Travel Policy

Section 1 - Executive Summary

(1) This Policy and the associated Travel Procedure empower University travellers to use careful judgement and due diligence to achieve an appropriate balance between operational effectiveness, safety, security, and cost when booking and undertaking travel for University business.

(2) Compliance with this Policy and its associated Procedure will ensure the University of Newcastle (University) can fulfil its duty of care for University travellers.

(3) Use of the word 'must' in this Policy and the associated Procedure requires strict compliance. Use of the word 'should' allows the exercise of discretion where operational needs or circumstances require an alternative approach. Any alternative approach must be in accordance with the principles in Section 5 of this Policy and will be subject to approval in accordance with Section 9 of the Travel Procedure.

(4) At their discretion and as necessary the Executive Committee may enact restrictions on travel because of financial, national interest, or other risks.

(5) Refer to the 'Definitions' section for the meaning of defined terms.

Section 2 - Purpose

(6) This Policy establishes the principles for decision making relating to travel for official University business and is designed to ensure that the University:

a. fulfils its duty of care to University travellers.
b. manages risks including, but not limited to, those in relation to national security;
c. makes the most efficient use of its administrative resources in the travel booking and expense management process; and
d. maintains accurate records for all travel approvals and travel related expenditure.

Section 3 - Scope

(7) This Policy applies to domestic travel and international travel arrangements by University travellers on approved University business, regardless of the source of funds, the duration, or purpose of travel.

(8) Trips longer than 180 days in duration are treated as an exception in the Travel Procedure due to additional considerations required for trips of this length, however, this Policy and Procedure still apply.

(9) This Policy does not apply to the following travel activity:

a. University staff travelling for purposes other than University business and utilising resources other than University administered resources;

b. students who are fully funding the travel from personal resources, including scholarships or stipends provided by the University but for which the student has full discretion over how the funds are applied;
c. University guests or affiliates travelling on University business where funding for travel is provided from funds that are not managed or otherwise administered by the University and the University is not responsible for the health, safety or wellbeing of the traveller; or
d. living costs for University staff moving to an alternative designated location of work. For example, a Callaghan employee seconded to the Singapore campus for a 3 month period.

(10) University Council (Council) members must refer to the Reimbursement of Council Members Expenses Policy in the first instance, and if an item is not covered in that policy, then the provisions of this policy applies.

(11) Where the travel is funded by the University, students who are also employees of the University are considered employees for the purposes of this Policy and its associated Procedure.

Section 4 - Audience

(12) This Policy and the associated Travel Procedure must be read and understood by all University travellers, approvers, and travel arrangers.

Section 5 - Principles

(13) All University travel must comply with the following travel policy principles:

Safe	The University traveller and the approver must take reasonable steps to ensure the safety, security, health, and wellbeing of all University travellers and resources while travelling on University business with consideration to the Work Health and Safety Act 2011. Risk assessment and mitigation must include, but is not limited to, due diligence in relation to: - potential for reputational damage, financial loss, and foreign interference, including identifying whether pre-travel registration is required under the Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme; - physical and mental health and wellbeing, and a workplace health and safety risk assessment; - consideration of potential for loss or damage to University resources that may require specific insurance measures; and - tax liabilities arising from the inclusion of any private travel component during and appended to University travel.
Essential	The University traveller is responsible for considering all practical and the most sustainable alternatives before committing to travel for University business. The University traveller must demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the approver, that the travel is essential to achieving the University objectives as set out in the University Strategic Plan.
Economical	The University traveller and the approver must take reasonable steps to ensure that all expenses associated with University travel demonstrate value for money and be within the relevant budget. It is not intended that this Policy or the Travel Procedure mandate a lowest price approach but rather that the most practical lowest cost outcome is achieved after consideration of the Safe and Essential principles.

(14) For staff, the University will pay or reimburse travel expenses incurred while efficiently and economically fulfilling approved University business, including costs associated with:

a. maintaining the health and safety of the University traveller;
b. providing reasonable transport, sustenance, and shelter for the traveller;
c. facilitating equitable participation in business activities by staff with carer responsibilities;
d. complying with legislative and regulatory obligations; and
e. booking, paying for, and acquitting travel related activity.

(15) For University travellers who are not employees, the extent of reimbursement for the above costs will depend on the agreement between the University and the University traveller at the time the trip is approved. Any agreement to reimburse expenses must be in writing and signed by an appropriate delegate.

