

Sustainable Business Travel Policy and Procedures for Staff & Students

Policy Category:	General
Subject:	Travel by staff, taught students, PGR/MRes students including group travel
Approving Authority:	University Executive
Responsible Officer:	Senior Vice-President (Operations) and Senior Vice President (Academic)
Related Procedures:	Procedure and guidance for the management of fieldwork activities Financial Procedures Sustainable Travel Guide Wellcome Trust Carbon Offsetting Procedure
Related College Policies:	Financial Regulations Risk Management Policy Health, Safety & Welfare Policy Environmental Sustainability Policy Climate & Sustainability Action Plan
Effective Date:	25 June 2025
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1. Purpose & Scope of this Policy and related Procedures

- 1.1 Staff and students of King's College London frequently undertake travel both inside and outside the UK as part of their work or studies. The risk profile of this travel varies widely from attendance at conferences in the UK to conducting research in war-torn countries. This policy is intended to assist the University in effectively discharging its obligations as a responsible employer, and with respect to its students, to ensure that all those who travel in the course of their work or study do so safely.
- 1.2 This policy is also intended to ensure that the University meets its commitments to climate and sustainability and that only essential travel is undertaken, using low carbon options where possible.
- 1.3 This policy is supported by detailed procedures set out below to assist Travellers when planning to travel on behalf of the University for Business purposes.
- 1.4 This policy and procedures covers travel arrangements for all staff and affiliate members of the university who undertake either domestic or international travel as part of their work, volunteer activity or postgraduate research (PGR) study. This includes the planning of such trips, booking of travel and accommodation, health and safety, environmental sustainability, and respective obligations and responsibilities of Travellers and their supervisors. Students on taught programmes are also covered.
- 1.5 This policy and procedures covers any travel which is supported by third parties, such as research funders.
- 1.6 This policy and related procedures are also intended to assist the University in ensuring that it achieves best value for money, meets carbon reduction targets and remains compliant with procurement rules, HMRC and funder's requirements.
- 1.7 This policy aims to ensure the consistent and fair treatment of Travellers who are required to travel on behalf of the University.

2. Definitions

2.1 Under this policy and related procedures:

2.2 “Traveller” refers to any staff member, contractor, taught student, PGR student, volunteer, member of College Council or its standing committees, or other affiliate who is travelling on behalf of the university or in relation to any business or activity connected with study at the university.

2.3 “PGR student” means any student on a MPhil, PhD or MRes programme and any other postgraduate research degree established from time to time by the university.

2.4 “Business” refers to work, research or study being performed on behalf of the University.

2.5 “Contractor” means a person or organisation external to King’s providing services to the university in accordance with agreed specifications, terms and conditions.

2.6 “Volunteer” means an individual providing service or support to the university who is not either an employee or a student and is not paid by or on behalf of the university for services rendered.

2.7 “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.

2.8 “Activity” refers to any action undertaken by the Traveller either in relation to making their journey or undertaking their assignment at their destination.

2.9 “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.

2.10 “Low-Risk” refers to a risk assessment outcome which rates the proposed activity as presenting little potential for the Traveller to be harmed in any way above and beyond normal everyday life.

2.11 “High-Risk” refers to a risk assessment outcome which rates the proposed activity as presenting significant potential for the Traveller to be harmed during the course of travel or where travel is to a country which government, insurers or regulatory bodies advise against visiting.

POLICY

3. Travel Authorisation

3.1 All travel for overseas business and UK fieldwork must be appropriately authorised prior to booking, taking into account compliance with health and safety, carbon reduction targets, procurement and financial regulations. The related procedures set out the various steps that must be followed before any travel is undertaken.

3.2 Each faculty and directorate shall publish a clear authorisation workflow for travel activities within their unit, consistent with this policy and its related procedure.

3.3 Travel assessed as being of High-Risk must be authorised by either the relevant Executive Dean or Director of Operations for academic staff/taught students/PGR students/MRes students or the relevant Senior Vice-President/Vice-President for professional services staff. Proxy approvers can be used, recognising that responsibility can be delegated but accountability remains with the Senior Leadership Team member.

3.4 Any travel paid for and provided by the University must be necessary and wholly and exclusively in the execution of the University’s Business.

