

University Business Travel Procedure

Version 2 – August 2026

Procedure Author – Senior Executive Officer, Vice Chancellor's Office

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UNIVERSITY BUSINESS TRAVEL PROCEDURE

1. Introduction

This Procedure sets out the University's approach to managing, monitoring, and reducing business travel in alignment with its Net Zero Target. It sets out what you must take into account when planning and booking travel, ensuring value for money and strengthening duty of care and travel monitoring processes. All travel must be booked through Clarity Travel Management ("Clarity"), the University's approved travel provider, to ensure compliance and accurate reporting.

In line with Scottish Government net zero legislation and the global climate agenda, the University has set a target to reduce business travel emissions by increasing public transport use and significantly decreasing air travel with the ambition of achieving this by 2030. The University has a duty of care to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of all our staff when they are travelling on University business. This includes location tracking, and completion of mandatory pre-travel checks; international travel will not be supported where these requirements are not met.

Faculties and Directorates must ensure travel is essential, cost-effective, and within approved budgets. Deans and Directors will receive monthly reports to support oversight and informed decision-making. This mandatory procedure outlines responsibilities for all University Travellers and third parties, promoting safe, compliant, and sustainable travel. University Travellers are staff, and Court members who travel on approved University business.

This procedure should be read in conjunction with the [University Expenses Procedure](#).

2. Scope of Procedure

This procedure sets out the University's approach to business travel to ensure that:

- The health, safety, and wellbeing of all individuals travelling on University business are safeguarded.
- The University fulfils its obligations under the [Climate Change \(Scotland\) Act 2009](#) and contributes to addressing the global climate emergency by minimising the environmental impact of business travel.
- All travel and travel management activities comply with relevant procurement legislation and University procedures.
- Staff who are required to travel are supported with appropriate arrangements that take account of any reasonable adjustments or other requirements associated with protected characteristics under the *Equality Act 2010*.

This procedure applies to all University business travel funded by the University. Where external funding imposes additional or more restrictive travel conditions, these must be complied with.

Failure to follow this procedure whether through oversight or repeated non-compliance may require the University to take appropriate action under its established People Management procedures.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The table below sets out the roles and responsibilities for colleagues involved in booking or undertaking travel on behalf of the University.

Role	Responsibilities
Traveller	Plan and book travel in line with this procedure. Ensure Budget Holder and Line Manager approval is sought before any bookings are made and comply with all local pre-travel booking requirements for their Faculties and Directorates. Ensure they hold a valid passport and required visas for international travel. Complete all relevant risk assessments and ensure any health requirements (e.g. vaccinations) are in place. Complete an International Travel Request Form prior to any international bookings being made. Ensure the trip does not contravene Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office ("FCDO") travel advice. Raise any exceptions to Heads of Service Director/Dean in advance of any bookings being made.
Travel Bookers	Confirm that any travel has the required pre-approvals before booking. Ensure that all bookings are made in line with this procedure and any concerns raised to the Heads of Service/Director/Dean in advance of bookings being made.
Budget Holders	Approve travel requests in line with the procedure. Raise any exceptions to Heads of Service/Director/Dean in advance of any bookings being made.
Line Managers	In conjunction with the Traveller, ensure a suitable and sufficient risk assessment is completed in advance of travel. Ensure the trip does not contravene FCDO travel advice. Ensure the Traveller can be contacted in the event of an emergency.
Heads of Service/ Directors/Deans/ Head of Faculty Operations	Ensure this procedure is communicated to Travellers, Travel Bookers and Line Managers and is complied with. Monitor travel spend.

Risk & Resilience Team	Maintain record of all International Travellers. Provide support and guidance to International Travellers. Ensure all authorised international travel is covered by the University Insurance. Provide support to International Travellers in the event of a major incident occurring in the country they have travelled to that requires evacuation.
Health & Safety Team	Review travel risk assessments completed by Travellers and provide feedback and commentary to support informed decision making by the relevant approver.

4. Considering Travel

This section of the procedure details the considerations required by Travellers up until the point of booking travel. In addition to the considerations listed below, Travellers should ensure they comply with all local pre-travel booking requirements for their Directorate or Faculty. For more information on local pre-travel booking requirements please speak to your Head of Faculty Operations or Head of Service who will direct you to the appropriate colleague at this point.

