

# Travel

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## 1.0 Purpose

This Policy provides the governing principles applicable for all travel by University Travellers on Official University Business. The University views travel as an enabler for its teaching, learning, research and engagement activities and recognises that domestic and international travel is a necessary activity for the University.

## 2.0 Scope

This Policy applies to all University Travellers, Travel Coordinators and Travel Approvers who incur travel related expenses for Official University Business, where:

- the costs are paid for by the University (in whole or in part) regardless of the funding source; and
- the University approves the travel as part of Official University Business.

This Policy does not cover the use of university vehicles for private related travel. The University will not be responsible or liable for managing any issues relating to or arising from private travel or the private portion of dual-purpose travel.

## 3.0 Policy Statement

"Travel" is travel funded by the University or funded by a third party\* and undertaken by a staff member, student or visitor while on official University business.

The University views travel as an enabler for its teaching, learning, research and engagement activities. It seeks to provide safe and cost-effective options for travel that allow the University to fulfil its legal, tax and employer duty of care obligations.

Travellers' health, safety, and security are important and must be considered before deciding to travel and while travelling.

All travel must only be undertaken after due consideration of the environmental impacts of travel and all other alternatives available to the University such as web meetings and video conferencing. The University is committed to halving carbon emissions by 2030, reducing them to zero by 2050 as part of its strategic goals and has developed strategies to support the achievement of these targets.

The University has secured preferred supplier arrangements with selected travel providers to achieve value for money outcomes for airline, accommodation and car rental services. The preferred suppliers also ensure collection of information required for insurance, provision of medical and emergency assistance and legislative reporting requirements.

\*Where University budget is not used to fund the travel then some of the obligations noted below (eg, travel expenses) will not apply. However, other requirements including approval, travel diaries, and consideration of health, safety, and security of the travellers still apply.

### **3.1 Approval Process**

The traveler must follow the guidelines and use the travel approval forms on the travel intranet site.

While a staff member must obtain approval to be absent in accordance with the "Absence on Official University Business" policy, such approval is not required prior to booking travel.

Financial approval is not required as part of the travel booking process for domestic or international travel. The travel booking process has been decoupled from approval processes to allow the 'best fare of the day' to be purchased without delays relating to the approval process.

However, in instances where travel expenditure is incurred, but subsequently absence is not approved, the staff member's project account used to make the booking (normally research/consultancy/staff accounts) will bear the costs of any ticketing changes, forfeits or other costs associated with cancelling or changing travel arrangements. Any impact on the element's operating account will require the approval of the financial delegate of the element.

The approval process for staff applying for Academic Studies Program is outlined in the Academic Studies Program Policy.

### **3.2 Travel Suppliers**

The University has established preferred supplier arrangements with selected travel providers for the provision of domestic and international travel services, including airfares, accommodation services and car hire. Staff must comply with these arrangements unless an exception is granted by the relevant member of Executive Group for airline fares and by the Travel administrator for accommodation and car rental arrangements.

### **3.3 Airline Travel**

For domestic travel, staff are required to make all bookings using the travel management booking tool available via the staff portal which provides a choice of competitive airfares from all domestic airline carriers.

For international travel, staff are required to source fares from the preferred travel provider. Where staff can show that cheaper options are available from other providers, this will be taken up with the preferred provider and where possible, the fares will be matched or the use of an alternative provider will be approved.

All bookings are to be made using the "Best Fare of the Day" which is the lowest cost fare available at the time of booking to suit the traveller's business needs and entitlements.

### **3.4 Class of Airline Travel**

#### **3.4.1 Economy Class**

Economy class air travel is the normal class of travel for domestic and international travel while on University business. Any variations to this should be approved and are subject to the following guidelines:

- All domestic travel should be economy class.
- Less than 9 hours flying time, should be no more than premium economy class.

- Business class or premium economy (or their equivalent) may be considered in these circumstances:
  - o travel requiring flying time of greater than 9 hours and there are exceptional work-related circumstances
  - o for distinguished visitors (eg, conference speakers)
  - o for international travel where circumstances involve a documented medical condition which is ameliorated by business class seating
  - o when the traveller pays, at their own private expense, for an upgrade from the approved class of travel
  - o when the traveller chooses to use frequent flyer points to upgrade from the approved class of travel (directly via the airline)
  - o when employment contracts otherwise provide for a specific class of air travel, or
  - o for travel where business class is allowable and paid for by an external body and only after due consideration of the environmental impact.
- First class travel is prohibited, except when paid for by another organisation and only after due consideration of the environmental impact.

