

TRAVEL POLICY



Current version in effect from: 5 Dec 2019

Approved by Council: 25 Nov 2015

Revised by Council: 8 Jun 2016, 23 Nov 2016, 15 Aug 2018, 4 Dec 2019

Related Documents

University of Divinity Act 1910 section 5 (d)

Fringe Benefits Tax Assessment Act 1986 (Cth)

Income Tax Assessment Act 1997 (Cth)

Delegations Policy

Health and Safety Policy

1. Rationale and Objectives

This Policy establishes eligibility and criteria for payment or reimbursement of travel costs undertaken by members of the University on University business. It aims to support the effective conduct of business by members of committees of the University and by staff in the Office of the Vice-Chancellor (OVC).

2. Scope

This policy applies to members of the Council, the Academic Board, and the Committees of the University; to staff in the OVC; and to academic staff and research students of the University, where the travel is funded by monies under the control of the University of Divinity Council.

3. Principles

- 3.1 The University is committed to supporting travel by its members where that travel is essential to the good governance and sound operation of the University.
- 3.2 The University takes all reasonable steps to ensure that members engaged in approved travel are safe and that neither they nor the University incur undue loss.
- 3.3 The University ensures that funds are available to meet the travel expenses of members of its Council, Academic Board and committees where fulfilment of their duties requires significant travel.
- 3.4 The University promotes engagement in the higher education sector by its senior leadership and academic staff by providing support for attendance at conferences and participation in networks.
- 3.5 The University ensures that travel arrangements are such that the most efficient and cost-effective use of University resources is achieved.
- 3.6 Regular travel costs incurred by members of Council, Academic Board, and Committees must be included in the University's annual budget; and members notified annually of their allowable travel costs.

4. Guidelines for travel

4.1 General Travel

4.1.1 Travel should be planned as far as possible in advance to take advantage of cheaper fares and allow flexibility in the time of travel to obtain best value for money.

4.1.2 All travelers are expected to take the most cost-effective means of travel available.

4.1.3 Prior to booking, careful consideration of the most economical options should be undertaken; and cost comparison between available modes of transport should be done. It may be more economical to hire a car than travel by taxi, or to travel by train than to drive.

4.2 Public transport

4.2.1 Where possible, public transport should be used.

4.3 Car

4.3.1 When planning a journey by car, all travelers must be aware of the costs of using a private car compared to the cost of a hire car. Travelers are expected to use the most economical option and should request prior approval from the Chief of Staff before choosing a higher cost option.

4.3.2 A private car should be used only when it is a faster and cheaper alternative to public transport. For vehicle reimbursement claims, acceptable supporting documentation would be a copy of entries in a Vehicle Log Book.

4.3.3 The cost of private mileage should be justified against the cost of hiring a car, prior to a journey taking place. For any journey over 150 kilometres, the hire car option should be taken if possible.

4.3.4 A self-drive hire vehicle may be booked on-line through authorised staff. Travelers requiring a hire car should contact the Chief of Staff to arrange.

4.3.5 The hire of self-drive vehicles for business requires prior approval from the Chief of Staff. Under normal circumstances, a vehicle with the lowest practical engine capacity should be hired. If there are three or more individuals in the party, a larger vehicle should be considered.

4.3.6 Claims for petrol supplied for the hire car should be accompanied by receipts and show suitable deductions for any private mileage.

4.4 Taxis

4.4.1 Taxis should be hired only where public transport is unavailable or when there are special circumstances such as: significant inconvenience; unfamiliar locations; when travelers are carrying heavy or bulky packages or luggage; safety issues; or when, for reasons of economy, it is more economical for a group of people to travel together in a taxi than to use public transport.

4.4.2 Wherever possible, taxis should be pre-booked at a fixed rate.

4.5 Air

4.5.1 Only economy class airfares are permitted, unless prior approval for a different class of travel has been obtained from the Vice-Chancellor; or, in the case of travel by the Vice-Chancellor, the Chancellor.

4.5.2 For journeys that exceed 10 hours, a Business Class flight may be approved, providing that the fare is discounted and there is insufficient time for the traveller to rest before commencing work commitments. Under such circumstances, if discounted Business Class fares are not available, premium economy may be booked.