4. Sustainability

- 4.1 Travellers must consider the environmental impact of their travel arrangements as part of their planning process, in accordance with the University's carbon reduction targets. Travellers should consider the [Travel Hierarchy](#) (incorporated into the Business [Travel Authorisation Form](#)) and Sustainable Travel Guide.
- 4.2 In line with the University's sustainability targets, air travel within mainland UK is not permitted excluding a set of exceptional circumstances set out in the related procedures. For international journeys that can be made in less than 5 hours by alternatives to air travel, land-based travel is preferred but not mandated.
- 4.3 Travellers are encouraged to choose the more environmentally sustainable travel option even when this is more expensive, where funds (and funding regulations) permit.

5. Travel Planning, Risk Management

- 5.1 Travellers are required to self-assess the risks of the proposed travel following the University's procedures. The outcome of that self-assessment, among other things, will determine the appropriate level of authorisation required for the travel. In carrying out this assessment the Traveller is expected to consult the University's Insurer and the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) travel advice. The procedures clarify the various steps that Travellers must take.
- 5.2 In general, the University does not consider travel within the UK to be High Risk. Consideration needs 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 [Fieldwork Procedure](#).
- 5.3 Where proposed travel is to a sanctioned country, a high or extreme risk area, as determined by the University's insurer, or to an area which the [FCDO](#) has advised against all or all-but-essential travel, for the whole or certain areas of the country the Traveller must obtain advice from the [University's insurance team](#) prior to making travel arrangements. This advice must be conveyed to the authoriser as part of the authorisation process.
- 5.4 Travellers must keep their Risk Assessments under constant review up to the point of departure and whilst in-country in case they need modification should circumstances or local conditions be subject to change.
- 5.5 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 as set out in the procedures below.
- 5.6 All Travellers must behave responsibly and with regard for local laws and customs when travelling on behalf of the University and must take full responsibility for their own actions and behaviour.
- 5.7 Managers and supervisors have a responsibility for ensuring that Travellers have the information they need to be able to behave responsibly and make appropriate decisions regarding their safety and security whilst travelling and to maintain the good reputation of the University. Approvers of the Business Travel Authorisation Form are required to complete the [Travel: Managing Risk for Managers and Academics e-learning module](#). All Travellers, as a minimum, must be able to demonstrate that they have completed the [General Safety and Risk Security Awareness travel risk management e-learning](#) and they have reviewed the [Travel Risk Guidelines](#).
- 5.8 Travellers must ensure that they have the appropriate travel documents required for the travel, including a valid passport complying with all passport rules for the destination and transit countries and visas as needed.
- 5.9 For all travel 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 provided to their manager, supervisor or other travel authoriser;
- 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 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.

5.10 For all travel *it will be the responsibility of the line manager, supervisor, or other authoriser to:*

- a) ensure that the travel is authorised, properly risk assessed and that the Traveller is competent and, where necessary, appropriately qualified;
- b) have travel arrangements and up-to-date contact information for all individuals travelling under their authorisation at any given time;
- c) remain aware of changes to risks to their Travellers, should the circumstances in the travel location change.

5.11 In addition, in cases of travel which are deemed to be **High-Risk** *it will be the responsibility of the line manager, supervisor, or other authoriser to have arrangements in place to regularly “check-in” with the Traveller to remain aware of changes to risks if the circumstances in the travel location change, and to advise the Traveller to return to the UK if circumstances indicate the risk has become unacceptable.*

5.12 Travel plans must be cancelled if a risk assessment finds that there is a high-level risk which cannot be adjusted to acceptable levels. 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 and the Traveller will be expected to take the necessary steps to leave immediately.

6. **Travel booking arrangements**

- 6.1 Is essential that all Travellers book travel and accommodation for **High-Risk** destinations through a travel provider approved by the University. Further details are contained in the procedures set out below and on the [dedicated travel intranet page](#).
- 6.2 In all other cases, Travellers may choose to book their travel and accommodation using other booking websites, but they risk not obtaining the additional booking and Traveller protections and benefits offered by the approved provider, such as support while travelling.
- 6.3 Travellers must not book private rental accommodation without first consulting with the University Travel Manager who will ensure that there are no alternatives available and follow the necessary health and safety checks.
- 6.4 Business or any premium fare for travel will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and if it has been authorised in advance by an appropriate senior officer as set out in the associated procedures.
- 6.5 Taxi travel is not usually permitted by the University due to lower carbon alternatives and HMRC rules. Budget holders should establish parameters for taxi travel within their area of responsibility and refer to HMRC guidance: [EIM21831 - Particular benefits: late night taxis: general overview - HMRC internal manual - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) and also refer to the related procedures.
- 6.6 Expenses for travel or accommodation between home and the vicinity of the normal

workplace/place of study of the claimant will not be reimbursed.

