Travel Procedures

Section 1 - Purpose and Scope

Purpose

(1) These Procedures give effect to the Travel Policy by providing the mandatory operational requirements for the planning, authorising, booking, managing and reconciling of all University Business travel.

Scope

(2) These Procedures apply to all University Business travel undertaken by staff, students and authorised third parties (such as consultants or guests), regardless of duration or funding source.

Section 2 - Definitions

(3) For the purposes of these Procedures, the definitions set out in the Travel Policy apply. In addition, the following operational definitions apply:

a. Dual-Purpose Travel: University Business travel that includes private travel equal to or greater than 35% of the duration of the trip.
b. Expense Report: the mandatory digital submission within the University's approved expense management platform used to reconcile travel expenses, corporate credit card transactions, acquit cash advances, or claim out-of-pocket reimbursements.
c. Group Travel: a booking managed by the University's Travel Management Company that comprises:
    i. Ten (10) or more Travellers on the same flight;
    ii. Ten (10) or more hotel rooms booked at the same property;
    iii. Twenty (20) or more Travellers journeying to the same destination on the same airline, or staying in the same location; or
    iv. Twenty (20) or more attendees registering for the same conference.
d. Pre-Trip Approval: the mandatory digital request form.
e. Travel Approver: the delegated officer with the institutional authority to approve travel requests and expenditure in accordance with Schedule A – Travel Approval Authorities.
f. Travel Arranger: a designated University staff member authorised to arrange and request travel bookings on behalf of other Travellers.
g. Travel Management Company: the Universities perferred supplier of travel management services, FCM.
h. Travel Services: the University's work unit that functions as a centralised travel fulfillment office.
i. University Funds: all funds controlled or administered by the University. This includes, but is not limited to, operating budgets, external research grant monies, consultancy earnings, academic pursuit funds, earnings from entrepreneurial ventures and external program funding (such as New Colombo Plan allocations).

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Section 3 - Travel Authorisation

Pre-Trip Approval

(4) Unless otherwise specified in these Procedures, all University Business travel must be formally authorised via a Pre-Trip Approval form before any bookings are made, travel is commenced, or University Funds are committed. No travel booking may be finalised until the Pre-Trip Approval has reached “approved” status within the system.

Group Travel

(5) Authorisation for Group Travel is granted via a detailed FCM Group Travel Budget, which must be formally approved prior to the commitment of University Funds or confirmation of bookings as follows:

a. Domestic Group Travel: Approved by the relevant Head of Work Unit.
b. International Group Travel: Dual approval by the relevant Head of Work Unit and the Executive Member.

(6) Additional financial approval may be required where stipulated by the Chief Financial Officer.

(7) Following formal budget approval and completion of any mandatory risk assessments, all travel must be booked directly through the University Travel Management Company, FCM or via Travel Services where an exception applies.

Same-day Travel

(8) Pre-Trip Approval is not required for same-day travel unless it involves air travel. Travellers must ensure compliance with any applicable University policies, such as the Motor Vehicle Policy.

Extended University Business Travel (exceeding 180 days)

(9) For any University Business travel exceeding 180 consecutive days, the Traveller must complete the following steps prior to submitting their Pre-Trip Approval form:

a. Risk and Wellbeing: Complete a Travel Risk Assessment that includes specific strategies to manage extended travel and support the Traveller’s mental health and wellbeing. A pre-trip advisory session with International SOS is highly recommended.
b. Employees are required to contact the Work Health and Safety team regarding workers' compensation coverage and Corporate Finance for potential taxation considerations.
c. Contact the University Corporate Insurance Team to secure written confirmation of extended medical and emergency cover for the full trip duration.

Section 4 - Booking Procedures

(10) All University Business travel must be booked by Travel Services or directly with the Travel Management Company, FCM.

Section 5 - Air Travel

(11) The standard air travel class for all University Business is economy class. Upgrades or alternative classes of travel may only be permitted under specific circumstances and with authorised approval as detailed below.

