Finance and Accounting Manual

Travel Policy

Approved by: Chief Operating Officer and Deputy Vice-Chancellor on 1 September 2008
Vice-Principal (Operations) on 8 December 2015

Date of effect: 1 October 2008.
Updated for Delegations amendment 25 June 2010.
Administrative amendments 21 April 2015.
Administrative amendments 12 May 2015.
Amendments effective 1 December 2015

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OVERVIEW

1. Policy

University business travel includes, but is not limited to:

- Representation of the University of Sydney in an official capacity
- Attendance at a conference or seminar in a field relevant to the traveller's expertise
- Participation in community service; for example, as an examiner, adviser, unpaid consultant or presenter of seminars or lectures in an official capacity
- Attendance as a member of government/external organisations in an official capacity
- Consultation or work with colleagues on research, project or teaching development
- Use of specialist equipment or facilities where these are not available at the work place
- Fieldwork

2. Principles

The University of Sydney recognises that travel is often an integral part of work related activities for University staff. This policy is designed to meet the needs of University travellers.

The policy is designed to provide maximum convenience, flexibility and safety for University travellers, to help ensure the financial integrity of all travel payments and maintenance of accurate records, and to ensure the consistent and fair treatment of all University travellers and staff who are directly or indirectly involved in the travel process, regardless of the source of funds.

University travellers and authorising officers are expected to exercise prudent business judgement at all times when booking, authorising and undertaking travel.

3. Coverage

This policy applies to everyone who travels on behalf of the University of Sydney, on pre-approved University business, regardless of the source of funds or duration of travel.

This policy applies to all domestic and international travel arrangements for everyone who travels on pre-approved University of Sydney business.

This policy does not apply to travel for Special Studies Program (SSP), Visiting Scholars, Interviews, Relocation of new appointees or group travel for students. Refer to the Special Studies Program Policy for details applying to these activities, and Personnel Services Teams for advice on Visiting Scholars, Interview travel and Relocation.

Refer to the Travel Website for all University travel related information (requires Unikey login).

4. Definitions

Best fare	the lowest logical available fare for the journey that offers the traveller the convenience and flexibility to complete the business purpose effectively
Domestic travel	travel to any destination within Australia and its territories
Discipline/Research area	a core group of people with expertise in a specialist area of knowledge
Everyone	see **University Traveller**
Expense Management System	the online expense management system utilised to request, approve, reimburse and acquit travel expenses
International travel	travel to any destination outside Australia and its territories
Overseas travel	see **International travel**
Reasonable costs	all University work related expenses which are incurred to conduct the pre-approved University business effectively and efficiently
Restricted Areas	Any country or region where the threat to the health and safety of the University Traveller is considered high
Travel	on approved University business away from the primary workplace
Travel Management Company (TMC)	An organisation that provides travel management services including expert business travel advice, bookings, ticketing management data and reports, account management and other ancillary services.
Travel Online Booking Tool	the online travel booking tool for making travel reservations electronically
University Traveller	includes, but is not limited to: • All staff (including casuals) • Accompanying persons • Associates, including Members of Senate • Consultants and contractors • Students

TRAVEL APPROVAL

5. Travel Bookings and Approvals

All University travel bookings and approvals are to be made using the Travel Requisition module within the University's Expense Management System. Flights are to be booked through a University Travel Preferred Supplier, using the best fare and paid with a University Corporate Card. Procedures to be followed are detailed in the University Travel Procedures.

Other travel management services such as accommodation and car hire may be booked directly in the Online Booking Tool, with assistance from a Preferred Travel Management Company or directly with preferred supplier hotels as detailed at the University Travel Website.

When approving travel, the authorising officer must ensure that:

- the travel is not to a restricted area;
- the absence is convenient to the department/unit;
- the travel duration limitations are satisfied;
- there are sufficient funds in the nominated accounts;
- the travel is for official University business;
- the cost to the University is minimised;
- the travel is booked through a University Travel Management Company so that maximum value is obtained by the University;
- all relevant costs associated with the travel are fully captured on the Travel Request form.

University staff members who are requesting travel approval should ensure that arrangements are made to cover their teaching, examining and administrative duties during the approved absence. Where such arrangements cannot be made, travel that interferes with teaching, examining and administrative duties, including the submission of results will not be approved.

5.1 Documentation

University travellers are responsible for ensuring that they maintain all documentation with regards to the travel request, travel approval and all supporting documentation for travel expenses. This documentation must be kept securely for 6 years in line with ATO requirements.

