



Travel Policy

Travelling on behalf of Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin is appropriate and necessary in particular circumstances. In line with best practice, the University seeks to manage these necessary travel expenses in an open and transparent manner to ensure value for money, minimal environmental impact, reduced carbon footprint and safeguarding the use of public funds.

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Travel Policy is to:

1. Ensure consistency and transparency in relation to expenditure on travel.
2. Ensure that travelling on behalf of the University is appropriate and reasonable.
3. Ensure travel occurs only when necessary and appropriate and there is no other alternative to achieve the same purpose, to minimise the university's carbon footprint.
4. In particular to rationalise flight travel which would save costs and be most effective in reducing emission rates.
5. Guide and protect the claimant and authoriser through the provision of detailed guidelines.

2. Definition

For the purpose of this policy, Travel refers to:

“Travel Expenses of any type provided out of all types of funds held by Trinity to anyone, be they a public servant or official, representative of a public or private body or organisation, or a private individual’.”

Travel expenditure is underpinned by the following principles. It must be:

1. Necessary and exclusively for the business of Trinity
2. Of benefit to the University
3. Properly documented
4. Carefully spent on the best options available, balancing minimal carbon footprint with time constrictions and available transport methods
5. Managed in a consistent and cost-effective manner
6. Specific enough that a third-party reviewer can understand the business purpose for which the expenditure occurs.



3. Scope

The Travel Policy and procedure applies to all individuals, including employees, students, and visitors travelling on behalf of Trinity, in Ireland or abroad, and seeking reimbursement from Trinity regardless of the funding source (core, self-financing, research, etc).

4. Responsibility of Claimant

It is the responsibility of every Trinity representative to act in a prudent and reasonable manner when travelling on behalf of Trinity. Travel expenditure must not be excessive, and should always stand up to public scrutiny and sustainability goals (see [Sustainability Policy](#), [Strategic Plan](#) and [Sustainability Reports](#) for further information). All claimants are required to comply with the Travel Policy.

Remote attendance at conferences offers cost, carbon and time saving benefits and should be investigated at all times. The option of remote attendance should be considered if available and referenced in the pre-approval process.

All overseas travel (except if claimed from a Research Account) **must be pre-approved**, in writing, in advance by the authoriser/budget holder of the account to which the travel costs will be charged.

All travel from the Conference Travel Scheme **must be pre-approved** by the Head of School in accordance with existing regulations under the Research, Training and Conference Travel Scheme.

5. Responsibility of Authoriser

The Authoriser must ensure that the claimant's travel is appropriate and complies with this Travel Policy. By approving a reimbursement claim, the Authoriser takes full responsibility and accountability for the expenditure. The reimbursement claim submitted should be fully scrutinized by the Authoriser to ensure that the expenditure and backup submitted is reasonable, provides value for money, can be justified in terms of carbon footprint and that the claim is of a standard whereby it could be audited by an internal or external auditor.



Guidelines

The key issues to consider when submitting and authorising an expense claim under the Travel Policy are as follows:

- Is there an alternative to travel, e.g. use of remote means such as Zoom/ MS Teams/etc.?
- Is the travel wholly, necessarily and exclusively for the business of Trinity?
- Is the travel reasonable and does it provide value for money?

Sustainability and Use of Technology

Flights taken by staff and students are one of the most significant carbon emission sources for the university. Aim to avoid travelling whenever possible, and find other ways of being present at meetings, events or conferences. Staff should be encouraged to consider using modern technology as an alternative to travel. This will reduce costs, carbon footprint and time implications associated with travel. Alternatives include conference calls or the use of video conferencing facilities which are now widely available on many devices, including laptops.

Use of technology instead of travel should align with the University's Sustainability Policy available [here](#).

1. Travel by Rail/Ferry

All Staff should ordinarily travel standard/economy class on trains/ferry. Fares should be booked online and in advance for best value. First class rail travel may be availed of for specific business reasons. However, all first-class rail travel must be expressly authorised in advance by the Head of School (Academic Areas) or Head of Area (Support Functions).

2. Travel by Air

Air Travel is one of the most damaging activities to the global environment as it involves the burning of fossil fuels to power transport. All staff should ordinarily travel standard class on flights. It is University policy to book travel on the lowest fare available at all times, including low cost carriers. The University wishes to ensure maximum value for money from the University's expenditure on air travel so air fares should be booked as far in advance as possible to obtain the best fare. Please note that the University has one appointed travel agent: [Preferred Suppliers](#)



Air travel may only be booked with the appointed travel agent or directly with an airline but cannot be booked with an alternative travel agent or web booking service.

For all staff air travel the following rules apply:

- Economy Class must be used on all flights of less than eight hours duration. Staff travelling Economy Class on long haul trips (greater than eight hours) will be given time to recover before being expected to report for work. If staff are travelling from Ireland to the Far East, one day's recovery is recommended.
- The use of Business Class travel should only be availed of when air travel is of more than eight hours or in exceptional circumstances, and if a reasonable fare can be sourced. Business class travel carries a heavier carbon footprint and therefore should be avoided where possible. All Business Class flights must be expressly authorised in advance by the Head of School (Academic Areas) or Head of Area (Support Functions). A copy of such approval should always be attached to expense claims.

