

Travel Policy

Section 1 - Summary

(1) This Policy provides the governing conditions applicable to all travel undertaken by Victoria University Travellers. This Policy applies to all travel arrangements related to approved and/or funded business and is supported by the [Travel Procedure](#).

Section 2 - TEQSA/ASQA/ESOS Alignment

(2) HESF: Standard 6.2 Corporate Monitoring and Accountability

(3) Standards for RTOs: Standard 8.

Section 3 - Scope

(4) This Policy applies to all Travellers, which for the purposes of this Policy are defined as:

- a. All University staff and students;
- b. Anyone who incurs travel and travel-related expenses paid wholly or in the majority by the University and/or;
- c. Anyone undertaking funded travel on behalf of, or at the request of, the University.

(5) Individuals providing services under contract to the University should refer to their contract travel provisions before enacting this Policy and associated Procedure and supporting documents.

Section 4 - Definitions

(6) Accommodation – Lodging other than that of permanent residence required due to travelling on University business for one or more nights. Accommodation for the purpose of University-related travel is a single room, with private facilities in a 3 - 4 star hotel.

(7) Business Travel – Travel, which includes leave from the workplace and relates specifically to University business. Categories include teaching; research; conferences; meetings; graduations; marketing; field trips and Outside Studies Programs.

(8) Activity with significant associated risk – Includes an activity potentially resulting in serious injury or death.

(9) University Business – Defined under the premise that the University will derive value from the travel to be undertaken and may include the following:

- a. Attendance at conferences;
- b. External courses or development programs;
- c. University representation in an official capacity;

- d. University business in a commercial, business development or procurement capacity;
- e. Obligations arising from membership of government bodies or international associations.

Section 5 - Policy Statement

(10) The University recognises travel as an important enabler for its teaching, learning, research and engagement activities. However, the costs and risks associated with travel mean that it is important to ensure each trip is necessary and valuable to the University. Critical travel considerations include:

- a. Health and Safety risks (utilise DFAT indicators) and maintaining employer duty of care
- b. Purpose of travel (beneficial to the University)
- c. Achieving value for money in relation to travel expenditure
- d. Ensuring Travellers incurring travel-related expenses are compliant with all legal and taxation obligations (e.g. fringe benefit tax, travel diaries, occupational health and safety requirements etc).
- e. Environmental care (avoiding excessive air travel helps progress the University's Carbon Neutral strategy)

(11) The University requires Travellers to observe the University's [Appropriate Workplace Behaviour Policy](#).

(12) All staff undertaking travel for University business are required to be aware of and abide by all conditions in this Policy and supporting [Travel Procedure](#).

Part A - Need for travel/alternatives

(13) For every travel request, Managers and approvers are required to question the need for staff to travel.

(14) Travellers are obligated to justify the need for travel to their designated approver, who has the final decision over whether, or under which conditions, the trip will proceed.

(15) The decision to travel will be mindful of the impact of travel on the local community, land and country we come from and plan travel to.

(16) Travel must directly enable the delivery of the Strategic Drivers:

- a. Doing Dual Differently;
- b. Partnering with Principle;
- c. Maximising Research Impact;
- d. Protecting Country; and,
- e. Thriving Place to Study and work.

(17) Travel is not the first option, but the last option after considering the following important principles:

- a. Virtual meeting or conference participation options are not available;
- b. Research and/or training that requires place based activity to be undertaken that cannot be undertaken virtually (i.e. flora samples, lack of network access to interview research participants);
- c. Directly contributes and is measurable in increasing student applications or placements.

(18) It is the responsibility of the traveller and approving managers to ensure travel plans align to these principles. Carbon offsets is mandatory and will be added to the cost of travel by VU's Travel Agent.

Part B - Safety and Security

(19) The physical and mental health, safety and wellbeing, and any concerns of travellers, must be considered before travel is undertaken, including COVID-19 and other illnesses and/or diseases.

(20) University travellers will familiarise themselves with any cultural and legal sensitivities of the destination(s) and/or organisation(s) they are travelling to or through.

