
Travel and Expenses Policy

Finance Policy

1 Purpose

To provide a framework for undertaking University travel and guidance on the process for incurring ordinary, necessary and reasonable travel expenses.

2 Organisational Scope

This is a University-wide policy, including all group entities that are wholly managed by the University. It shall apply to all University staff or individuals (including the University's Council members and students) arranging, undertaking or approving University travel, irrespective of the country in which travel occurs.

3 Definitions

For purposes of this Policy, unless otherwise stated, the following definitions shall apply:

Approving Manager:	The Traveller's line manager or a manager higher in the approval hierarchy with the appropriate financial delegated authority.
Cost of Travel:	Includes airfares, accommodation, rental vehicles, travel insurance and all ordinary, necessary and reasonable expenses associated with University Travel.
Grant Travel:	A subset of University Travel for grants administered by the Research Trust of Victoria University of Wellington. Grant Travel may be partially or wholly funded by the University and hence qualifies as University Travel. Grants received by the University from third parties are considered to be University funds and are required to be administered in accordance with University policies.
Inbound Travel:	Inbound Travel is travel arranged for a visitor to the University from a location other than Wellington.
Purchasing Card:	The University Purchasing Card being a Bank of New Zealand Visa. This is the preferred procurement tool for settling travel expenses with the exception of travel bookings via the Travel Management Company.
Travel Insurance Policy:	The University's Travel Insurance Policy underwritten by Vero.
Travel Management Company (TMC):	Travel agency contracted by the University to supply travel management services.

Traveller:	A staff member, student, Council member or any other individual undertaking University Travel.
University Purposes:	University purposes include but are not limited to travel for research and field work, conference participation, recruitment of staff or students, staff training and development, Research and Study Leave, alumni relations, marketing or business development.
University Travel:	Travel that has been approved as being for University purposes and may be either wholly or partially funded by the University.

All monetary amounts referred to in this policy are in New Zealand dollars and are exclusive of Goods and Services Tax.

4 Policy Content and Guidelines

4.1 Ethics and Over Arching Framework

- (a) The University is obliged to safeguard and use its resources in a responsible manner. Furthermore, the University, and its staff must guard against actual or perceived conflicts of interest in regard to the use of those resources. Due to the personal nature of travel and the risk of perceived or actual personal benefit to the Traveller, the Controller and Auditor-General defines travel as a 'sensitive' expenditure type. The University expects all staff arranging and/or undertaking University travel:
 - (i) To do so only for University purposes;
 - (ii) To exercise prudence and professionalism;
 - (iii) Not to derive personal financial gain;
 - (iv) Will plan to meet trip objectives while minimising cost;
 - (v) To have read and adhered to this and other relevant University policies (see references).
- (b) The [Conduct Policy](#) identifies the required behavioural standards for staff in all areas of their work.

4.2 Compliance

4.2.1 Monitoring of Compliance

- (a) The University's travel framework is managed by the Financial Operations Team, Finance. The travel framework includes this Policy, the contractual relationships with all travel providers, and the duty of care framework. Compliance with this Policy will be monitored by Finance.
- (b) All staff involved in arranging, undertaking or approving travel are required to comply with this Policy so that the University derives maximum benefit from the travel framework.
- (c) Staff who consider that there are grounds for enquiry into inappropriate expenditure may advise their Manager or Finance immediately. Alternatively, disclosure may be made under the [Protected Disclosures Act 2000](#). Refer to the [Disclosure of Serious Wrongdoing \(Whistleblower\) Policy](#).

4.2.2 Consequences of Non-Compliance

- (a) Failure by a staff member to fully comply with this Policy may amount to misconduct or serious misconduct by the staff member which may result in the University taking disciplinary action.
- (b) Where a staff member breaches the policy, the University may:
 - (i) Seek reimbursement of costs directly from the staff member;
 - (ii) Refuse to use University funds to meet the purchase commitment.

4.3 Travel Approval

4.3.1 General

- (a) Self approval of travel is not permitted, and approval for travel must be granted by an Approving Manager. The booking procedures administered by the TMC on the University's behalf will require this authorisation. An exception to this is for domestic and trans-Tasman travel for Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and University Council members which may be self-approved up to a value of \$2,500 – refer to Section 4.13.4(c) of the [Financial Delegated Authorities Policy](#) for further details.
- (b) Refer to the [Use of Private Vehicles Policy](#) for specific approval requirements relating to staff using a personal vehicle for University purposes.
- (c) The Approving Manager will satisfy him/herself that the proposed travel and the associated costs are necessary, reasonable, for University purposes, are consistent with University policy and covered by the available budget or grant prior to granting approval.
- (d) The TMC records the 'reason for travel' for each booking on behalf of Finance. This information may be analysed and provided to interested parties such as the Vice Chancellor and the SLT on a periodic basis.