5.2 Travel not funded by University Sources

Travel funded by another organisation or an external grant that is not arranged or paid through the University should follow this policy unless the funding agency imposes different restrictions. Section 19 of this policy, relating to Travel to Restricted areas, must be complied with regardless of the funding. The funds should be used responsibly and in such a way as to realise the best economies and also maximise benefits to the University.

5.3 Travel Authorising Officers

All University travel must be authorised by Head of School or Head of Administrative Unit or above.

6. Associated Personal/Private Travel

Personal or private travel (non University business) may be permitted in conjunction with pre-approved business travel, provided the purpose of the travel is properly documented prior to the commencement of travel and the absence is convenient to the department/unit.

The personal/private travel component and associated costs are to be paid for separately by the traveller and must not be charged to the University.

University staff members must use some form of leave (as appropriate; annual, long service or leave without pay) to cover periods of absence that are not specifically required to conduct

University business (except between periods of authorised travel, where it is impractical to return to normal duties).

The University will not provide travel insurance for personal/ private travel. Refer to Section 18.2 for Insurance Provisions.

7. Spouse, Partner and Dependant Travel

Travellers are to notify their authorising officer prior to travel where a spouse, partner or dependant is accompanying them on official University travel.

Travellers are to ensure that when accompanied by a spouse, partner or dependant, the business of the University of Sydney is not compromised. The University will not fund any cost incurred for an accompanying spouse, partner or dependant.

In special circumstances University travel for a spouse, partner and dependents is permitted if approved in writing by the Vice-Chancellor.

8. Duration and Timing of Travel

Travel will only be approved when convenient to the Department/Unit and for the following maximum periods:

- During teaching periods (including examination periods) (Note: research-only academics are exempted) — Maximum 2 weeks per trip
- Outside teaching periods — Maximum 4 weeks per trip
- Annually (each calendar year) — Maximum 12 weeks

Note: Fieldwork Absence in any one calendar year will not normally exceed a total of twelve weeks.

These may be exceeded in special circumstances with the prior approval of the Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellors', Chief Financial Officer as appropriate.

9. Travelling Together

To minimise disruptions to the University's ongoing operations and reduce the risk of multiple absences, the following restrictions apply on group travel:

- **Senate and Senate Committee**
  No more than three members of Senate or of a Senate Committee are to travel in the same craft/vehicle at the same time

- **Senior Executive**
  No more than three members of the Senior Executive Group are to travel in the same craft/vehicle at the same time

- **Principal Officers**
  No more than three Principal Officers are to travel in the same craft/vehicle at the same time

- **Faculties/Departments/Administration Units/ Schools/Disciplines**
  No more than the Dean and half the number of Heads of School from within the one Faculty are to travel in the same craft/vehicle at the same time; and
  No more than half of the members of the same Department/Unit or Discipline/Research area are to travel in the same craft/vehicle at the same time

FINANCIAL MATTERS

10. Travel Payments and Acquittals

All travel payments and acquittals are to be completed using the University's Expense Management System within 7 working days of return to the University.

10.1 University Corporate Card

The University Corporate Card is to be used to pay for all business travel expenses where feasible. Expenses that could not be acquired using the University Corporate Card should be paid by cash and included in the travel acquittal as a reimbursement immediately on return to the office. All University travellers must retain original travel documentation in order to support a claim (refer to section 10.6).

University Corporate Cards are intended for business costs only and should be used to pay for all University travel and related costs including:

- Airfares
- Accommodation
- Entertainment
- Car hire and rental charges
- Meals
- Miscellaneous travel expenses
- Parking
- Taxes and tolls
- Taxis

The University Corporate Card must not be used for private expenses.

10.2 Travel Advance

Travel advances can be made to travellers in specific circumstances where the traveller identifies to the authorising officer that the University Corporate Card cannot be used for some travel expenses and these expenses are a significant cost. Travel advances must not be used for substantial costs that can be paid on the University Corporate card (i.e. airfares, accommodation, car hire etc).

10.3 Travel Expenses

The University of Sydney will cover all pre-approved reasonable business costs for travel, accommodation, meals and incidental business expenses. The University assumes no obligation to reimburse travellers for expenses that are not in accordance with this Policy, unless the expense is approved by the Vice Chancellor or Chief Financial Officer. Travellers who incur expenses that are not in accordance with Policy are at risk of delayed or partial reimbursement.

University travellers must nominate on their travel requests whether they are requesting a Per Diem allowance or travelling on expenses prior to travel within the Fraedom request.

