Travel Procedure

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This Procedure outlines the steps for planning, approving, booking, and undertaking University travel; and paying for and acquitting travel expenses.

(2) All University travel must be in accordance with principles outlined in the Travel Policy and this Procedure, unless the University travel is for an outbound global experience where the Outbound Global Experience Procedure will apply.

(3) Refer to the 'Definitions' section for the meaning of defined terms.

Section 2 - Scope

(4) This Procedure applies to domestic travel and international travel arrangements by University travellers on University business, regardless of the source of funds, the duration, or purpose of travel.

(5) University travel for staff and students must comply with the Travel Procedure unless the University travel is for an outbound global experience where the Outbound Global Experience Procedure will apply.

(6) This Procedure does not apply to the following travel activities:

a. University staff or students travelling for purposes other than University business;
b. University guests or affiliates travelling on University business where funding for travel is provided from funds that are not managed or otherwise administered by the University and the University is not responsible for the health, safety, or wellbeing of the traveller;
c. living costs for University staff moving to an alternate designated location of work. For example, a Callaghan employee seconded to the Singapore campus for a 3-month period;
d. as per clause 60 in Section 7 of the Procedure, the requirement to use the University Travel Management Company (TMC) does not apply where the University travel for University business is fully funded and booked by the traveller or a third-party funding body. All other requirements of the Policy and Procedure remain.

(7) Students who are also employees of the University, travelling on University funded travel, are considered employees for the purposes of the Travel Policy and Procedure.

(8) One way and undated return trips and trips greater than 180 days require an approved exemption, therefore Section 9 applies.

Section 3 - Audience

(9) This Procedure and the Travel Policy must be read and understood by all University travellers, travel approvers, and travel arrangers.

Section 4 - Overview

(10) All University travel must be in accordance with the Safe, Essential, Economical (SEE) principles outlined in the Travel Policy.

(11) Failure to comply with the Travel Policy or this procedure may render the University and its travellers' ineligible for insurance and thus be exposed to significant financial losses.

(12) The Travel Procedure is intended to align the approval workflow with the level of risk. This is done by categorising University travel as local, simple, or complex, as per the Travel Categorisation Flow Chart.

(13) The Travel Hub is accessed to obtain approval for University travel, apply for and make travel bookings. Exemptions required in accordance with Section 9 are applied for in the first instance via email to the Chief Financial Officer.

Part A - Travel Types

(14) The classification of University travel informs the level and complexity of approval and risk management. Where travellers are planning to undertake 'complex travel' they must be mindful of the additional time that will be needed to prepare, consult, and review travel plans before travel bookings can be finalised.

(15) The University travel types described below are also articulated in the Travel Categorisation Flow Chart.

Local Travel

(16) Local travel refers to University travel for which all the following apply:

a. is to undertake a 'business-as-usual' activity.
b. can be completed in a single day and is within a 100km radius from the home campus of the traveller, or within the campus corridor.
c. does not require any bookable expenditure (i.e., flight, accommodation, or car hire expenses); and
d. involves transport by University fleet vehicle, local public transport, or self-drive private vehicle in line with the Vehicles - Private Vehicle Use Procedure.

For Local Travel	
Approval	The University traveller must notify a supervisor of the planned absence from the office and mode of transport, including if a private vehicle will be used is needed. The instructions from the Supervisor will suffice as implicit approval.
Booking	Via a fleet vehicle request if needed.
Risk management requirements	Compliance with the University Work, Health and Safety Policy / Guidelines. Awareness of insurance procedures if there is an incident – Travel & Personal Accident.
Payments	Internal charge, corporate card, or cash (and reimbursement).
Expense acquittal	Via the expense management system. Expenditure approval via automated workflows. (See Section 8).

(17) The remaining sections of this Procedure only apply to the extent outlined above.

Simple Travel

(18) Simple travel refers to University travel for which all the following apply:

a. it is not Local Travel as defined above;
b. it involves domestic, or international point-to-point single metropolitan destination;
c. the travel is not high risk, where the risk is determined based on an assessment of the destination risk and activity risk (see SECTION 5 Part B);
d. all travellers are travelling in their role as current employees or students;
e. the number of travellers (employee or student) is nine or less;
f. all University travellers are younger than 80 years old;and
g. the private component is 50% or less.

For Simple Travel	
Approval	Passive approval in accordance with the University's delegations of authority (See Section 6)
Booking	Through the Travel Management System (online booking tool) using preferred suppliers (see Section 7).
Risk Management Requirements	Compliance with the University Travel Policy, Travel Procedure, Work, Health and Safety Policy, and risk assessment requirements. University travel insurance (see Section 5 Part c). Registration of travel on 'My Trips" (ISOS) – guidance here. Staff and students who engage the services of International SOS during their travel will be asked to provide their consent to share their personal information with the University. If the staff or student does not provide consent, the University may not be able to respond effectively.
Payments	Prepaid (including APG Pay) / companion card and corporate card.
Expense Acquittal	Via the expense management system including the Mobile app / auto approval (i.e., passive approval).

