

Aberystwyth University Travel Policy

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Authorised by: Health, Safety and Environment Committee

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1.0 ABERYSTWYTH UNIVERSITY TRAVEL POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of Aberystwyth University, so far as is reasonably practicable, and in accordance with the relevant legislation, statutory requirements and best practice, to ensure the health and safety of employees, students and visitors of the University.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Additionally to other duties in law, Aberystwyth University and all its affiliations have a specific obligation under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, to ensure that risks from travel on University business are suitably considered and controlled as far as reasonably practicable.

For the purpose of this Policy Standard 'Business' is the generic term used for activities associated with, and agreed through, the University, such as lecturing, research work, work placements, visits, fieldwork, business, recruitment, and conference attendance.

Aberystwyth University requires that:

- All trips involving public or pre-booked transport and/or overnight accommodation will be booked through the University's Travel Provider so all individual's itineraries are recorded and whereabouts known at all times.
- All travel for the purposes of University business must be approved by the individual's Line Manager and by their Institute Director / Head of Professional Service Department or delegate (where appropriate).
- A travel risk assessment is produced for all travel and takes into account the needs of the individual and will vary according to the country being visited and the risk rating of that country as deemed by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office at the time of travel and the nature (or risk) of the work to be undertaken.
- University financial procedures and regulations are followed.
- University travel cover is obtained via the Finance Department.
- The whereabouts of University staff and students when on University business is known to the University and its Travel Provider in order to contact and provide assistance to them in the event of an emergency or other incident.

In accordance with Aberystwyth University's Health and Safety Policy the duty to implement this Policy is delegated to each Institute and Professional Service Department, as applicable.

3.0 BACKGROUND AND INFORMATION

As travel is a regular part of the University's activities, e.g. for field trips, work experience, recruitment, collaboration opportunities, sharing and development of courses etc., it is important that all staff and students undertaking such activities and embarking on any travel are aware of the risks and are guided to follow the necessary protocols to prevent any ill health, accident, injury or disruption during their time away.

It is also important that where an event occurs such as an accident, injury, theft, uprising, or natural disaster that contingency plans appropriate to the situation are implemented to deal with any emergency, and that the traveller is properly insured.

The Aberystwyth University Travel Policy and supporting systems are designed to provide information, instruction and guidance to all AU staff and students whilst providing the necessary records and information, as required by the University.

Where appropriate, the Policy will distinguish between any additional requirements for domestic and overseas travel, however the prevailing principles of this Policy will apply equally to all types of travel while on University business unless otherwise stated. The term 'domestic' travel applies to all travel undertaken within the United Kingdom. The term 'overseas' travel will apply to all travel undertaken outside the United Kingdom.

4.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

Risk Assessments are developed to control the risk of injury or illness whilst undertaking University business. The law does not expect all risks to be eliminated but it does require employers to protect people from harm, as far as is 'reasonably practicable'.

The travel risk assessment is a plan that takes into reasonable account who is travelling, where they are travelling to, where they are staying, what documents are required for travel and work, the types of illnesses and infections that may be encountered, injuries and emergency provisions and events and / or natural disasters that may occur during travel. This is in order for individuals or line managers to identify the actions required to control those risks, as far as is reasonably practicable. In many cases the travel risk assessment will be complemented by a separate assessment of the risks arising from the actual activity being conducted.

Assessing risks will not result in all risks being eliminated and as such it is essential that all members of staff are fully prepared and adequately insured before travelling.

To support this process a template risk assessment for travel and a webpage that links to information which will allow individuals to take the identified actions to control risks has been produced. These actions are then checked through a risk assessment checklist which is located on the Aberystwyth University HSE web site: <http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/hse/>

A travel risk assessment on University business:

- a) Assists the University in fulfilling its statutory duties and common law duty of care.
- b) Reduces the likelihood of staff, students and others being injured or made ill from travel and activities etc. for which the University has responsibility.
- c) Takes into account and follows the guidelines and restrictions issued by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO).
- d) Considers specific health risks associated with a particular area or region and the protocols that should be followed.

e) Makes individuals aware of their responsibilities for ensuring that they obtain and maintain any vaccination or preventative medications (e.g. malaria) as required: Please consult the following web sites for further information:

Foreign Office – Travel Advice - <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>
NHS - <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Travel-immunisation/Pages/Introduction>

A travel risk assessment takes into account the nature and risk of the activity, for example:

a) For most 'low risk' activities such as lecturing, conferences, recruitment, visits to museums etc. the completion and approval of the travel risk assessment is all that is required.

b) For 'higher risk' activities' such as fieldwork, the completion of the travel risk assessment must be supplemented by an activity-specific risk assessment identifying controls that have been agreed and approved at an Institute / Professional Service Department level.

