

# Policy on Work-Related Travel

Health and Safety Services

Approved by SMT November 2010

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## **1. Introduction**

This policy is to be applied to all work-related travel and off-site visits carried out by employees of the University, except in relation to field courses, which are covered in a separate policy (Policy on the Management of Field Courses). Categories of travel include (not exclusively), recruitment visits, attendance at conferences, business meetings, research in overseas countries and teaching overseas.

It applies to all employees at all levels within the organisation.

The aim of the policy is to consider the health and safety implications of work-related travel, and to put into place procedures which control these risks to an acceptable level.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Finance Department's 'Financial Procedures' on the Portal.

## **2. Responsibilities**

This policy follows the principles of responsibility outlined in the University Health and Safety Policy. However, the following detail applies in addition:

### **Employees are responsible for:**

- Taking care of their own health and safety whilst undertaking off-site visits and not compromising the safety of colleagues they may be travelling with.
- Utilising the systems in place for managing such visits within their Departments.
- Feeding back any concerns to the University at an appropriate point either during or after the visit.

### **The Head of Department or other Line Manager is responsible for:**

- Ensuring that a suitable management system is in place, and monitored within their Departments which reflects the requirements of this policy.
- Ensuring that employees who undertake travel as part of their work are suitably trained and experienced to do so (in accordance with paragraph 9).
- Responding to incidents and feedback which is reported by employees.

### **The Dean or Equivalent is responsible for:**

- Ensuring that an appropriate system is in place to consider the adequacy of risk assessments carried out by line managers.
- Ensuring that a robust system is in place to manage employees who may be off-site within all their areas of control.
- Receiving reports of significant residual risks and making considered decisions on their acceptability involving the Safety Office and members of SMT as appropriate, in accordance with the risk statement.

### **The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for:**

- Selecting a suitable travel agent, taking into account health and safety considerations e.g. the availability of a 24 hour help line, passenger tracking information, the facilitation of accommodation health and safety checks.
- Providing a contact point to receive updates from Travel Insurance providers and Travel Agencies.

- Arranging overseas travel insurance on behalf of the organisation and publishing the levels of cover.
- Initiating a suitable response to safety alerts received in relation to overseas destinations.

**SMT is responsible for:**

- Establishing the risk statement in relation to overseas travel, and for considering this statement when strategic decisions are made in relation to work off-site.
- Considering any requests for off-site visits where significant residual risks exist, or where requests are made to travel to areas outside the published risk statement.
- Taking suitable action to manage incidents which may arise involving University employees.

The term ‘Head of Department’ and ‘Dean’ are used throughout the document but line managers should also assume the relevant detailed responsibilities as appropriate within their areas of control.

**3. Planning visits**

Prior to any planned activity, permission should be sought from the Head of Department or equivalent. For routine, low risk, off-site visits authorisation may be given for a series of off-site visits, without the need for separate approval each time. Departments will need to develop suitable approval protocols to meet their needs, without creating unnecessary bureaucracy.

For some destinations the visit may need to be authorised by SMT. Heads of Department should consider:

- Security risks and travel to areas of political instability
- Natural disasters and extreme climates
- Areas of endemic and epidemic disease

The Head of Department should refer any requests for travel which present unusual or high residual risks to the Dean or Service Head who will review the travel plan, making any necessary referrals up to SMT. There may be ethical reasons why the University does not want to work in certain areas of the world. Alternatively, it may be that the residual risks associated with the travel are unacceptable.

In the interests of employees safety, employees who wish, or are required, to travel overseas on University business must ensure they check information being provided by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (0870 6060290, web address: <http://www.fco.gov.uk>), which is updated on a regular basis.

The University also subscribes to ‘Control Risks’ a provider of detailed travel information. This web site should also be consulted as part of the risk assessment process.