- 6.7 The University will not normally meet any costs relating to a partner or other family member or pet accompanying a Traveller on University Business unless there are exceptional circumstances and there are no alternatives available. In such cases, prior approval must be given by the relevant Executive Dean or Professional Services Director.
- 6.8 Travellers must ensure that they achieve value for money when booking accommodation and use [Directly Contracted Hotels](#) whenever possible.

7. Enforcement of this policy

- 7.1 Failure to comply with any of the provisions of this policy and related procedures may result in approval for travel being denied, costs not being reimbursed to the Traveller by the University and/or disciplinary action being taken under the appropriate University policy.

PROCEDURES

1. Overview

- 1.1. The procedures apply to all staff, contractors, students, volunteers, members of Council or its standing committees, or other affiliates of the University and anyone who travels on behalf of, or at the expense of, the University. This includes any travel which is supported by third parties, such as research funders.
- 1.2. These procedures are intended to assist the University in effectively discharging its obligations as a responsible employer and its safeguarding responsibilities toward students, and to ensure that anyone who travels on its behalf does so safely and sustainably. It is also intended to assist the University in ensuring that it achieves best value for money and remains compliant with the procurement, taxation and research funder's rules.
- 1.3. These procedures have been renamed as **Sustainable** Business Travel Procedures to clearly signal the University's commitment to minimising our carbon emissions in relation to business travel.

2. Travel Decision Tree and Authorisation

- 2.1. Business travel is a normal part of university life and is important to achieve our education, research and impact missions. But all travel generates climate and sustainability impacts. Before any travel is authorised, the authoriser must use the [travel decision tree](#) to consider whether:
 - 2.1.1. The travel is essential or whether the stated purpose might be achieved in another way, such as video conferencing or if other colleagues from the University are already attending the conference;
 - 2.1.2. The proposed travel is wholly and exclusively for the purposes of University Business;
 - 2.1.3. The trip represents good value for money and time;
 - 2.1.4. The carbon cost is justified.
- 2.2. Travellers should familiarise themselves with the relevant [Travel Booking Processes](#) before applying for authorisation to travel. The [travel flow chart](#) provides an overview of the following booking process.
 - 2.2.1. **Step 1: Prior to booking travel:**

If you are travelling overseas or undertaking any UK fieldwork, complete the Business Travel Authorisation Form via the [Helix](#) self-service portal. This form covers sustainability considerations, global mobility implications (for staff only), the travel risk assessment, and requests authorisation for travel.
 - 2.2.2. **Step 2: Booking travel:**

Book travel in line with these Procedures either through Key Travel or independently, in compliance with the [King's Expense Policy](#). Purchasing cards must not be used to book travel or accommodation.
 - 2.2.3. **Step 3: After booking travel:**

Apply for the King's Travel Insurance Certificate by completing the Travel Insurance Application via the [Helix](#) self-service portal.
- 2.3. Line managers and supervisors are responsible for ensuring that Travellers are suitably prepared and equipped to travel on University Business. They are also responsible for ensuring that the

purpose of the travel is essential for the business of the University.

- 2.4. The approver (other than of exceptions) must be an individual in a position of seniority within the academic department, faculty or professional services function and would normally be the line manager of a staff Traveller and academic supervisor or Head of Department for a PGR/MRes Traveller. For a taught student, the approver must be someone who performs a supervisory role for the student or has some direct authority over the programme on which the student Traveller is travelling.
- 2.5. All King's business travel must have appropriate financial approval prior to the travel or accommodation being booked.
- 2.6. Where travel costs are to be reimbursed by external funders, including research grants and contracts, all such travel costs must comply both with King's regulations and any funder specific requirements. It is the grant or project holder's responsibility to ensure that this is the case.
- 2.7. Staff should note that there can be financial and legal implications for both individual staff members and King's when working overseas, such as social security and tax obligations. Therefore, if staff members plan to spend more than 60 days working in an overseas country within a 12-month rolling period, they must seek advice from the relevant HR People Partner before making any arrangements to travel overseas. A [Global Staff Mobility Policy](#) and application process for working in any overseas country for more than 60 days is in place.