c) In relation to placements, the completion of the travel risk assessment must be supplemented by a risk assessment for the placement and protocols that have been agreed and approved at an Institute / Professional Service Department level.

d) The type of issues to be considered by a travel risk assessment may include, but may not be limited to:

- Disease or other particular medical concern (such as known conditions for the individual(s) engaging in travel)
- Personal fitness to travel
- Immunisation / Vaccination requirements
- Accommodation
- Manual Handling (such as carrying luggage and/or work equipment)
- Specific safety issues or concerns regarding the proposed destination
- Medical Emergency Protocols
- Terrorism

e) The travel risk assessment (and activity-specific risk assessment if required) should be completed by a competent person within the Institute / Professional Service Department (who may or may not be the staff member or student undertaking the travel). A competent person is someone who has sufficient training and experience, or knowledge and other qualities, that allow them to undertake the risk assessment. In instances where the competent person is another member of staff, the person undertaking the travel should also have considerable input into the contents of the travel risk assessment.

For domestic travel, Institutes and Professional Service Departments may wish to produce template risk assessments for each travel or transport method used by its staff and students, which will be periodically reviewed by a competent person within that Institute / Professional Service Department. Such template risk assessments should be adapted for each particular occasion, to account for such variances as weather conditions, road conditions, etc. Institute Directors and Heads of Professional Service Departments should ensure that all individuals are provided with, are aware of, and comply with the control measures identified in these risk assessments. These may be supplemented by activity specific risk assessments where required. For each case of overseas travel, a specific travel risk assessment will be required for each destination, in addition to activity specific risk assessment(s) where appropriate.

The completion of a travel risk assessment does not remove the requirement for individuals undertaking travel on University business to conduct dynamic risk assessments during the period of their travel. Dynamic risk assessment is a continuous process of identifying hazards in a changing and potentially unstable environment, with identified risks assessed and action taken to reduce or eliminate those risks as considered appropriate by the travelling individual.

If the purpose of the proposed visit(s) is to undertake research, the University's Research Ethics Policy and approvals procedures must also be adhered to.

5.0 AUTHORISATION

All travel proposals must follow documented authorisation procedures set out in this Policy.

Staff and students should seek an initial approval from their respective Line Manager / Supervisor as soon as the requirement or intention to travel is established. Approval from the Line Manager / Supervisor does not allow formal arrangements to be made at this stage, but will prompt the development of the travel risk assessment.

i. Where domestic travel (i.e. within the United Kingdom) is to be undertaken

a. It is the University's Policy that such travel be approved by the appropriate Institute Director / Head of Professional Service Department (or delegates). This will include consideration for the activity specific risk assessment where applicable.

ii. Where there are no travel restrictions imposed by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)

a. It is the University's Policy that such travel will be approved by the appropriate Institute Director / Head of Professional Service Department (or delegates), following due consideration of the Travel Risk Assessment and accompanying documentation.

b. Appendix A provides a summary of the typical stages in the travel approval process. Failure to complete any of these steps may result in the individual's travel cover being considered null and void.

Where the FCO offers specific advice against travel or advises against all but essential travel, an additional and specific risk assessment must be produced, considering both the planned activity and the travel arrangements. Subsequent to the completion of a suitable risk assessment the following authorisation criteria and arrangements apply:

iii. Where the FCO advises against all travel to countries or regions unless on essential business:

a. It is the University's Policy that travel should only be considered following a comprehensive risk assessment and receipt of advice from the Health, Safety and Environment department, University Travel Cover Provider, and having due regard for FCO advice. In all circumstances the case for the importance of travelling must be evidentially overwhelming.

b. Authorisation shall only be given by the Institute Director / Head of Professional Service Department following due consideration of the risk assessment and following consultation with the Health , Safety and Environment Department.

c. Approval from the University's Insurers will be required for all travel to FCO listed countries and regions and the Travel Cover Form completed.

d. In exceptional circumstances and where there is a continuing concern, or where the person(s) wishing to travel is resolute in his/her intention to travel, the matter will be referred to the Director of Health, Safety and Environment and Pro Vice Chancellor (Chief Operating Officer).

iv. Where the FCO advises against all travel to countries or regions:

a. It is the University's policy that all such travel will only be approved by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Chief Operating Officer) and Director of Health, Safety and Environment, except when travelling to their respected home countries.

b. Requests will not be considered for any such travel request unless supported by a written Safety Case. The proposal must also be supported by the Institute Director / Head of Professional Service Department and relevant Head of Department / Line Manager, clearly stating that the requirement to undertake the proposed travel is evidentially overwhelming.

c. All requests for such travel should be sent to the Director of Health, Safety and Environment with at much notice as possible or a minimum of 30 days prior to the intended departure date.