Password access for this service is provided below:

Website	<a href="http://www.crg-online.com">www.crg-online.com</a>
Login name	14ACRS000002
Password	14ACRS000002

When travelling to higher risk destinations it will be necessary for the employee to keep the risk assessment under review until the point of departure, to ensure that the most current information is used.

The 'Control Risks' web site provides more detailed security information than may be available on the FCO web site. There is also a facility to request an itinerary specific risk profile for a visit from a travel consultant within this company. Further information is available on the Insurance Office web-site.

The current risk statement for the University of Hull is as follows:

#### **RISK STATEMENT- UNIVERSITY OF HULL**

If the FCO is advising against all travel to an area then University employees must **not attempt** to travel **to or through** these areas.

If the FCO is advising against all but essential travel to an area then University employees must **not attempt** to **travel to or through** those areas.

All travel not falling within the above definition is considered on a case by case basis, with significant residual risks being referred to the Dean, or Service Head and, if permission is granted at this level, to SMT for approval.

#### **4. Risk Assessment**

Once permission has been granted, all off site overseas work visits carried out within Departments should be categorized according to risk. In the first instance, this categorisation should be determined by the person intending to travel. Departments will need to introduce a mechanism to ensure the approval process picks up on any miscategorised visits. (*Refer also to flow chart in Appendix 1 for Overseas Visits*).

##### **Risk Category: One (Low Risk)**

These are low risk trips which do not require a specific risk assessment to be completed for each visit. Such visits would include attendance at short conferences in the UK or regular teaching slots in non volatile, easily accessible environments and hosted visits to Overseas Universities. There should be no significant additional risks associated with the visit and nothing on the FCO website which indicates a high risk status in any respect.

The health and safety protocol for such visits should be as follows:

- The Head of Department must put in place a system to approve the visit or a series of visits. Arrangements should be in place so that a process exists to enable start and return dates to be recorded. A travel itinerary should be provided for overseas visits.
- The Head of Department must ensure that current home emergency contacts are held for the employee and that employees leave contact information for themselves whilst they are away, including accommodation details, in-country contacts when overseas and mobile phone details.

- Accommodation should be booked via a reputable external event organiser (e.g. conference host) or through a University approved agent and due consideration should be given to the location of the accommodation and safe travel to the event.
- For overseas visits, the participant must be authorised under the travel insurance provisions and be issued with the emergency contact card in case of Emergency.

### **Risk Category: Two (Medium or High Risk)**

In addition to the above, all other higher risk travel arrangements must be supported by a written risk assessment which covers the activity. It may be possible for one basic risk assessment to be prepared which covers a number of trips to the same destination. However, this must be frequently reviewed prior to departure to ensure any changes to the risk status of the destination are taken into account.

Examples of visits falling into category two would include visits to areas for any purposes where the travel advice states there is a high risk for security and terrorism, any visit to a remote area, fieldwork and research with significant risks attached, or any overseas recruitment activities to new or existing areas. If there is a need to obtain vaccination prior to travel this may be an indication that there are risks associated with the visit which require special control measures being adopted.

An approval process for risk assessments completed by employees should be in place. Any significant residual risks which remain in place following the risk assessment should be clearly flagged up to the Dean of the Faculty or equivalent. The Dean will then need to consider whether the residual risks identified are acceptable, and if necessary, seek additional advice from the Safety Office and their line manager.

A reporting in procedure, commensurate with the risks associated with the travel, should be included as part of the risk assessment. This may be by phone, email or text. Frequency of reporting will be determined by risk assessment. Departments should consider the action to be taken in cases of non-reporting in.