10.4 Per Diem Allowances

Per Diem allowances for meals and incidentals are available to travellers, providing the relevant Head of Administration, Head of School, or Dean allow travellers in their unit or faculty to be paid a per diem allowance, after assessing that the per diem may be a more appropriate means to reimburse the reasonable expenses of the staff member's travel. Per diem rates do not include accommodation. Refer to section 15 for accommodation provisions.

The University of Sydney Per Diem rate payable is set at 70% of the rate applied at the lowest salary band of the ATO reasonable allowances, regardless of the salary of the staff member; the ATO salary brackets above the minimum band do not apply.

There is one rate for all staff, for all domestic locations (aligned to 70% of the lowest applicable domestic rate in the lowest salary band), and one rate for all staff, for all

international locations (aligned to 70% of the lowest applicable rate within each ATO country grouping).

These rates will be reviewed annually as and when the ATO updates the amounts.

10.5 Acquittal Documentation

All University travellers must retain original travel documentation in order to support a claim for payment and reimbursement of travel expenses, acquittal of advances (if any), grant reporting, audit reviews and personal taxation requirements.

10. 6 Cash Claims (Out of Pocket Expenses)

All University travellers and Fraedom account holders MUST claim reimbursement for travel and non-travel related expenses, in Fraedom, Expense Management system (refer to section 10.1).

Non-travellers who do not have Fraedom account may claim reimbursement through Petty Cash for amounts less than $25. Amounts over $25 must be claimed through Fraedom only.

Effective 1st October 2008, 'Payment Request' forms for claiming travel or non-travel related reimbursements will not be accepted by Accounts Payable for payment processing.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

11. Travel Preferred (Contracted) Suppliers

The University of Sydney has contract arrangements in place with selected Travel Management Companies and a Travel Online Booking Tool. To maximise the benefits of these arrangements, travellers must utilise these Travel Preferred Suppliers.

Procedures to be followed are detailed in the Travel Procedures.

12. Airline Memberships

The University may fund business airline lounge memberships for travellers who travel two or more University business trips each year.

13. Frequent Flyer Programs

Frequent flyer and other reward program membership must not override the University's best fare requirement.

The University will not fund airline frequent flyer program memberships. Frequent flyer membership that is part of the airline membership is seen as an incidental benefit to those travellers.

The University will not fund airline life membership programs.

14. Class of Travel

The University requires all travellers to contain costs wherever practical and utilise the best available fare for the journey to be undertaken on safe, reliable carriers in all authorised classes. Travellers should consider transport modes such as rail, coach and car as an alternative to air travel when planning University travel.
The traveller should utilise the 'lowest logical best fare' available on the class travelled, at the time of booking. Utilisation of the 'best fare' that is available for the journey must override all personal airline preferences and/or the accrual of frequent flyer points.

14.1 Air Travel – Domestic and International

Travellers should travel on the most direct route using normal economy class air travel. The Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor will travel business class air travel.

In special circumstances business class air travel is permitted for other travellers following approval by the Dean or Principal Officers. Guidelines for the approval of business class travel can be found at https://intranet.sydney.edu.au/documents/working/finance-management/finance-forms/travel-approval-business-premiumecon-class.pdf (requires Unikey login).

On Jetstar specifically, subject to HOS/HOA approval and the existence of sufficient funds, travellers may use StarClass fares only where the cost of a StarClass fare does not exceed the normal economy class cost on a competing airline offering the same route.

Travellers must specify within the Expense Management Solution's Travel Requisition the class of travel they are seeking approval to use.

14.2 Rail Travel

University travellers may travel first class domestic rail travel (based on the General Staff Enterprise Agreement). For international rail travel, Economy class must be used.

15. Accommodation

The University has a number of preferred rates at individual properties as detailed at the Travel Website. All travellers should ensure when booking accommodation that the rate charged is the corporate/government rate, and payment is made, wherever possible, using the University Corporate Card.

Travellers should use these properties unless accommodation is not available at the particular location or there are other justified reasons for alternative accommodation.

16. Car/Vehicle Rental

The University has Travel Car Rental Agreements for negotiated discount rates with specific car hire companies. Car/vehicle bookings should be made with these suppliers using the University Corporate Card for payment.

16.1 Insurance on Car/Vehicle Rental

University travellers are to accept and include the lowest excess options for vehicle insurance cover for damage and theft in all car/vehicle rental agreements. Reimbursement for excess payments made following an accident may be recovered under the University's insurance program subject to the provisions of the relevant insurance policies and the lowest excess option being accepted.

