

Taught Student Travel Policy

Policy Category:	General
Subject:	Travel by students on taught programmes
Approving Authority:	SMT
Responsible Officer:	Senior Vice-President (Operations)
Responsible Office:	Senior Vice-President (Operations)
Related Procedures:	Travel Procedures Controversial and dangerous research guidance Financial Procedures
Related College Policies:	Policy on Policies Safeguarding Policy Policy on Staff & PGR Student Travel Financial Regulations Risk Management Policy Health and Safety Policy
Effective Date:	24 September 2020
Supersedes:	March 2016
Next Review:	31 July 2023

1. Purpose & Scope

- 1.1 This policy covers travel for all students of the university in taught programmes who undertake travel as part of their programme of study or as a co- or extra-curricular opportunity offered by the university. This includes the planning of such trips, procurement of travel and accommodation, health and safety, environmental sustainability, and respective obligations and responsibilities of travellers and the university. This also includes any travel which is supported by third parties, such as scholarships.
- 1.2 Students travelling on programmes managed by KCLSU are not covered by this policy and should refer to [KCLSU](#) for information.
- 1.3 This policy is intended to assist the university in effectively discharging its duty of care towards students and to ensure that all those who travel in the course of their programme of study or through engagement with student opportunities offered by the university do so safely. It is also intended to assist the university in ensuring that it achieves best value for money and, where relevant, remains compliant with the procurement rules.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 Under this policy, “Traveller” refers to any taught student, who is travelling on behalf of the university or in relation to any business or activity connected with their study or university-sponsored extra-curricular or co-curricular activity at the university.
- 2.2 “Travel Sponsor” is the academic department, professional service office, instructor, director or internal group lead who is responsible for organising a group trip or co-ordinating travel opportunities whether for academic or co- or extracurricular activities.
- 2.3 “Incident” means a situation or event that might be, or could lead to, a disruption, loss, emergency or crisis causing a negative impact on the travellers’ health, safety and/or security.

- 2.4 “Activity” refers to any action undertaken by the traveller either in relation to making their journey or undertaking their assignment at their destination.
- 2.5 “Risk Assessment” refers to processes established by the university, and described in the [procedures](#), for identifying threats and hazards to the traveller, quantifying the risk level and taking action to eliminate or reduce risk, prior to and during travel, as well as monitoring and reviewing.
- 2.6 “Low risk” refers to a risk assessment outcome which rates the activity as presenting little potential for the traveller to be harmed in any way.
- 2.7 “High risk” refers to a risk assessment outcome which rates the activity as presenting significant potential for the traveller to be harmed during the course of travel or where travel is to an area which government, insurers or regulatory bodies advise against visiting.

3. Policy

Authorisation

- 3.1 All travel must be authorised at an appropriate level of seniority, both in terms of the safety of the travellers and in compliance with procurement and financial regulations.
- 3.2 Travel must be approved either in the student’s home academic department or by the professional service office supporting the travel.
- 3.3 In the interests of both safety of the traveller and environmental sustainability, the authoriser must also give consideration to whether the purpose of the trip could be satisfied in some other way, such as online or video conferencing.

Travel Plans, Risk Assessment and Sustainability

- 3.4 All travel plans for students must be assessed in order to evaluate the level of risk involved and, if necessary, to make adjustments to the plans. If the planned student travel is for a group, or is being sponsored by a department or group, the [risk assessment](#) must be completed by the office or person responsible for organising the trip. If the proposed travel is for a single traveller under their own auspices, the traveller is responsible for completing the risk assessment. The [official university travel risk assessment form](#) must be used.
- 3.5 In general, the university does not consider that travel within the UK will be of high risk, unless it is to remote locations or in adverse conditions. Nonetheless, for taught students a formal risk assessment must be completed. Consideration may also need to be given in the risk assessment to the nature of the activity to be undertaken and this may invoke other policies and procedures, such as the [Controversial and Dangerous Research Guidance](#) or [Fieldwork Procedure](#).
- 3.6 Where travel is to a sanctioned country, high risk areas or to an area which the Foreign and Commonwealth Office ([FCO](#)) has advised against all-but-essential travel, the traveller/travel sponsor must obtain [advice from the university’s insurance team](#) prior to seeking authorisation and this advice must be conveyed to the authoriser.
- 3.7 Travellers and travel sponsors must keep their risk assessments under constant review up to the point of departure and whilst in-country in case they need modification in light of particular circumstances or local conditions at the time.
- 3.8 Any incident which impacts on the safety of the traveller(s) or the reputation of the university must be reported immediately to the university for management to take appropriate action. The reporting line will vary depending on the individual travelling and the reasons for travel – see [procedures](#).