Complex Travel

(19) Travel that is not Local or Simple travel is Complex travel, including University travel for which one or more of the following apply:

a. multi-sector travel;
b. the travel is high risk, i.e., the destination risk is a Department of Foreign Affairs and Trading (DFAT) Advice Level "reconsider your need to travel or "Do not Travel" and/or activity risk is high (see SECTION 5 Part B);
c. the travel party includes guests and / or is accompanied travel;
d. one or more of the travellers are aged 80 years or over;
e. the number of travellers is more than nine;
f. the travel includes a private component of >50%(see definitions and SECTION 5).

Complex Travel	
Approval	Active approval in accordance with the University's delegations of authority (see Section 6)
Booking	Travel Management Company consultant assisted booking (see Section 7).
Risk Management	Compliance with the University Travel Policy, Travel Procedure, Work, Health and Safety Policy, and risk assessment requirements. Trip specific health and safety approval, Senior Executive Group approval, and/or University and traveller insurance (see Section 5 Part B). Registration of travel on 'My Trips" (ISOS) –guidance here. Staff and students who engage the services of International SOS during their travel will be asked to provide their consent to share their personal information with the University. If the staff or student does not provide consent, the University may not be able to respond effectively.
Payments	Prepaid (including APG Pay) / companion card and corporate card and cash.
Expense Acquittal	Via the expense management system including the Mobile App, auto approval, and/or supervisor approval.

Section 5 - Travel Planning

Part B - Risk Assessment

(20) University travellers (or in the case of group travel the most senior employee on, or associated with the trip), must perform a risk assessment to determine the risk level of the planned University travel (see Travel Risk Assessment). For travel identified as 'Complex' the risk assessment must be documented and attached in the pre-trip approve system. Any "HIGH" risk travel risk assessments must be forwarded to the Health Safety and Wellbeing Team for endorsement prior, and attached in system.

(21) University travellers and travel approvers must be mindful that travel may place University travellers in environments that are unfamiliar, and therefore must proactively seek out relevant information about risks, relating to the destination and the travel itself. University travellers should also refer to the International Travel – Safety Best Practice document prior to travel.

(22) University travel is classified as high risk, if it:

a. is to a high-risk destination; and / or
b. incorporates high risk activities that put the traveller at higher risk of significant injury or death and / or the University at higher risk of reputational damage or economic loss than activities performed in a normal teaching, office, or low risk research environment.

(23) A request to undertake high risk travel may require additional risk treatment measures, for example additional insurance, defined communication protocols, mandated use of personal protection equipment. The nature of these measures will depend on the reasons for which a destination or activity is considered high risk (refer to Section 6).

(24) The University will not require University travellers to compulsorily undertake high risk University travel. If high risk University travel is undertaken it will not be covered by the University's travel insurance, unless approval for the travel destination and activities has been granted as determined by the Health and Safety team and/or the Foreign Interference Committee (as applicable), and relevant risk treatment measures are put in place by the University traveller.

(25) For a trip identified as simple travel, the University traveller and travel approver must consider whether compliance with this Procedure and the Travel Policy and other guidance as referenced is considered sufficient risk mitigation. If it is not, the trip should be classified as high risk and processed as 'complex'.

Destination and Activity Risk Assessment

(26) The destination is high risk if travelling to any country or region where the threat to the health or safety of the University traveller is considered high, and includes University travel to locations where:

a. a DFAT Advice Level of "Reconsider your need to travel" has been issued;
b. a DFAT Advice Level of "Do not travel" has been issued noting travel to these countries is not covered by the standard University travel insurance policy;
c. a "high" or "extreme" risk rating has been issued by the University's Global Assistance Support Service provider; or
d. the University has imposed broad restrictions on travel for example during a pandemic.

(27) The activity is high risk if there is a material threat:

a. to the health and safety of the University traveller.

b. to the reputation of the University; and / or
c. of material economic loss.

(28) High risk activities and destinations must have a risk assessment completed in accordance with guidance provided for complex travel in the Travel Hub. The relevant reference will be required to be included in the pre-trip approval travel request.

(29) The risk mitigation measures for high-risk activities and destinations should be devised in consultation with the University Subject Matter Expert (SME); for example, the Health and Safety team, Insurance, Finance and/or the Foreign Interference Committee (as applicable).

(30) If a University traveller and travel approver are unable to determine the level of activity risk, they must assume the risk is high and consult with University Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to inform the need for a documented risk assessment and appropriate mitigation activities.

(31) As a guide, low risk activities are typically those consistent with typical office or classroom work, or low risk research.

Changes in Risk Assessment

(32) If a low-risk destination or activity risk changes and is later deemed high risk after the University travel has been approved, the University traveller must provide evidence of further risk mitigation measures and seek written approval from the relevant travel approver to begin or continue the trip.