All travel decisions should be made with sustainability, value for money and the University's duty of care in mind. Travellers and Line Managers should also be mindful that travel decisions may be subject to public, regulatory, or reputational scrutiny. Before travel is authorised and booked, Travellers and Line Managers should consider:

- Environmental impact of travel, particularly flights
- Individual needs and personal impact of travel
- Value for money
- Benefits to the University of travel

Accessibility requirements

Disabled staff and staff with medical or accessibility requirements may need travel arrangements which fall outside of the cost limits outlined in this procedure. For example, using taxis rather than public transport, staying at the hotel closest to/ attached to the venue they are attending, etc. If travel arrangements fall outside of cost limits due to disability, medical needs or reasonable adjustments, the traveller should advise the Travel Booker this is due to accessibility requirements. To maintain privacy and dignity, Travellers should not be asked to disclose any details about their personal condition or provide any evidence of such to the Travel Booker.

4.1 Duty of Care

As a responsible employer, the University will take all reasonable measures to ensure University Travellers are safe. The University's duty of care places shared responsibility on Travellers and their Line Managers to ensure that health and safety risks are identified and managed, and that every reasonable precaution is taken to protect the Traveller's health, safety and wellbeing before, during and after travel.

Adhering to this procedure and any additional requirements from the Risk & Resilience or Health & Safety teams for international travel is mandatory and ensures that:

- The Risk & Resilience team are aware of all international travel plans and can keep the Traveller informed about unexpected levels of risk, to help ensure a sensible decision on whether to travel or not, can be made.
- Appropriate travel insurance cover is in place for all approved International Travel, subject to the insurance policy terms and conditions.
- If a major incident occurs overseas, the University will take all reasonable steps to contact affected Travellers and provide support. Personal Accident and Travel Assistance is available from the University's insurers 24/7 response team who will provide support during the incident. Travel insurance applies by default to domestic travel.

To ensure the University meets our duty of care, all Travellers undertaking international travel are required to review and comply with all requirements set out in this procedure under Section 5.3 and on the *International Travel* page on UWS Connect available [here](#). This page is subject to periodic updates, and Travellers should ensure they consult the most recent version when planning or considering any trip.

4.2 Sustainability

Reducing carbon emissions from travel is the responsibility of all University staff. Increasing the information on and understanding of individual choices on the carbon impact of travel is critical in influencing and changing behaviours and decisions.

The UWS Sustainability Plan 2025-2030 includes a number of commitments on travel including a reduction in the emissions from business travel through an increase in the number of public transport and other sustainable journeys replacing air travel.

Travellers should read the [UWS Travel Sustainability guide](#) and use the sustainable transport hierarchy when considering travel to support them in minimising their impact.

1. Reduce the amount of travel  Use digital alternatives to collaborate instead of travelling Combine multiple destinations into one trip	2. Use low carbon transport  Travel without flying – consider alternative modes of travel within the UK, to Europe, and within other countries Use public transport (e.g. rail, coach, ferry)	3. Fly when there are no alternatives – and consider:  The route – flying direct is usually less carbon intensive Ticket class – economy flights are the default unless by permissible exception
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For more information or guidance on travelling sustainably please contact netzero@uws.ac.uk

Travellers and travel bookers are responsible for ensuring that travel is planned and undertaken in the most carbon-neutral way practicable.

4.3 Domestic Travel

For all mainland UK travel, it is expected that travel will be booked as soon as possible and no later than 21 days in advance to ensure that the most economic fare can be secured.

All travel should be booked in line with the University's approved class and cost limits outlined at **Appendix I**.

Travel between University campuses in Scotland should, where possible, be via pre-booked public transport, if this is not possible then travel should be undertaken in the most carbon-neutral way practicable. University fleet cars can be used to travel between campuses. To become an authorised driver to use University fleet cars, please apply on the Authorised Driver page on [Connect](#). If personal cars are being used to travel between campuses mileage claims can be submitted via the University Expenses Procedure. It is the responsibility of individuals to ensure they have the appropriate car insurance in place for the use of their own personal cars for university business. For travel to our London campus, approval should be sought from your Line Manager and the Budget Holder before travel is booked.