No retrospective approval will be given.

3. Travel by Car

Travel by car is the most environmentally damaging mode of transport after flying. However, where public transport is unsuitable and the budget holder or Head of School/Admin/Support function authorises the use of a private car on University business, a mileage allowance, at the University's current rate, may be claimed. The mileage rates can be found in the [Travel & Subsistence Booklet](#).

In these circumstances motor insurance including cover for the carriage of passengers and goods is the responsibility of the claimant, who must ensure that they have adequate insurance cover.

The following criteria apply:

- Mileage can only be claimed by Trinity staff.
- Mileage claims should state the nature and purpose of the visit, the date, location to and from, number of miles/kms. Mileage will be paid from/to home or normal place of work, whichever is the lesser unless you are travelling overseas.
- Mileage will be paid from/to home to the airport, bus, train station or ferry when travelling overseas on Trinity Business.
- Where more than one employee is travelling to the same event, arrangements should be made where possible to travel together in the same car in order to save costs and carbon



emissions.

- Mileage will not be paid for travelling from/to home to Trinity.

4. Travel by Bicycle

Depending on the location being visited, cycling can be one of the quickest, healthiest and most convenient ways to get around. Always consider safety aspects of the location before committing to hiring or using a local bike service. If using a personal bike (safely) to get around, mileage rates are reimbursed as per the [Travel & Subsistence Booklet](#).

5. Car Hire

The cost of car hire from a standard economy/compact range plus petrol will be reimbursed upon presentation of all receipts. Many car hire companies offer hybrid and/ or electric cars, which have lower carbon emissions.

6. Public Transport, taxis, airport parking

- Public transport should be used where feasible having due regard to the efficient use of time. Most major cities have modern and efficient public transport options, offering the low carbon option to travel.
- If public transport is not available or public transport is unsuitable, taxi fares will be reimbursed on presentation of receipts.
- Staff considering the use of public transport or taxis should be mindful of personal safety at all times.
- Taxis to and from functions should be taken only as a last resort, and are reimbursable only if attending for University business in an official capacity as per the Hospitality & Entertainment policy.
- Parking at airports should only be used if booked in advance to take advantage of special rates available and if more economically and environmentally advantageous than using public transport or taxis if public transport is unsuitable. It is recommended to use the cheapest option available including long-term parking if possible.



7. Travel Insurance

The University travel insurance scheme applies to any person (excluding students other than Postgraduates) over the age of 17 authorised by the University to travel on University business excluding persons on long term secondment/sabbatical. The journey must be authorised by the Head of School/Admin/Support function and a Travel Insurance form completed and returned to the Estates and Facilities Department. The staff member is not covered by the University travel insurance scheme unless this form is completed prior to the journey. Independent travel insurance will not be reimbursed. Please see the following link for further details: [Insurance](#)

8. Field Trips

Field trips should be planned well in advance taking into account associated carbon footprint as well as local customs/arrangements and payments should be in line with University procedures.

9. Conferences

When attending a conference, backup documentation is required such as a flyer, booking documentation, invitation to attend.

10. Accommodation & Subsistence

When booking hotels and using restaurants, the University representative should act in a prudent and reasonable manner and weigh up the closest location to the event to reduce travel needs as well as best value for money at all times. All expenses incurred in relation to accommodation and subsistence will be reimbursed at the per diem subsistence rate or on the basis of actual vouched receipts (up to the maximum allowed under the rates approved by the Civil Service as set out in the [Travel & Subsistence Booklet](#)). If the per diem subsistence rate is claimed then proof of travel must be provided.

In the limited circumstances that the actual vouched receipts are in excess of the agreed subsistence rate as set out in the Travel & Subsistence booklet then clear and robust evidence to support the reasons for any departure from the rates should be provided at the time of incurring the cost or claiming reimbursement. The claimant and authoriser must take full



responsibility for providing this information and by approving a claim on iExpenses the authoriser is confirming that this has been provided and the departure from the policy has been approved.

Visitors to the University should use one of the [University's preferred hotels](#) or onsite accommodation if available, opting for a balance of cost and accessibility.

11. Expenses in relation to visits to other public sector bodies/Universities

As a general rule, expenses in relation to a visit to another public sector body or University should be claimed from the body or organisation that *requires the work*. Therefore, if as part of an employee's normal work, they visit other Universities or public sector bodies, the employee should claim the related expenses from their employing University. If however, another University or public sector body has asked an employee to participate on a review board for example, or undertake any other work, then any related expenses should be claimed from that other University or public body. It is the responsibility of the employee to ensure that expenses are only claimed once from the relevant University/public sector body.

12. Family Members Accompanying Staff Abroad

Spouses/partners or family members of staff, accompanying a member of staff abroad, must pay their own travel expenses.

13. Extending Visits for Personal Purposes

When staff extend the period of their stay abroad for personal reasons, it must be approved in advance by the Head of School/Admin/Support function, documented and demonstrated that all additional costs are borne personally by the individual. The individual must be able to clearly demonstrate that legitimate University business is the primary purpose of the main visit. Leave records should record any extended personal absences.

All information on how to process a Reimbursement claim can be found on the Financial Services Division Website [here](#).