

Staff & PGR Travel Policy

Policy Category:	General
Subject:	Travel by staff and PGR students
Approving Authority:	SMT
Responsible Officer:	Senior Vice-President (Operations)
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Related Procedures:	Travel Procedures Controversial and dangerous research guidance
Related College Policies:	Policy on Policies Financial Regulations Risk Management Policy Health and Safety Policy Taught Student Travel Policy Travel Authorisation Interim Policy – Response to Coronavirus
Effective Date:	24 September 2020
Supersedes:	March 2016
Next Review:	July 2023

This document must be read in conjunction with the [Travel Authorisation Interim Policy – Response to Coronavirus](#). The provisions of the Interim Policy will take precedence over provisions in this policy.

1. Purpose & Scope

- 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 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, procurement of travel and accommodation, health and safety, environmental sustainability, and respective obligations and responsibilities of travellers and their academic or work supervisors. Students on taught programmes are covered under the [Taught Student Travel Policy](#).
- 1.3 This policy includes any travel which is supported by third parties, such as research funders.
- 1.4 It is recognised that in King’s multi-campus London environment there may be daily or frequent travel to which every element of this policy may not practically apply. Therefore, the primary focus of the policy and its related procedures is travel that is outside the usual day-to-day business of an individual (unless significant travel outside of London is a key element of an individual’s role).
- 1.5 This policy is also intended to assist the university in ensuring that it achieves best value for money and remains compliant with the procurement rules.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 Under this policy, “Traveller” refers to any staff member, contractor, 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.
- 2.2 “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.
- 2.3 “Contractor” means a person or organisation external to King’s providing services to the university in accordance with agreed specifications, terms and conditions.
- 2.4 “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.
- 2.5 “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.
- 2.6 “Activity” refers to any action undertaken by the traveller either in relation to making their journey or undertaking their assignment at their destination.
- 2.7 “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.
- 2.8 “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.
- 2.9 “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 appropriately authorised prior to booking taking into account compliance with health and safety, procurement and financial regulations.
- 3.2 Each faculty or 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 designate) for academic staff/PGR students/MRes students or the relevant senior vice-president/vice-president for professional staff.
- 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.
- 3.5 Staff are encouraged to use the most environmentally sustainable method of transport.
- 3.6 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 Planning, Risk Management and Sustainability

- 3.7 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.
- 3.8 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. 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 [Controversial and Dangerous Research Guidance](#) or [Fieldwork Procedure](#).
- 3.9 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 Foreign and Commonwealth Office ([FCO](#)) has advised against all-but-essential travel, the traveller must obtain [advice from the university's insurance team](#) prior to seeking authorisation. This advice must be conveyed to the authoriser as part of the authorisation process.
- 3.10 Travellers 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.
- 3.11 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](#).
- 3.12 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.
- 3.13 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.
- 3.14 Travellers must ensure that they have the appropriate travel documents required for the travel, including an up-to-date, valid passport, and visas as needed.
- 3.15 For travel which as a result of the risk assessment is deemed to be of higher risk, 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.

- 3.16 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:
- 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 travelling staff/student if the circumstances in the travel location change.
- 3.17 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.
- 3.18 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](#).
- 3.19 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

- 3.20 In order to comply with the procurement rules, it is essential that all staff book their travel and accommodation 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 course of day-to-day business.
- 3.21 First class, business or any premium fare for any means of 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.
- 3.22 Taxi travel is permissible when there is no available public transport or when it is unreasonable to expect public transport to be taken. Budget holders should establish parameters for taxi travel within their area of responsibility.
- 3.23 Expenses for travel between home and the normal workplace of the claimant will not be allowed.
- 3.24 The university will not normally meet any costs relating to a partner or other family member accompanying a member of staff on university business. In exceptional cases, the university may consider it appropriate for a spouse to accompany a member of staff, for instance if there are cultural reasons. In such cases, prior approval must be given by the Principal or their designate.

- 3.25 Travellers must ensure that they achieve value for money when booking accommodation. Guidelines are provided in the [procedures](#) and on the [Procurement Strategy and Services web pages](#).

Enforcement of this policy

- 3.26 Failure to comply with any of the provisions of this policy 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.

4. Review

This policy is normally reviewed every three years.