Travel to other UK destinations should, where possible, be pre-booked and use public transport, approval should be sought from your Line Manager and the Budget Holder before travel is booked.

Domestic travel should not be booked on a personal credit card and reclaimed through the University Expenses Procedure. Where Clarity are unable to support a booking, the booking should be made via a University corporate card or procurement card. This excludes taxis, buses, parking and London Underground where the use of a personal card is permitted.

It is the responsibility of Line Managers to ensure that they are aware of the whereabouts of their staff when travelling within the UK.

4.4 International Travel

No international travel should be booked without completion of an International Travel Form which can be accessed [here](#). Guidance on how to complete this form is included in the [International Travel User Guide](#). Travellers should only book their travel once their completed International Travel Form has been approved. International travel should be booked at the earliest opportunity after approval and no later than 28 days before travel for long haul flights. All international internal flights should be booked no later than 21 days before travel, except in the case of an emergency and when approval from the Line Manager and Budget Holder are given.

All international travel should be booked via Clarity; this includes any in-country air or rail travel within the primary international destination. If after consultation with Clarity, they are unable to support the necessary booking, an alternative booking route can be used with approval from your Head of Service, Dean or Director. Evidence must be provided and kept supporting these exceptions. Exceptions to using Clarity, together with approval and evidence requirements are listed at **Appendix II** to this procedure. No international travel should be booked on a personal credit card and reclaimed through the University Expenses Procedure. Where Clarity is unable to support a booking, the booking should be made via a University Corporate Card or Procurement

Card. If you do not have access to a University Corporate Card or Procurement Card, please speak to your Head of Faculty Operations or Head of Service who will direct you to the appropriate colleague to make the booking.

Any changes to a booked international trip require the Traveller to update the approved International Travel Form to ensure that the Risk & Resilience Team are updated on your planned trip.

The University's travel insurance does not cover any element of personal travel.

In the unusual event that appropriate insurance is not secured from the University's insurance provider (e.g. exclusions are made to the policy), the trip cannot proceed. Where the FCDO advises no travel to a specific location, it is an express condition of insurance that the policy is withdrawn and the trip cannot proceed. Where the FCDO advises all but essential travel, trips can only proceed with the approval of the University Secretary and following consideration of any alternative mitigation measures which may be appropriate and meet any subjectivities of the insurance policy; a business case is also required which should outline the reasons that the trip should proceed, the benefits to the university of the trip and the risks if the trip were to be refused.

5. Booking Travel

5.1 Travel Management Company

All air travel, accommodation, and rail bookings must be made through Clarity. Exceptions may be permitted where Clarity cannot provide the required journey or where significant cost saving for the University can be demonstrated. Details of acceptable exceptions and the required approval process for exceptions are outlined at **Appendix II** of this Procedure.

The most efficient and convenient way to arrange university business travel is through Clarity's online booking system, ClarityGo. A user guide for ClarityGo can be found [here](#). For further information or training on ClarityGo please contact procurement@uws.ac.uk.

Clarity offers price matching and if you are able to obtain a better price elsewhere this should be discussed with Clarity to ensure they cannot match price before considering booking elsewhere.

5.2 Travel Booker

The Travel Booker should ensure that the appropriate approval has been granted for the Traveller before booking.

The Travel Booker must consult with the Head of Faculty Operations, Head of Service or Director if any travel request falls outside this procedure or exceeds the specified limits. Travel that does not comply with this Procedure must not be booked without written approval from the relevant Head of Faculty Operations, Head of Service, or Director.

For exceptions involving travel by a Head of Faculty Operations, Head of Service

Director, or VCE member, approval must be obtained from their Line Manager.

5.3 *Booking travel in advance*

Travel bookings should be made as far in advance as possible and normally within the timescales below. However, it is noted that on some occasions travel may be required to be booked at short notice, this should not be normal practice.

- 28 days in advance for international flights.
- 21 days in advance for domestic flights.
- At least 21 days in advance for domestic rail travel, noting that the best prices are normally obtained when booking 8-12 weeks in advance.

Travellers and Travel Bookers should consider the cancellation policy on each booking prior to confirming the booking to ensure this is suitable for the needs of the trip. In the event of cancellation, Travel Bookers should ensure this is actioned via Clarity and a refund is received.