### **5. Risk Assessment Criteria for Category Two visits**

The following hazards (not an exhaustive list) should be assessed as part of the risk assessment process:

- Hazards associated with the activities carried out during the off site visit
- Fatigue at place of work due to travel frequency, duration times, and ability to take breaks and rest periods
- Fatigue when travelling and driving following flights
- Inability to maintain an appropriate work life balance
- Health effects due to long haul flights
- Lone Working and personal safety
- Dealing with the public
- Terrorism and security threat including kidnap
- Competency of the traveller (previous experience of business travel , culture being visited and location)
- Inability to communicate
- Inability to summon help in an emergency
- Inability to locate employee in an emergency

- Inability to access medical care, despite insurance cover (some hospitals overseas will only accept cash up front to provide treatment, even in a critical life threatening emergency)
- In country medical care presents threats e.g. infection risks from syringes
- Climate
- Natural Disasters
- Contact with animals
- Food and Drink Hazards
- Transportation in country

## **6. Minimum Standards for Overseas Travel**

In order to achieve consistency in the risk assessment process the following standards have been set down with respect to certain control measures which need to be in place throughout the University:

- Flights and accommodation should, wherever possible, be arranged through the University approved travel agency. The approved travel agent will provide a mechanism for departments to track University employees who are overseas at any given point in time.
- All employees who regularly travel overseas as part of their duties should be issued with 'contact cards' by their Department. These will detail personal details, key contacts and the emergency response numbers.
- In the case of long-haul flights or other extended travel episodes (e.g. when the period of travel is longer than approximately 5-6 hours' duration), employees should not undertake duties and/or lengthy drives without an adequate rest period. A reasonable period for rest and/or acclimatisation should be allowed for within travel itineraries, even where this may involve an additional night's accommodation whilst abroad, or additional time away from the University upon return.
- It should be standard practice for the University department to grant a recovery day following return from an extended period of overseas travel, especially after long haul flights. This will both allow the employee to recover from the overseas trip and acknowledges the fact that on many occasions the daily routine may exceed the standard working day whilst overseas. Time differences will need to be considered.
- Arrangements need to be made to compensate employees for week-ends (two days off in a period of seven days) spent working whilst overseas. Week-ends are compensated at a rate of a day off for a day off. A flexible approach is required.
- For longer trips, the taking of accrued lieu time is best achieved during the period of stay. For shorter duration trips, it should be taken at the end of the trip. This will ensure that the employee does not become overtired and build up extensive amounts of lieu time which then cannot easily be taken. The arrangements for weekend working and subsequent taking of time off should be agreed in principle before the visit takes place.
- It should be standard practice for the risk assessment to identify how many employees are required to attend an event for reasons of safety.
- Standards of accommodation may vary from country to country. It is expected that employees will stay in accommodation which does not present any health and safety

concerns. The risk assessment should detail extra requirements which may be necessary from the hotel. Examples will include a need to avoid dubious localities, a need to ensure that a chauffeur service exists to avoid kidnap risk, a need to ensure a cash advance would be forthcoming in the event of emergency, presence of English speaking staff.

- A method for communication must always be available to employees whilst abroad, this may mean hiring a satellite phone for visits or purchasing SIM cards whilst abroad. An emergency personal location beacon is also available from the safety office, should the risk assessment require this as a control measure for very remote locations.

## **7. Good Practice for Overseas Travel**

- Employees who travel overseas frequently are advised to register with the FCO on their LOCATE web site.

[www.locate.fco.uk/locate](http://www.locate.fco.uk/locate) portal

- If possible, no appointments should be made on the day of travel where the total duration of travel is over 6 Hours
- Itineraries should take account of travel time, travel mode and allow for meal breaks
- Where working days are likely to significantly exceed 7.5 hours then appropriate consideration should be given to the potential for fatigue when preparing the itinerary for the following day.
- Recruitment trips should not routinely exceed two weeks, although there may be reasons why this may be extended if particular circumstances demand a longer stay.
- When overseas, for domestic and in-country flights, where premium economy flights are not available, premium class or economy plus equivalents (which provide seats with back support and extra leg room) may be booked. Normally, the additional costs incurred for such flights are offset by a reduction in excess baggage costs.