d. Normally, travel will only be authorised if the activity is under the control of an International Humanitarian or Governmental Agency, or employs similar controls.

e. Approval from the University's Travel Cover Providers will be required for all travel to FCO listed countries and regions and the Travel Cover Form completed.

v. Travel to Home Country or Region:

Where a Student or member of Staff wishes to return to their home country to undertake research or work and that home country (or region) has travel restrictions stipulated by the FCO for UK citizens then travel may be authorised provided the following criteria are met:

a. The research / work proposed can only be undertaken in that home country/region or it was always the intention of the funding partner/sponsor that the research should be undertaken in that home country / region.

b. The research /work does not put the person at a notably greater level of risk when compared to the risks they would be exposed to if returning to live and undertake their usual work in that home country / region.

c. The person holds a valid passport for that country.

d. A travel risk assessment and associated activity risk assessment (if required) has been completed and advice sought from the Health, Safety and Environment department.

e. Approval from the University's Travel Cover Providers has been obtained and the Travel Cover Form completed.

f. Approval for travel shall be provided by the Institute Director giving due consideration to the risk assessment and reason for travel.

g. Students have informed the Compliance Manager in the International Office, for reporting to UK Visas and Immigration.

6.0 POBL ABER PEOPLE

In addition to attaining the appropriate approval for the travel to be undertaken, all members of staff must record details of their travel on the Pobl Aber People system. This must be completed before their departure. Guidance on how to do so is available on the Human Resources department website.

7.0 TRAVEL COVER

All overseas travel must be notified prior to travel to the University Insurance Officer by completing the Finance Department Travel Cover Form.

This form reflects the controls required by the University overseas travel risk assessment and ensures that all travellers have considered the risks of travel, obtained the necessary documentation and vaccinations, have followed the correct approval procedure, provided the necessary emergency contact details and are aware of the limitations of the travel cover and of the need to obtain additional private insurance where necessary.

8.0 INSTITUTES & PROFESSIONAL SERVICE DEPARTMENTS REQUIREMENTS

Institute and Service Departments are required to establish a management system that:

- i.** Identifies those persons / roles / groups* authorised to approve travel to countries or regions for which no FCO restrictions apply.
- ii.** Identifies those persons / roles / groups* authorised to approve the activity risk assessments for travel on University business.
- iii.** Identifies those persons / roles / groups* responsible for notifying the travel to the Finance Department, if not the traveller him/herself.
- iv.** Maintains a travel itinerary and contact details of those persons who are travelling during the period of their travel.

**this could be a Line Manager, the individual, a person with a central administrative role.*

The Institute Directors / Heads of Professional Service Departments should ensure that all their staff members and students who travel for the purpose of University business comply with this Policy.

9.0 STAFF AND STUDENT DUTIES

It is the duty of all staff and students travelling on behalf of the University to comply with this Policy and ensure that the travel risk assessment and activity risk assessments (if applicable) are satisfactorily completed, and approved by the relevant parties (see section 6.0) prior to their travel. All staff and students travelling on behalf of the University are required to ensure that the requirements, applicable controls measures and guidelines are followed during their period of travel. Regular contact should be maintained through the use of mobile phone or email via a pre-determined contact and/or at pre-arranged times.

All staff and students must ensure that all aspects of the Travel Check List (Appendix B) have been satisfied prior to their travel.

10.0 RECORD KEEPING

All associated risk assessments and additional documentation (including full itinerary and emergency contact numbers) that relates to work activity, fieldwork and group trips etc. must be kept by the Institute / Professional Service Department responsible for the arrangements and readily accessible in the event of an emergency.

For all overseas travel, a copy of the travel details including emergency contact numbers and a copy of the travel risk assessment will be given to and retained by the International Office.

Supplementary risk assessments required for placements must be undertaken and retained by the Institute and / or the placement approver.

11.0 FURTHER INFORMATION AND PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

Further information on the University's controls to enable safe travel is available through the Health, Safety and Environment Department web pages, the Finance Department website and the associated links.

