

Travel Safety (Business and Study)			
Policy✓	Code of Practice...	Guidance...	Procedure...
Organisation-wide✓		Local...	
Approved by the University Health & Safety Committee			
Chair Dr Derek Millard-Healy	Date October 2023	Review date 2026	
The purpose of presenting this documents to the University Health and Safety Committee Standard 3 year re-fresh... Changes in practice and/or legislation... New Policy ✓			

1. Introduction

This policy sets out the University's approach to business and study travel for both national and overseas work. Work Overseas covers any work activity carried out by employees and or students for the purpose of research, teaching, marketing or enterprise in countries other than those of the United Kingdom. Such work-based activities could include business meetings, research or teaching and attendance at conferences in overseas countries. This list is not exhaustive but is indicative of the overseas work-based activities in which individuals could be involved.

This policy aims to ensure that where travel is proposed, consideration is given to the value it will add to the work or study activity in question and that these benefits outweigh any risk posed by the trip, the overall cost of the trip, and its impact on the environment. It outlines the measures in place, and required actions from travellers, to minimise the risks associated both with travel and associated activity and emphasises the potential tax implications for individuals and the University in relation to certain types of travel.

2. Scope

This organisational policy applies to the Brunel University London as a whole – staff and students.

3. Responsibilities

All staff and students should be aware of this policy. However, it is the responsibility of each College, Institute and Directorate to ensure that their employees and students involved in overseas business travel, its planning, authorisation, monitoring and administration, are fully conversant in the principles and arrangements highlighted herein.

Any students planning trips as part of a study abroad/ exchange programme or other overseas placements through a global mobility programme should initiate their enquiries through their supervisors and heads of department.

3.1 Line Managers and Academic Supervisors.

a) Ensuring staff and students are made aware of this policy and the associated systems

and procedures in place to support safe and compliant travel

b) Monitoring travel requests in their area of responsibility to ensure that proposed trips are essential to the work or study of the traveller

c) Contributing to (where necessary) and reviewing travel risk assessments to ensure they give appropriate consideration to the foreseeable range of hazards likely to be encountered during the travel and identify suitable control measures to minimise the risk from these hazards.

d) Supporting travellers to source any equipment, insurance, sustainable travel and tax advice, training, or other materials identified in the risk assessment as suitable control measures.

e) Approving travel, and in the case of higher risk trips, signing off completed risk assessments to indicate that b) and c) above are satisfied.

f) For overseas travel, with a risk rating of moderate or above, bringing the risk assessment to the attention of the Head of Department/ Director of Institute/ Service for secondary authorisation for the trip to proceed.

3.2 Head of Department/ Director of Institutes/ Director of Services

a) Ensuring managers/ academic supervisors, staff and students are made aware of this policy and the associated systems and procedures in place to support safe travel.

b) Monitoring travel requests in their area of responsibility to ensure that proposed trips are essential to the work or study of travellers and that environmental and tax implications, where appropriate, are considered.

c) Putting in place arrangements to resource suitable control measures to support safe, sustainable and compliant travel for their staff and students.

d) Scrutinising moderate or higher rated risk assessments for travellers within their area of responsibility to ensure they are suitable and sufficient before authorising travel to take place.

e) Highlighting to the Head of College/ Chief Operation Officer/Health Safety and Environment Team any proposed travel that is against Government travel advice and for which the risk rating is High or Very High and forwarding them the associated risk assessments for their consideration, authorisation and sign-off.

3.3 Executive Deans of College/ Chief Operating Officer

a) Ensuring the Colleges, Institutes and/ or Services within their area of responsibility are made aware of this policy and the associated systems and procedures to support safe and compliant travel.

b) Monitoring travel requests across their College/ Services to ensure that proposed trips are essential to the work or study of travellers.

c) Having suitable resource strategies in place within their College/ Services to support safe, sustainable and tax compliant travel for their staff and students.

d) Scrutinising and signing off risk assessments for travellers within their area of responsibility, where the proposed travel is against Government travel advice and for which the risk rating is High or Very High, to ensure they are suitably and sufficiently robust to justify the proposed travel taking place.

3.4 Executive Board and Vice Chancellor

- a) Ensuring appointment of suitable competent person(s) to advise on the safety, security, sustainability, insurance and tax aspects of work and study-related travel
- b) Having arrangements in place for the monitoring of travel requests across the University to ensure that proposed trips are essential to the work or study of travellers.
- c) Ensuring necessary policies, procedures, resources and systems are in place to support safe, sustainable and tax-compliant travel for the University's staff and students
- d) The University Executive Board (EB) will determine the level of risk associated with international travel that is acceptable to the University.