(12) The following restrictions apply to air travel:

a. All travel must take the most direct and economical route from the University to the location of the University Business and return via the same most direct and economical route.
b. Travellers must choose the lowest non-stop fare of the day that is fit for purpose.
c. Travellers must not use frequent flyer rewards, personal preferences or personal needs as a justification for choosing a higher cost flight.
d. Where a lower cost alternative is available within a reasonable window of the requested departure time, the Traveller must accept the lower fare unless it compromises safety or direct business objectives.
e. First class travel is prohibited.

(13) Business class travel is permitted for University Council members and Executive members for international travel (except New Zealand) and for domestic flights exceeding four hours.

(14) The Vice-Chancellor may approve business class travel on a case-by-case basis for other Travellers where a demonstrated business requirement or Work Health and Safety need exists. Requests based on medical or health grounds must be supported by appropriate documentation from a qualified medical practitioner.

(15) Travellers must not book flights directly with airlines or through third-party retail travel websites unless approved by the Manager, Travel Services.

Non-scheduled air travel (charter flights)

(16) To ensure that appropriate insurance coverage is in place, the Insurance Office requires three weeks' notice of any non-scheduled air travel bookings.

Section 6 - Accommodation Selection and Standards

(17) All accommodation bookings must be for a single occupancy room with private ensuite bathroom facilities.

(18) Room upgrades at the University's expense are strictly prohibited.

(19) Accommodation must be selected near the business location to minimise ground transport expenses. All accommodation bookings must remain within the University's established reasonable rate scales or the best available commercial rate at the time of booking.

(20) Airbnb bookings are permitted exclusively in destinations categorised by DFAT (Smartraveller) as Level 1 (Exercise normal safety precautions) or Level 2 (Exercise a high degree of caution) provided that:

a. The Airbnb rental is an entire home (private room/shared space arrangements are prohibited).
b. The property listing or host explicitly verifies functional safety features, including smoke/fire alarms, an accessible fire extinguisher, clear emergency exit paths, and secure, lockable entry points.
c. The Traveller explicitly declares the Airbnb within the Pre-Trip Approval system.

(21) The booking of Airbnb or alternative short-term private rental platforms is strictly prohibited in any destination categorised by DFAT (Smartraveller) as Level 3 (Reconsider your need to travel) or Level 4 (Do not travel).

(22) Where a Traveller elects to stay with family or friends when travelling on University Business, accommodation allowances are not paid. The University will not reimburse Travellers for contributions or gifts for their host.

Section 7 - Ground Transportation

(23) Travellers should use University pool vehicles ahead of hire cars and private vehicles, where available.

(24) Travellers must refer to and comply with the Motor Vehicle Policy if they plan to self-drive.

(25) Travellers must use the most cost-effective and safe mode of ground transport. Consideration should be given to public transport and shuttles.

Hire Cars

(26) Travellers must accept all comprehensive motor vehicle insurance options, including excess or deductible coverage offered by the car rental organisation, whether discretionary or mandatory, against loss or damage to the rental vehicle during the rental period. Travellers must comply with the requirements of the rental company under the hiring agreement and of the insurer under the insurance policy.

(27) Incidental personal use of a hire car during a business trip is permitted. However, Travellers who choose to extend a business trip for personal reasons, either before or after business is conducted, must pay for additional days, fuel, and other usage charges.

Intercampus Travel

(28) Where a University pool vehicle is unavailable for intercampus travel, Property Services may arrange a hire car. Staff must submit requests using the Pool Vehicle Request Form. Hire cars will only be approved if a pool vehicle cannot be provisioned.

Accidents

(29) If an accident occurs while a Traveller is using a hire car, Travellers must submit a written accident report as soon as possible to the rental company. All accidents, regardless of whether an injury by the driver or any passenger has been sustained, must be reported to Work Health Safety within 48 hours via Riskware.