References to Economy, Premium Economy, Business, and First class above refer to Australian airline industry standards. Australian equivalency of class of travel should be used when considering class of travel in other international jurisdictions (i.e. travel in North America may refer to Business class as First class, in which case Australian Business class equivalent allows the use of First class)

#### **3.4.2 Business Class and Premium Economy Approvals**

The relevant member of Executive Group may approve standing arrangements in relation to business class and premium economy travel.

Any other requests to travel business class and premium economy are considered on a trip-by-trip basis, at the discretion of the relevant member of Executive Group.

### **3.5 Other Travel Modes**

Other modes of travel may be used if they offer practical, cost effective and timely services. Should other modes of travel be used (e.g. use of motor vehicles rather than air travel), which are not the most cost-effective option, the University reserves the right to only reimburse expenditure based on the lowest cost alternative.

### **3.6 Accommodation and Car Rentals**

Staff are encouraged to use the University preferred supplier arrangements for booking accommodation and car rentals. Where the preferred supplier is unable to provide competitive options, approval will be provided to use other vendors.

A university vehicle parking permit will generally not be supplied for car rentals. When hiring a bus, a bus that is fitted with seat belts must be requested.

Travellers' accommodation costs will be paid by the University when:

- the travel is for official University business, and
- the location of travel renders it impossible or impractical for the traveller to return to their normal place of residence as outlined in the Financial Management Practice Manual – Spending University Funds Guidelines – Travel.

### 3.7 Travel Between Campuses

For the safety of our community, at the traveller's choice, the university will pay for overnight accommodation if:

- pre-approved by the relevant financial delegate
- the university's booking system and preferred accommodation is used
- the work commitment ends after 9pm, and
- if the campus or work location is more than 25km from home, or
- in other exceptional circumstances.

### 3.8 Travel Expenses

Staff travelling on approved official University business may apply for a University credit card if they do not already have one. Alternatively, reimbursement of travel expenses will occur upon a staff member's return if the expenses are reasonable and necessarily incurred.

Reimbursement for the use of private motor vehicles will be at the rates specified by the Australian Taxation Office and should be made via a mileage claim in the expense management system.

Tax invoices or receipts are required to support claims for travel expenses. The University does not support a 'per diem' reimbursement method unless specifically required to do so by a granting body for travel paid for with grant funds.

Expenses must comply with the Expenditure Guidelines – **Spending University Funds** – Travel, as well as compliance with relevant FBT legislation.

### 3.9 Travel Warnings

International travellers should check the **Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade** website, for any warnings that apply to intended destinations. Advice contained in these warnings should be followed. Travel will not be approved to areas under current Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade warnings, 'Do not travel' (level 4) or 'Reconsider your need to travel' (level 3) or if insurance cover is not available, unless specific approval is provided by the Vice Chancellor or Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research) for academic staff, Deputy Vice Chancellor Education for students or the Chief Operating Officer for professional staff.

### 3.10 Emergency Assistance Provider

The University subscribes to the services of an emergency assistance provider for medical assistance, international health care and security services whilst overseas, who provides specific information about destinations prior to travel, including medical and security risks and how to stay safe and well while travelling and staying overseas.

Assistance is provided 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The program does not replace the University's existing travel insurance policy. It augments the corporate travel assistance program. In extenuating circumstances, where international travel is

approved to be booked outside the preferred supplier arrangements, it is the responsibility of the traveller to notify the emergency assistance provider of their travel itinerary prior to departure. For further information visit the [travel intranet site](#).

### 3.11 Dual Purpose Travel (work and private elements)

Due to requirements of the Australian Tax Office and the Fringe Benefits Tax legislation, private days at your own personal expense may be approved if:

- the dominant purpose of your travel is University business (at least 51% of the period of travel is on University business)
- the private component will not add extra cost to the university (eg, changes cost of flights, fringe benefits tax liability)
- leave for private travel is approved before booking
- adding a private element does not affect insurance coverage of the work element
- you pay for your own share of travel expenses for private elements, including airfares, and
- you pay for private components from personal money, not with university funds such as surplus return accounts.

