

OVERSEAS TRAVEL HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

Date	Purpose of Issue / Description of Change	Equality Impact Assessment Completed
1 st June 2011	Initial Issue	
6 th Feb 2013	Review	
27 th February 2020	Reviewed and approved by the Health, Safety and Emergency Management Committee	14 th Oct 2019
17 th March 2025	Reviewed and approved by the Health, Safety and Emergency Management Committee	Reviewed 17 th March 2025

Policy Officer	Senior Responsible Officer for Policy	Initial Approval By	Date of initial approval
Head of Health & Safety	Chief Operating Officer	Health & Safety Committee	18 th Feb 2011

This Policy will be reviewed in 2028

1. INTRODUCTION

As international travel is a regular part of University work, it is important that all staff and students travelling and working overseas are aware of any potential risks and follow the necessary protocols to safeguard themselves.

International travel, as with all travel, comes with a risk. Procedures are therefore in place to help Travellers prepare and to ensure appropriate support is in place in the event they are taken ill or suffer injury or disruption during their time away.

2. POLICY STATEMENT AND SCOPE¹

It is the policy of Bangor University, so far as is reasonably practicable, and in accordance with the relevant statutory requirements and good practice, to ensure the health and safety of staff, students and visitors to the University.

This Policy states the requirements placed on the University and its Colleges, Professional Services, staff and students with regard to staff and students undertaking overseas travel on University related business.

The Policy applies to:

- Each College and Professional Service whose staff or students travel overseas on University related business.
- Each member of staff or student who travels overseas on University related business.

The Policy does not apply to:

- Overseas travel not associated with the University.
- Personal travel.

3. RELATED POLICIES AND LEGISLATION

In addition to those general duties in law, the University and its constituent Colleges and Services, have a specific obligation under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations and Insurance stipulations to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, that risks from overseas travel on University business are suitably considered and controlled.

Where fieldwork is undertaken whilst overseas this document should be read alongside the Fieldwork Health and Safety Policy and associated guidance.

4. DEFINITIONS / TERMINOLOGY

For the purposes of this Policy the following definitions apply:

- Overseas: Countries and regions outside of the UK.
- University Related Business: Generic term used for formal activities associated with the University, such as research, student work placements that form a part of a degree programme, teaching & research fieldtrips, official academic and administrative visits to partners and associates, business promotion and student recruitment, and presenting and attending conferences on behalf of or representing the University.

¹ Staff and students must also adhere to any Finance Policies and Procedures when procuring University related overseas travel. See <https://my.bangor.ac.uk/finance-services/booking-business-travel.php.en>

- Invitation of a Third Party: Where members of staff travel at the invitation and expense of a third party. Such as, an external examiner, academic expert member of a VIVA panel, invited guest, and invited speaker.
- FCDO: Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, UK Government.

5. DUTIES OF THE UNIVERSITY

The University will:

- a. Establish, through this Policy, a management system that seeks to comply with legislation, Sector guidance, Insurance requirements and good practice to help safeguard staff and students travelling overseas on University business.
- b. Provide adequate resources to support the implementation of this Policy.
- c. Ensure there is a suitable system in place for recording staff and student overseas University travel, and for holding emergency contact details.
- d. Delegate, in line with the University's management system, the duty to implement this Policy to Heads of Colleges and Directors of Professional Services.

6. COLLEGE / PROFESSIONAL SERVICE RESPONSIBILITIES

Each College and its constituent Schools and Professional Service is responsible for implementing this Policy and associated overseas travel management procedures which seek to ensure that staff and students travelling overseas on University business do so without significant risk and having suitably considered and planned for risk.

Each College / Professional Service will:

- a. Ensure all overseas travel on University business is planned and approved in accordance with this Policy and any local arrangements.
- b. Put in place and operate procedures that ensure they approve and suitably risk assess travel and work overseas.
- c. Require all overseas travel to be recorded with nominated College / Service personnel, who will confirm the University Mandatory Overseas Travel Notification, with emergency contact details, has been completed for each trip.
- d. Ensure staff and students, as appropriate, are made aware of the University 'Staff and Student Travel Handbook' and of local procedures for authorising and risk assessing overseas travel and working.
- e. Where appropriate, provide additional training and information ahead of travel which informs and raises awareness of local conditions, expectations, security, human behaviours and local customs, and environmental risks that they may experience whilst overseas.
- f. For activities overseas, identify whether the general overseas travel risk assessment is appropriate and if not, produce a further risk assessment for activities and any heightened location risks, such as for fieldwork and group activities.
- g. Ensure, when planning overseas travel activities, consideration is given to equitable treatment and equal access to opportunities, including considering any protected characteristics, participant diversity and the wellbeing of participants.

