

TRAVEL POLICY

Category	Finance
Policy Owner	Chief Financial Officer
Last review	1 February 2023
Next review	1 February 2026
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1. PURPOSE

To ensure that:

- University resources are used appropriately and responsibly;
- Staff travel is sustainable, both environmentally and financially;
- Staff travel maximises opportunities to enhance the academic endeavour, support our research efforts, grow our reputation and brand, and support career development; and
- Risks associated with travel are appropriately identified and managed.

2. POLICY

2.1 Key Principles

- Travel is important to the University as an enabler of its teaching, learning, research, engagement and business activities;
- All staff travel must have a justifiable business benefit to the University.
- The University has a responsibility to ensure the safety and wellbeing of its staff;
- Approval for travel should support equitable outcomes and related University goals;
- The University is obliged to manage its resources in a responsible and sustainable manner and all expenditure incurred by university staff must be subject to standards of probity and financial prudence that are expected of a public entity and able to withstand public scrutiny, including audit scrutiny; and
- All staff travelling must adhere to the travel policy and related procedures.

All travel for business must be necessary, within appropriate expenditure, and have received the required approval. Travel must only be undertaken after due consideration of business needs, the risk profile of the travel destination, and the activities to be undertaken whilst travelling. Environmental impacts of travel and alternatives to travel available to the University, such as web meetings and video conferencing, must also be considered.

2.2 Travel Approval

All travel must be approved within budget as follows:

- International travel (with the exception of Executive member travel to Australia) is subject to the approval of a Tier 1 Executive Manager;
- Domestic travel (with the exception of Executive member travel) is subject to the approval of a Tier 1 Executive Manager or a Tier 2 Senior Manager; and
- International travel to Australia and domestic travel for Executive members does not require the approval of the Vice-Chancellor.

Self-approval of travel is not permitted unless expressly noted in this policy and approval for travel must be granted by the appropriate approving manager before travel is booked.

All international travel requires a [travel request](#) form to be completed.

To ensure support for travel and associated expenses is awarded in a transparent and equitable way, all applications for travel approval require a supporting application utilising the international travel points system template ([Academic](#) / [Professional](#)). The exceptions to this requirement are:

1. Where the travel is fully funded by an external party (that is, not using AUT funds);
2. Where the travel is to an east coast city of Australia or islands in the Pacific (where travel is less than five (5) hours [one way]).

To approve the travel the approver must be satisfied:

- The travel provides demonstrable benefits to the University through reputational benefit to the University, and/or contributes to the professional or academic community of practice, updated knowledge, networking with peers or developing new skills;
- The benefits cannot be achieved through other communication methods such as web meetings and video conferencing;
- The associated costs to the University are moderate and appropriate in all respects;
- Sufficient budget is available;
- Risks associated with the travel have been appropriately assessed;
- Travelling staff members have a contingency plan for work in case of disruption; and
- Consideration has been given to the University's commitment to environmental sustainability and reducing carbon emissions.

2.3 Use of Approved Suppliers

The University has established arrangements with a Travel Management Company (TMC) (currently Orbit Travel) to provide:

- Support in the event of an emergency;
- Simple, consistent, and efficient administrative procedures; and
- Effective coordination, management, and reporting across the organisation.

All travel and insurance must be booked through AUT Technology One (Tech One)/ Orbit in accordance with the Travel Procedure once approval has been given.

Where travel costs are paid by an external party and booked through their preferred travel agent, the requirement to use the University's preferred travel supplier will not apply. For externally funded travel, confirmation must be provided that all costs will be covered, and sufficient support mechanisms have been arranged (for example insurance and assistance in case of emergency).

2.4 Safety and Risk Assessments

Travel Security Program:

The University takes its duty of care responsibilities seriously. Prior to booking international travel and prior to departure, University Travellers must check the [Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade \(MFAT\) Safe Travel website](#), to assess risks associated with the intended destination. It is strongly recommended travellers also register their travel details on the MFAT website prior to travel.

Staff travel is not permitted to Extreme or High Risk¹ Areas without prior written approval from the Vice Chancellor. If travel to a high or extreme-risk destination is necessary and justifiable, the University's standard travel insurance policy may not provide cover. It is mandatory for all University Travellers to be insured. Any additional insurance premium must be advised by the University's insurer on a trip-by-trip basis and approved prior to travel.