The University will not approve private travel to a high risk (DFAT levels 3 and 4) destination (see section 3.9 above). The University will not be responsible or liable for managing any issues relating to or arising from private travel or the private portion of dual-purpose travel.

Not all private travel will be covered by the University’s travel insurance and it is the traveller’s responsibility to ensure travel is insured for the work and private components of the trip.

Please refer to the [travel intranet site](#) for guidance, a calculator, and practical examples around the dominant purpose of your travel.

Where the travel is predominantly for private purposes, but some incidental University business will be conducted then reasonable direct costs associated with undertaking University business may be claimed (this may include accommodation, meals, and taxi costs but not an apportionment of airfares).

A business day includes a recovery day. The recovery day is the day after the traveller’s arrival in the location of conducting official University business following a flight of nine or more continuous hours. The recovery day may be suitable to manage fatigue and should be agreed on by the traveller and their supervisor. A recovery day would not usually apply if:

- the day after the recovery day is not used for official University business
- the traveller was approved to fly business class, or
- the recovery day is taken at a different location on the way to the business location.

## 4.0 Roles, responsibilities and delegations

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITY
Approving officers	Travel approved and undertaken is necessary to effectively perform the official business required.

The University is able to maintain its employer duty of care

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University staff members undertaking Official Travel	<p>Receipts and documentation for all travel expenditure are obtained and submitted.</p> <p>No unnecessary or excessive expenditure is incurred on behalf of the University.</p> <p>They comply with all travel related duty of care and personal health, safety, and security requirements as determined by law and the University's relevant policies and guidelines.</p> <p>Travel funded by research grants is conducted in accordance with the broad structure of the project cost detailed in the application, contract budget, any revised budget or research plan approved by the grantor.</p> <p>They travel only after exploring the environmental impacts of their travel and other alternatives such as web meetings or video conferencing.</p> <p>They record work-related and private elements of their trip in a travel diary (only when required) at the completion of relevant travel.</p>
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## 5.0 Definitions

For the purposes of this policy and related policy documents, the following definitions apply:

**Official University Business** is any activity that the University determines will provide value or help fulfill the objectives of the University. In terms of travel, it may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Attendance at conferences, expos, trade or industry fairs, or other collegiate events.
- External or internal courses, study trips or development programs held offsite to the University.
- University representation in an official capacity.
- University business in a commercial, business development or procurement capacity.
- Obligations arising from membership of government bodies or international associations.

**Travel related expenses** typically includes vehicle, public transport, food, drink and incidentals.

**Travellers**, includes University staff, external committee members (including University Council members), HDR students, or any other person associated with the University.

For advice and support contact [policy@griffith.edu.au](mailto:policy@griffith.edu.au) for Governance and Operational policy documents.

## 6.0 Information

Title	Travel Policy
Document number	2023/0001186
Purpose	This Policy provides the governing principles applicable for all travel by University Travellers on Official University Business. The University views travel as an enabler for its teaching, learning, research and engagement activities and recognises that domestic and international travel is a necessary activity for the University.
Audience	Staff
Category	Operational
Subcategory	Finance
UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	This document aligns with Sustainable Development Goal/s: 12: Responsible Consumption and Production
Approval date	31 August 2023
Effective date	31 August 2023
Review date	2026
Policy advisor	Head of Strategic Procurement and Supply
Approving authority	Chief Operating Officer

## 7.0 Related Policy Documents and Supporting Documents

Legislation	N/A
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Policy	<a href="#">Code of Conduct</a> <a href="#">Conflict of Interest Policy</a> <a href="#">Delegations Policy</a> <a href="#">Environmental Sustainability Policy</a> <a href="#">Fraud and Corruption Control Policy</a> <a href="#">Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy</a> <a href="#">Modern Slavery Policy</a> <a href="#">Responsible Conduct of Research</a> <a href="#">Risk and Resilience Management Policy</a>
Procedures	<a href="#">Fraud and Corruption Control Procedure.</a>
Local Protocol	N/A
Forms	N/A