General Controls

Colleges, Schools and Professional Services are expected to implement approval requirements for staff and students wishing to travel overseas and to inform them of pre-travel requirements, including the need for risk assessments and completion of the Mandatory Overseas Travel Notification.

For countries and regions where there is no FCDO advice against travel and where the activity is low risk, travel can be approved by the College, School or Service protocols, subject to completion of the online Mandatory Overseas Travel Notification, which includes a general Travel Risk Assessment Checklist.

Low-risk activities may include guest lectures, attendance at conferences, meetings and site visits.

Consideration must be given to countries and regions that may have different attitudes towards travellers with protected characteristics or lone female travellers, and to the health risks and medical needs of the traveller within that location.

For overseas Student Placements, students must follow agreed University, College / School placement protocols.

Higher-risk locations and activity

For 'higher risk' activities, such as remote fieldwork, social research, and for travel to locations with inherent health or personal safety risks, the online Mandatory Overseas Travel Notification must be supplemented by a specific Risk Assessment, prior to travel approval. This assessment must consider the activities being undertaken and local risks, as well as emergency arrangements.

7. WHERE THE FCDO ADVISES AGAINST TRAVEL

Where the FCDO advises UK citizens not to 'travel' or advises against 'all but essential travel' a higher level of scrutiny applies and an additional trip-specific risk assessment must be produced, which considers the FCDO advice, the location, the planned activity and the travel and emergency arrangements.

Subsequent to the production of the additional risk assessment, the University has set the following consultation and authorisation criteria:

- a. Where the FCDO advises against all travel unless on essential business
 - i. The Traveller should present all details to their Head of College / Director at least 15 working days before planned departure, together with the specific risk assessment.
 - ii. The Head of College or Director should first confirm that the reason and importance of travel is justified and then discuss the proposal with Health and Safety, Campus Wellbeing.
 - iii. The Traveller must inform the University Insurance Officer, who will confirm or otherwise insurance for travel is available. The Insurance Officer will also liaise with Health and Safety, Campus Wellbeing, as appropriate.
 - iv. If the travel is justified, the risk assessment is suitable and Insurance is confirmed, the PVC & Head of College / Director of Professional Services may then authorise travel.
- Note: If the PVC Head of College or Director of Professional Services wishes to travel, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Leadership) will approve travel.
- b. Where the FCDO advises against all travel
 - i. The PVC Head of College / Director must consider the proposal and associated risk assessment and trip details, and confirm that the proposed trip is justified and will be supported.

- ii. On behalf of the Traveller, The PVC Head of College / Director will provide a Proposal which details the travel risks, mitigations and arrangements, to the Health, Safety & Emergency Management Committee for its consideration.
- iii. Requests for travel should be made to the Health, Safety & Emergency Management Committee at least 15 working days before the intended departure date.
- iv. The Health, Safety & Emergency Management Committee will then consider the proposed trip and will approve, or otherwise.

Note: Normally, travel to such FCDO countries and regions will only be authorised by the Health, Safety and Emergency Management Committee if the activity is under the control of an International Humanitarian or Governmental Agency, or employs similar controls.

c. Travel to Home Country or Region

Staff or students wishing to return to their home country for their research or work and that home country has FCDO travel restrictions (for UK citizens) may be authorised to travel, provided the following criteria are met:

- i. The research / work 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.
- ii. 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.
- iii. The person holds a valid passport for that country.
- iv. The online Mandatory Overseas Travel Notification is completed, along with an additional Risk Assessment, which considers activities and in-country travel and security.
- v. Once documentation is complete, the Traveller or School representative must inform the University Insurance Officer who will confirm or otherwise insurance for travel.
- vi. Approval for travel shall be provided by the PVC Head or Director giving due consideration to the risk assessment and reason for travel.

8. STAFF AND STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

All staff and students travelling and planning to travel overseas on University business and when travelling at the invitation of a third-party, must comply with this Policy and the requirements established by their College or Professional Service.