Part C - Travel Insurance

(33) The University has travel insurance in place for University travel that is undertaken in accordance with this Procedure and the Travel Policy and is to destinations classified as DFAT Advice Level “exercise normaly safety precautions” or “exercise a high degree of caution”. Countries classified by DFAT as Advice Level “Reconsider your need to travel” (medium risk countries) may be subject to insurance exclusions (partially or wholly) and should be treated as complex travel.

(34) In addition, University travel to countries determined to be DFAT Advice Level “Do not Travel” is excluded from the University Corporate Insurance Cover. In the circumstance that a travel approver has determined the University travel to a DFAT Advice Level “Do not Travel” country is essential, they must work with the Insurance team to determine whether ‘special cover’ arrangements can be made. Costs associated with additional coverage will be charged to the cost collector nominated for the travel expenses.

(35) Where a University traveller incorporates personal travel into their approved University travel, the personal component will not be covered by the University Travel Insurance Policy. It is strongly recommended that separate (private) travel insurance is obtained by the traveller for the personal portion, or portions, to ensure individuals remain appropriately covered for the duration of their travel.

(36) Cover is provided for costs incurred in relation to a disruption event, extended stay, or quarantine if a staff member contracts COVID-19. No cover is provided for testing requirements. The staff members’ employing business unit is responsible for any costs incurred that are not recoverable under the University travel insurance policy.

Part D - Travel Diaries and Leave

(37) Part D only applies to University travellers who are also University employees.

(38) The University may incur Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT), imposed by the Australian Tax Office (ATO) if the University pays for or reimburses employees for travel expenses relating to travel deemed as private even where the source of

funds is through a grant. To ensure FBT is not incurred by the University the employee must:

a. ensure that the primary purpose of the trip is for location specific University business;
b. prepare and keep an ATO compliant travel diary for:
    i. domestic and international trips of any length where the trip includes a private component; and
    ii. all international and domestic business trips for six or more consecutive nights.
c. at the time of booking the traveller must pay the Travel Management Company (TMC), or other approved travel provider, a personal contribution towards the cost of flights where the private component of the trip is 50% or more of the total travel days. See Section 8 Part K for more details.

(39) The ATO compliant travel diary will be used by the University to:

a. meet ATO documentation requirements;
b. determine FBT implications; and
c. calculate any personal contributions from the employee needed to remove an FBT liability and ensure proper use of University funds (see also Section 8 Part K).

(40) Travel diaries must be prepared and reviewed at the time of travel approval by the travel approver. On return, if diary details have changed, travel diaries must be updated and provided for review by the travel approver within 10 business days of returning from the trip.

Leave for Private Days

(41) Before a trip is booked, employees must ensure that leave has been requested and approved to cover any weekdays that are classified as private days and that are not public holidays or University concession days.

Part E - Other

Health and Vaccinations

(42) University travellers are responsible for contacting a health professional specialising in travel medicine and advice to discuss pre-travel health checks and vaccinations at least 4-6 weeks prior to departure for international University travel.

(43) University travellers must be aware of and follow vaccination requirements governed by the transport or accommodation provider and laws of the jurisdiction to which they are travelling. By approving travel, the travel approver is confirming that this mandatory requirement has been met.

Visa/Work Permit Requirements

(44) University travellers are responsible for meeting all the entry and visa requirements of all countries they are visiting, transiting through, or working in. It is also the traveller’s responsibility to ensure that they hold a passport valid for the period required by the countries visited which is typically, but not always, the duration plus six months after the last day of planned travel.

(45) University travellers should also be aware that, while the University respects and recognises diverse gender identities, a gender marker other than male or female may present entry, visa, transit, or documentation issues at some international destinations. These issues arise from destination-specific laws, rules, systems, and policies, and travellers should confirm relevant requirements before travel is booked or undertaken.

Section 6 - Travel Approval

Approval

(46) Authority for the approval of travel expenditure is provided in the University's delegations of authority (Please see Delegation Register – Schedule A – VC Operational Sub-Delegations – Operations).

(47) All University travel is subject to approval regardless of the source of funds or any private travel component.

(48) University travellers must not, under any circumstances, authorise their own travel or the reimbursement of their own travel expenditure.

(49) The travel approver must consider location, activities, and expenditure types contained in the travel request with consideration to the Travel Policy SEE Principles and all other University Policy and Procedures.

(50) Where a travel return date is not known at the time of booking, the approver must consider factors such as FBT implications (need for travel diary), Wellbeing Health & Safety (WH&S) compliance and operational needs. Where the trip will exceed 180 days, additional insurance assessment will be required, please refer to clause 106.

(51) Consultation with the risk team is highly recommended before approving destinations or activities identified as high-risk or those that could be reasonably perceived as high risk.