3. Air Travel

- 3.1. In line with the University's sustainability targets, **air travel is not permitted** (excluding connecting flights and exceptional circumstances) if the journey originates and terminates within mainland UK¹.
- 3.2. Travellers are also encouraged to use land-based modes for international journeys that can be made in less than 5 hours using alternatives to air travel.
- 3.3. Exceptional circumstances include caring responsibilities and mobility issues. Formal approval for an exceptional circumstance must be provided in accordance with the approvals in paragraph 4 below.
- 3.4. In instances where a more environmentally sustainable travel option costs more than a less sustainable option, Travellers are permitted to choose the more expensive option on sustainability grounds.
- 3.5. Help with decision-making around sustainable travel options is available through the [Sustainable Travel](#) web pages.

4. Class of travel

- 4.1. For travel with a duration of 6 hours or less, Travellers must book economy/standard class.
- 4.2. For travel exceeding 6 hours, Premium class may be booked for flights, if budget allows.
- 4.3. Where an international flight, exceeding 6 hours is immediately followed by a presentation or meeting, staff may travel by business class for that part of the journey. This must be pre-approved by the appropriate senior officer. For the Senior Vice Presidents, Vice Presidents and the University Secretary, approval must be given by the Vice-Chancellor or designate. For Executive Deans and Directors of Professional Services, approval must be given by the relevant Senior Vice President. Relevant Executive Deans, Director of Operations and Directors of Professional Services have authority to approve all others.
- 4.4. In the case of the Vice-Chancellor, this should be covered by annual standing authorisation from the Chair of College Council, indicating that such travel can be permitted where circumstances dictate

¹ Excluding Northern Ireland, Scottish islands, Isle of Man, Channel Islands

that this is an appropriate option in the interests of the University.

- 4.5. A copy of such permission should always be attached to the order or to the relevant expense claim.
- 4.6. As a charitable institution and one that is committed to reducing our collective carbon emissions to net zero, University policy is that, other than as stated above, business class or any premium fare will only be permitted under exceptional conditions. These conditions include:
 - 4.6.1. Sufficient health reasons, supported by appropriate documentation;
 - 4.6.2. The evidenced necessity to travel at short notice with this being the only available fare option (in such circumstances Premium should be chosen);
 - 4.6.3. The requirements for a defined class of travel specified by the sponsor of the trip (this should be supported by documentation from the sponsor).

5. Travel by bike, public transport and road (including taxi)

- 5.1. The University supports low emission active travel within London by providing secure bike storage facilities across campuses, many of which contain bike repair stands for simple bike repairs. Find out more about [cycling facilities at King's](#). The University also offers a [Cycle to Work scheme](#) which provides substantial savings on the cost of a bike and safety equipment.
- 5.2. Extra time for slower land-based travel will be recognised as justified working time, up to a maximum of 7 hours per journey between the point of origin and final destination.
- 5.3. Travellers may claim additional subsistence expenses (accommodation, food and drink) when travelling by a less carbon-intensive mode which necessitates more travel time.
- 5.4. Where active transport is not practical, for disability, safety reasons or complexity of journey, public transport should be taken.
- 5.5. Travel between campuses should be undertaken on foot, bike or by public transport unless it is impractical. The cost of travelling between campus buildings will not normally be reimbursed by the University.
- 5.6. Travel by car should only be undertaken if public transport options are not available and after due consideration of its environmental impact, prioritising electric vehicles.
- 5.7. It is essential that any vehicle used for University travel meets government safety standards and is appropriately licensed and insured.
- 5.8. Private vehicles should only be used when they provide the most economical, practical or sustainable method of completing a journey. When considering driving on University Business, Travellers should familiarise themselves with the [University's Arrangements in Respect of Safe Driving at Work](#).
- 5.9. Where a private vehicle is used, claims may be made for mileage at the standard University mileage rates, approved by HRMC, which can be found at: <https://internal.kcl.ac.uk/about/ps/finance/staff/mileage>
- 5.10. It should be noted that the University's insurance policy does not cover the use of private vehicles for University Business as the mileage reimbursement rates already include an element for insurance. It is, therefore, the responsibility of the vehicle owner to ensure that the cover under their personal motor policy extends to the appropriate business use, e.g. the carriage of passengers and/or goods.
- 5.11. If required, such insurance must be arranged by the individual at their own expense. The vehicle owner must also ensure that the receipt of mileage allowance for Business use does not invalidate their insurance.