5. Accommodation and subsistence

5.1 Accommodation may be booked by the OVC. Choice of accommodation options are based on price, location and fitness for purpose. As a guide, accommodation costs should not be more than \$250 per night.

5.2 While a traveler is away from home on business, the cost of a short personal telephone call home each night may be reimbursed. Hotel phones should be avoided in preference to mobile rates or phone cards.

5.3 No charges relating to mini-bars (other than for water or a soft drink), or film-hire may be reimbursed.

5.4 Excluding breakfast, employees travelling on business may claim for a maximum of \$50 plus GST for meals and drinks in a 24-hour period. All expenditure must be supported by receipts. Unspent allowances may not be carried over and accumulated.

5.5 Employees may claim for one alcoholic drink with their evening meal, as part of 5.4. No other alcoholic drinks may be claimed for unless the employee is entertaining guests on behalf of the University and with prior approval of the Vice-Chancellor or the Chief of Staff.

5.6 If an employee stays with friends, colleagues or family when travelling on business, \$50 for bed and breakfast and \$75 for dinner, bed and breakfast may be claimed, using standard expense claim procedures.

6. Entertainment

6.1 All entertaining must be on a modest scale. The names of all persons entertained must be listed when seeking reimbursement of expenses. No reimbursement will be made without this list. Alcohol must be kept to a reasonable level.

6.2 Use of expensive restaurants is to be avoided wherever possible. If there are pressing reasons for using a high tariff restaurant, prior authorisation from the Chief of Staff or Vice-Chancellor must have been obtained and the reasons noted on the expense claim form.

6.3 Working lunches are not reimbursable for employees entertaining each other, except when it is necessary to order sandwiches or similar food during seminars and meetings.

6.4 An employee may take a colleague who is visiting from another country out to dinner with their Supervisor's prior consent providing the cost does not exceed \$50 per person and the alcohol limit as per 5.5 is observed.

7. General guidelines

- 7.1 The University provides for travel, and corresponding costs, to facilitate engagement in the higher education sector by its senior leadership, academic staff, and research students, as well as persons engaged in University business on its Council, Academic Board, and their Committees.
- 7.2 The OVC books and pays for approved travel for its members including flights, accommodation, taxi and car hire. Where possible, additional travel arrangements are booked by the OVC. Where this is not possible, costs initially paid by the traveler may be reimbursed on presentation of receipts.
- 7.3 The University commits to funding fair and reasonable costs incurred by persons under section 3 approved to travel on University business, as defined in sections 4 to 6 above.
- 7.4 Members of Council may claim travel expenses relating to attendance at Council meetings, meetings of Council committees, or any other duties directly related to the duties of a Council member.
- 7.5 Members of the Academic Board and members of the committees of the University may claim travel expenses where attendance at a meeting is required, and travel exceeding 100 kilometres over the course of a year is required. Where teleconference or videoconference facilities are available, the University will pay for travel to attend one meeting per year.
- 7.6 External experts providing advice to the University may also be eligible for reimbursement of travel costs in accordance with this policy.
- 7.7 Employees in the OVC are entitled to travel in the fulfilment of their duties in accordance with the provisions of this Policy and any provision of employment agreements.
- 7.8 A person who has won a University Research Grant may claim travel expenses up to the amount of the grant, relating to attendance at conferences and other functions associated with research activity for which the grant was awarded. Where possible, the OVC coordinates travel requirements and incurs direct costs.
- 7.9 Business-related travel may be joined with travel for private purposes where it does not result in an additional unrecovered cost to the University.
- 7.10 The University does not fund airline frequent flyer program memberships or memberships to airline clubs (e.g. Qantas Club). Travelers are entitled to claim individual frequent flyer points when travelling for University purposes.
- 7.11 Parking infringements and fines for traffic violations will not be reimbursed.

8. Approval of travel

- 8.1 Approval of travel is given by the online approval of a travel expenses request. Where online approval is not possible, approval may be obtained by signing the *Travel Approval* application form. Approval may be by either the immediate Supervisor, Chief of Staff or the Vice-Chancellor, as applicable.