17. Other Ground Transportation

17.1 Use of Private Vehicles

Travellers should use public transport or University vehicles before using private vehicles for University business travel. The use of a private vehicle is to be approved prior to the travel and costs should be reasonable.

Travellers who use their own private motor vehicle are entitled to claim Motor Vehicle Usage Allowance Rates specified in the Travel Website. The traveller is responsible for private motor vehicle insurance as the University does not cover damage or theft of a private vehicle.

17.2 Taxis

Travellers should use public transport for University business travel wherever feasible. Prudent business judgement is to be applied when using taxis. When making payments for taxis, travellers should use the University Corporate Card.

18. Travel Insurance

The University will provide travel insurance for the following travellers while on official University business only:

- All staff (including casuals)

- Associates, including Members of Senate
- Students, excluding travel associated with elective subjects or placements

The insurance coverage is subject to the travel insurance policy's conditions and exclusions, including loss or damage to baggage and overseas medical expenses.

Weekends that fall between periods of approved business travel will normally be covered by the University's insurance. However, the policy does not provide coverage for high-risk recreational activities or any associated holiday travel undertaken during the journey or any period of recreational leave.

Full details of the insurance coverage are available from the Audit and Risk Management.

18.1 Air Charter Insurance

If travel includes private charter flights, the Risk Management Office must be notified prior to booking to ensure appropriate insurance is available.

18.2 Travel Insurance Exclusions

The University will not provide travel insurance for personal/private travel, accompanying persons, consultants or contractors. These travellers will need to take out their own personal/private travel insurance.

19. Travel to Restricted Areas

The University of Sydney has a duty of care for the health, safety and well-being of all persons travelling on University business and as such the University has an obligation to:-

- Identify potential dangers or risks present in particular geographical areas where University travellers may travel;
- Advise such travellers on the potential risks they may face; and
- Take reasonable measures to control risks, where possible.

Travel to restricted areas will be governed by the University's Travel to Restricted Areas Policy or in the absence of such a policy by the travel advisories of Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and information provided by the University's travel risk management advice supplier, Travel Guard.

20. Passport/Visa Requirements

It is the responsibility of University travellers to ensure that they possess a valid passport and appropriate visas, and are compliant with any other relevant immigration requirements, before embarking on official travel. The University will meet the cost for a passport and visa where it is required for business purposes.

21. Health Requirements

It is the responsibility of University travellers to ensure that they have the required inoculations when travelling on official University business. The World Health Organisation and the University's travel risk management advice supplier, Travel Guard provides information on medical requirements. The University will meet the cost for inoculations where they are required for business purposes.

RELATED INFORMATION

22. Resources and Weblinks

References

- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)
  www.smartraveller.gov.au/zw-cgi/view/Advice/
- Motor Vehicle Usage Allowance Rates
  https://intranet.sydney.edu.au/working/travel/before-you-travel/budgeting.php
- Audit and Risk Management
  sydney.edu.au/audit_risk
- Special Studies Program Policy
  http://sydney.edu.au/policies/showdoc.aspx?recnum=PDOC2011/130&RendNum=0
- Travel Accommodation Providers
  https://intranet.sydney.edu.au/working/travel/suppliers-bookings/accommodation.php
- Travel Car Rental Agreements
  https://intranet.sydney.edu.au/working/travel/suppliers-bookings/car-rental.php
- Travel Preferred Suppliers
  https://intranet.sydney.edu.au/working/travel/suppliers-bookings/travel-agents.php
- Travel Procedures
  sydney.edu.au/policies/showdoc.aspx?recnum=PDOC2011/136&RendNum=0
- World Health Organisation
  www.who.int/en/

23. University policies and procedures superseded or replaced by this policy:

- Travel Policy: 1 October 2008

CONTACTS AND REVIEW

24. Contacts

- **Travel and Expense Management Helpdesk**
  Phone: (02) 9351 8005; (02) 9036 9424; (02) 9351 3480
  Fax: (02) 9114 0556
  Email: pcardhelp@sydney.edu.au

25. Review

The Finance and Accounting Manual will be reviewed annually and on an ad hoc basis if required.

The Chief Financial Officer will approve changes to financial procedures and guidelines and will co-ordinate changes to financial policy, with the Vice-Chancellor delegated to approve University financial and infrastructure policy.

Amendments to forms, schedules and weblinks will be processed by Financial Services.

Amendments to the Finance and Accounting Manual procedures and forms are listed on the Financial Services website under:-

- FAM Amendments
- Amendments to Forms

Please forward suggestions and comments on the Finance and Accounting Manual via the Feedback Form.