Travel Safety (Business and Study) Policy
Policy ✓ Code of Practice… Guidance… Procedure…
Organisation-wide ✓ Local…
Approved by the University Health & Safety Committee
Chairperson: Dr Derek Millard- Healy Date: 15th October 2026 Review date: 2029
The purpose of presenting this document to the University Health & Safety Committee Standard three-year review ✓ Changes in practice and/or legislation ✓ New policy document …

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1. Purpose

Brunel University of London is committed to ensuring that work- and study-related travel is planned, authorised and undertaken with appropriate safeguards for the health, safety and wellbeing of travellers and others who may be affected. This policy establishes the University-wide requirements for managing foreseeable travel risks in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, taking account of relevant duties concerning equality, safeguarding and overseas activities.

2. Scope

This policy applies to University staff and students undertaking authorised UK or international travel for University business, teaching, research, fieldwork, placements, study, conferences and other University-related activities, including group travel. It also applies to those commissioning, organising, approving or supporting such travel, and to contractors or partners where the University has relevant responsibilities.

It applies to travel from initial planning and approval through the journey, activity, return and any required follow-up. Personal holidays and private travel unrelated to University activities are outside its scope. Additional arrangements may apply to placements, exchange programmes, fieldwork and other specialist activities.

3. Policy details

The University will require proportionate, suitable and sufficient assessment of foreseeable risks associated with work- and study-related travel before travel is authorised. The assessment must consider, as relevant, the destination and itinerary, transport, accommodation, activity-specific hazards, personal safety and security, health and accessibility needs, local conditions, environmental considerations and arrangements for emergencies. Controls must be appropriate to the risk and supported by competent advice where necessary.

Travel must be authorised at the appropriate level in accordance with the University's travel risk assessment and approval arrangements. Proposed travel contrary to Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) advice must not proceed without the specific senior authorisation required by those arrangements. Approval may be withheld, withdrawn or reconsidered when circumstances materially change. Travellers must not undertake travel for which necessary risk controls or authorisations are absent.

The University will provide suitable arrangements for traveller welfare, insurance and emergency assistance, communication, incident reporting and escalation. Appropriate arrangements must be in place to maintain contact with travellers and respond to incidents or changes in security, health or travel conditions. Particular consideration will be given to lone travellers, groups, vulnerable travellers and those whose circumstances may increase foreseeable risks, without unnecessary disclosure of personal health information.

Those arranging and undertaking travel must receive relevant information, instruction and training commensurate with their roles and the risks involved. Relevant travel information, controls, emergency contacts and responsibilities must be communicated before departure, including to group participants where appropriate. The University will monitor implementation and effectiveness through proportionate assurance, review of incidents, feedback and management oversight, and will act on significant deficiencies.

Compliance with this policy and the University's associated travel risk assessment, authorisation, booking, insurance, incident reporting and emergency arrangements is mandatory. Detailed approval routes, assessment templates, contact protocols and practical travel guidance are provided through supporting procedures and guidance rather than this policy. This policy will normally be reviewed every three years, or sooner following significant legislative, organisational or operational change, a serious travel incident or material assurance findings.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 University Council / Vice-Chancellor & Leadership Team

The University's senior leadership — including Council, the Vice-Chancellor and President, and the Executive Board/Leadership Team — hold ultimate responsibility for health and safety governance. They are accountable for setting the strategic direction of the University, ensuring it reflects statutory duties (e.g., under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974), and that adequate resources, oversight, and organisational frameworks are in place. They champion a culture of safety and continuous improvement across the institution.

4.2 Senior Managers

Senior Managers — including Directors, Associate Directors, Heads of Department, Executive Deans and equivalent roles — are responsible for translating policy into action within their areas of control. This includes implementing health and safety arrangements, ensuring risk assessments are conducted, supervising local operational committees, and making sure staff and students understand their health and safety duties.

4.3 Line Managers

Line managers and supervisors play a critical operational role in maintaining safe environments day-to-day. They must ensure risk assessments are current and recorded, oversee induction and training, supervise safe systems of work, inspect local activities, lead incident investigations, and escalate issues appropriately. They also make sure new equipment is assessed for hazards and that relevant controls and competencies are in place.

4.4 Individual Staff and Students

All staff and students are expected to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of others. This includes following University policies and procedures, cooperating with safety arrangements, reporting hazards, incidents or near misses promptly, and engaging in required training and consultations. Staff must also ensure work areas and routines are safe and support continuous safety improvement.

4.5 Contractors, Visitors and Others on University Premises

Contractors, visitors, and external partners must comply with Brunel's health and safety policies while on campus. Those responsible for arranging visits must ensure contractors and visitors receive relevant safety information and understand emergency procedures and local hazards.

4.6 Competent Health & Safety Support

Brunel's Health, Safety & Environment Team (HSET) provide specialist advice, support, and training. They facilitate risk assessment guidance, promote best practice, help interpret legislation, and support organisational compliance activities. Managers and staff should seek specialist input where needed.

5 Legal and other requirements

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Equality Act 2010, where applicable
- Relevant safeguarding, data protection, insurance, driving and overseas legal requirements, as applicable
- University travel risk assessment and approval arrangements; Travel and Expenses Policy and booking requirements; Travel Insurance and emergency assistance arrangements; Driving for Work Policy; accident and incident reporting arrangements

6 Appendix – Definitions

University-related travel: Authorised travel undertaken for University business or study purposes.
Travel organiser / group leader: Person coordinating arrangements for a journey or group activity.
Travel risk assessment: The documented evaluation of foreseeable travel and activity risks and the measures required to control them.

