

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 University business and is supported by the [Travel Procedure](#).

Section 2 - Scope

(2) 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 third-party funded travel on behalf of, or at the request of, the University.

(3) 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 3 - Policy Statement

(4) The University recognises travel as an important enabler for its teaching, learning, research and engagement activities. However, due to the associated costs and risks, it is essential that each trip is necessary and provides demonstrable value to the University. Essential travel considerations include:

- a. Health and Safety risks (utilise DFAT indicators) and the University's duty of care obligations;
- b. Purpose of travel (beneficial to the University);
- c. Value for money in relation to travel expenditure;
- d. Compliance with legal and taxation obligations (e.g. fringe benefit tax, travel diaries, occupational health and safety requirements etc);
- e. Environmental impact (minimising air travel supports the University's Carbon Neutral strategy).

(5) Travellers must observe the University's [Appropriate Workplace Behaviour Policy](#).

(6) Staff undertaking travel for University business must be aware of and comply with all conditions outlined in this Policy and supporting [Travel Procedure](#).

Part A - Need for travel/alternatives

(7) Managers and approvers must critically assess the necessity for each travel request.

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

Part B - Principles

(9) These principles guide decision-making for University travel to ensure alignment with strategic priorities, responsible resource use, and ethical practice. All travel must be assessed in accordance with these principles and the definitions of Essential and Non-Essential Travel provided in this Policy:

- a. Travel must be assessed against the definitions of Essential and Non-Essential Travel, with approval contingent on alignment to strategic priorities and operational necessity.
- b. The decision to travel must consider the impact on the local community, land and Country we come from and plan travel to.
- c. Travel must have a clear business, academic or operational purpose that supports University objectives, including teaching, research, professional development, capability uplift, industry engagement or institutional representation.
- d. Travellers and approving managers are responsible for ensuring travel plans align to these principles.
- e. Carbon offsets are mandatory and will be added to the cost of travel by VU's Travel Agent.

Part C - Safety and Security

(10) The University recognises that it may be necessary for University travellers to travel to destinations that pose certain risks. The risks are dependent on the individual circumstances of the traveller and the conditions present at the travel location. The University has partnered with International SOS to provide travellers with medical and security information and assistance.

(11) The physical and mental health, safety and wellbeing, and any concerns of travellers, must be considered prior to travel, including pre-existing medical conditions, illnesses and/or diseases.

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

(13) University staff and students travelling internationally with laptops, phones, and other mobile devices are subject to risks including loss, seizure, tampering or compromise. Travellers should follow the recommendations outlined in the International Travel Card to mitigate these risks. For further advice contact VUCyber@vu.edu.au.

(14) Travellers must comply with the University's [Health and Safety Policy](#) when preparing for and undertaking travel. Operational requirements, including the mandatory OH&S Travel Planning Checklist, are outlined in the Travel Procedure.

Governance Oversight

Essential Travel Review Committee

(15) During periods of elevated travel risk, the Essential Travel Review Committee may be convened to assess and approve travel requests. The Committee has authority to override prior approvals and restrict travel based on financial, national interest, health, or security and risk concerns.

(16) The Committee will consist of:

- a. Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer
- b. Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research & Impact
- c. Chief Risk Officer
- d. Representative from the Travel Unit or DVC Finance

- e. Representative from the Office of the Vice-Chancellor

Travel Insurance

(17) The University maintains travel insurance policies, (STAFF & STUDENTS) that provides cover for authorised domestic and overseas travel for the traveller. The University does not ordinarily provide travel insurance coverage for accompanying spouses, partners or dependents. Any exception must be explicitly approved by the Chief Risk Officer.

(18) All Travellers must make themselves familiar with the 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.

Part D - Breach of the Policy

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

Section 4 - Procedures

(20) [Travel Procedure](#)

Section 5 - HESF/ASQA/ESOS Alignment

(21) HESF: Standard 6.2 Corporate Monitoring and Accountability.

(22) Outcome Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations 2025: Standard 4.3 Risk Management.

Section 6 - Definitions

(23) Accommodation – Lodging other than that of permanent residence required due to travelling on University business for one or more nights. Preference should be given to single room accommodation, with private facilities in a 3-4 star hotel, however the decision should be made with budget in mind and value for money.

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

(25) 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.

(26) Essential travel: refers to overseas travel that is critical to the University's strategic objectives and cannot reasonably be deferred, conducted virtually, or delegated to a local representative. This may include:

- a. Representing the University at significant international forums or events where a presence is required to maintain strategic institutional-level partnerships.
- b. Delivering invited keynote addresses, presenting research outputs or participating in research collaborations where absence or virtual participation would jeopardise academic or funding outcomes.
- c. Undertaking fieldwork or data collection that is time-sensitive and cannot be conducted elsewhere or by other parties.
- d. Attending meetings or negotiations is critical to securing international agreements, funding, or joint ventures

that directly support University priorities, where virtual attendance would jeopardise the outcomes.

(27) Non-Essential Travel: travel is considered non-essential when it is:

- a. Primarily for professional networking, discretionary attendance at conferences, or events where virtual participation is available. Attendance at conferences held within Australia is permitted where there is a clear business or academic purpose and the travel is consistent with this Policy and Procedure.
- b. Sending a team to present a paper or represent VU where only one speaker could perform the task(s).
- c. Of limited strategic or operational value to the University.
- d. Personal or leisure in nature (even if attached to University business).

(28) 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.
- f. Up to one additional day before and after a business-related event may be considered University business, as long as it does not exceed 50% of business activities.

University-related business does not include Outside Studies Programs.

Status and Details

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Accountable Officer	Matthew Walsh Chief Financial Officer officeofCFO@vu.edu.au
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