5.4 *Travelling with a spouse/family*

Under no circumstances should Travel Bookers book travel for spouse / family of the Traveller. Spouse/family are permitted to travel with Travellers at the cost of the Traveller, Travellers must notify their Line Manager in advance of travel for awareness only. Travellers should note that the University travel insurance does not provide cover for spouse/family members travelling and it's their own responsibility to arrange this personally.

5.5 *Mileage*

Any approved mileage for university business travel is payable via the University Expenses Procedure and is not within the scope of this procedure. Where possible Travellers should make use of the University pool cars before opting to travel in their own personal car.

5.6 *Rail travel*

The limits and class of travel allowable, including approval requirements, are included at Appendix I.

In circumstances where a train is delayed or cancelled, the Traveller should instruct the Travel Booker to apply for compensation or a refund to the University. The Travel Booker should ensure a refund is received. The University bank account details can be obtained from your Finance Business Partner, if you do not know who this is please consult with your Head of Service.

5.7 *Air travel*

Air Travel is allowable, where it is the most appropriate means of travel. Limits and class allowable, including approval requirements, are included at **Appendix I**.

All baggage requirements should be booked in advance before travel. When travelling internationally and this is not possible, a University Corporate Card should be used to pay for additional baggage at the airport.

Whilst Travellers are permitted to accrue personal frequent flyer benefits when travelling on university business Line Managers and Budget Holders should be comfortable that airlines are not selected on this basis only. Travel Bookers should check the price of alternative airlines to confirm that the selected airline offers the best value for the trip.

In the circumstances where a flight is significantly delayed or cancelled, the Traveller should instruct the Travel Booker to apply for compensation or a refund to the University. The Travel Booker should ensure a refund is received. The University bank account details can be obtained from your Finance Business Partner, if you do not know who this is please consult with your Head of Service.

5.8 *Public transport*

Travellers should use public transport where practicable, as it generally produces lower carbon emissions and aligns with the University's sustainability goals. This principle applies in most circumstances, noting that exceptions may be appropriate.

5.9 *Accommodation*

The University does not permit the use of Airbnb as such accommodation does not meet the University's standards for safety, insurance, emergency procedures, or security. For longer term stays, Clarity can provide options for serviced suites or apartments. There are no exceptions to this.

Where an overnight stay is required, Travellers should select a hotel which falls within the price caps included at **Appendix I**. If a suitable hotel cannot be found within the price cap approval should be sought from the Head of Faculty Operations, Head of Service or Director prior to booking.

Where possible, accommodation should be booked with breakfast included.

5.10 *Car hire and parking*

Car hire is only permitted when:

- No reasonable public transport option exists; or
- It is not practical to utilise the University Fleet Vehicles
- There are health, disability, or logistical reasons; and
- The Budget Holder has approved the hire

All car hire should be booked via Clarity.

Where possible, airport parking should be pre-booked via Clarity. Airport parking is only permitted when it is the most cost-effective option, e.g. it is cheaper than a taxi to and from the airport from your home or a campus. All other parking costs should be claimed via the University Expenses Procedure.

6. During Travel

6.1 *Domestic travel*

Where possible and practicable, public transport should be used for transfers between airports, railway stations, hotels and venues, always taking into consideration cost, time,

sustainability and personal safety.

When travelling domestically you should ensure that your Line Manager is aware of your movements in case of an emergency.

If you fall ill during domestic travel, please notify your Line Manager immediately to allow them to offer support and ensure you can make arrangements to return home safely.

6.2 International travel

It is important that the International Travel Request Form is kept up to date by the Traveller with any changes to your travel plans to ensure the Risk & Resilience Team are aware of the locations of Travellers at all times.

Travellers should keep in touch with their Line Manager or agreed contact at the University throughout their trip and in line with details given in the International Travel Form.

Travellers should carry the most up to date 24/7 assistance card for use in the event of an emergency abroad. Where relevant, and when able to do so, Travellers should notify their agreed University contact or Line Manager of the situation. Any emergency requiring escalation within the University must be reported via Security, ensuring appropriate co-ordination in response.

It is important that your next-of-kin details are provided correctly on the International Travel Form in case of an emergency.