Documentation

(52) The level of documentation needed to support the approval of University travel will vary based on the risk, the University traveller type, and the travel approver's requirements to appropriately exercise their delegated authority. The Travel Hub will guide University travellers and travel arrangers through the minimum documentation requirements noting that travel approvers may request more documentation at their discretion.

(53) The University traveller must prepare sufficient documentation to:

a. ensure the University (including travel approvers) has sufficient information to fulfil their legislated duty of care obligations (e.g., contacts in case of an emergency);
b. meet any associated insurance or compliance requirements;
c. record and assess the appropriateness of the University travel purpose and resources needed; and
d. identify and assess the risks associated with University travel and ensure the mitigation of identified risks in a timely manner.

(54) Documentation required to facilitate the timely and thorough review and approval of University travel must be kept or referenced through the applicable approval record. The travel approval tool in the Travel Hub will direct the minimum documentation requirement however travel approvers may request more records at their discretion.

(55) University travellers who are currently or intend to become engaged in Defence related research or activities prior to their University travel, may be needed to adhere to added set of requirements related to the Department of Defence, Defence Industry Security Program (DISP) membership. Further information may be obtained from the National Security Compliance Manager.

Section 7 - Booking Travel

(56) The most practical fare of the day requirement applies to all categories of University travel.

(57) The TMC's Online Booking Tool (OBT) should be used for booking simple travel and the TMC consultant should be used to book complex travel unless an exception is supplied for in this Procedure, as set out in clause 60 below.

(58) Cost collector/s or G number/s must be identified for each trip.

(59) The University traveller must ensure that all travel itineraries are recorded with the University's Global Assistance Support Service provider (ISOS) through MyTrips. This will occur automatically for trips booked on the OBT and via a consultant booking with the University preferred supplier. This information will need to be manually updated where alternative booking methods are used. Access to MyTrips can be found in the Travel Hub. All travellers must download the ISOS app prior to travel.

(60) The following complex travel bookings do not have to be made through the TMC however the Travel Policy SEE principles still apply:

a. bookings for accommodation and other travel costs not accessible to the TMC but necessary to meet operational requirements;
b. conference or event bookings/packages that enable access to preferential pricing that are not available through the TMC; or
c. bookings required to be made or changed in emergency circumstances when the TMC is not accessible;
d. trips made under this clause must still be logged by the University traveller or arranger in ISOS.

Part F - Lounge, Loyalty and Frequent Flyer Program Memberships

(61) Lounge, loyalty or frequent flyer program memberships or personal preference must not be a factor in selecting airlines, hotels or any other reward bearing expenses, for any University traveller.

(62) The University will not pay for or subsidise loyalty program or lounge memberships. University travellers are allowed to use a personal lounge, loyalty, or frequent flyer membership if the most practical travel arrangements facilitate use of them, however, the individual is responsible for any tax implications associated with the use.

(63) Financial benefits associated with the utilisation of loyalty program membership may only be considered in determining the most practical fare of the day where the University traveller can show a quantifiable saving to the University. The saving must reduce the cost of the trip to match or better the next most practical fare of the day. Examples of demonstrable benefits include avoided costs as determined using standard meal rates, meeting room hire, and ground transport hire costs. Accrual of loyalty points, status credits, or other benefits for future use are not allowed in determining the saving.

(64) Where a University traveller does not use loyalty benefits in the manner identified during the approval process because of personal choice or avoidable change of plans, the University traveller is liable for the cost of these items.

(65) Use of loyalty memberships is not adequate justification to make bookings outside of the TMC or OBT.

Part G - Transport

(66) The Travel Policy SEE principles must be applied in the choice of transport methods and routes. University travellers must exercise good judgment in deciding on transport that best suits their circumstances, considering cost effectiveness, risk, and effective use of time.

Travel Route

(67) University travellers must undertake the most practical and economical route between the University and the location of their University business. Deviations from the most practical route will be considered private travel where

the deviation results in an increased trip duration or cost.

(68) For clarity, while travelling for approved University business, University travellers must not direct the choice of a travel route based on:

a. a personal preference of the route;
b. a personal preference for a travel provider; or
c. private travel needs.

Travel Class

(69) University travellers are to travel in Economy Class. Any upgrade to Business Class must be approved by the travel approver and the Vice-Chancellor (email - vc@newcastle.edu.au) prior to booking except where the upgrade, including purchase of a higher value fare to facilitate access to an upgrade, is paid for using the University traveller's personal resources. Any upgrade sought to Premium Economy is to be reviewed by the relevant College Pro Vice-Chancellor, or equivalent.

(70) Members of the Executive Leadership Team are allowed to travel in Business Class on individual flight legs that are longer than 5 hours in duration where there are good business reasons to do so.