3.3 Insurance Team

- a) Putting in place appropriate travel and other insurance policies, including emergency assistance support and repatriation arrangement support for travellers overseas.
- b) If appropriate, requesting departments to make initial contact with potentially affected travelling staff and students to ascertain their welfare and to offer guidance and support;
- c) Escalating to the University Major Incident Team (MIT), where appropriate, for managing guidance, support and communications to travellers and departmental teams.

3.4 Human Resources

Human Resources are responsible for ensuring that occupational health advice with respect to overseas travel is available to Managers via Occupational Health, who in turn will notify the line manager if they believe the traveller is not fit to travel. A management referral will be required. HR can also provide advice in relation to long/short term overseas appointments.

3.5 Health, Safety and Environment Team

The Health, safety and Environment team (HSET) are in place to provide advice and guidance on safety related matters. The HSET can be contacted via email (healthandsafety@brunel.ac.uk) and, if required, should be consulted before you book your travel and a minimum of 15 working days before any planned travel.

3.6 Security

The security team can provide advice on personal safety and any potential concerns around a destination's safety in relation to terrorism and/or crime. The security team can be contacted via email (security-operations@brunel.ac.uk) and, if required, should be consulted before you book your travel and a minimum of 15 working days before any planned travel.

3.7 Staff/Students undertaking Travel and Travel Group Leaders

- a) Ensure they have the appropriate level of authorisation to undertake the travel. Where advice from the FCDO is not to travel, it is not a matter of personal decision whether to travel to the affected country, since any untoward incident would risk exposing the University reputationally, legally or both. For this reason, any proposed

journey to, or within, an affected country by staff on University business or students in connection with their studies can only be made with express permission of the Vice-Chancellor.

- b) Must have adequately risk assessed and planned for the conditions that they might encounter and develop an emergency plan for any significant situation which may be encountered.
- c) Ensure compliance with this Policy and any related policies/documents.
- d) Not take any unnecessary risks when travelling on University business or activities;
- e) Provide their Supervisor/Line Manager with up to date contact and next of kin details;
- f) Maintain regular contact whilst travelling with their Supervisor/Line Manager via appropriate and pre-agreed channels
- g) Inform their Supervisor/Line Manager of any changes to their travel itinerary and contact details as soon as practicable;
- h) Confirm their wellbeing to the University as soon as practicable if contacted to verify safety in the event of an incident;
- i) Adhere to Government Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) travel guidance.
- j) All travel must be booked through the university approved supplier.

4. Risk Assessment

The University has a duty of care to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of all staff and students travelling on University business, as well as safeguarding the communities we work with, and any 3rd parties we engage as part of work activities. It is therefore essential that all responsible parties give appropriate due diligence to writing and authorising risk assessments for national and international travel.

The risk assessment should be seen as an essential planning tool that aims to address potential events which may negatively impact individuals, property and/or the environment. The individual writing the risk assessment should be competent to do so and/or seek competent advice and guidance from a local health and safety coordinator, or the Health, Safety and Environment Team. The risk assessment should sufficiently address a range of hazards and needs commensurate with the risk level, including (but not limited to):-

- transport arrangements,
- accommodation safety,
- the environment (political, social, natural etc.),
- emergency arrangements,
- personal safety and security
- the work activity being undertaken (including any hazardous sampling or equipment), and
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The approver, and/or senior management, have the authority to withdraw approval if the situation changes between the time of approval and departure.

All travel for University business purposes requires a suitable and sufficient risk assessment to be conducted. Travel must not be authorised without a suitable and sufficient risk assessment in place. The risk assessment must be approved by the appropriate level of management

If the risk assessment is to be undertaken by a group leader, they must ensure that the hazards, risks and control measures are communicated to all participants in a pre-trip briefing and in writing. Records of such communication should be maintained by the College/Institute/Department.

Further advice on Risk assessment and suitable proformas can be found here: [Risk Assessment \(brunel.ac.uk\)](https://brunel.ac.uk/risk-assessment)

5. Transport and Driving

Driving:

If driving your own vehicle for work purposes within the UK please ensure that you are appropriately insured and licensed. Adhere to the **Driving for Work** Policy, and the [Travel and Expenses Policy](#) at all times.