- 5.12. Should a Traveller elect to use their own private vehicle in preference to a more economical means of transport, reimbursement will only be made based on the cheaper alternative and not for mileage.
- 5.13. If a Traveller arrives at the home airport early morning, between midnight and 5am, or arrives after a long-haul flight (7hrs and longer), they are strongly discouraged from driving. King's College London will not accept any liability for incidents, penalties or fines arising from the use of a private vehicle for University Business.
- 5.14. A hired vehicle may be used for road journeys where this proves to be the most cost-effective mode of travel. A number of agreements for vehicle hire have been negotiated for use by the University. These provide for a variety of vehicles from small cars to MPVs and vans. Details are available on the [Procurement intranet pages](#).
- 5.15. Staff may claim reimbursement for the cost of taxi/private hire vehicle fares (of a standard nature) through the expenses system when undertaking University Business and when it would not be reasonable to make the journey by public transport, or where this is justified due to disability or health issues.
- 5.16. In all cases when a taxi journey is being reclaimed, receipts must be provided together with a clear statement of where the journey began and ended, the purpose of the journey, why public transport was not used and the cost. Travellers should use an [approved taxi provider](#) when choosing this mode of travel.
- 5.17. Departments must not open accounts with taxi companies without the written authority of the Vice-President (Finance) or their designate.
- 5.18. Travellers should take care when booking in-country travel abroad. It is highly recommended that hire cars or excursions be booked prior to travel. It is recommended that where a private vehicle is a necessity, advice is sought from local University colleagues or contacts on hiring a car and driver with a good safety record.

6. Carbon offsetting

- 6.1. The University has published an [institutional approach to offsetting carbon emissions](#), including those generated by business travel. Currently, offsetting for business travel should only be undertaken when required by funders, such as the [Wellcome Trust Carbon Offsetting Procedure](#), which offsets emissions through the [EAUC Carbon Coalition](#). Travellers (or faculties/directorates) should not engage in offsetting schemes themselves.

7. Health and Safety and Risk Assessment

- 7.1. It is an absolute imperative for the University to take all possible steps to ensure the personal safety and security of its staff and students wherever they work or study. The risks to be taken into account by Travellers are diverse in nature and may be present in either the UK or international destinations. These are risks which are linked to criminal activity, terrorism, political or civil disorder, war situations, as well as risks to health or risks from natural events.
- 7.2. Before travel, serious consideration should be given to the health and safety of all Travellers in the context of the local conditions that they are likely to encounter, through completion of the risk assessment as part of the Business Travel Authorisation Form.
- 7.3. In agreeing to the risk assessment, the line manager should be cognisant to the level of risk and viability of the mitigations proposed before approving the business trip on behalf of the University.
- 7.4. Medical advice should be sought from Occupational Health and travel health clinics about necessary vaccinations, immunisation, first aid requirements and health precautions for individual countries.

Travellers must also make themselves aware of any ongoing pandemic or other outbreak in the region to which they are travelling and any special requirements that result. For information about travelling with existing health conditions Travellers are advised to seek advice from their GP, including medication legality and availability in the country to be visited.