(21) University staff, and students, who travel internationally with laptops, phones, and other mobile devices, are subject to many risks, namely that of loss, seizure, tampering or compromise. Please use recommendations as per the International Travel Card to reduce the risks associated with travelling with these devices. For any questions regarding these recommendations or where you are travelling, please contact VUCyber@vu.edu.au

Part C - Travel Bookings

Domestic and Trans-Tasman Travel

(22) All Domestic and Trans-Tasman travel (including air, accommodation and land requirements) should be booked directly through the Concur Online Booking Tool (OBT) facility wherever possible.

Point to Point/Multi Point International Travel

(23) All multi point (i.e. more than 1 destination point and return trip) international travel requirements must be booked through the Corporate Travel Management (CTM) system and requested and submitted through the Concur Authority to Travel (ATT) Request process.

Class of Air Travel

Domestic

(24) All domestic air travel will be economy class.

(25) All domestic air travel must be booked via the Concur Travel Management system.

International

(26) All international air travel must be booked using the Approved Travel Management Consultant. University Travellers must book a class of air travel in accordance with the following:

- a. Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor positions: Business Class.
- b. Executive Dean/Director and above positions: Economy Class for continuous trips of eight (8) hours or less, and Premium Economy Class if flight time exceeds eight (8) hours in duration.
- c. All other University Travellers: Economy Class.
- d. The only exceptions to the class of air travel are:
 - i. University Travellers who have a particular class of airfare stated in their contract of employment;
 - ii. University Travellers who can provide a medical endorsement to their Travel authorising officer indicating that their normal entitlement is unsatisfactory and they require a higher class of travel;
 - iii. University Travellers who personally fund the difference between a higher class of fare and their normal entitlement;
 - iv. University Travellers who have the approval of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Finance to travel in a higher class of travel.

(27) The University has a number of corporate discount agreements in place with airlines. These airlines are considered preferred carriers therefore in the first instance travel with one of these airlines should be considered over other airlines unless the preferred airlines do not service-specific destinations.

(28) Air travel upgrades will not be funded by the University and must be paid for by the Traveller.

Authorisation of Travel

(29) Domestic travel does not require approval within the travel booking tool. Staff, however, need to ensure that their Direct Manager is aware and is supportive of the need for the staff member to travel domestically.

(30) Travel approvers for international travel must:

- a. Review and understand the trip information provided by the Traveller and either approve or decline the trip having due consideration of the risk. This includes:
 - i. Understanding the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Risk Rating and associated risks of the country and city being visited;
 - ii. Understanding and challenging (if need be) the business case/justification for the trip - including the Travel Risk Assessment Form.

Booking Travel

(31) All domestic and international flights must be booked through the University's contracted travel service provider and initiated through the University's travel booking tool.

(32) Staff should where possible book accommodation through the University's contracted travel service provider and be initiated through the University's travel booking tool.

(33) University-related business does not include Outside Studies Programs.

(34) Travellers are required to understand their fare conditions for the purposes of ensuring best value is achieved.

(35) All domestic and international bookings will include a carbon offset charge, to support the University progress its Carbon Neutral Strategy.

(36) Refer to [Travel Procedure](#) for more information.

Travel Insurance

(37) The University maintains travel insurance policies, (STAFF & STUDENTS) that provides cover for authorised domestic and overseas travel for the Traveller and in some instances the Traveller's, accompanying spouse/Partner and their Dependent Children.

(38) All Travellers must make themselves familiar with University's travel insurance policies, which includes but is not limited to Student Travel Insurance, Staff Travel Insurance, and Leisure Travel Extension of Coverage, to ensure compliance with eligibility requirements, terms and conditions. Further information, guidance and instruction regarding this can be obtained from the [Travel Procedure](#).

Safety and Security

(39) All Travellers are required to check the travel advice pertinent to their travel destination/destinations with the [Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade](#) website (DFAT) at the time of booking and again prior to travel for destinations to be travelled. Travellers travelling to destinations rated DFAT 3 or 4 must register their itinerary with the smart traveller and ensure appropriate escalated levels of travel approval are obtained as shown in the Table

below. The requirements for DFAT Advisory Levels advises DFAT level meanings and requirements of the Traveller with regard to each DFAT level.

