

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 Task Group	14 th Oct 2019

Policy Officer	Senior Responsible Officer	Approved By	Date
Head of Health & Safety	University Secretary	Health & Safety Committee	18 th Feb 2011

This Policy will be reviewed in 2023

1. INTRODUCTION

As international travel is a regular part of our 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 travelers 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 SCOPE

It is the policy of Bangor University, so far as is reasonably practicable, but 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 regards 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 or sanctioned by a College or Professional Service.

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.

4. DEFINITIONS / TERMINOLOGY

For the purposes of this Policy the following definitions apply:

- Overseas: Countries and regions outside of the UK.
- University Related Business: Is the generic term used for formal activities associated with the University; such as lecturing, research, student work placements, visits, fieldwork, business promotion and presenting and attending conferences.

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 other good practice to safeguard staff and students travelling overseas on University business.
- b. Provide adequate resources to support the implementation of this Policy.

- c. Delegate, in line with the University's management system, the duty to implement this Policy to Deans of College and Directors of Professional Services.

6. COLLEGE / PROFESSIONAL SERVICE RESPONSIBILITIES

Each College and Professional Service is responsible for implementing this Policy and procedures to ensure their staff and students travelling overseas on University business can do so without significant risk. Each College / Professional Service will ensure:

- a. All overseas travel on University business is approved in accordance with this Policy and any local arrangements.
- b. Travelers are made aware of the University 'Staff and Student Travel Handbook' and local procedures for authorising and risk assessing overseas travel and work.
- c. University overseas travel insurance is obtained for all travel undertaken on University related business.
- d. The location of University staff and students on overseas University business is known in order for contact to be made and assistance provided in the event of an emergency or other incident.

7. AUTHORISATION AND RISK ASSESSMENT

Colleges and Professional Services are required to put in place and operate procedures that ensure they approve and suitably risk assess travel overseas.

General Controls

For countries and regions that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) have not 'advised' against travel to and for most 'low risk' activities, such as lecturing, conferences, the completion and approval of the on-line Overseas Travel Insurance Form, that includes a Travel Risk Assessment Checklist, is often sufficient.

Consideration must also be given to countries and regions that may have different attitudes towards travellers with protected characteristics and lone female travellers.

For 'higher risk' activities, such as remote fieldwork, the on-line Insurance Form must be supplemented by a Fieldwork Risk Assessment.

For overseas Student Placements, the completion of the Travel Risk Assessment Checklist must be supplemented by a Placement Risk Assessment and also follow agreed College / Professional Service placement protocols.

Where the FCO advises against travel, additional approval and risk assessments will be required:

Where the FCO advises against travel

Where the FCO offers specific advice against 'all travel' or advises against 'all but essential travel', an additional and specific risk assessment must be produced, considering both the planned activity and the travel arrangements. Subsequent to the completion of a suitable risk assessment the University has set the following authorisation criteria and arrangements.

- a. Where the FCO advises against all travel unless on essential business
 - i. The traveler should present all details to their Dean/Director at least 15 working days before planned departure.
 - ii. The Dean or Director should firstly confirm that the reasons and importance of travel is justified.

- iii. A specific risk assessment should be produced, taking into account FCO and other authoritative information, and the activities and travel within the country or region.
- iv. Once documentation is complete, inform the University Insurance Officer who will confirm or otherwise insurance for travel. The Insurance Officer will also liaise with Health and Safety, Governance & Compliance.
- v. The Dean / Director may then authorise travel.

If the Dean or Director wishes to travel, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor will approve travel.

b. Where the FCO advises against all travel

- i. The Dean/Director must provide relevant documentation, on behalf of the traveler, and confirm their support for travel, to the Health, Safety & Emergency Management Task Group.
- ii. All requests for travel should be made to the Health, Safety & Emergency Management Task Group at least 10 working days before intended departure date.
- iii. Normally, travel to such countries and regions will only be authorised 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 FCO travel restrictions (for UK citizens) may be authorised 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 on-line overseas Travel Insurance Form is completed, along with an additional Risk Assessment, which considers activities and in-country travel and security.
- v. Once documentation is complete, inform the University Insurance Officer who will confirm or otherwise insurance for travel.
- vi. Approval for travel shall be provided by the Dean or Director giving due consideration to the risk assessment and reason for travel.

8. INSURANCE

All overseas travelers must complete the on-line Overseas Travel Insurance Form in order to obtain business travel insurance. The Insurance Form will also request confirmation of suitable travel documentation, vaccinations and provision of emergency contact details whilst overseas.

Travelers will be provided with an Insurance Cover Summary Sheet. Travelers should be aware of the limitations of the insurance cover and of the need to obtain additional insurance where appropriate.

Where travelers extend their time overseas for non-University business or holidays they are required to obtain their own travel insurance for these periods and activities.

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 Governance & Compliance in the first instance. In some cases travel and work in Sanctioned countries may require University Ethics approval.

10. STAFF AND STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

All staff and students travelling overseas on behalf of the University must comply with this Policy and the requirements of their College or Professional Service.

They must also ensure that the on-line Overseas Travel Insurance Form and its associated Travel Risk Assessment Checklist is completed, with supplementary risk assessments undertaken as appropriate.

Staff and students must familiarise themselves with the Staff and Student Overseas Travel Handbook and other overseas travel and fieldwork information, as appropriate.

Staff and students must appreciate 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. In addition, staff and students should remember that some countries and regions may have different attitudes towards travellers, particularly those with protected characteristics.

Where planning to extend their stay or undertake high-risk activities for personal reasons, personal Travel Insurance will be required.

11. 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 well-being. 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.

12. FURTHER INFORMATION AND PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

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

13. REVIEW AND AUDIT PROCEDURES

Governance and Compliance, Health and Safety, 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 Task Group will review this Policy in accordance with the agreed Review Schedule, with any significant changes considered by the University Health and Safety Committee.

End.