7. Appendix – Travel-specific responsibilities

This appendix supplements the standard University responsibilities in Section 4. It sets out key subject-specific accountabilities; detailed approvals, contact arrangements and operational processes remain in the University's supporting travel procedures and guidance.

Executive Board and senior leadership

Set the University's risk appetite for University-related travel and ensure appropriate governance, resources and arrangements for higher-risk travel and significant incidents.

Heads of College, Directors and other senior authorisers

Ensure appropriate oversight and authorisation of travel within their areas, including escalation of higher-risk proposals and provision of resources for necessary safeguards.

Line managers, academic supervisors and travel approvers

Ensure proposed travel is justified, appropriately risk assessed and authorised, that travellers are suitably prepared and that necessary controls and communications are in place.

Travel organisers and group leaders

Coordinate proportionate planning, communicate relevant risks and controls to participants, and ensure suitable welfare, contact and emergency arrangements are established.

Staff and students undertaking travel

Comply with authorisation and risk-control requirements, provide necessary travel information, follow applicable advice, report significant changes or incidents, and cooperate with agreed contact and emergency arrangements.

Insurance, security, HR and specialist support functions

Provide advice and assistance within their respective remits, including insurance and emergency assistance, security, occupational health and employment matters, with escalation to the appropriate University response arrangements.

Health, Safety & Environment Team

Provide competent advice on travel risk management and support assurance and improvement, without assuming responsibility for each individual travel approval or operational arrangement.

Specific approval thresholds, exceptional travel permissions, reporting lines and emergency contact details must be maintained in the supporting arrangements.

8. Appendix – Guidance for lone travellers

Lone travel may increase exposure to security, welfare and emergency-response risks. Arrangements should be proportionate to the destination, activities and individual circumstances, and recorded in the travel risk assessment where relevant.

- Review current FCDO and local security advice before departure and during the trip.
- Select suitable accommodation and transport; check access, fire escape routes and the safety of surrounding areas.
- Agree an appropriate check-in arrangement with the University contact, including what happens if contact is missed.
- Keep emergency assistance and accommodation contact details accessible, and ensure someone authorised has the itinerary.
- Avoid sharing accommodation details or live movements unnecessarily; use reputable transport and exercise judgement in unfamiliar locations.
- Report significant itinerary changes, incidents and welfare concerns through agreed channels.

9. Appendix – Guidance for LGBT+ travellers

Laws, social attitudes and protections for LGBT+ people vary considerably between destinations. The University will assess relevant risks sensitively and without presuming that LGBT+ travellers should disclose personal information or restrict their participation.

- Consult current FCDO destination guidance and relevant trusted sources on laws, discrimination and personal safety.
- Consider the practical implications of local laws and social conditions, including for gender identity, documentation, relationships and access to healthcare.
- Discuss individual concerns confidentially where appropriate; offer alternative arrangements or additional controls without unnecessary disclosure.
- Ensure emergency contacts, insurance and assistance arrangements are appropriate for the traveller and destination.
- Avoid assumptions about identity, relationship status or willingness to disclose; respect privacy and data protection.

10. Appendix – Drinking water and hygiene guidance

Food and waterborne illness may be a significant travel risk, particularly where water treatment and sanitation standards differ. Travellers should follow current destination-specific public health advice.

- Use safe drinking water; where tap water safety is uncertain, use sealed bottled water or water treated by a recognised method appropriate to the hazard.
- Be cautious with ice, uncooked food, drinks diluted with water and food washed in potentially unsafe water.
- Wash hands with soap and safe water, especially before eating and after using the toilet; use hand sanitiser when washing is not available.
- Do not use untreated tap water for nasal irrigation or contact-lens care.
- Seek medical advice for severe or persistent gastrointestinal symptoms, fever, dehydration or blood in stools, and mention recent travel.

11. Appendix – Food safety guidance

Travellers should use proportionate precautions to reduce foodborne illness, taking account of destination conditions and individual dietary requirements.

- Choose food that is freshly cooked and served hot; avoid food kept at unsafe temperatures.
- Take particular care with raw or undercooked meat, fish, seafood and eggs, and with unpasteurised dairy products.
- Where local water safety is uncertain, prefer fruit that can be peeled and avoid uncooked produce washed in unsafe water.
- Check food allergies, intolerances and dietary requirements in advance; language cards or translated explanations may assist.
- If illness develops, seek appropriate healthcare and notify the University where the illness affects safety or the trip.

12. Appendix – Travel information for emergency arrangements

The organising unit should retain the minimum information necessary to locate, contact and support travellers during an emergency, using approved secure systems and appropriate access controls. Information must be accurate, accessible to authorised responders and handled in accordance with data-protection requirements.

- Traveller names and an up-to-date itinerary, including travel dates, destination(s), accommodation and planned activities.
- Suitable contact details for travellers, group leaders, host organisations and the designated University contact.
- Emergency contact details provided on an appropriate lawful basis and used only for legitimate purposes.
- Travel insurance and emergency assistance details, including policy or reference numbers where needed.
- Relevant visa, entry or identification information only where necessary; avoid unnecessary copies of passports or other sensitive documents.
- Necessary health, disability or support information only where relevant, shared confidentially and on a lawful basis.
- Arrangements for changes to itineraries, missed check-ins, emergency escalation and confirmation of safe return.