Requirements for DFAT Advisory Levels

| DFAT Level* | Meaning | Travel Permission | Insurance Coverage | Additional Approval required |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|---|---|
| 1 | Exercise normal precautions | Permitted | Yes - but refer to insurance summary and exclusions | No |
| 2 | Exercise a high degree of caution | Permitted | Yes - but refer to insurance summary and exclusions | No |
| 3 | Reconsider your need to travel | Permitted with approval | Yes - but refer to insurance summary and exclusions | Yes - Departmental Budget Owner AND Vice Chancellor or a VC nominated delegate approval required with business justification for travel which must include a risk mitigation and management plan. |
| 4 | Do not travel | Not Permitted | No | Not Applicable |

Travellers must ensure they have read and understood their obligations under this Risk Management provision per the [Travel Procedure](#).

(40) University Travellers are required to upload their itinerary into [Concur Triplt](#) to be provided access to automated travel risk management notifications and advise to capture report and appropriately discharge their duty of care requirements to the Traveller.

Travel Administration

Travel Diary

(41) It is an ATO requirement that Travellers keep a Travel Diary of all domestic and international trips where:

- a. overseas travel is greater than five (5) consecutive nights taken for University business, research or fieldwork or,
- b. for travel within Australia where the trip involves the employee being away from their home for greater than five (5) consecutive nights and the purpose of the travel is not exclusively for University business.

(42) Failure to provide this may expose the Traveller to substantial financial penalties.

Incorporated Personal Travel

(43) Private travel incorporated into a business trip, (e.g. Annual Leave, RDO's, LSL etc.), must be less than 30% of the total travel period.

(44) Where private travel is greater than 30% of the total travel period, the purpose of the travel will be considered dual purpose, i.e. business and private and the Traveller will be required to pay 50% of the airfares to avoid Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT).

(45) To calculate if travel will attract FBT, Travellers must complete the FBT Calculator (located on the [Travel Information intranet page](#)) and attach this to their online ATT request.

Self-funded travel for Business (e.g. self-funded Conferences etc.)

(46) Self-funded travel (i.e. travel and related expenses are paid for by the Traveller or an external source) does not require funding approval. However, the Traveller must lodge their full travel details/itinerary with the TMC and upload same into [Concur Triplt](#) prior to the travel taking place for insurance and Duty of Care purposes.

(47) Further guidance and instruction regarding ATO requirements for Travel Diary completion and FBT are provided in the [Travel Procedure](#).

(48) The Traveller's organisational unit is responsible for ensuring their employees maintain and attach the Travel Diaries for record-keeping and reporting.

Per Diem

(49) Per Diem shall be paid for international trips only.

(50) Per Diem is the set allowance provided to the Traveller as defined in the [Travel Procedure](#) and claimable by reference to the application process and forms provided through the Finance intranet [Payment of Reimbursement and Per Diem Entitlements](#).

Accommodation

(51) The accommodation should be booked via the University's contracted travel service provider and initiated through the University's travel booking tool. The standard of accommodation chosen must provide a safe and secure environment, which is conveniently located and at a reasonable cost.

(52) Accommodation for the purpose of University-related travel is a single room, with private facilities in a 3 - 4 star hotel.

(53) Airbnb should not be used as they represent an unacceptable personal safety risk.

(54) Payment of all accommodation must remain in line with the University's [Purchasing Policy](#). Staff will be required to bear the costs of any unsubstantiated claims for accommodation.

Costs Associated with International Travel

(55) The University Traveller shall ensure appropriate validity and currency of their passport when travelling for University business. The cost of obtaining/renewing a passport is the responsibility of the Traveller.

(56) The TMC will identify, advise and/or arrange any Visa or other country-specific applications if applicable and/or required. In the event of a business Visa being required, will cover the full cost of obtaining such.

Health

(57) The Traveller must check and ensure all immunisation and health information per DFAT recommendations are appropriately adhered to.

OH&S

(58) The [Health and Safety Policy](#) applies to all Travellers travelling for all related purposes.

(59) The Traveller is responsible for making themselves aware of and ensuring compliance with any OH&S

responsibilities when preparing for travel and whilst travelling. Adherence to the OH&S Travel planning checklist (located on the [Travel Information intranet page](#)) is mandatory.

Breach of the Policy

(60) There will be consequences for breaches of the Policy and Procedure, including but not limited to possible disciplinary action

Section 6 - Procedures

(61) [Travel Procedure](#)

Status and Details

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| Status | Current |
| Effective Date | 22nd November 2022 |
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| Approval Authority | Chief Financial Officer |
| Approval Date | 21st November 2022 |
| Expiry Date | Not Applicable |
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