- 7.5. Information should also be obtained by any individual preparing to travel abroad, including but not limited, to the below:
 - a) General country and airport information;
 - b) Climatic extremes;
 - c) Drinking water;
 - d) Cultural information;
 - e) Safety standards in less well-regulated environments;
 - f) Local emergency numbers.
- 7.6. If Travellers have any health problems or do not feel well before departure, they should check with their GP if they are fit to travel. If the GP advises that they are unfit to travel, they should inform the service providers they have arranged travel bookings with, and the University, without delay. The University – line managers and supervisors – will assume that Travellers are fit to travel unless the Traveller advises otherwise.
- 7.7. A risk assessment must be undertaken for travel which goes beyond the usual day-to-day business of the Traveller.
- 7.8. For trips in the UK for any reason other than fieldwork, such as travel to business premises, academic or professional conferences, or to another university in the UK, a simple informal assessment of the potential risks and consideration of any mitigating actions will suffice but must include full consideration of any public health advice as necessary.
- 7.9. If the travel is for fieldwork in the UK, the Business Travel Authorisation Process must be completed.
- 7.10. Where the proposed travel is to an international destination, a full risk assessment must be undertaken by completing the Business Travel Authorisation Form.
- 7.11. When travel involves a class group, in whole or in part, the risk assessment must be made for the group as a whole by the instructor responsible for the course.
- 7.12. The risk assessment embedded in the Business Travel Authorisation Form is designed to provide the University with sufficient information to be assured that proper consideration has been given to any foreseeable risks that may be encountered during the trip and that reasonable precautions or mitigations have been agreed to minimise the likelihood of, or impact from, any risk identified.
- 7.13. For an individual Traveller, if the assessment identifies that there is a higher level of risk present in the proposed travel plan, the approver must review the risk assessment and must consider whether there are any adjustments that can be made to the plans to reduce the level of risk.
- 7.14. For group travel, if the assessment identifies that there is a higher level of risk present in the proposed travel plan, the risk assessment must be escalated to the appropriate authoriser.
- 7.15. If the risk assessment identifies an unacceptable level of risk which cannot be adjusted to an acceptable level through reasonable mitigations, the travel plans must be cancelled.
- 7.16. Travellers or those responsible for groups of Travellers must keep their risk assessments under review at all times both before and during travel and must escalate any changes which increase the threat level in the risk assessment to their authoriser for approval. If the level of risk increases whilst the Traveller(s) is travelling and the risk assessment cannot be reduced by the introduction of reasonable mitigations, the trip must be cancelled, and the Traveller(s) must return.

7.17. Travellers or those responsible for groups of Travellers must keep a member of their home department, or the office which is sponsoring the travel, informed of itineraries (including any changes) before and whilst they are travelling. This will help the University in managing any incidents which occur during the period of travel and will facilitate the provision of support to Travellers.

8. Travel insurance

- 8.1. Travellers should ensure that their travel is appropriately covered by the University insurance policy when travelling on University Business. The conditions for cover can be found on the King's [travel insurance](#) web pages. Where travel is to a sanctioned country, high-risk areas or to an area which the [FCDO](#) has advised against all or all-but-essential travel for the whole or part of the country, the Traveller/travel sponsor must obtain [advice from the University's insurance team](#) prior to seeking authorisation. If cover is granted it may be subject to restrictions and an additional premium may be charged.
- 8.2. The University's Insurance team must be contacted in advance of the travel being undertaken if the proposed period overseas is to exceed 12 months. This is to allow time to consult with the University's insurers. Cover will only be provided in this instance if the details of the travel have been provided to the insurer and they have agreed cover prior to the commencement of the trip. Such trips may be subject to an insurance premium.
- 8.3. The University's insurance cover will not apply to any period of private holiday connected with the work or study trip.
- 8.4. Travellers going on trips overseas or undertaking UK fieldwork must apply for a King's Travel Insurance Certificate by completing the Travel Insurance Application via the [Helix](#) self-service portal for each individual business trip.

9. Traveller and manager obligations while travelling

- 9.1. 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. Travellers have an obligation to keep the University informed of their up-to-date travel plans throughout the period of their travel.
- 9.2. Managers and supervisors have a responsibility for ensuring that Travellers have the information they need to be able to behave responsibly and make appropriate decisions regarding their safety and security whilst travelling and to maintain the good reputation of the University. [The Insurance webpages](#) offer a valuable source of information.
- 9.3. Travellers must ensure that they have obtained the appropriate travel documents, including a valid passport complying with all passport rules for the destination and transit countries, and any visas required.
- 9.4. In order to understand the obligations placed on both Travellers and managers (or supervisors), all parties must familiarise themselves with the key guidance tools provided through the University relating to travel:
 - a. [Procurement - Travel Intranet Site](#)
 - b. [The University's travel insurer, and third-party travel security and emergency assistance provider](#)
 - c. [Procedure and guidance for the management of fieldwork activities](#)
 - d. [Guidance Note – Travelling Abroad on University Business](#)
 - e. [Travel Risk Guidelines for Travellers and Approvers](#)