Ground Transport

(71) A safe, effective, and economical ground transport method must be used. Examples of appropriate ground transport methods are:

a. a University fleet vehicle;
b. public transport whenever workable;
c. hotel shuttle and airport buses;
d. taxis (where they are operated legally);
e. a hire vehicle, booked through the TMC which includes insurance for standard damage protection. Purchase of reductions to insurance excess is not needed up to $10,000;
f. a private vehicle may be considered if it is the most economical option after considering any workplace health and safety concerns, reimbursements, and associated parking costs:
    i. the University traveller must ensure the private vehicle has comprehensive car insurance and is roadworthy.
    ii. a University traveller must only use a private vehicle for their University travel if this method is approved for each University travel event as outlined in Section 4 Part A. Please refer to 'Vehicles - Private Vehicle Use Procedure'.
g. ride-sharing providers (for example, Uber) in cities where they are operated legally;
h. chauffeured vehicles / charters where the use conforms with the Travel Policy SEE principles.

(72) University travellers must not use drivers touting or soliciting for services or passengers.

(73) Refer Part F of this Procedure for use of ground transport loyalty memberships.

Air Travel

(74) In consultation with the TMC, legitimate considerations when calculating the most practical fare of the day include:

a. the length of the itinerary (total flying time);

b. health and safety of the University traveller(s);
c. cumulative transit times;
d. timing of essential business appointments where this is not at the discretion of the University traveller;
e. connecting services;
f. the purpose of travel; and
g. the University's preferred airlines.

(75) Refer to Part F of this Procedure for use of airline loyalty memberships.

(76) Where there are ancillary services available for inclusion at no extra cost for airline bookings (for example seat choice, meals, baggage, Wi-Fi, priority boarding, entertainment, lounge access), only inclusions consistent within the airfare will be funded by the University. Addition of any discretionary ancillaries is a private cost and must be paid for by the University traveller, unless extenuating circumstances apply, and approval has been granted prior to travel being booked. This includes airline seating where personal preferences are an additional cost to the airfare. Refer to Section 8 Part I for more information about expenses when travelling.

Part H - Accommodation

(77) The Travel Policy SEE principles are to be applied in the choice of accommodation. Accommodation must supply a safe and secure environment, be conveniently located to the location of the essential business activities and be economically sensible.

(78) Refer to Part F of this Procedure for use of accommodation loyalty memberships.

(79) University travellers must book accommodation through the TMC if suitable accommodation is available. Any accommodation available through the TMC's OBT may be booked, provided it aligns with the Travel Policy SEE principles. See also Section 7.

(80) University travellers may book accommodation in well-known online accommodation marketplaces (such as Booking.com), provided they:

a. make the booking through the TMC;
b. book an entire property; and
c. take all measures to ensure their safety and assist the University in exercising its duty of care.

(81) If suitable accommodation is not available through the TMC, accommodation should be booked at properties that are (listed in preferred order):

a. commercial establishments i.e., licenced hotels, motels, and serviced apartments;
b. booked through a reputable agent who can demonstrate that maintenance, safety and call out services are offered.

(82) When accommodation cannot be obtained in accordance with this requirement, an exemption may be requested. Refer to Section 9.

(83) On arrival, University travellers using accommodation must familiarise themselves with the safety and security features of the property including emergency exits, alarms, smoke and carbon dioxide detectors, and emergency contact numbers of the host or reception.

(84) For domestic travel, the daily accommodation charge should not exceed the local accommodation guide provided for the mid-tier annual salary range within the current ATO Taxation Determination for 'Reasonable Travel and

Overtime Meal Allowance Expense Amounts'. Exceptions to these limits will be considered in accordance with Section 9 where there is no alternative that facilitates the Travel Policy SEE principles.

Section 8 - Paying for Travel

Part I - Allowable Expenses While Travelling

(85) Staff using a University corporate card while travelling must follow the University Purchasing Card Policy and Procedures and/or Companion Card Policy and their associated documents.

(86) The University will only pay for or reimburse essential business expenses incurred on the provision of a receipt. Where an expense is incurred in Australia an Australian Tax Office compliant tax invoice must be kept.

(87) The University will not pay for charges incurred where the trip approval was based on the University traveller using loyalty membership benefits for the goods or services bought. University travellers will not receive reimbursement from the University for loyalty benefits utilised during University travel.

(88) Typical essential business expenses include:

a. conference fees;
b. visa, vaccination costs (where recommended by DFAT, World Health Organisation, health professional specialising in travel medicine and advice) and related medical expenses;
c. mileage for private vehicle use (no other private vehicle costs are reimbursable);
d. Australian Taxation Office reasonable travel and expense rates;
e. transport costs to/from airport;
f. airfares (where bought through the TMC or reimbursed if exceptional circumstances apply) and any domestic airfares whilst overseas if unable to book through the appointed TMC;
g. ground transportation costs such as public transport or hire car fees, fuel used in hire cars, and parking;
h. hotel accommodation, including any hotel service fees;
i. excess baggage relating to University items that must be carried as part of University business;
j. meals and incidental charges such as:
    i. business related communication requirements, such as business telephone calls and, where approved, global roaming usage and internet access.
    ii. tips or gratuities, where a set percentage service charge is added to the bill in an overseas country where it is culturally expected and appropriate.