Avoid driving overseas if possible and only drive if absolutely essential. Ensure individuals hold a full valid international driving licence. As part of the risk assessment process ensure the selection of reputable companies from which to hire vehicles, ensure the vehicle is roadworthy before use e.g. lights work, tyre pressure, screen wash, oil levels are sufficient for the journey, spare tyre present etc. Ensure that you adhere to local road legislation including speed restrictions, tyre type (winter), emergency breakdown kit e.g. warning triangles, hi-vis etc. and breakdown cover is included in the hire price. The Department/College's arrangements should also include what pre-planned route individuals are taking, food/water provision, blanket, tool-kit etc. Driving at night in many countries poses an increased risk of accidents, prolonged breakdown recovery times and car-jacking/robbery, and must be avoided wherever practicable. Do not travel by moped/motorcycle.

Travel by air/sea:

Travel bookings by air or sea must be undertaken using an approved university supplier. Internal flights at your destination should be booked beforehand using the approved suppliers. All transport provider rules and regulations must be followed.

6. Emergency Arrangements/Emergency Preparedness

Travellers must have an emergency plan, appropriate to the circumstances likely to be encountered. This may be as simple as relying on the standard University travel insurance/emergency assistance cover and having access to their emergency contact telephone number, or it may require more planning and resources e.g. 'buddies' in country, flexible travel tickets, emergency currency in dollars or personal security protection.

All travellers should carry a form of personal identification, in case of accident or emergency. In some countries, this is a legal requirement.

7. Medication and Personal Health

The degree of general health fitness required (both mental and physical) for the work and for travel to the proposed destination. For staff, general advice can be obtained from Occupational Health. Where an assessment of the fitness of an individual is required, a Management Referral should be made in order to obtain advice about any reasonable adjustments that may be required.

Immunisations/vaccinations:

It can take several weeks or months for full immunity to be developed after some courses of immunisations, so advance planning is essential. Vaccinations and chemoprophylaxis tablets (e.g. for Malaria) may not prevent disease or tropical infections, but they may ensure survival. Vaccination advice may also vary with underlying health issues, destination, and length of stay and time of year. It is therefore important to contact Occupational Health, your GP or a travel clinic for advice on immunisations and vaccinations.

Personal Health:

Any traveller with health restrictions e.g. heart disease, epilepsy, diabetes, recent serious injury etc. should consider the possible effect that these may have on their ability to travel or the likelihood that they will need medical support while abroad. Underlying medical issues may not be a cause for concern in the UK, but they could be an issue on a long-haul flight, where air pollution is poor or in a country where appropriate treatment is not readily available. Also, disease or treatment may affect a person's response to a vaccine, or occasionally a vaccine may aggravate a disease. An [individual risk assessment](#) can be completed if required.

Travel during pregnancy must also be considered (as appropriate). Advice from your medical practitioner must be followed and a pregnancy risk assessment should be completed with your line manager regardless of whether or not you are travelling. Further advice can be found on the [NHS website](#).

Mental Health:

Stress levels can be intensified during travel because of a lack of familiar support systems, disrupted daily routines, language barriers, culture shock and unexpected situations. Attitudes to mental illness vary between countries and in many, severe stigma and discrimination exist. Access to mental health services and medication may be very limited at some destinations.

Looking after yourself during travel and when abroad is important. Further information on travelling with mental health conditions is available at:

- [FCDO guidance page](#).
- [Travel Health Pro](#)
- [NHS Mental Health and Travel](#)

Further support is available from Brunel through [Human Resources](#).

Medication:

The legal status and regulation of some medicines prescribed or purchased in the UK can be different in other countries. If you're travelling with prescription or over-the-counter medicine, read this guidance from [fitfortravel - NHS](#) on best practice when travelling with medicines. Many medicines are unavailable in some countries.

Rules for different countries can be checked with the foreign embassy in the UK but can be difficult to obtain for some countries; other useful resources are provided below:

[FCDO Travel Advice Page](#)

Travellers should have/carry, as appropriate:

- Up to date Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC) or European Health Insurance Card (EHIC (if applicable)). Further information can be found [here](#).
- Vaccination certificates
- Proof of medical insurance (download via the [University Insurance Website](#)),
- Sufficient medication for the trip (if required for a pre-existing medical condition, plus spares in case of loss, destruction, or damage e.g. asthma inhaler, insulin etc.)
- A copy of the prescription and a letter from your doctor explaining your condition, treatment, medication, and dosage may be helpful at customs.
- A 'Fit to Travel' medical certificate, as required by some countries (obtainable through a GP, or a travel clinic. Staff should be referred to Occupational Health if necessary.

The availability of medical assistance in-country, and the procedures for medical repatriation must be checked. Information about likely health hazards and preventative measures must be obtained. This might include information about food, drink and hygiene, environmental or climatic illnesses e.g. dehydration, Altitude Sickness, and endemic diseases. Travellers are strongly advised to have a dental check-up prior to undertaking extended travel overseas to remote locations where access to dental care may be difficult or where there is a high prevalence of blood borne virus including HIV infection.