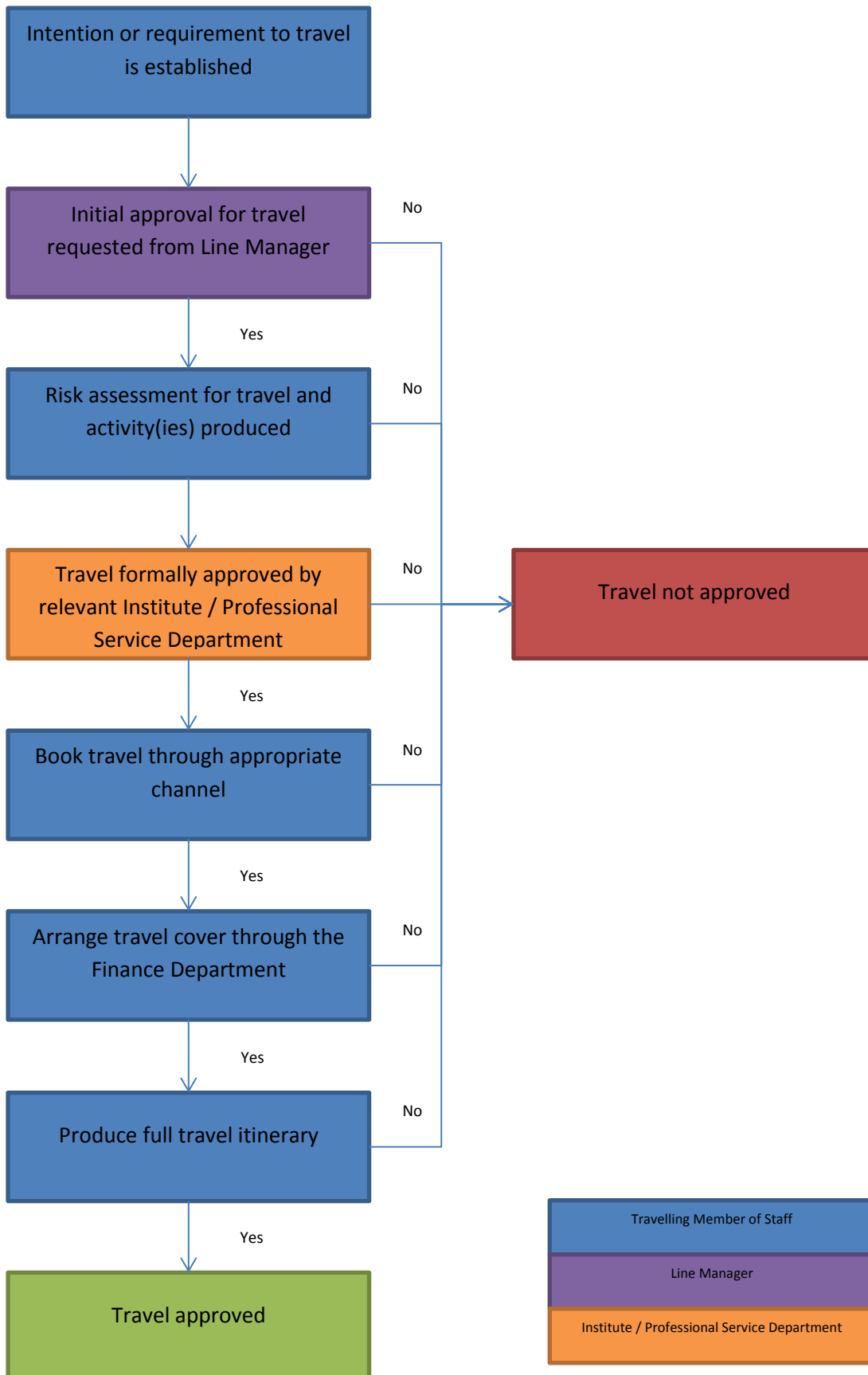
12.0 REVIEW AND AUDIT PROCEDURES

The Health, Safety and Environment Department carry out general and periodic audits to ensure compliance against this Policy Standard and legislation in general.

Institutes / Professional Service Departments must periodically review their own procedures to ensure the requirements of this Policy Standard are implemented, suitable and effective.

In addition, the University's Health, Safety and Environment Committee may from time to time review the effectiveness of the University's system for the management of travel on University related business.

13.0 Appendix A – Travel Approval Flowchart



14.0 Appendix B

Travel Check List

- 1. Ensure you have permission to travel from your Institute Director / Head of Professional Service Department.**
- 2. Ensure all contact numbers are backed up and accessible on an email account / hard copy in your room, in addition to your passport and visa.**
- 3. Contact your Institute at agreed intervals.**
- 4. Check that you have appropriate vaccinations and other health protection measures before travel.**
- 5. Check you have applied and been granted the appropriate Visas (if applicable) for countries to be visited.**
- 6. Your travel itinerary is logged with your Institute Director or Head of Professional Service Department and the International Office.**
- 7. Contact the International Office for country specific information on practical matters and University policy.**
- 8. The University has confirmed you are covered by its travel cover.**
- 9. You have suitable funds for your trip, and have applied for an advance of expenses if required.**
- 10. Keep all receipts to claim expenses back (ensure the receipt is legible for verification of what was purchased).**
- 11. You have raised any concerns that you may have before leaving.**