Use of Private Vehicles

(30) Travellers may be permitted to use a private vehicle for business purposes, where it is roadworthy and has valid compulsory third-party insurance, where:

a. No University pool vehicle or hire car is available; or
a. The Traveller resides more than 20 kilometres from either a University campus or hire car collection point.

(31) Travellers will be reimbursed for approved travel using the kilometre rates set by the University in accordance with the Australian Taxation Office.

(32) If an accident occurs while a Traveller is using a private vehicle on University Business, any insurance claim must be made under the Traveller's personal insurance policy.

Section 8 - Travel Risk and Health Management

Risk Assessment and Approval

(33) Depending on the destination risk, Travellers may be required to undertake a risk assessment prior to travel.

High-Risk Destinations (DFAT Levels 2 and 3)

(34) Travel to locations with a DFAT rating of Level 2 or Level 3 requires a completed Travel Risk Assessment Form attached directly to the Pre-Trip Approval request. Bookings must not be finalised until formal endorsement is granted by the designated Travel Approvers.

Prohibited Destinations (DFAT Level 4)

(35) Travel to Level 4 locations is generally prohibited. Exceptional requests require a comprehensive risk assessment to be completed and submitted via Travel Services for the express written approval of the Vice-Chancellor prior to any travel planning.

Group Travel

(36) Where Group Travel is to a DFAT Level 2 or higher destination, bookings must be accompanied by a completed Group Travel Risk Assessment Form.

Student Group Travel

(37) Irrespective of the destination's risk rating or funding source, all student group travel must undergo a mandatory Group Risk Assessment process. The approved Group Risk Assessment Form must be submitted to Travel Services.

Fitness to Travel

(38) Travellers must ensure they are medically 'fit to travel' prior to departure. Travellers with pre-existing medical conditions that may impact their health or safety during travel for University Business are expected to:

a. contact the Insurance Office to ensure coverage is available; and
b. contact International SOS for a confidential pre-trip medical consultation to ensure that the medical care and availability of medicine in the destination location is sufficient to ensure the Traveller's wellbeing.

Section 9 - While Travelling

Cash Advances

(39) All requests for cash advances must be submitted within the Pre-Trip Approval to ensure it is approved for payment in a timely manner, prior to travel. Cash advances are normally released:

a. For domestic travel - a week prior to travel.
b. For international travel - two weeks prior to travel, to facilitate currency conversion.

(40) Any unspent or unsubstantiated portion of the cash advance must be repaid to the University within 30 days of the travel being completed. Failure to reconcile the cash advance will result in further travel being placed on hold and/or reimbursement of the cash advance through payroll. Further cash advances will not be issued until any outstanding cash advances are fully acquitted.

Corporate Credit Card

(41) If a Traveller intends to use a corporate credit card while travelling overseas, they should advise the credit card provider of their travel arrangements, to ensure the card is not unnecessarily blocked.

(42) In the event a card is lost or stolen whilst travelling, cardholders should contact the issuer. Travellers are encouraged to install their corporate credit card securely on their mobile device in a digital wallet. If the card was

previously added to a digital wallet, a new virtual card can be issued quickly instead of waiting for the physical card to be re-issued upon return from their trip.

Communications and Contact

(43) Where Travellers use a phone number other than their usual number for travel (such as a locally sourced SIM card) they must inform Travel Services and update their profile in the FCM Platform App and International SOS Assistance App with the active contact number.

Emergency, Medical and Security Situations

(44) In the event of an emergency medical or security situation in Australia, Travellers will follow normal Work Health Safety Procedures and submit an Incident/Hazard Report as soon as safe to do so.

(45) In the event of an overseas emergency medical or security situation Travellers will:

a. Contact International SOS;
b. Read, and where necessary, respond to the real time alerts issued by International SOS; and
c. Submit an Incident/Hazard Report and follow all normal Work Health Safety Procedures.

(46) If there is a major incident in the location of a Traveller, International SOS will send affected Travellers an automated message on behalf of the University for confirmation that they are safe. If the Traveller does not respond, an email alert, text to voicemail and then a push notification from the app will be activated. This service is available to all Travellers who have booked their travel through University Travel Services. The SMS will come from the number +61 429 336 557, and the phone call from + 1 215 354 3803.