7. After Travel

All Travellers undertaking International Business travel should provide a brief report upon their return from the trip. This should include a summary of the activity, personnel met, any issues, feedback on partnership, academic follow-up, lessons learned, final costs against budget etc. This report should be submitted to the relevant Head of Faculty Operations, Head of Service/Director and Line Manager for Senior Management to enhance future risk mitigation strategies and Traveller safety. A copy of the report should also be submitted to the Office of the Vice-Principal (External Engagement). This report should be completed within 21 days of your return.

Any incidents, accidents and near misses that occur during travel, should be recorded on an incident form in the [Awaken system](#) and notified to the [Risk and Resilience team](#) within 21 days of your return.

8. Reporting and Oversight

Monthly travel management reports are sent to Head of Faculty Operations, Heads of Service, Directors and Deans to ensure that:

- Resources are being managed effectively.
- Travel bookings are being made as far in advance as possible.
- Exceptions to this procedure are being appropriately recorded and authorised.

Appendix I – University Approved Class and Limits for travel costs

The following limits have been agreed for university business travel, except where a disability, medical condition or other reasonable adjustment has been noted.

Mode of Transport	Journey time 6 hours or less	Journey time greater than 6 hours	Notes
Flight	Economy	Premium Economy or Business Class	Approval from Line Manager and Budget Holder for business class flights is required. All long-haul flights should be booked as far in advance as possible, normally, no later than 1 month in advance of travel. However, it is noted that on some occasions, travel is required to be booked at short notice, this should not be normal practice. All short-haul flights should be booked as far in advance as possible, normally, no later than 1 month in advance of travel. However, it is noted that on some occasions, travel is required to be booked at short notice, this should not be normal practice.
Rail	Economy	First Class	Approval from Line Manager and Budget Holder for first class train tickets required and only when booked as far in advance. However, it is noted that on some occasions, travel is required to be booked at short notice, this should not be the norm. First class travel is permitted to facilitate a productive use of travel time, as first class carriages typically offer enhanced Wi-Fi, quieter workspace and power outlets. The use of open return tickets should be avoided where possible.

Accommodation	Cost per night*
Hotel – Edinburgh	£200
Hotel – London	£200
Hotel – Rest of UK	£120
Hotel – International	£200

*excluding breakfast

Appendix II – Exceptions

If Clarity cannot support a specific University travel booking, Travellers or bookers may, by exception, use another provider. These bookings must be made with a University Corporate or Procurement Card. If you do not have a University Corporate Card or Procurement Card, please speak to your Head of Faculty Operations or Department Administrator for support in making a booking.

Permitted exceptions to using Clarity are as follows:

- When attending a conference and a special rate is available as part of the conference booking. Please note Travel Bookers should still price check with Clarity to ensure that the special rate is the best rate available.
- When attending a conference and the accommodation is included in the ticket price.
- Where a disability or health-related requirement necessitates an alternative booking method.
- A significant saving to the University can be obtained by booking out with Clarity.

Clarity provides a range of support services that are not typically available when booking directly. In addition, they offer management reporting that cannot be accessed through direct bookings.

While using an alternative provider may appear to offer a cost saving to the University, it often results in additional administrative work - such as completing, approving, and submitting card reconciliations to Finance for processing - which should be factored into the overall cost.

Accordingly, the University's significant savings through Clarity can be summarised as follows:

Travel Booking	Saving Required
All Hotel Bookings	£50
International Flights	£500
Domestic Flights	£50
Domestic Rail	£50

Travel Bookers should record any instance where a Clarity booking is more expensive than booking directly but does not meet the permitted savings criteria. These cases should be reported to universitytravel@uws.ac.uk with supporting details and evidence, so they can be reviewed and discussed with Clarity on a quarterly basis.

Evidence required to support exceptions:

- Written confirmation of Clarity cost, and written confirmation that they cannot price match the price obtained directly.
- Written confirmation of the cheaper price obtained.

Approval required to support exceptions:

- Approval is required in writing prior to booking from the Head of Service/ Director or Head of Faculty Operations.

Please submit the evidence and approval to universitytravel@uws.ac.uk for monitoring and to support ongoing discussions with Clarity.