4.3.2 High Risk Destinations

- (a) High Risk Destinations include but are not limited to countries (or specific destinations within them) defined by the University's Insurer as High Risk. The University reserves the right to extend the High Risk status to other destinations, based on advice issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and International SOS.
- (b) All University travel to High Risk Destinations requires the prior written approval of the Traveller's relevant SLT member. Where the Traveller is a SLT member, prior written approval of the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) is required. The CFO is responsible for the Duty of Care framework operated by the University for travellers.
- (c) A SLT Team member (or the CFO) who approves travel to a High Risk Destination is responsible for ensuring that the Traveller is fully aware of, and prepared for, the potential risks associated with that travel. Prior to granting approval, advice must be sought from Finance via VUW-Travel@vuw.ac.nz
- (d) At any time the situation in a High Risk Destination may prompt the University to take certain action, including prohibiting any University travel to that country or recalling staff who are currently in that country. Given that the safety of all people travelling for University purposes is paramount, the University reserves the right to make such decisions.
- (e) Refer to Section 4.11.4 for insurance in relation to travel to a High Risk Destination.

4.4 Booking Travel

4.4.1 Contracted TMC

- (a) In accordance with the process required by the [Procurement Policy](#), the University has contracted a TMC to coordinate all University Travel. Refer to Appendix One for the details of the University's contracted TMC and a list of services and benefits provided.
- (b) It is mandatory to use the TMC, either directly or via their online booking tool, for all University travel unless specifically addressed in this Policy.
- (c) To request a departure from this Policy please contact Finance via VUW-Travel@vuw.ac.nz prior to making any travel arrangements, including for scenarios covered by Sections 4.5 and 4.6 of this Policy.
- (d) The CFO or Manager Financial Operations will assess requests for departures from this Policy and approve or decline.

4.4.2 Airlines

- (a) The TMC will book all travel with airlines in accordance with contracts, policies or agreements set by the University.
- (b) Travellers may not request the TMC to schedule their travel on a non-preferred airline in order to generate frequent flyer reward points or other personal benefits.

4.4.3 Airfares

- (a) All University travel will be economy class unless:
 - (i) The Traveller personally meets the cost of a class upgrade; or
 - (ii) The relevant SLT member or Vice Chancellor has approved the travel for classes other than economy.
- (b) The cost of the airfare will be invoiced directly to the University by the TMC based on the account code information provided at time of approval.
- (c) All air travel must be booked via the TMC. This allows access to the pricing offered by the University's contracts with airlines and enables the TMC to record all itineraries and contact details for duty of care purposes.
- (d) All domestic and trans-Tasman airfares must be booked directly with the TMC via:
 - (i) The Online Booking Tool; or
 - (ii) A consultant.
- (e) Point-to-point fares within foreign destinations (for example, from London to Dublin) may be purchased directly with airlines using their internet booking systems, using a University Purchasing Card.

4.4.4 Frequent Flyer and Airline Club Memberships

- (a) Where frequent flyer reward points or other similar benefits are gained in the course of University travel, staff are encouraged to utilise these reward points to facilitate future University Travel.

- (b) The University does not fund frequent flyer programmes, airline club memberships or traveller club memberships, without the prior approval of a SLT member (or Vice Chancellor if the applicant is a SLT member).

4.4.5 Downgrading

Downgrading travel to provide personal benefit is not permitted.

4.4.6 Excess Baggage

Airline carry-on and check-through luggage size and weight restrictions should be observed. Excess baggage surcharges incurred on flights for personal items will be at the Traveller's own expense. Excess baggage surcharges incurred on flights for items required for University purposes (e.g. equipment) should be paid for using a Purchasing Card or will be reimbursed.

4.4.7 Accommodation

- (a) Hotel and motel accommodation is to be in the mid or standard price range only, and must be arranged through the TMC. Where accommodation is provided as part of a conference or package deal, it should be used.
- (b) Where possible, the account should be charged back to the TMC or paid for using a Purchasing Card.
- (c) Any additional accommodation costs (e.g. breakfast) should be paid for using a Purchasing Card or charged back to the TMC with prior arrangement. Travellers should agree to a budget for expenditure during the trip with the Approving Manager, prior to departure.

4.4.8 Rental Vehicles

- (a) Rental vehicles must be arranged through the TMC.
- (b) The charge of the rental vehicle will be included in the TMC's invoice and made after the rental has been used.
- (c) In general, only vehicles up to 1600cc should be hired, unless:
 - (i) There are four or more travellers, or
 - (ii) It is required to accommodate the luggage or gear taken on the trip, or
 - (iii) The roads travelled are difficult, e.g. rocky terrain, steep winding roads.
- (d) All petrol and parking receipts should be paid for by Purchasing Card or will be reimbursed.
- (e) The rental vehicle should be returned to the supplier with a full tank of petrol.
- (f) Domestic rental vehicles are covered under the University's motor vehicle insurance policy.
- (g) International rental vehicles must be insured in the country of hire. The University's Travel Insurance Policy will only cover the excess.