Travel Risk Assessment:

Staff are required to complete a Travel Risk Assessment and ensure the required risk management controls are in place prior to travel. Risks must be controlled as reasonably practicable to ensure that the Traveller's safety, and the overall level of risk, is acceptable to the University.

2.5 Travel Insurance

Insurance While Travelling Internationally:

It is mandatory for all University international travellers to be insured. All staff are covered by the University's insurance policy while travelling internationally on approved University business if the booking is made through Tech One / [Orbit](#) in accordance with the Travel Procedure. Staff travelling internationally must refer to documents published on the [Procurement Services webpage](#) and complete the travel requisition in Tech One. Staff travelling internationally should also check the University's travel [insurance procedures](#) to ensure any special conditions (for example medical) are adequately covered.

For assurance, travel insurance cover is provided over those days (that is, weekends and public holidays) that are incidental to the time away when University business is being undertaken. Travel insurance cover is arranged when your travel requisition has been received by the TMC. Confirmation of cover will appear on the bottom of your travel itinerary.

The University will not reimburse the cost of any travel insurance incurred in addition to the University's insurance policy for international travel.

¹ **Extreme-Risk Area** means a part of the world where there is conflict, warfare or ongoing violent civil unrest that poses an extreme risk to the safety of travellers according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT); MFAT advises against all travel to extreme risk areas through its travel advisories at <https://safetravel.govt.nz/travel-advisories>

High-Risk Area means a part of the world where there are sustained safety and security concerns that pose a high risk to the safety of travellers according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT); MFAT advises against non-essential travel to high-risk areas through its travel advisories at <https://safetravel.govt.nz/travel-advisories>

Insurance While Travelling Domestically:

Staff are to arrange their own cover for domestic travel if required (noting that most home contents policies have an extension covering the insured's property throughout New Zealand).

Insurance For Partners / Spouses or Private Travel:

The University's staff travel insurance does not cover partners, spouses, or other family members accompanying a staff member and/or private travel added on to a business-related trip. Additional insurance should be organised privately to cover this.

The discounted AUT business travel insurance rate is not available to partners and spouses and/or other family members but is available for staff who wish to add private travel on to a business-related trip.

2.6 Travel Expenses and Reimbursements

Staff will be reimbursed for reasonable and appropriate expenses necessarily incurred in undertaking approved travel in accordance with the Travel Procedures. Staff must ensure that expenditure incurred while travelling on university business is conservative, reasonable, adequately documented and in accordance with university policy requirements.

Staff must obtain itemised tax invoices or receipts for expenditure in support of a staff claim for reimbursement. Refer to the Travel Procedures for more information and for information about lost receipts. Incurring travel expenses must not provide a personal financial benefit to the staff member or an accompanying person.

If a travel itinerary is structured to accommodate personal business or leisure, the traveller must pay the incremental cost of personal travel and document the costs incurred, separating personal expenses from university business expenses. Whenever possible, personal expenses should be charged separately when making travel arrangements. The University will not cover the travel costs of partners.

Reimbursement against receipts:

Reimbursement is made after the travel is completed. Subject to having prior approval of the daily allowance rate and any other expenses. Should the actual expenses incurred be more than that originally approved, then approval for additional expenditure must be obtained by the manager before reimbursement.

The employee must complete a staff expense claim form and provide detailed receipts and/or tax invoices.

Use of P-Card:

The Purchasing Card (P-card) must be used in accordance with the Purchasing Card Procedures Guidelines for the use of University Purchasing Cards (P-Card). A University credit card must not be used to pay for any personal or leisure activities. If a P-Card is used for travel expenses, then **all receipts and full details of transactions are required** for later reconciliation and approval.

Per Diems:

Per Diems are no longer available for travel. Expenses should be covered through a staff expense claim or using a P-Card as outlined above.

2.7 Personal Travel / Annual Leave

Individuals may undertake leave within reasonable limits in conjunction with business travel, provided there is no additional cost to the University, the private travel is incidental to the business travel, and their manager has granted approval.

Private travel ceases to be incidental to business travel if it is, or if it is perceived to be, the primary reason for the travel. In such cases a contribution to the airfare is to be made. The contribution will be based on the 50/50 rule whereby the staff member must pay 50% of the airfare costs if more than 50% of the total travel period is classified as personal/annual leave time. All other costs incurred during the annual leave portion of the total trip must be paid from the staff member's personal funds. The appropriate SLT member should document the agreement via email to the staff member prior to travel being approved and copy the Travel Coordinator for audit purposes.