Cyber Security

(47) Travellers must:

a. Minimise to the greatest extent possible the number of networks they connect with while travelling.
b. Not connect to non-secure networks, such as public WiFi networks.
c. Use a VPN to access sensitive or confidential information, or University networks.
d. Not install new software or update existing.
e. Immediately inform Technology Services if a University device is lost or compromised.

Lost Luggage

(48) In the event of lost or missing luggage, Travellers should first seek to recover:

a. Lost items via the airline and airport; and
b. Costs for lost baggage from the relevant airline.

Section 10 - Rest Breaks

(49) Where a period of business is five consecutive days or more in duration, Travellers are entitled to a rest break of 24 hours, which may include an overnight stay in the destination.

(50) Travellers are entitled to a rest break following a period of travel to an international location (other than New Zealand) prior to commencing work as follows:

a. The minimum rest break is ten hours and the maximum is 24 hours which includes an overnight stay;
a. Where the flight time is greater than 12 hours (including transit stops), a variation to a maximum of a two-night rest break may be authorised by the Travel Approver, after considering flight arrival times and distance travelled.

(51) Rest Breaks while overseas must be taken at the time of arrival. A rest break is not permitted in a transit point unless the flight to the transit point is greater than 12 hours.

(52) Return travel should begin the day of completion of business, subject to suitable travel being available. Where no suitable travel is available, it should be as soon as practicable on the following day.

(53) On return to their place of residence, Travellers will be entitled to a rest break which includes one night. A variation to two nights may be authorised by the Travel Approver, after considering flight arrival times and distance travelled.

(54) Where dual-purpose travel is undertaken, the rest breaks must be in line with the Private Travel Guidelines.

Section 11 - Private Travel

(55) Travellers may undertake private travel in conjunction with travel on University Business, provided that the private travel is not the primary purpose of the trip and would not have occurred if not for the University Business travel.

(56) The University will only fund direct costs (including accommodation, meals, airfares) that are attributable to the approved business component of the travel. All costs associated with private travel (including airfares for wholly private segments or Dual Purpose Travel outlined below) and expenses relating to accompanying persons must be personally arranged and funded by the Traveller.

(57) Travellers must refer to the Private Travel Guidelines to determine business and personal days.

Dual Purpose Travel

(58) Where private travel is approved and combined with University Business travel, the following applies:

Type	Definition	University Contribution
Merely Incidental	Private Travel less than 35% of the total trip = 'Incidental'	The University will fund the full return airfare to the approved business destination, with no contribution required from the Traveller.
Dual Purpose Travel	Private Travel comprising 35% or more of the total trip duration is considered dual purpose.	Limited to the cost of one-way travel based on the most direct and economical route to or from the approved business location.

Co-payments for Dual Purpose Travel

(59) In respect of Dual Purpose Travel, the University's financial contribution will be limited to the cost of one-way travel based on the most direct and economical route to or from the approved business location by:

a. The University arranging a return airfare to the approved business destination, the Traveller will need to contribute 50% of the cost directly to the University at the time of booking;
b. The University funds a one-way airfare to or from the approved business destination. The Traveller will need to independently arrange and fund all other travel.

(60) Where changes to travel arrangements occur after booking that result in Dual Purpose Travel, Travellers will need to reimburse the University for the private portion.

(61) Funds administered or held by the University cannot be used by staff to pay their co-payment or any fringe benefit tax liability.

Section 12 - Travel Diary (Itinerary)

(62) In accordance with Section 11 of the Travel Policy, a Travel Diary must be maintained for all trips of 6 or more nights. The Travel Diary must cover the entire travel period, including any private travel.

(63) The Travel Diary must be completed by the Traveller (or if a group is travelling together, the lead traveller) prior to departure via the Pre-Trip Approval form and is subject to review and endorsement by the Travel Approver.