It is important that any accidents, incidents, injuries, ill-health or near-misses during trips are reported through the university [Accident Reporting System](#).

8. Non-UK National Staff and Students

Members of staff or students wishing to travel to their home country for purposes directly related to their employment or course of study must comply with the authorisation procedures set out in this Policy. If this involves travel to a country on the GOV.UK travel advisory list, Vice-Chancellor or delegated approval must be obtained. Those undertaking work or study overseas should also check the travel advice and consular services provided by their own country for the destination.

9. Existing contracts or travellers already in country

Where an existing contract is in place that requires work in a country where the personal

security risks subsequently increase and the UK Government advises against travel, travel should not take place, and advice should be sought on any contractual implications (HR or Legal).

Any travellers already in a country when a government travel advisory notice is introduced should contact the Insurance Team/University travel insurance providers/the British or own national Embassy for advice. The University insurance policy remains valid in these circumstances.

10. Post Travel

Debrief following the trip:

It is important that a debrief takes place with the Line Manager/Supervisor in line with departmental processes, upon return to the UK. This may not be necessary if the time overseas is short e.g. following a conference, but lengthy overseas trips or those to remote, less-developed parts of the world or high-risk trips should be discussed at a debrief meeting.

Personal Health:

If you return home after travel with the following symptoms you should contact your GP and make them aware of your travel history:

- continuous diarrhoea
- have blood or mucous in their faeces
- a high fever
- severe abdominal pain

This list is not exhaustive and you should contact a medical practitioner if you experience any symptoms of illness after travel

11. Related Documents, Policies and Webpages:

- [Employee Travel and Expenses Policy and Procedure](#)
- [Travel Insurance](#)
- [Booking Travel](#)
- [Health, Safety and Environment \(brunel.ac.uk\)](#)
- [Occupational Health \(brunel.ac.uk\)](#)
- [Driving abroad: Driving abroad on holiday - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Appendix 1: Advice for Lone Travellers

Travelling alone can bring additional risks and challenges. Research your destination in advance of travel and understand the typical local scams to avoid. Read FCDO travel advice for information on the local culture and customs for the countries you are travelling to.

Stay safe in your accommodation

- never leave your key where someone can note your room number
- do not leave your window open, especially if your room is on the ground floor or has a balcony
- lock your room door when you are inside the room
- if the door has a spyhole or chain, use these before opening the door to unexpected visitors
- Take time to check the location fire escape routes

Stay Safe when out and about

- Keep abreast of local news outlets for updates on any political / social unrest in country
- Be respectful of local dress codes and cover up as appropriate.
- Walk confidently and stay calm. Avoid walking alone in deserted and unlit areas and at night.
- Do not tell strangers where you are staying or details about your travel plans.
- Plan your daily itinerary: know where you are going and how to get back. Give a copy of your itinerary to your supervisor/Line Manager/Emergency contact before you leave.
- Have a check-in procedure arranged with friends/family/College/Department.
- Ask your hotel or hostel to recommend a taxi firm.
- Store all useful phone numbers, including for your accommodation, on your phone in case you get lost or find yourself in an emergency situation.
- Stay sober. Never leave drinks or food unattended and do not accept drinks from strangers.
- For additional advice for lone female travellers see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/advice-for-women-travelling-abroad>

Appendix 2: Advice for LGBT+ Travellers

- Cultural attitudes and laws regarding LGBT+ people vary significantly around the world, carefully research intended destinations in advance of booking.
- In some countries where homosexuality is illegal, the police have been known to carry out entrapment campaigns, deliberately trying to entice people to partake in same-sex sexual activities.
- Local LGBT+ groups may be best placed to advise on the attitude of local residents hold towards LGBT community.
- Some countries may recognise some LGBT rights; however, it may not be culturally accepted.
- LGBT travellers may be subjected to hate crimes; overt displays of physical affection may be best avoided in some countries.
- Criminals sometimes exploit the generally open and relaxed nature of the gay scene - be cautious of new acquaintances.