- 8.2 All travel by staff in the OVC that falls within the annual budget approved by the Council must be approved in advance by the Chief of Staff, for total travel costs up to \$3,000; and by the Vice-Chancellor, for travel over \$3,000.
- 8.3 All travel for the Vice-Chancellor that falls within the annual budget approved by the Council, must be approved in advance by the Chief of Staff (for domestic travel costs up to \$3000) or by the Chancellor (for travel costs over \$3,000 and for any international travel).
- 8.4 Prior to booking travel, travelers should confirm remaining budget funds are available. If travel will exceed budget, approval must be obtained from the Vice-Chancellor.

9. Safety and Insurance

- 9.1 When considering international travel, travel advice must be obtained from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade or OVC authorised travel agent's website. In the event of any warning, the traveler should consider the need for travel into the area. In the event that travel is still required, approval must be obtained from the traveler's immediate manager. Travel in high risk areas must be approved by the Vice-Chancellor and may only be granted in exceptional circumstances.
- 9.2 The University must provide reasonable insurance cover for persons undertaking travel on behalf of the University. The University holds a corporate travel insurance policy that covers all travel where approved under the terms of this policy.
- 9.3 The corporate travel policy is applicable while travelling to the following extent:
- a) all days where the traveler is engaged on University business
 - b) all days where the traveler is being transported to and from locations necessary for University business
 - c) all weekends (or equivalent) where there is a necessary pause between days as defined in sub-clauses a) and b)
 - d) A total of three days appended to the beginning and/or end of a trip where the traveler has taken approved official leave from University business.
- 9.4 The traveler is responsible for arranging insurance cover for any additional days of travel outside those described in clause 9.3 unless arrangement is made and approved in writing with the Chief of Staff or Vice-Chancellor.
- 9.5 In unforeseen circumstances the corporate travel insurance policy may be applied beyond the terms of this policy or any pre-approved arrangement at the discretion of the Chief of Staff or Vice-Chancellor.
- 9.6 The Chief of Staff is responsible for ensuring that sufficient information is made available to travelers to make them aware of their rights and responsibilities under the terms of this policy and the corporate travel insurance policy.
- 9.7 Travelers are responsible for making themselves aware of terms of the corporate travel insurance policy and behavioral expectations therein by consulting with the Chief of Staff as follows:

- a) Prior to booking a domestic airfare, in the first instance arrange a discussion with the Chief of Staff; and in subsequent instances confirming there have been no subsequent changes to the policy
- b) Prior to booking an international airfare, the traveler must consult with the Chief of Staff in relation to arrangements for travel insurance, any Fringe Benefits Tax implications, health care, safety, loss of belongings or University assets, and travel itinerary changes.

9.8 Travelers are responsible for ensuring that the terms of the corporate travel insurance policy for the type of travel in which they are engaged are not breached.

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10. Claiming travel expenses

10.1 Claims for travel reimbursement should only be required where online booking is not available. Travelers are to contact the OVC to identify if online booking are available.

10.2 Approved claims for travel may be paid in advance by the OVC, or reimbursed on production of receipts for the expenses claimed, providing eligibility criteria in section 4 have been met.

10.3 The OVC may pay for College staff and HDR students' travel upon advice received from the Research Committee's Research Grants Panel, accompanied by original invoices or receipts supplied by the traveler. Alternatively, travel may be arranged by the OVC.

10.4 The Chief of Staff is responsible for authorisation of any form or forms necessary to give effect to this Policy.

10.5 All claims for payment or reimbursement of travel expenses must be submitted to the OVC on the approved form, with supporting documentation, no later than fourteen days after the date on which the travel occurred. For vehicle reimbursement claims, acceptable supporting documentation would be a copy of entries in a Vehicle log book.

10.6 A travel diary or similar-record of all international journeys, and of domestic journeys where the time away from home is more than five consecutive nights, must be maintained to substantiate to the Australian Taxation Office the genuine business purpose of the travel undertaken. Failure to do so brings the potential risk of the University incurring substantial financial penalties. Items that must be recorded include:

- a) the nature of the activity
- b) the day and approximate time the business activity began
- c) how long the business activity lasted
- d) the name of the place where the traveler engaged in the business activity.

This requirement does not apply to students, honorary staff, or other eligible persons who have never been employees of the University.

11. Procedures

The Vice-Chancellor may determine procedures for the implementation of this Policy.

12. Review Date

This policy is to be reviewed no later than 31 December 2020.