complied with sections 5.1, 5.5 and 5.12 of this policy
Approve travel to high risk level 3 destinations	Dean or appropriate equivalent	As described in section 5 4
Approve exemptions to the travel policy for high risk level 4 destinations	Provost Chief Operating Officer	As described in section 5.5

## 7. Definitions

**Best available fare** means the lowest cost fare, taking into account considerations such as safety, comfort, convenience and practicality of schedules, and the extent to which the travel is certain and unlikely to need to be cancelled, changed and/or refunded.

**Dominant purpose of travel is University business** means, for the purposes of this policy, satisfying the following elements:

- (a) the business-related travel must be the principal component of the travel;
- (b) a logical flight path should be used to travel to and from the business-related destination;
- (c) any private reason for the travel must be a secondary consideration to the business reason for the travel and should not result in any additional cost to the university; and
- (d) the travel would not have occurred but for the business-related component of the travel.

**Fit for travel** means that travellers are fit and able to participate in the travel and associated activities.

**Fringe benefits tax (FBT)** means a benefit provided in respect of employment as defined in the Fringe Benefits Tax Assessment Act 1986.

**High risk destination** means a destination with Level 3 (Reconsider your need to travel) or 4 (Do not travel) classification by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, or any other country or region as determined by the COO. <https://safety.unimelb.edu.au/safety-topics/travel-and-off-campus-work>

**Externally funded University business-related travel** means travel where funding is conditional on the travel booked by an external body to the exclusion of the University Endorsed Travel System. Funding that originates from an external source (such as research funding) but comes into the University accounts is not included as external funding for these purposes.



**Level 2b** or **Level 3a delegate** has the meaning given to it by the Vice-Chancellor's Delegations Manual.

**Relevant travel advisories** means travel advice:

- (a) published by Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT);
- (b) published by other countries for which the traveller holds citizenship or residency; and
- (c) to which the University subscribes and makes available to employees.

**Supporting documents** means written evidence that verifies that the dominant purpose of travel was University business-related and that expenses paid for by the University were incurred in undertaking the University business-related travel. This includes email records, booking records and receipts related to the planning and undertaking of University business-related travel.

**Travel and business-related travel** means travel undertaken for University business on the University's behalf, whether within Australia or internationally, but does not include travel in which the employee reasonably expects to return to work within the same day.

**Travel documents** means passports and visas required to facilitate travel and associated activities

**Traveller** means an employee, and where applicable, an honorary appointee or visitor, undertaking travel.

**Travel arranger** means a person nominated by a Traveller to make travel bookings on behalf of the Traveller

**University business-related travel** means travel which enables the University's teaching, learning, research, engagement activities.

## POLICY APPROVER

Vice-President (Administration & Finance) and Chief Operating Officer

## POLICY STEWARD

Executive Director, Business Services

## REVIEW

This policy is to be reviewed by 25 November 2024.

## VERSION HISTORY

Version	Approved By	Approval Date	Effective Date	Sections Modified
1	Vice Principal Administration & Finance and Chief Finance Officer	19 December 2014	20 December 2014	Moved from Promapp into Melbourne Policy Library on 16 July 2015 as Version 1.

2 - 4	-	-	-	<i>Created in error</i>
5	Vice Principal Administration & Finance and Chief Finance Officer	2 May 2017	2 May 2017	New version arising from the Policy Consolidation Project and the Smarter Travel Project.
6	Executive Director, Finance	11 May 2017	11 May 2017	Editorial amendment to section 5.11, clarifying method for submission of travel diary.
7	Vice Principal Administration & Finance and Chief Finance Officer	29 March 2018	4 April 2018	Removal of travel diary requirements at section 5.11, inclusion of reference to the Financial Code of Conduct at section 5.15, changes to definition of "Dominant purpose".
8	-	-	-	<i>Created in error</i>
9	University Secretary	24 May 2019	4 June 2019	Amended Policy Approver and Policy Steward title. Editorial amendments to correct minor errors or align with the University's policy style guide.
10	University Secretary	31 July 2019	1 August 2019	Amended Policy Steward Title.
11	Vice Principal Administration & Finance and Chief Finance Officer	23 November 2021	25 November 2021	Major cyclical review undertaken and substantive changes made.