10. Dealing with incidents whilst travelling

- 10.1. If a serious incident occurs whilst travelling, Travellers must contact the University and may also need to contact the University's insurers and/or the local police. Follow the advice of the local host with respect to the latter where possible.
- 10.2. The University's escalation protocol should be used in the event of a serious incident whilst travelling away from campus so that the incident can be managed at the correct level. Serious incidents include, but are not restricted to, extortion, kidnap, arrest or detention, international terrorist attack, natural disaster, mass transit accident, riots, civil unrest.
- 10.3. Support to help Travellers deal with serious incidents whilst travelling away from campus will be managed as part of the University's incident response procedure or will be escalated to the critical incident team, however, in most cases, the incident response will be managed by local emergency services and personal assistance will be provided by the University's Insurance representatives.
- 10.4. Travellers must ensure they have registered on the [travel app](#) for advice and support whilst away from campus. The travel app is provided through the University's insurer. This should not be considered a failsafe process and other methods of ensuring that Travellers stay in contact with their home department in the University must be put in place by all Travellers. The specific mechanisms for this will differ from situation to situation. Use the App if you need additional medical or security support and follow their advice. If you are not able to use the App, contact King's Service Centre on **0207 836 5454** to report the issue, confirm your status and any support you are currently receiving and any additional support you may need.
- 10.5. If you are travelling as part of a placement or study abroad, contact the arranging office directly during office hours or via the King's Service Centre out of hours.
- 10.6. Details for contacting the insurance company will be found on the Traveller's insurance certificate.

11. Travel booking arrangements and authorisations

Travel providers

- 11.1. The University-approved travel providers should always be used when booking a trip which is considered as **High Risk** as defined in the associated Travel Policy, irrespective of the mode of transport chosen. Details of the University's approved travel providers can be found on the [internal Procurement pages](#).
- 11.2. Approved suppliers provide value for money to the University in several ways including providing refunds, rearranging trips without cost and helping to identify the most sustainable options.
- 11.3. For Low-Risk Travel, Travellers are permitted to book travel and accommodation with other providers. All transactions relating to travel purchases, other than with the University's approved providers must be made using the [University's expenses system](#), attaching the relevant receipts.
- 11.4. In order to keep air travel cost at the minimum, air ticket bookings must be made well in advance, at least 14 days prior to departure, where possible, and only in exceptional, unavoidable circumstances should changes be made to the original itinerary once bookings have been confirmed.
- 11.5. Travellers may not specify a particular carrier solely to gain 'Air Miles' or any other loyalty points. Where Air Miles or loyalty points do not accrue to the University, but to an individual as a result of business travel on behalf of the University, these are expected to be used for future business travel.
- 11.6. Where travel is funded by grants from the United States Government Departments, grant conditions may require that air travel should be undertaken using U.S. Flag Carriers. Staff should bear this requirement in mind when arranging airline travel, the cost of which is reimbursed by the US Government Department through the respective grant award to the University.

Cancellations and Amendments

- 11.7. Where itinerary changes or cancellations become necessary, you should speak to the supplier that you have made the booking with without any delay, in order to have the widest possible choice of alternative services and to minimise financial loss to the University. Unused or partially used tickets should be returned for an appropriate refund. Refunds of flights and hotels are much more likely if staff book using the approved Travel Provider.
- 11.8. Travellers should note that cancellation and amendment deadlines on hotel vouchers are based on the local time the property concerned.

Accompanied staff travel

- 11.9. In general, the costs of an accompanying person or animal will not usually be met by the University. Personal or family travel must not be arranged using the University finances or systems. It is appreciated however, that there may be circumstances when a Traveller requires to be accompanied by, for example, a family member or service dog. Evidence of this need must be provided and approval sought from the appropriate senior staff (as applies for permission to travel business class).
- 11.10. Where appropriate permission for partner or family travel has been provided, a copy of the documented permission must be attached to the booking order or the expense claim.