## **8. Individual Risk Assessment for Overseas Travel**

Employees should be advised to seek the advice of their GP prior to travel, having given them an outline of the destinations to be visited and the type of work to be carried out. They can then obtain the necessary vaccinations via their GP or travel clinic. Any costs will be re-imbursed by the University.

Any employee who is required to travel on any work related matter should not do so if their GP has advised against this. Any employee who is concerned about their ability to undertake overseas visits should seek their GP's advice before travelling.

An Occupational Health referral may be appropriate for employees who have specific health needs. One outcome from the referral process may be that the Occupational Health Department will make specific recommendations regarding the travel arrangements which need to be put in place for an individual. Decisions can then be made on the viability of travel plans.

It is possible that there may be an opportunity to bring these health checks in-house to the Occupational Health Unit in the future.

## **9. Experience/Knowledge of the traveller**

One of the critical elements when looking at the safety of working overseas is the experience of the employee, both in travelling generally and with the country or area of the country they are travelling to.

As well as referring to the published sources of advice it is likely that those going to **medium/high** risk destinations will need:

- A briefing by another employee with experience
- A familiarisation visit with an experienced member of staff

This will apply to all employees including senior colleagues.

There can be very significant cultural issues which need to be covered, together with local knowledge of do's and don'ts for each destination.

For completely new destinations it will be necessary to provide these briefings through other mechanisms. This may include networking with colleagues in other universities.

Research ventures may require specialist competencies or technical skills. If this is the case, details should be included in the risk assessment.

## **10. Reporting of Incidents**

A mechanism should be in place to manage any incidents which are reported during or after an overseas visit. Examples might be threatening behaviour, ill health, poor standards of accommodation. Emergency contact numbers are supplied for emergency medical assistance and to facilitate repatriation in the event of a security incident. Employees should ensure that their line manager is alerted to any serious difficulty at the earliest opportunity.

If assistance is required out of hours the Security Office on the Hull Campus should be contacted using the Emergency number(+44 1482 465555).

Any employee or manager may contact the Insurance Officer or Health and Safety Office for assistance in dealing with an incident.

After any incident has occurred the risk assessment in place should be reviewed. If necessary, changes to the risk assessment should be completed. It may be that a formal investigation is required so that improvements may be implemented across the University. This investigation should be completed by the Insurance Officer, Purchasing Manager or Health and Safety Services as appropriate.

## 11. Insurance for Overseas Travel

The University has travel insurance cover in place for its employees and Postgraduate students travelling overseas on University business either for teaching or research.

However, it is a requirement under this policy that the Insurance Office is supplied with a list of those individuals who require travel insurance on an annual basis. If such notification is not provided to the Insurance Office the insurance cover may be compromised and individuals will not be able to access the required travel documentation. It should be noted that some countries are excluded from the travel insurance arrangements.

For administration purposes, employees and postgraduates who are likely to travel abroad for less than 14 days in total per insurance year, there is an option available where departments can enter into an occasional traveller's scheme. Departments are required to keep a log of the traveller's details including where they have travelled to and for what duration. The agreement is negotiated annually with each department, to establish whether they still want to remain in the scheme.

Refer to the link below to obtain a copy of the travel cover summary document including the University's travel policy number and emergency contact details.

<http://www.hull.ac.uk/insurance/Pages/travel.html>

The medical expenses cover provided under the University's travel policy is not a full health insurance; it will only cover emergency treatment and associated expenses. Routine, preventative or other elective treatments are not covered. Pre-existing medical conditions are only covered if travel is being undertaken in line with medical advice. **Cover is not provided for anyone travelling against medical advice or for the purpose of undertaking treatment.**

If travellers are visiting their normal country of residence for more than 30 days medical cover may be limited and it requested that employees members contact the Insurance Office for details and any further restrictions imposed by the University's insurers.