Staff and students must:

- a. Ensure approval for work related travel has been obtained from the applicable line manager, supervisor, Head of School, College or Director of Service, in line with local arrangements.
- b. Consider the appropriateness and necessity of travel, the potential risks that may occur during travel and whilst at the destination, including the risk to own health and own 'fit to travel' status and any health, physical or security risks at the destination.
- c. Consider travel warnings and advice issued by the FCDO for the destination and any transit countries, and seek further guidance and approval, as appropriate, in accordance with sections 6 and 7 of this Policy.
- d. Consider requirements for health safeguards and inoculations, including any requirement for health certificates (e.g. Yellow Fever) at destination and transit routes.

- e. Ensure travel documents have sufficient expiry margins, in accordance with destination and transit country requirements, and that appropriate transit and destination visas, visa-wavers, permissions or permits are obtained.
- f. Ensure, ahead of travelling, that the online Mandatory Overseas Travel Notification and its associated Travel Risk Assessment Checklist are completed, with supplementary risk assessments undertaken as appropriate.
- g. Ensure the applicable College / School or Professional Service administrative contact is notified, via the Mandatory Overseas Travel Notification, of travel and accommodation details and emergency contact information.
- h. Familiarise themselves with the Staff and Student Overseas Travel Handbook and other overseas travel and fieldwork information available on the University health and safety website, as appropriate.
- i. Attend or receive training and information which is deemed appropriate by the University, or by their College or Professional Service, ahead of travel.
- j. Consider, when planning to extend their stay or undertake high-risk activities for personal reasons, that additional Personal Travel Insurance will be required.
- k. Where travel is to an FCDO restricted country or region, discuss the proposal with their Head of School or Director of Professional Service before proceeding with travel arrangements.
- l. Where the activity at the destination may be hazardous, discuss the implications of this with their local health and safety contact and University Insurance officer before proceeding with travel arrangements.

Upon completion of the Mandatory Overseas Travel Notification, Travellers will be provided with an Insurance Cover Summary Sheet, and they should make themselves aware of the limitations of the insurance cover and of the need to obtain additional insurance advice where appropriate, e.g. travel to a higher security risk destination or travelling with pre-existing health conditions.

Staff and students are reminded of the importance of pre-travel preparation, including arranging vaccinations and notifying the University Insurance Officer of any medical condition that may impact upon the insurance. Also, they should appreciate that some countries and regions may have different attitudes towards travellers, particularly those with protected characteristics.

High-risk travel destinations

Where travel is planned to a high-risk destination, additional personal security measures may be required before authorisation to travel can be given. Such requirements should be evaluated and discussed during the early stages of travel planning with the University Insurance Officer and central Health and Safety, and with the Head of College / School or Director of Professional Service. In some cases, it will be necessary to attend specialist training and for a detailed location-specific security assessment to be produced.

Third Party work and invitations

When travelling at the invitation of a third party it is possible that the host or organiser will procure travel, accommodation and even travel insurance on behalf of the traveller. Travellers are required to confirm that the host / organiser has also risk assessed, as appropriate, and that arrangements follow the general controls stipulated in this Policy.

The Traveller is still required to seek authorisation to travel, in accordance with College, School or Professional Service requirements and must log the trip on the Mandatory Overseas Travel Notification.

Note: Where a member of staff travels on their own time, having booked annual leave, to undertake work for a third party or for themselves, then that activity is not considered to be University-related. Such work for a third party must be in line with Human Resources policies and arrangements.

9. INTERNATIONAL SANCTIONS

If planning to undertake work in countries that are subject to political sanctions or boycotts contact should be made with the Head of Legal Services in the first instance. In some cases travel and work in Sanctioned countries may require University Ethics approval.

10. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Every effort must be made to inform and support individuals to enable them to undertake their tasks in the same way as their peers.

However, in some rare instances, there may be a requirement to treat '*persons with a protected characteristic*' differently in order to safeguard their own health, safety and wellbeing. Any such consideration will be discussed with the individual and reasonable adjustments agreed.

Travel may also be restricted if treatment for a known medical condition cannot be insured or if essential medication cannot be taken into the country.

11. FURTHER INFORMATION AND PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

Further information on the University's controls to enable safe overseas travel and support safe working overseas is available through the Health and Safety Website, the Finance Website and their associated links.

12. REVIEW AND AUDIT PROCEDURES

Health and Safety, Campus Services may undertake periodic audits or reviews to assess the effectiveness of and compliance with, this Policy.

Colleges / Professional Services must periodically review their own procedures to ensure the requirements of this Policy are implemented, suitable and effective.

The Health, Safety and Emergency Management Committee will review this Policy in accordance with the agreed Review Schedule, with any significant changes considered by the Executive Board.

End.