4.4.9 Cancellations and Refunds

When a confirmed trip is cancelled the Traveller or travel co-ordinator must immediately advise the TMC.

4.4.10 Lost or Stolen Tickets

If tickets and/or vouchers are lost or stolen prior to departure the Traveller or travel co-ordinator must immediately advise the TMC.

4.4.11 Grants Travel

- (a) Where Grants Travel is wholly funded by the University then travel must be booked by the TMC.
- (b) Where Grant Travel is funded 50% or more by the Traveller alternative agents may be approached for written quotations. Please contact Finance, via VUW-Travel@vuw.ac.nz for advice prior to approaching any agents. If alternative quotes are sought, to ensure comparative accuracy the Traveller is required to obtain quotations from the University's TMC at the same time for the identical itinerary and dates of travel. The quotations must be submitted to VUW-Travel@vuw.ac.nz for assessment. If the alternative agent provides a favourable quotation, Finance will provide the University's TMC with the opportunity to match or better it.

4.5 Inbound Travel

Travellers that reside overseas are sometimes required to undertake University travel. The University's contracts with airlines offer Point of Sale Rebates for inbound airfares, which must be quoted by the TMC. If a favourably priced airfare is sourced in the Traveller's country of residence, please contact Finance via VUW-Travel@vuw.ac.nz for advice prior to making a booking.

4.6 Group Travel

Group Travel is typically arranged in respect of study tours and field trips. Group Travel must be booked through the TMC.

4.7 Duty of Care

- (a) The safety of all people undertaking University Travel is paramount. The TMC plays an important role in the duty of care aspect of the travel framework, particularly via the tracking and locating of Travellers.
 - (i) Prior to departure, the Traveller should view the International SOS (ISOS) [website](#) to obtain detailed information on the countries they are intending to travel to. The University log-in is 25ACPA000013.
 - (ii) ISOS specialise in advice on health and security related issues and provide up to date information on over 190 countries from their website. They also undertake emergency evacuations from countries where security issues have become extreme and provide assistance with urgent medical care that may be required.
- (b) Comprehensive information for New Zealand citizens is provided through a [website](#) managed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.
- (c) Where there are a number of University staff travelling at one time to the same place, an Approving Manager needs to consider the risk this poses.
- (d) Travellers should ensure that they have taken all reasonable measures to ensure their personal safety. Prior to departure, the Traveller should view this [safety information](#) from ISOS.
- (e) At any time the situation in a country may mean that a decision is made by the University to take certain action, including prohibiting any University travel to that country or recalling staff who are currently in that country. The University reserves the right to make such decisions in the best interests of the traveller and the University. The CFO or any SLT member has the right to action a prohibition or recall.

4.8 *Taxis and Shuttles*

Staff who hold a Purchasing Card must use it to pay for taxi fares, as this is the preferred payment method. Other staff may request one or more taxi chits to cover their immediate travel needs. Staff must enter their name and coding details before submitting the chit to the driver.

4.9 *Personal Vehicle Use*

Please refer to the [Use of Private Vehicles Policy](#).

4.10 *Travel Expenses*

4.10.1 **General**

- (a) The University will pay for all ordinary, necessary and reasonable expenses required for the individual to undertake approved University travel. In terms of guidance on what is reasonable the following types of expenses will normally be paid for by the University:
 - (i) Visas and inoculations
 - (ii) Meals
 - (iii) Taxis/trains and buses
 - (iv) Mileage – up to the rates specified by Inland Revenue Department
 - (v) Parking fees – when travelling away from the University. Parking fees when travelling to the University are not normally paid.
- (b) Travel expenditure that has a personal benefit or is considered unreasonable will not normally be paid for or reimbursed. Such expenditure includes:
 - (i) Passports
 - (ii) Movies (or other entertainment)
 - (iii) Drinks – unless hosting a guest(s) of the University
 - (iv) Parking fines
 - (v) Traffic infringements
 - (vi) Mini bar alcoholic drinks/snacks – unless the snack is in lieu of a meal
 - (vii) Books/magazines that are not required for University purposes
 - (viii) Snacks – unless the snack is in lieu of a meal
 - (ix) Petrol, other than for a rental vehicle
 - (x) Any costs associated with personal travel taken in conjunction with University travel
 - (xi) Expenditure on persons or family members accompanying the approved traveller.
- (c) The Purchasing Card is acknowledged as the most cost effective and preferred method of payment of travel expenses.
- (d) To apply for a Purchasing Card for travel purposes please complete a Purchasing Card Application Form.
- (e) Where a Purchasing Card is not used, travel expenses are reimbursed upon receipt by the Payments Team of an approved reimbursement claim <https://intranet.victoria.ac.nz/finance/payments/expense-claims.aspx> with the requisite supporting documentation for each transaction attached. The reimbursement

claim must be submitted as soon as possible and within the financial year in which the expenditure was incurred. Supporting documentation includes original receipts or where a receipt is not received, a written record of the details of the transaction.