(89) The combined daily meals and incidental charges, both domestically and internationally, should not exceed the reasonable travel expense amounts specified in the ATO 'Reasonable Allowances' Taxation determination for the current year (for the mid-range salary).

(90) Where the most practical accommodation expenses cannot meet the ATO 'Reasonable Allowances' Taxation Determination, the travel approver needs to ensure the economical component of the Travel Policy SEE principles is still met. Higher amounts for accommodation are only allowed to be approved when booked through the Online Booking Tool, unless approved as part of an exception request as allowed under Section 9 (clause 106).

(91) Expenditure that is not related to the conduct of University travel activities is subject to application of the University Procurement Policy and associated documents prior to undertaking University travel. Examples include equipment, venue hire, and consultancies.

(92) Only business-related expenses with valid supporting documentation will be met by the University. Expenses incurred on a University corporate card that are not confirmed with supporting documentation will have to be reimbursed by the University traveller within 30 days of the charge being incurred.

(93) Except for airfares as per clause 102, the University will not pay for any expenses related to private travel days.

Accounting Treatment of Travel Expenses

(94) Typically:

a. non-refundable travel costs will be expensed in the year that the payment for the travel cost is made; and
b. refundable travel costs will be expensed in the year the travel is taken.

External Grants

(95) University travel funded through external grant arrangements must follow the terms and conditions of the grant. Where there is an inconsistency between the terms of the external grant and the University's Travel Policy and Travel Procedure, the terms of the external grant, with respect to travel, shall prevail except where doing so compromises the health and/or safety of the University traveller.

(96) If the grant is silent on travel terms, the University's Travel Policy and this Procedure will apply.

Part J - Expenses Not Allowable While Travelling

(97) University travellers must not claim cost reimbursement for items of a personal or private nature, including but not limited to the following:

a. lounge, loyalty, or frequent flyer program fees;
b. minibar, bar and alcoholic beverage costs, health spas, saunas, massages, and similar expenditures;
c. in-room/external movies or other forms of personal entertainment;
d. laundry for business trips of five nights or less;
e. passports;
f. excess luggage where not required for University business;
g. toiletries, cosmetics, and non-emergency medication (including Band-Aids and non-prescription medication and prescriptions known to be required in advance of travel commencing);
h. clothing unless required to meet work health and safety requirements;
i. costs associated with family members or other accompanying travellers except where approved under clause 99;
j. tips that are not dictated by national custom. For clarity, tips are not an allowable expense within Australia;
k. otherwise allowable expenses that by cost or quantity would be considered extravagant by a reasonable person.

Accompanied Travel

(98) Accompanied travel is allowed provided that:

a. supervisor approval has been received prior to making any commitments;
b. the standard at which University business is performed will not be affected; and
c. any expenses incurred for the accompanied travel are privately funded except where a Division or College provides support for accompanying dependents and carers to enable equitable participation by staff with carer responsibilities.

(99) Where accompanied travel occurs, unrelated to staff with carer responsibilities, the University will only fund the equivalent cost for one person. Where there are meals or other charges the lowest value invoiced item will be reimbursed.

(100) Support provided to a University traveller with carer responsibilities must be agreed in writing and approved by a complex travel approver in advance of travel costs and associated FBT being incurred. Discussion with the Insurance team must also occur to confirm appropriate cover.

(101) In all instances the maximum reimbursement restrictions outlined elsewhere in this Procedure will apply.

Part K - Personal Contribution to Travel Cost

(102) Where there is a private component to an airfare that is being paid for using University funds, the following personal contributions apply and must be made at the time of travel booking:

Private Travel < Business Travel	No personal contribution to primary airfare.
Private Travel = Business Travel	50% personal contribution to primary airfares.
Private Travel > Business Travel	100% personal payment for primary airfares with an expense claim for business related component.

(103) Airfares for travel legs that are 100% private are paid for by the University traveller.

(104) Private travel occurring as part of a trip paid for using third party funding must be allowable under the grant conditions.

(105) The University traveller must personally fund any additional costs incurred on a trip due to private travel plans i.e., accommodation, meals, ground transport etc.

Section 9 - Exemptions

(106) All trips greater than 180 days are considered an exemption under clause 108 due to being outside of scope for workers compensation insurance purposes, as well as taxation and workplace health and safety implications.

(107) All one way and undated return trips need to be processed as exemptions as per clause 108 as the travel approver is required to make additional consideration as to the workplace health and safety matters, travel diary requirements, and operational impacts of an unknown trip duration and return.

(108) Where the circumstances of a trip require deviation from the Travel Procedure the University traveller may seek an exemption. The documented exemption request must have reference to the section of this Procedure to which it applies, the proposed alternative, and the measures taken to ensure the proposed alternative meets the Travel Policy SEE principles. The exemption request must be endorsed by the University traveller's organisational unit leader and approved by the Chief Financial Officer (or their nominee) prior to booking of travel.