Further advice can be found here:

[Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender \(LGBT\) Travellers - Fit for Travel](#)

[Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender: foreign travel advice - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Appendix 3: Drinking Water Safety

- Maintain good general hand hygiene at all times and especially before eating and drinking, before and after preparing food, after using the toilet, after visiting food markets and after touching live animals. Use hand sanitiser where water is not available. Wash all dishes, cups and utensils thoroughly. Use alcohol wipes where there is no access to safe water and soap.
- Contaminated food and water often pose a risk for travellers. Many of the infectious diseases associated with contaminated food and water are caused by pathogens transmitted via the faecal–oral route. Swallowing, inhaling aerosols of, or coming in contact with contaminated water, including natural freshwater, marine water, or the water in inadequately treated swimming pools, or hot tubs and spas, can transmit pathogens that can cause diarrhoea, vomiting, or infection of the ears, eyes, skin, or the respiratory or nervous system.
- In many parts of the world, particularly where water treatment, sanitation, and hygiene are inadequate, tap water may contain disease-causing agents, including viruses, bacteria, and parasites, or chemical contaminants. As a result, tap water in some places may be unsafe for drinking, preparing food and beverages, making ice, cooking, and brushing teeth. Pregnant women, and people whose immune systems are compromised (for example, because of HIV, chemotherapy, or transplant medications) may be especially susceptible to illness. Take medicines to treat diarrhoea and dehydration with you in your first aid kit.
- Travelers should avoid drinking or putting into their mouths tap water unless they are reasonably certain it is safe. Consider disinfecting or filtering water when traveling to destinations where safe tap water may not be available. Tap water that is safe for drinking is still not sterile and should not be used for sinus or nasal irrigation or rinsing unless it is further disinfected by the traveller. Tap water should never be used to clean or rinse contact lenses. Water that looks cloudy or coloured may be contaminated with chemicals and will not be made safe by boiling or disinfection.
- In areas where tap water may be unsafe, only commercially bottled water from an unopened, factory-sealed container or water that has been adequately disinfected should be used for drinking, preparing food and beverages, making ice, cooking, and brushing teeth. See Water Purification for best techniques.
- Beverages made with water that has just been boiled, such as tea and coffee (without milk and cream), are generally safe to drink. When served in unopened, factory-sealed cans or bottles, carbonated beverages, commercially prepared fruit drinks, water, alcoholic beverages, and pasteurized drinks generally can be considered safe. Because water on the outside of cans and bottles may be contaminated, they should be wiped clean and dried before opening or drinking directly from the container.
- Beverages that may not be safe for consumption include fountain drinks or other drinks made with tap water and iced drinks. Because ice might be made from contaminated water, travellers in areas with unsafe tap water should request that beverages be served without ice.

Appendix 4: Food Safety

Preparation and storage

- Cooking is the best way to make your food safe. If you can you should:
- choose food that is served fresh and whilst still steaming hot
- avoid pre-prepared foods which are not kept hot, kept refrigerated or kept cool on ice from buffets, street vendors, markets or restaurants
- avoid reheating leftovers

Meat and seafood You should avoid:

- seafood which is raw: fish and shellfish can be hazardous even if well cooked. If in doubt then it is best avoided
- meat that is still red or pink or has red or pink juices

Dairy

- only drink or eat pasteurised milk or dairy products: boil milk that is unpasteurised and choose well-established retailers or brands if eating unpasteurised cheeses or ice cream
- Avoid dishes that contain raw or undercooked eggs, such as mayonnaise, some sauces or desserts (e.g. mousse).

Fruit and vegetables

- Avoid salads and fresh herbs (including garnishes in drinks e.g. mint leaves in mojitos) where drinking water may be unsafe: they may have been washed in contaminated water.
- Peel all fruits and vegetables, including tomatoes if they are to be eaten raw: avoid types that cannot be peeled
- Avoid berries, in particular raspberries: they are difficult to wash and may be a source of cyclospora
- Choose fruit juice from sealed cartons: freshly squeezed fruit juice may have been made with unwashed fruit

Appendix 5: Travel Information that should be recorded locally in case of Emergency

The information that will be valuable for the traveller and the School/Function in case of an emergency is likely to include:

- Names of all travellers
- Passport and visa details for all travellers
- Emergency contact details (to be used only in the event of an emergency and with the prior consent of the traveller)

A copy of the itinerary, with details such as:

- Dates
- Stopovers
- Flight details
- Addresses (for appointments and hotels)
- Contact names and telephone numbers (for appointments and hotels)
- Times of appointments (where relevant/known)
- Contact names, addresses and telephone numbers of the British Consul, agents and British Embassy/High Commission
- Purchase card/credit card emergency numbers (to report loss etc.)
- Travel insurance company contact details, policy number and emergency numbers available by the Travel Assistance app
- Details of any health issues or disabilities of vulnerable individuals
- Name and contact details for the nominated School/Function contact
- If there are any last-minute changes, especially of participants, the information must be updated