12. Accommodation

- 12.1. The normal expectation is that Travellers will book accommodation in line with the Guide on Subsistence and Accommodation Cost on the [internal Procurement pages](#) unless formal approval to depart from this is provided in advance by the appropriate senior officer. A copy of such permission should always be attached to the order or expense claim.
- 12.2. Travellers are encouraged to book sustainability-accredited accommodations options where possible. They should consult the [Sustainable Travel Guide](#).
- 12.3. The use of a sleeper train or bus service (e.g. the Caledonian Sleeper) is permitted for overnight travel. Travellers are permitted to put the cost of a regular hotel towards the higher cost of overnight travel, where necessary.
- 12.4. Accommodation must always be comfortable and safe. The University does not consider that privately rented accommodation booked with owners directly or through any brokers, such as Property Management Companies, Estate Agents, Airbnb, Booking.com, Vrbo etc. provides a sufficiently secure service and will not reimburse private rental accommodation costs without express approval from the University's Travel Manager. However, the University recognises that research in some countries, especially Low and Middle Income Countries, necessitates more flexibility when it comes to accommodation bookings. Travellers must however demonstrate that:
 - 12.4.1. They contacted the University's Travel Manager before booking and he/she was satisfied that there was no reasonable alternative in the circumstances; and
 - 12.4.2. The outcome of a risk assessment demonstrated that any risk could be mitigated and managed.
- 12.5. Cost reasons alone do not justify the selection of a private rental accommodation as the University has a legal duty to ensure the safety and wellbeing of its Travellers when undertaking University Business. A Bed and Breakfast establishment, Inn, Lodge or Guest House can be only used, if the property is registered with the appropriate tourist board. The University secures [approved providers](#) which can be used by Travellers.
- 12.6. Travellers may not specify a particular hotel solely to gain loyalty points. Where loyalty points do not accrue to the University, but to an individual as a result of hotel accommodation on behalf of the

University, these are expected to be used for future Business travel.

- 12.7. Where possible, Travellers should utilise the agreements and rates which the University has negotiated. These can be accessed through the [internal Procurement pages](#). Hotels should be booked well in advance to take advantage of discounted rates. Where Travellers are attending a conference, they will be entitled to stay at the conference hotel and where Travellers are attending a congress, they are entitled to stay at one of the official congress hotels, regardless of cost.
- 12.8. Where enroute accommodation is required, the decision on the hotel's location must be made taking into consideration practicality and the convenience and safety of the Traveller. This could be booked in transit, close to the airport or even centrally located – where additional visa is not required – depending on feasibility and the Traveller's needs.
- 12.9. Staff travelling to an established partner University should contact that University's international office to determine the usual range of hotels for accommodation of visitors.
- 12.10. For visitors (including visiting lecturers or external examiners) the University has a number of guest rooms situated throughout its halls of residence. These options should be explored before booking external accommodation. Further details of these facilities can be obtained through [King's Venues](#). If these are not available or not suitable for any reason, next bookings with one of [King's directly contracted hotels](#) should be explored.
- 12.11. When it is necessary for a member of University staff to stay overnight in London at the University's expense, due to:
 - an essential requirement to work later than normal on Campus; and
 - to work until at least 10pm; and
 - the use of a taxi costs in excess of £80.00.This must be approved in advance by the person's line manager and attached to the relevant PO. Subject to availability, a University hall of residence should be used on such occasions.
- 12.12. When travelling as part of a delegation, all members of a delegation should stay in the same hotel if at all possible.
- 12.13. It is understood that some Travellers will choose to stay with friends, colleagues or family while on University business. In this instance, they should still ensure they notify their manager or supervisor as part of the risk assessment process, including any additional contact information. The University will not make any payments in lieu of expenses in these circumstances.
- 12.14. Unless permission has been granted for a Traveller to be accompanied in accordance with the section on 'Accompanied Staff Travel', expenses will be capped to cover the cost of a Traveller rather than any larger accommodation booked to accommodate partners and other family members, friends or pets.

13. Funder requirements

- 13.1. Where a funder has more restrictive or additional requirements to those set out above, these must be respected when booking and carrying out the travel, accommodation and subsistence. Relevant documentation to evidence this should be made available on request.