- (f) Finance will monitor all reimbursement claims for compliance with University policies.

4.10.2 Chancellor, Council and Senior Leadership Team

Refer to Section 4.13.4(C) of the [Financial Delegated Authorities Policy](#) for the specific process for approval of travel expenses.

4.11 Travel Insurance

4.11.1 General

- (a) The University has a Travel Insurance Policy ('Insurance Policy') for international University travel. The [Travel Insurance Procedure](#) provides guidance on the operational aspects of travel insurance. Refer to Appendix Two for the Insurance Policy.
- (b) It is mandatory for all travellers undertaking international University Travel to register for Travel Insurance. The Travel Insurance Procedure provides a detailed explanation of how cover is activated.
- (c) Travel insurance cover for personal travel is the responsibility of the individual.
- (d) A person accompanying a Traveller may qualify for insurance by the University if the Approving Manager deems there is a direct benefit to the University.
- (e) A person self-funding travel will qualify for Travel Insurance cover if the Approving Manager deems that there is a direct benefit to the University for the travel.
- (f) Persons either self-funding their travel for University purposes or accompanying a University traveller may qualify for insurance cover under the Insurance Policy. Refer to the Travel Insurance Procedure for details.
- (g) The Insurance Policy covers normal personal effects associated with travel including laptops and cameras.
- (h) Where travel includes equipment other than personal effects (e.g. specialist University equipment) the traveller must advise Finance so that suitable arrangements can be made.

4.11.2 Unforeseeable or Unexpected Events

- (a) The Insurance Policy will not provide cover for any loss, damage, condition, or other event, which is foreseeable or expected to the traveller.
- (b) A travel booking must only be made in the full knowledge of current circumstances prevailing in the destination country or countries. The research required to obtain such knowledge must be undertaken by the Traveller and must include research of political and medical risks.

4.11.3 Disinclination to Travel

- (a) The University's travel insurance does not cover a Traveller voluntarily changing their travel plans, or declining to travel when a scheduled flight is available.
- (b) Where the Traveller has changed their travel plans in consultation with, and with the agreement of a senior staff member of the relevant School or Central Service Unit, the cost of the change in travel plans will be borne by that School or Central Service Unit.

- (c) Where the Traveller has changed their travel plans without consulting with or obtaining the agreement of a senior staff member of the relevant School or Central Service Unit, the staff member may be liable for the cost of the change in travel plans.

4.11.4 Travel to High Risk Destinations

- (a) A destination may be deemed High Risk by the Insurer, with respect to Travel Insurance Policy, and as a result the Insurer may not pay benefits unless special arrangements are made prior to travel.
- (b) The University's [Travel Insurance Procedure](#) contains a list of current High Risk Destinations that is also provided to the TMC. Travellers who suspect the destination they are travelling to may be deemed High Risk must contact Finance, well in advance of the departure date to enable special insurance requirements to be met where possible.
- (c) Refer to Section 4.3.2 for the approval requirements for travel to High Risk Destinations.
- (d) The University's duty of care obligations are particularly relevant to High Risk Destinations. Refer to Section 4.7(e) which details the rights of the University to prohibit travel to or recall travellers from High Risk Destinations.

4.12 Personal travel

Staff are able to take advantage of the service, fare and fee structure negotiated by the University by booking personal travel through the TMC. Personal travel may be booked concurrently with, or independently of, the University portion but will be invoiced separately and directly to the Traveller. On no account is the cost of any personal travel to be charged to the University.

4.12.1 Travel Insurance

Travel insurance cover for personal travel is the responsibility of the individual. Staff can access travel insurance cover for themselves and their families under the [Leisure Travel Insurance Scheme](#).

5 References

[Conduct Policy](#)

[Gift and Koha Policy](#)

[Financial Delegated Authority Policy](#)

[Financial Delegated Authority Statute](#)

[Procurement Policy](#)

[Sensitive Expenditure Policy](#)

[Travel Insurance Procedure](#)

[Use of Private Vehicles Policy](#)

Office of the Controller and Auditor-General:

Controlling sensitive expenditure: [Guidelines for Public Entities. February 2007](#).

Previous version: [Travel and Expenses Policy](#)

6 Appendices

[Appendix One: University Official TMC](#)

7 Approval Agency

Vice Chancellor

8 Policy Sponsor

Chief Financial Officer

9 Contact Person

Procurement Manager

Ext: 5904