Should any employee require any medical assistance whilst abroad, they should contact Chubb Medical Assistance using the contact details on the travel medical card issued to employees members when obtaining Travel Insurance. The information required by Chubb Medical Assistance are: a contact number, location and the name of any attending doctor. Once they have these details Chubb will liaise with the employee to get the correct medical treatment required and will advise the appropriate people including family members if required. Chubb Medical Assistance is available 24 hours a day 365 days a year. Employees are requested to keep all receipts, doctors notes etc as evidence when making a claim.

Any other claims such as loss of luggage can be dealt with on return to the University. If essential items need to be bought as temporary replacement for items lost, employees are requested to keep all receipts as evidence for the claim. Claim forms can be found on the Insurance Office website under 'Forms and Documents'.

Further information on the University's travel insurance policy can be found at the Insurance Office Website at [www.hull.ac.uk/insurance](http://www.hull.ac.uk/insurance)

Employees are further reminded that the University's travel insurance policy may be invalidated if travel proceeds against specific FCO advice.

There is no travel insurance in place for visits to UK destinations.

## **12. Financial Arrangements for Overseas Travel**

Under normal circumstances it is expected that University employees will travel overseas on economy class. Employee fatigue after flying long haul can be addressed by ensuring adequate rest periods after travelling. However, there may be circumstances where it can be justified in terms of health and safety or business reasons to travel economy plus or business class. Health and Safety concerns should be dealt with by a referral of the person concerned to Occupational Health.

All items purchased shall be supported by receipts. Discretion may be used in countries where it is difficult to obtain receipts in all cases.

An advance in sterling is recommended for all travel overseas. There may be a case for those who spend the majority of their working time travelling between the UK and sites overseas to apply for a University Credit card to cover their expenses.

***Any requests for business class travel or for a University Credit Card shall be submitted to the Chief Finance Officer for approval.***

## **13. Policy Review**

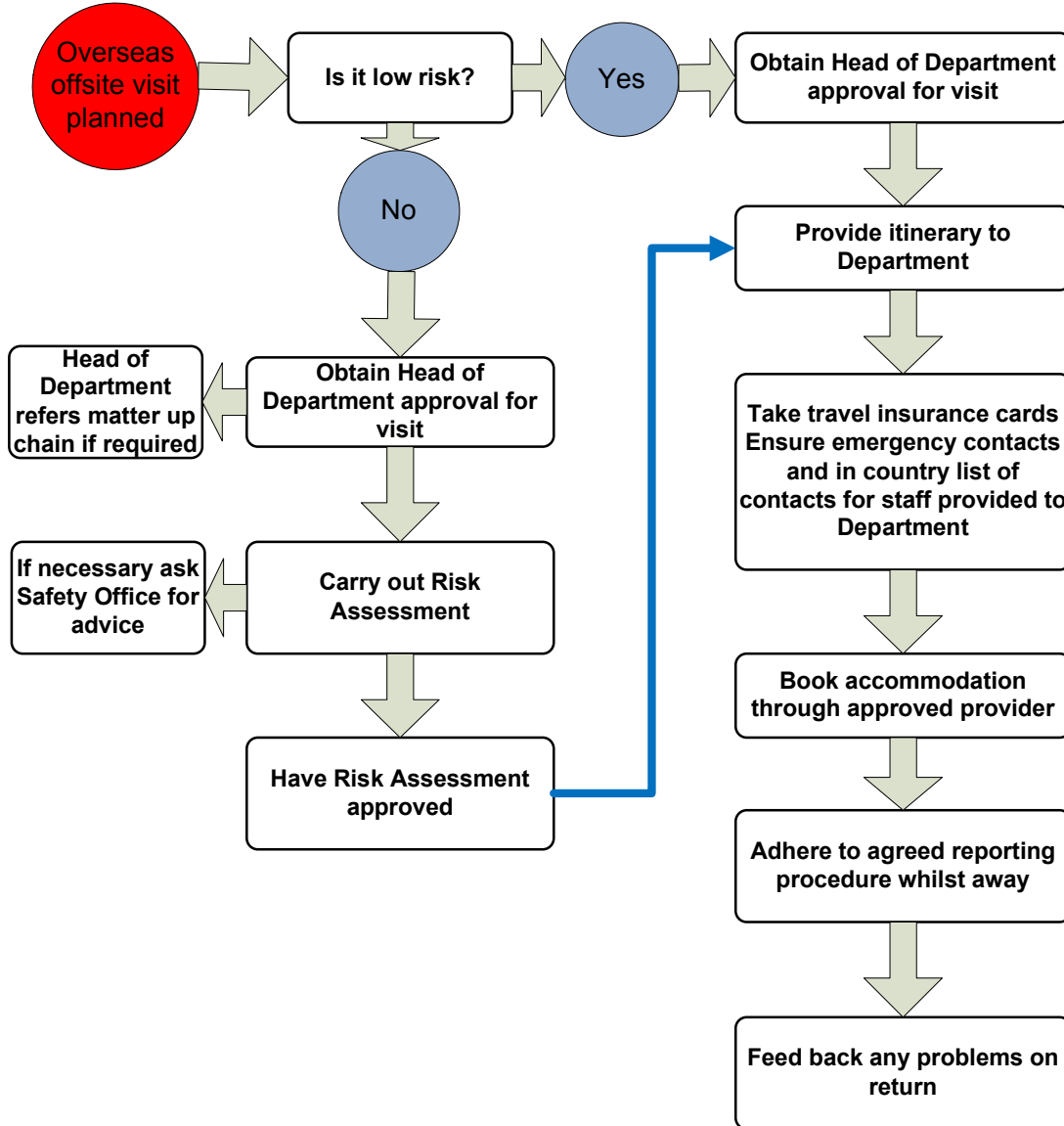
This policy will be reviewed on a three yearly basis or at an earlier date if changes are required due to risk assessment review or changes in government advice.

