Travel Policy

INTRODUCTION

The University recognises that travel is an important enabler for its teaching, learning, research, engagement and administration activities. Staff members and students may be required to undertake intrastate, interstate and/or international travel as part of University business or in connection with official activities.

Travel bookings and approvals must follow the University’s established processes. Travel requires open, accountable and transparent practices to ensure that the University’s duty of care to travellers is maintained and its prudential, legal and tax obligations are complied with. Travellers have an obligation under the University’s Code of Conduct to comply with this and other Governance documents while undertaking their duties.

STATEMENT OF AUTHORITY

The authority behind this policy is the Charles Darwin University Act 2003 part 3, section 15.

COMPLIANCE

This is a compliance requirement under the Code of Conduct and part 8, section 33 of the Charles Darwin University Act 2003.

INTENT

This Policy applies to all University travel arrangements and to all travellers who travel on behalf of the University on official University business, regardless of the source of funds, duration of the travel or business purpose. This may include, but is not limited to, staff members, persons accompanying staff members who are representing or engaged in University business, students, adjuncts, associates, including members of Council, consultants and other persons and/or visitors whose travel is associated with and paid for by the University.

RELEVANT DEFINITIONS

In the context of this document

Staff Member means anyone employed by the University and includes all continuing, fixed-term, casual, adjunct or honorary staff or those holding University offices or who are a member of a University committee;

Student means a student of the University as defined in the Charles Darwin University (Student of the University) By-laws;
POLICY

University resources must be used efficiently to ensure costs are minimised. Alternatives to undertaking travel should always be considered, such as teleconferencing and video-conferencing.

Pre-approval

Pre-approval is required on all travel, including travel at no cost to the University, prior to commencing a travel booking. Evidence must be retained by both the traveller and approving delegate for audit and record management purposes

Bookings

To assist the University in maintaining its duty of care obligations, all authorised travel to destinations 50km or more from the staff member’s normal place of work, or student’s primary campus, must be booked or recorded and approved in the University’s online booking tool. This includes the following types of travel:

- Flights on commercial carriers to domestic or international destinations;
- Accommodation;
- Car hire, including the use of University fleet or personal vehicles, bus hire;
- Air Charters; and
- Field trips and travel to remote areas.

Travel must be booked in economy class at the lowest fare available at the time of booking for the journey, that reasonably meets the business needs of the traveller, unless there are exceptional circumstances such as a documented medical condition or current written employment contract.

For further guidance on booking, recording and approving travel refer to Smart Approve Workflow Field Trip and Smart Approve Workflow International.

Expenses

Travellers must ensure that any expenditure they incur while travelling is for legitimate University business purposes. Incidental costs such as meals and transportation will be reimbursed by the University in accordance with the approved methods, for example, Travel Allowance, Corporate Purchasing Card or Expense Reimbursements. Expenses of a personal nature will not be reimbursed.

In the case of external grant funded travel, travellers may have agreed expenses covered by a cash advance, which must be acquitted upon return.

Approval

Delegation to approve travel on official University business is listed in the Delegation Register. A traveller must not approve their own travel or travel expenses. Staff members must not approve travel or travel expenses for an individual to whom they report.

Pre-approval must be obtained prior to booking any travel. Funds may only be spent on travel for official business directly associated with the functions of the University. The University will not pay for travel that is not approved or for personal travel. Failure to obtain approval prior to booking travel that is subsequently considered unreasonable or unnecessary may result in disciplinary action and the University recovering costs from the traveller.
Private travel

The practice of combining private travel with official travel is not encouraged, however Travel Approvers may review and approve incidental private travel on a case by case basis and must not result in any additional cost to the University. The University has an obligation to comply with the Fringe Benefit Tax Assessment Act (FBT) and its travel insurance policies.

Where private travel is approved in conjunction with official travel, the following requirements must be met:

- It can demonstrate that the dominant reason for the travel is for University business and that the private component is secondary. For the avoidance of doubt the official component of the travel must be at least 60%.
- A travel diary is maintained;
- Travel Insurance must be obtained that covers the private component of the trip as the University’s travel insurance policy does not extend to cover private travel.
- All costs associated with the private travel, including travel insurance, airfares etc are paid for separately by the traveller and not charged to the University.

The University will not reimburse or pay for expenses incurred in relation to private travel or expenses determined by the approver to be unreasonable for official travel.

Travel diary

It is an Australian Taxation Office requirement that all travellers keep a Travel Diary for travel that exceeds six (6) consecutive nights or includes any private travel.

Remote travel/field trips

Air travel to remote locations must only be in an aircraft operated by air charter company which is duly licensed for the regular transportation of fare paying passengers. Travellers must not pilot a personal or leased aircraft or travel using a private plane or non-approved air charter unless an exception is granted by the Vice-Chancellor.

Where remote travel requires chartering flights, travellers should always attempt to coordinate their travel with other business units, government agencies or organisations in order to share the cost of the charter flights and other transport.

Insurance

The University maintains corporate travel insurance that provides cover for travellers on approved University business only.

Health and safety

Reasonable steps must be taken by a traveller to ensure they are fit to travel and that they avoid doing anything that creates or increases the risk to their health and safety. As a representative of the University, the traveller must ensure that their behaviour is at all times appropriate to the purpose of the travel, compliant with local laws and customs and consistent with the University’s Code of Conduct.

In the event of a significant incident such as, but not limited to, civil unrest or natural disaster whilst travelling, the traveller must follow any advice issued by the relevant local authorities and/or the University.
Travel warnings/restrictions

Travel will not be approved to areas with a Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade travel warning of 'Do not travel' or 'Reconsider your need to travel' or if insurance cover is unavailable, unless specific approval is provided by the Vice-Chancellor.

Risks are to be assessed and managed in accordance with the University's work health and safety obligations and taken into consideration prior to approval and again before departure.

Lounge / Frequent Flyer Memberships

Lounge / Frequent Flyer Memberships is the responsibility of the individual traveller except where the employment contract allows for this cost to be covered by the University.

Non-compliance

Failure to comply with Governance Documents is considered a breach of the Code of Conduct and is treated seriously by the University. Reports of concerns about non-compliance will be managed in accordance with the relevant disciplinary procedures.

ESSENTIAL SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Internal

Charles Darwin University Union and Enterprise Agreement 2018

Charles Darwin University (Student Conduct) By-laws

Code of Conduct

Corporate Purchasing Card Policy

Corporate Purchasing Card Procedures

Delegations Policy

Charles Darwin University (Student Conduct) By-Laws

Work Health and Safety Policy

External

Fringe Benefits Tax Assessment Act 1986 (Commonwealth)

Income Tax Assessment Act 1997 (Commonwealth)

Payroll Tax Act 2009 (NT)

Smart Traveller
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<td>23 Sept 2015</td>
<td>Vice-Chancellor</td>
<td>Creation of original document and upload to CDU website.</td>
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<td>10 Feb 2016</td>
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<td>• Addition of definition for Private Expense</td>
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<td>• Addition of All authorisations of expenditure need to be publicly defensible to dot point 10</td>
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<td>• Amended Internal Supporting Information reference to Student Misconduct Procedures to CDU (Student Conduct) By Laws</td>
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<td>Comprehensive review of Policy, procedures and online travel management system.</td>
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<td>• Complete rewrite with principles moved into specific headings</td>
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