The staff member is allowed to have up to one day counted as business travel each side of the conference/event (excluding travel time) if the duration of the event that they are travelling for can be classified under AUT related business (for example, Professional Development time or work-related travel time).

Any other time that is spent outside of the above is to be classified as Annual Leave and must be applied for in the Employee Self Service (ESS) system and approved by the line manager.

2.8 Consequences of Non-Compliance

Where a university staff member breaches this policy, this may amount to misconduct or serious misconduct which may result in the University taking appropriate disciplinary action. Where a staff member breaches the policy, the University may seek reimbursement of costs directly from the staff member or refuse to use University funds to meet the purchase commitment.

2.9 Overarching Travel Criteria

Requests for travel should meet the following criteria:

- Critical for academic purposes [for example, 'with a focus on primary research to be completed internationally']; or
- Critical for career development, [for example, 'particular consideration for early career academics']; or
- Critical for other University business reasons to AUT's benefit.
- Alternatives to air travel must have been considered and articulated in the application;
- All travel related costs must be accepted by the operational area within their budget allowance [for example, high risk travel insurance];
- Funding source/s must be made explicit (AUT, External, Mixed/proportions);
- Benefits must clearly outweigh the costs; and
- Representation from AUT will be achieved efficiently, without multiple people travelling where it is not necessary.

2.10 Exceptions

Any exceptions to this Policy will be managed by the Chief Financial Officer on a case-by-case basis and must be recommended for approval by a Tier 1 Executive Manager prior to booking travel. Approved exceptions must be documented in writing. Exceptions will be summarised and reported to the Executive.

1 DEFINITIONS

Approving Manager:	<p>The Tier 1 Executive Manager or Tier 2 Senior Manager of the person requesting permission to travel.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tier 1: Deputy Vice Chancellors, Deans, Assistant Vice Chancellors, Group Directors, and Pro Vice- Chancellors reporting directly to the Vice Chancellor. • Tier 2: Senior Managers reporting directly to Tier 1 members, including Deputy and Associate Deans, Heads of Schools, Group Directors, and Directors.
Cost of Travel:	Includes airfares, accommodation, rental vehicles, travel insurance and all ordinary, necessary, and reasonable expenses associated with University Travel.
Extreme-Risk Area:	a part of the world where there is conflict, warfare or ongoing violent civil unrest that poses an extreme risk to the safety of travellers according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT).
High-Risk Area:	a part of the world where there are sustained safety and security concerns that pose a high risk to the safety of travellers according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT).
Incidental Travel:	Private travel ceases to be incidental to business travel if it is, or if it is perceived to be, the primary reason for the travel.
Personal Travel:	travel for non-University purpose either in conjunction with or wholly separate from university travel.
Risk Management Controls	the plans and actions put in place to mitigate potential risks
TMC:	Travel Management Company (currently Orbit)
Traveller:	the staff member travelling for university purposes.
University:	means the Auckland University of Technology (AUT) and includes all subsidiaries.
University Business:	means any activity that a staff member is expected to undertake during their work.
University Purposes:	University purposes include but are not limited to travel for research and field-work work, conference participation, recruitment of staff or students, staff training and development, Research and Study Leave, alumni relations, marketing, or business development.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- All staff organising, undertaking or approving travelling on university business or representing the university; and
- All other persons for whom the University funds travel, either wholly or partially.

Grants received by the University from external parties are considered to be University funds and must be administered in accordance with this policy except where a grant has specific terms and conditions related to funding dedicated for travel, in which case those terms and conditions or compliance requirements may supersede this policy.

3. LEGISLATION AND COMPLIANCE

The University shall comply with all applicable New Zealand laws, legislation, and regulations.

See also the Register of Key Legislation and specifically:

[Health and at Work Act 2015](#)

4. RELATED PROCEDURES/DOCUMENTS

Travel Request Business Case Template

Staff Travel Procedures

Staff Travel Guidelines

Travel Risk Assessment template

[Procurement Services webpage](#)

[Travel Insurance Procedures](#)

[Purchasing Card Procedures](#)

[Reimbursements and Staff Claims Guidelines](#)

[Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade \(MFAT\) Safe Travel website](#)

Points System

[Tech One / Orbit Website](#)

Travel requisition

Travel Insurance Manual

Accounts Payable Policy

[Purchasing Card Policy](#)

5. DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL

Policy Owner: Chief Financial Officer

Last review: 1 February 2023

Next review: 2 March 2023 (Feedback Period)

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