## **14. Appendices**

1. Flow chart for approval for overseas travel
2. Safety Tips for Employees travelling Overseas

# OVERSEAS TRAVEL RISK ASSESSMENT FLOW CHART

Flow Chart for those intending to travel overseas on University Business (Use in conjunction with Section 4)



## **Appendix 2**

### **Safety Tips for employees travelling overseas**

#### **Before you go:**

- Consider the culture in the country you are travelling to. Your actions may have repercussions for both yourself and your colleagues, take advice from those who are more experienced in the country before you go.
- Consider whether your mobile telephone will work in the destination of travel, you may need to hire a satellite telephone, take a departmental telephone or purchase a SIM card in country. Consider the data downloading arrangements offered by the service provider whilst abroad to ensure that you don't inadvertently incur excessive costs.
- Take a photocopy of your passport.
- Have some emergency cash held separately in case your wallet is stolen and if you can, take two credit cards which can be stored in different locations.
- Consider notifying your bank that you are travelling abroad to avoid problems associated with changing patterns of use of bank cards.

#### **While you are away:**

- Familiarise yourself with the emergency provisions within your room and the emergency evacuation routes available
- Don't invite clients back to your hotel room or conduct face to face business in your room
- Don't forget to use the reporting in procedure in place within your Department, failure to do so may result in disciplinary action being taken
- Keep your family/close contacts updated, when there are no formal reporting-in procedures in place. Make sure they are aware of how to contact you and the University if an emergency arises whilst you are away.

#### **Dealing with an Emergency:**

- Remember to take your university contact card and emergency travel insurance info, wherever you go
- Employees already overseas when a local situation changes should contact the University Security Provider 'Control Risks' on the emergency number issued
- Keep the University informed about any difficult situations you may be experiencing, if necessary using the 24 hour Security Report Centre on 465555.

#### **When you get back:**

- Report any near misses when you get back to base or during reporting in procedures.