(109) Depending on the specific facts and circumstances the exemption may require additional workplace health and safety review, insurance, tax and / or foreign interference considerations. University travellers must allow adequate time for these considerations when making such requests.

(110) The purpose of obtaining approval for an exemption is to ensure that the Travel Policy SEE principles are met through the alternative arrangement and to confirm that operational requirements cannot be met by applying the requirements in this Procedure.

Emergency Bookings and Amendments of in progress trips

(111) An emergency booking or amendment occurs when a traveller needs new or amended travel arrangements due to an emergency.

(112) An emergency booking or amendment will be considered 'approved' for TMC purposes. A notification will be sent to the University for retrospective approval or rejection by the approver. If the request is rejected, expenses associated with the emergency booking or amendment will have to be reimbursed by the University traveller within 30 days of being notified of the charges.

Section 10 - Roles and Responsibilities

Part L - Travel Approver Responsibilities

(113) Prior to committing to expenditure, a travel approver must confirm that the travel is in accordance with:

a. the Travel Policy principles (SEE), including ensuring that individuals whose travel is not booked via the University Travel Management Company, via an exemption, are registered with ISOS through the My Trips website or mobile devices app;
b. University policies and procedures;
c. relevant legislation;
d. relevant contract requirements including grant funding agreements.

(114) Travel approvers must take responsibility, with the University traveller, to monitor and take appropriate action for any changes to travel related risks including updates to DFAT Advice Level between approval and departure and for the duration of the planned travel.

Part M - University Traveller's Responsibilities

(115) For trips undertaken by University travellers the following must be addressed by the University traveller or through instruction to a travel arranger:

a. provide documentation needed to substantiate the University business purpose of the trip as needed in Section 6 of this Procedure;
b. attach evidence of due diligence processes and risk assessments carried out for the proposed University travel and business activity, this may require the use of standard templates and forms as determined in associated policies, procedures, or guidelines;
c. ensure the level of risk associated with the travel (DFAT Advice Level) has not escalated between time of approval and departure. If it has, a new risk assessment must be undertaken as per Section 6 – Travel Approval;
d. retain evidence of business expenditure by submitting images and/ or the originals for all travel related receipts or tax invoices;
e. if the pre-approved travel diary has changed during the trip, submit the updated travel diary to the relevant approver for approval within 10 business days from the return date;
f. book private days as leave;
g. ensure funds are acquitted within the stipulated time frames, in accordance with the Purchasing Card Policy and Procedures;
h. the acquittal for all travel expenses must identify the travel requisition number that each travel expense refers to;
i. ensure while travelling that any risk mitigation activities identified through the risk assessment processes are

fully undertaken. Where new risks are identified, or mitigation strategies are found to be insufficient the University traveller must reconsider the destination and activity risk and act appropriately;

j. in the event of an incident whilst travelling, involving the University traveller or students/visitor travelling with the University traveller, notify the University and where needed, ISOS to initiate assistance where required;

k. report any incidents involving concerns regarding gender-based violence arising during the approved travel period through mechanisms described in the Prevention and Response to Gender Based Violence Policy;

l. log any deviations from approved and recorded travel plans as soon as possible with ISOS.

Section 11 - Definitions

(116) In the context of this document:

Defined Term	Meaning
accompanied travel	travel with family members or private guests accompanying the University traveller who do not otherwise have any other University business related reason to be travelling.
active approval	occurs when intervention is required by an approver to allow a transaction to continue through the workflow.
APG Pay	virtual credit cards used by the University's TMC to make payments for travel services.
complex travel	as defined in Section 4 Part A.
DFAT Advice Level	Travel Advice Levels applied by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Please see "Travel Advice Explained".
Employee	a person who is classified as staff who is remunerated by the University through the payroll system and processes.
Group Travel	Bookings for groups of 10 or more travellers.
high risk travel	travel to a high-risk destination and/or travel that incorporates high risk activities and/or travel where there is an elevated risk of foreign interference.
local travel	as defined in Section 4 Part a.
location specific University business	that where the benefits from the activity undertaken are only able to be fully achieved by being in the travel destination. If the University business only consists of activities that could be just as effectively executed at the home campus the date is considered a private travel day.
low risk research	comprises low risk research activities that occur in a low-risk environment. Environments or activities that require specific operating procedures, protective equipment, induction, or security are generally not considered low risk.
most practical fare of the day	the lowest fare at the time of booking, which facilities operational requirements and the SEE principles outlined in the Travel Policy.
Online Booking Tool (OBT)	the portal in which travellers or travel arrangers make travel bookings including flights, accommodation, and care hire. The OBT is a component of the Travel Management System.
passive approval	system driven automatic approvals to enable the workflow to progress without manual intervention.
point-to-point	travel from a University campus to a transit hub plus on further travel transit point. For example, a trip that consisted of continuous travel from Newcastle to Sydney, and one flight to another city would be considered point to point. Where transit is broken by a stopover requiring exit from the airport, it is no longer point-to-point travel.
private component	the portion of travel days that do not have a location specific business requirement or are not otherwise unavoidable travel days. It is expressed as a percentage of the travel, calculated by dividing the number of private days by the number of total trip days.