(64) The Travel Diary is used to determine if travel is primarily for business or private purposes, whether a contribution is required by the Traveller and will be used for staff to comply with University tax requirements. When completing the Travel Diary, Travellers must ensure that:

a. All travel activities are fully recorded and submitted through the Pre-Trip Approval system;
b. The “Location” field specifies both the city and the country;
c. Each day is strictly classified as either Business or Private. A minimum of 4 hours of business activity to be classified as a business day;
d. The “Description” field explicitly details the nature and duration of the business activity (including start and end times). General terms such as “Business” are insufficient, and any day that cannot be substantiated will be treated as private; and
e. Third-Party Entry: If the Travel Diary is entered into the system on behalf of the Traveller, the Traveller remains responsible for endorsing that the recorded activities accurately represent the business undertaken.

(65) Upon return from the trip, the Traveller will receive an automated email to confirm that the recorded Travel Diary accurately reflects the trip details, including locations, durations, and activity times.

(66) If the actual trip details or itineraries differed from the pre-approved Travel Diary, the Traveller must update the Pre-Trip Approval system to ensure record accuracy. All Travel Diaries must be finalised within 14 days of returning from the trip.

(67) If a compliant diary is not submitted or a contribution is not made by an employee, fringe benefits tax may apply.

Section 13 - Cancellations and Amendments to Bookings

(68) If Travellers wish to cancel or amend a travel booking, they must do so by contacting Travel Services or the University’s Travel Management Company, FCM.

(69) It is the responsibility of the Traveller to ensure cancellations and cancellation costs are minimised for the University.

(70) If urgent, out of business hours changes to travel bookings are required, the Traveller should contact the University's Travel Management Company.

(71) When a trip is cancelled by the operator, such as an airline, the Traveller should request an alternative booking

by:

a. Speaking with the airline help desk if the cancellation or change occurs during the journey;
b. During business hours, contacting Travel Services or the University's Travel Management Company; or
c. Outside business hours, contacting the University's Travel Management Company.

(72) The Traveller's itinerary includes the out of business hours contact details of the University's Travel Management Company.

Section 14 - Travel Costs

Reimbursable Travel Costs

(73) The University does not pay per diems. Meals, incidental and other travel-related costs are reimbursed on the basis of actual costs, which must be reasonable. Travellers should refer to the following Guides when determining reasonable rates:

a. Council Members and Executive: Executive Domestic Travel Rates.
b. Council Members and Executive: Executive Overseas Travel Rates.
c. Other Travellers: Non-executive Domestic Travel Rates.
d. Other Travellers: Non-executive Overseas Travel Rates.

(74) Tips or gratuities in countries where tipping is not customary are not considered reasonable.

(75) Alcohol expenses may be reimbursed provided they are not excessive, and the alcohol is consumed alongside a travel or hospitality meal. The University will not reimburse or cover claims where alcohol forms the primary component of the expense or where consumption is deemed unreasonable for a business context.

(76) In exceptional circumstances, the Chief Financial Officer may authorise the payment of travel allowances via Payroll to Travellers as an alternative to the reimbursement of actual expenses.

(77) Travel Allowances are granted by exception only. The allowance must be requested at the time of Pre-Trip Approval submission. The request will be reviewed and processed by Travel Services, then sent to Financial Services for final approval and payment.

(78) Reimbursement for airline lounge membership is not a standard entitlement and requires written dual approval by both the Head of Work Unit and the relevant Executive Member. Approval may only be granted where a clear business need exists, provided the Traveller complies with all airfare procedures and does not select flights based on lounge access.

Acquittal of Travel Expenses

(79) Travellers should acquit their travel costs (including travel charges, reimbursement, corporate credit card charges and cash advances) by submitting an expense claim and supporting documentation (invoices/receipts) in Concur within 30 days of the travel being completed. Failure to acquit expenses within 30 days can result in the credit card being placed on hold or travel being restricted until all expenses are properly acquitted. Please contact expenses@scu.edu.au for support.

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