- 3.9 All travellers must behave responsibly and with regard for local laws and customs when travelling on behalf of the university. In this respect, all travellers must take full responsibility for their own actions and behaviour.
- 3.10 This policy places certain obligations on the traveller. It will be the responsibility of the traveller to:
- a) ensure that their travel is appropriately covered by the university travel insurance policy and that they act in accordance with the policy;
 - b) ensure their contact details whilst travelling are updated via [Student Records](#);
 - c) understand the levels of risk at their destination and appropriate mitigation measures identified through the risk assessment, and utilise available alert systems for their continued safety and security during the trip;
 - d) understand the necessary health precautions and to consult with their local physician before departure, during the trip or upon return if they have any concerns; and
 - e) understand the emergency escalation process which they should adopt if required;
- 3.11 This policy also places certain obligations on the university. The academic department authorising the travel or the professional service office supporting the travel must:
- a) ensure that the travel is authorised, properly risk assessed and that the traveller is competent and, where necessary, appropriately qualified;
 - b) ensure that the student traveller has obtained the appropriate travel documents, including an up-to-date valid passport, and any visas required.
 - c) keep a record of the travel plans and contact information for all individuals travelling at any given time; and
 - d) remain aware of changes to risks to their travelling students if the circumstances in the travel location change.
- 3.12 The university reserves the right to put mitigating plans in place or refuse permission to travel if the risk to the traveller or to the university is deemed to be too high. The permission to travel may be withdrawn whilst the traveller is in-country if the risk profile of the travel were to adversely change during the trip.
- 3.13 Travellers must consider the environmental impact of their travel arrangements as part of their planning process, in accordance with the [university's commitment to become net carbon neutral](#).
- 3.14 Travellers should consult the Sustainability Team at sustainability@kcl.ac.uk for advice on the most carbon efficient mode of travel for their proposed trip, whether there is an acceptable alternative to travel for their requirements or how any carbon miles accrued by their travel could be appropriately offset.

Procurement and travel arrangements

- 3.15 In order to comply with the procurement rules, travel and accommodation which is paid for by the university must be obtained through a travel provider approved by the university, unless booking through an alternative supplier is approved in advance by the Chief Procurement Officer or their designate. Further details are contained in the [procedures](#) associated with this policy and on the [Procurement Strategy and Services web pages](#). This provision does not apply to rail and bus journeys which are purchased on the day of travel for local trips or short distances in the case of day-to-day business.

- 3.16 Students who travel independently on university-related activities and pay for their own travel arrangements are free to choose their own travel provider but must consult with the university with respect to potential safety issues.
- 3.17 Where the university pays for the travel, first class, business or any premium fare for any travel will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and if it has been authorised in advance by an appropriate senior officer. It may also be permissible to travel at a class above economy if the travel is funded by a third party and the funder has confirmed in writing that it will permit such travel. Conditions for modifying class of travel are laid out in the associated [procedures](#) of this policy.

Enforcement of this policy

- 3.18 Failure to comply with any of the provisions of this policy may result in costs not being reimbursed to the traveller by the university and/or disciplinary action being taken under the appropriate university policy.

4. Review

- 4.1 This policy will normally be reviewed every three years.