Defined Term	Meaning
private day	any day which is not an unavoidable travel day or does not have location specific University business. Private days also include paid and unpaid leave, personal travel time, and travel to and from private travel destinations.
private travel	travel time and costs incurred for private purposes only. Private travel includes travel to a destination which is a deviation from the most practical route for business purposes that adds additional travel days or cost to the trip.
senior employee	a staff member who is the highest-ranking, paid employee, in a group based on the University organisational structure. In groups where more than one person is at the same level this role will need to be nominated within the group of most senior staff.
simple travel	as defined in SECTION 4 Part A.
travel	travel is to a destination that is more than 50 kilometres away from the University traveller's designated campus location, where University business is required to be performed by the University traveller.
travel approver	means a delegate who is authorised to approve travel in accordance with the University's delegations of authority, as amended from time to time.
Travel diary	A document that records the following details for business related activities: - date - location - nature of business-related activity - start and finish time - total duration
Travel Hub	The TMC’s central travel hub is where traveller’s and travel arrangers should begin their travel journey. The hub steps the traveller through the required travel forms, health and safety information, and how to make a travel booking (including the pre-trip approval process). It also has all the latest information on visas and travel from around the world.
Travel Management Company (TMC)	the travel agent appointed by the University to book air travel, accommodation, rental cars and other travel related services on behalf of the University.
Travel Management System (TMS)	the software system/s used to manage travel requests and bookings. The Travel Management System includes a workflow component for pre-trip approval, an OBT, dashboard and reporting.
Unavoidable travel day	days which, due to necessity rather than University business or the choice of the traveller, form part of the total trip duration. Examples of unavoidable travel include transit days, rest days when taken as part of an agreed health and safety risk management plan, travel delays caused by travel providers, set up and pack down periods before and after events / conferences / meetings, weekends or public holidays immediately proceeded and succeeded by approved University business days.
University business days	Days on which the predominant purpose is location specific; and ‘unavoidable travel days. A weekend day, public holiday or concession day is considered a University business day when there is approved, location specific, unavoidable business activity required to be undertaken on that day or on the working days immediately before and after.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	30th July 2026
Review Date	9th August 2027
Approval Authority	Chief Financial Officer
Approval Date	30th July 2026
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Michael Di Rienzo Chief Financial Officer
Enquiries Contact	Travel

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"University" - The University of Newcastle, a body corporate established under sections 4 and 5 of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

"Risk" - Effect of uncertainty on objectives. Note: An effect is a deviation from the expected, whether it is positive and/or negative.

"Risk management" - The co-ordinated activities of assessing, controlling, monitoring, and reviewing risk in the pursuit of the University's objectives.

"Risk assessment" - The overall process of risk identification, risk analysis, and risk evaluation.

"Working day" - Any day other than Saturday, Sunday, or a public holiday in Newcastle, on which business may be conducted.

"Campus" - means any place or premises owned or controlled by the University, but may also specifically refer to a designated operating location such as the Callaghan Campus.

"Personal information" - Has the same meaning as in the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW).

"Student" - A person formally enrolled in a course or active in a program offered by the University or affiliated entity.

"Research" - As defined in the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, or any replacing Code or document.

"Senior staff" - Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Global Innovation Chair, Global Innovation Professorial Fellow, Head of School, Director or equivalent.

"Staff" - Means a person who was at the relevant time employed by the University and includes professional and academic staff of the University, by contract or ongoing, as well as conjoint staff but does not include visitors to the University.

"University business" - Work that the University has directed to be undertaken which is required, essential, and beneficial for the functions of the University. This includes, but is not limited to, attending meetings, conferences or fieldwork, but does not include activity that is not location specific, e.g. email management, writing papers. University business may be undertaken by staff and non-staff.

"University travel" - Travel on pre-approved University business, away from the University traveller's primary workplace or place of enrolment. Travel to and from the University to begin or end employment or study is excluded.

"University traveller" - Persons travelling on pre-approved University business. Spouses, partners and dependants of the traveller are excluded.

"College" - An organisational unit established within the University by the Council.

"Foreign interference" - Foreign interference occurs when activities are carried out by, or on behalf of, a foreign actor that are coercive, clandestine, deceptive or corrupting and are contrary to Australia's sovereignty, values and national interests.

"Delegate" - (noun) refers to a person occupying a position that has been granted or sub-delegated a delegation of authority, or a committee or body that has been granted or sub-delegated a delegation of authority.

"Delegated authority" - refers to the specific description of the authority that is delegated or sub-delegated to a holder.