(16) All travel must be pre-approved by an approver in accordance with the Travel Procedure and its associated documents (see Associated Documents). University travellers must not, under any circumstances, authorise their own travel.

(17) Staff must ensure that the receipt of third-party funding or benefits for University travel is in accordance with the Conflict of Interest Policy and Conflict of Interest Procedure, where relevant.

Section 6 - Travel Procedure

(18) The Travel Procedure forms part of this Policy and should be read in conjunction with this document.

Section 7 - Compliance

(19) Staff, students and guests failing to comply with the requirements of the Travel Policy and its related documents may be subject to the following actions:

a. reimbursement to the University for costs deemed not to be economical, or essential to achieving the University's objectives;
b. reimbursement to the University of any Fringe Benefits Tax or other costs including but not limited to penalties, interest, third party advice and tax charges;
c. suspension or cancellation of corporate cards in accordance with the Purchasing, Companion Card and Petty Cash Policy;
d. suspension or cancellation of proposed and/or future University travel;
e. disciplinary action in accordance with the relevant Enterprise Agreement or employment contract for employees, or the Student Conduct Rule for students; and/or
f. where failure to comply with this Policy and its associated Procedure results in non-compliance with domestic or foreign laws, significant penalties including imprisonment may be imposed by the relevant authorities on individual travellers.

Section 8 - Definitions

(20) In the context of this document and its related Travel Procedure:

Defined Term	Meaning
domestic travel	travel within Australia.
due diligence	a process undertaken, in this case by the University traveller and the Delegated Officer, to enquire into the operational effectiveness, safety, security and cost of proposed travel. Due diligence may include, but is not limited to, a considered risk assessment of the intended travel and associated University business, and enquiries into the collaboration, partnership, institution, or activity proposed by a foreign principal.
employee	a person who is classified as staff that is also remunerated by the University through the payroll system and processes.
Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme	a Scheme established under the Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme Act (2018) (Cwlth).

Defined Term	Meaning
guest	a person or persons engaged by the University to execute approved University business, who is not an employee or a student of the University.
international travel	travel to locations outside of Australia.
travel	activity where a staff member, student or guest conducts University business more than 50 kilometres away from their designated campus location.
travel arranger	an employee responsible for collecting and booking travel requirements on behalf of other staff, students, and guests.

Status and Details

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Effective Date	4th March 2022
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Approval Authority	Vice-Chancellor
Approval Date	4th March 2022
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Responsible Executive	Michael Di Rienzo Chief Financial Officer
Enquiries Contact	Michael Di Rienzo Chief Financial Officer Financial Services

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"University" - The University of Newcastle, a body corporate established under sections 4 and 5 of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

"Risk" - Effect of uncertainty on objectives. Note: An effect is a deviation from the expected, whether it is positive and/or negative.

"Risk assessment" - The overall process of risk identification, risk analysis, and risk evaluation.

"Campus" - means any place or premises owned or controlled by the University, but may also specifically refer to a designated operating location such as the Callaghan Campus.

"Student" - A person formally enrolled in a course or active in a program offered by the University or affiliated entity.

"Disciplinary action" - When used in relation to staff of the University, this is as defined in the applicable and current Enterprise Bargaining Agreement, or the staff member's employment contract. When used in relation to students of the University, this refers to the range of penalties that may be applied under the Student Conduct Rule.

"Staff" - Means a person who was at the relevant time employed by the University and includes professional and academic staff of the University, by contract or ongoing, as well as conjoint staff but does not include visitors to the University.

"University business" - Work that the University has directed to be undertaken which is required, essential, and beneficial for the functions of the University. This includes, but is not limited to, attending meetings, conferences or fieldwork, but does not include activity that is not location specific, e.g. email management, writing papers. University business may be undertaken by staff and non-staff.

"University resources" - Any resources of the University including the staff member's work time or duties, facilities, equipment, systems, IT networks, other staff resources and the University's name, logo or any other identifying mark or brand of the University.

"University travel" - Travel on pre-approved University business, away from the University traveller's primary workplace or place of enrolment. Travel to and from the University to begin or end employment or study is excluded.

"University traveller" - Persons travelling on pre-approved University business. Spouses, partners and dependants

of the traveller are excluded.

"Affiliate" - A person or organisation legally obligated to, or informally associated with the University. Categories of affiliates are outlined on the University website.

"Foreign interference" - Foreign interference occurs when activities are carried out by, or on behalf of, a foreign actor that are coercive, clandestine, deceptive or corrupting and are contrary to Australia's sovereignty, values and national interests.