Travel Policy

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) The purpose of this policy is to:

a. prescribe the requirements, rules, and processes for arranging University travel
b. minimise risk to the wellbeing, health, and safety of University travellers
c. assist Charles Sturt University (the University) in meeting its duty of care to University travellers, and
d. ensure travel activities support the University's sustainability objectives and expenditure principles.

Scope

(2) This policy applies to all persons travelling on approved University travel including Learning Abroad Programs and persons involved in planning and approving travel arrangements for University travel.

Section 2 - Policy

Travel arrangements

(3) As part of the University's commitment to sustainability and cost minimisation, staff should first consider alternative options to travel, including audio, central and desktop video conference facilities.

(4) University travellers are required to exercise prudent business judgement regarding travel to minimise expenses and financial costs to the University, including but not limited to:

a. making their travel arrangements at the earliest opportunity to ensure best value for money and allow time for processing (see the Travel Procedure for best practice timelines), and
b. complying with the University's expenditure principles and rules stated in the Finance Management Policy.

(5) Travellers represent the University while travelling on University business and must:

a. act professionally at all times, consistent with the Code of Conduct or, where relevant, the Student Charter, and
b. reflect the University's values and corporate social responsibilities in their actions, expenditures, and behaviours.

(6) All University travel requirements must be arranged through the University's travel management platform or via the Travel and Expense office within the Division of Finance.

(7) All travellers must comply with the Travel Policy and Travel Procedure in relation to University travel.

Travel approvals

(8) All travel is required to be approved by the authorised officer as per Delegation Schedule C - Finance via the University's travel management platform.

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(9) University travel must not be undertaken until it has been approved, except where an auto-approval is granted by the Delegate and not required for:

a. the University Secretary for members of Council
b. the Chancellor for the Vice-Chancellor, or
c. Senior Executive staff as approved by the Vice-Chancellor.

(10) International travel will be structured around the most logical and financially responsible options, and all personal travel will be treated as the traveller's private expense.

(11) All travellers must be aware of and comply with their obligations to avoid bribery and other forms of unlawful or improper payments or corrupt conduct. See also the Fraud and Corruption Control Policy and the Finance Procedure – Entertainment Expenses.

Traveller risk, health and safety

(12) The University is committed to protecting the safety and wellbeing of all persons when travelling on behalf of the University.

(13) University travellers and supervisors must take a risk management approach to the planning, approving and undertaking of University travel:

a. University travellers must be mindful of potential risks while travelling and act in a manner that will minimise the possibility of harm. All staff must make themselves aware of any restrictions relevant to their destination via the relevant state government and federal government websites.
b. International travellers will be required to complete a risk assessment provided by Travel and Expense. This must be completed before any arrangements will be made.

(14) Travellers and approvers are responsible for checking the travel advice levels from when they start planning until their departure and during their travels, for both their destination and transit countries. Information is provided via a link on the online international travel booking form. Travel advice levels should be checked through the University's global assistance provider, World Travel Protection, in collaboration with Riskline: https://wtp1.riskline.com/global-map.

a. Additionally, a number of destinations will require a briefing and debriefing from the University's Director, Security and Resilience (CSO) (CSO). Travel and Expense will advise if this is applicable at the time they receive a request. Travel to a destination defined as "Do not travel" will not be supported or approved.
b. It is the traveller's responsibility to ensure they have had the required vaccinations prior to travel and seek advice on whether they need a visa to enter the country/s of destination.
c. For travel by vehicle, the Driver Safety Guidelines must be followed.
d. Supervisors and travellers must ensure the University is provided with details of the traveller's whereabouts at all times so that the University can contact the traveller and provide assistance in the event of an emergency or other incident. This will require the traveller to advise Travel and Expense of all accommodation whilst travelling internationally.

(15) The University reserves the right to deny travel where any University or other travel restrictions are in place, or it otherwise considers the risk of travel is too great.

Travel restrictions

(16) The Vice-Chancellor may place restrictions on travel, acting on the advice of any of the following: University

Council, the Executive Leadership Team, the Crisis Management Team, the CSO, the Director, Financial Services, or external authorities. At the discretion of the Vice-Chancellor, restricted travel will generally be limited to travel for the following reasons only:

a. Teaching activities where the subject matter is not taught online.
b. Essential research activities (including fieldwork travel).
c. Campus to campus travel for business critical reasons where the activity cannot be undertaken via video conferencing facilities.
d. Regional, metropolitan and interstate travel for business critical reasons where a face to face meeting is required and cannot be conducted via video conferencing facilities, subject to any travel restrictions and/or quarantine requirements.
e. Relocation travel.
f. Relief travel e.g. to relieve a staff member at another location.
g. Marketing activities that are crucial to the operation of the University.
h. Graduation travel - subject to state government restrictions.
i. Other travel deemed as business critical.

(17) When the Vice-Chancellor has limited University travel, Travel and Expense may refer any travel requests that do not comply with a restriction made by the University or an external authority to the Vice-Chancellor for endorsement before making the travel arrangements.

(18) No international travel should be approved for travel to any country sanctioned and listed by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) or under the Australian Autonomous Sanctions Regime.

Breach of policy

(19) Failure to comply with this policy or the associated procedures or guidelines may result in:

a. withdrawal or restriction of delegations under the Delegations and Authorisations Policy
b. cancellation of corporate credit cards
c. travel expenditure being deemed as a private expense and individuals becoming liable for the expenditure, and/or
d. the action being deemed a breach of the Code of Conduct or the Student Charter and subject to any sanctions under that.

(20) Where a University traveller is suspected of non-compliance with this policy or the associated procedures or guidelines, Travel and Expense will:

a. contact the University traveller concerned to discuss the issue and obtain information
b. inform the University traveller concerned of the requirements of this policy (and any associated procedure or guideline), and/or
c. raise the issue with the Director, Financial Services.

(21) The Director, Financial Services may refer the matter to the Chief Financial Officer for further action. In instances of suspected misconduct, the Chief Financial Officer will refer the matter to the Division of People and Culture for further action.

Section 3 - Procedure

(22) The following procedures support this policy:

a. Travel Procedure
b. Fleet Management Procedure [in development]

Section 4 - Guidelines

(23) The following guidelines support this policy:

a. Driver Safety Guidelines

Section 5 - Glossary

(24) In this policy:

a. Authorised officer - means the officer with delegated authority under the Delegations and Authorisations Policy to provide approval for the proposed travel arrangements.
b. Business critical – means activities crucial to the operations of the University.
c. University business - means work undertaken on behalf of the University for purposes directly associated with the functions of the University, including but not limited to official duties, conferences, research, fieldwork, consultancy, administration, academic duties, approved professional development activities or interviewing of candidates and new appointments and Learning Abroad Programs.
d. University traveller - means anyone who travels on behalf of the University on pre-approved University business including, but not limited to:
    i. employees of the University and its controlled entities, including casual staff
    ii. persons who are accompanying employees
    iii. members of the University Council and its sub-committees
    iv. consultants and contractors
    v. students, and
    vi. any other persons and/or visitors whose travel is associated with University business and it is appropriate for the travel costs to be paid by the University.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	17th December 2024
Review Date	17th December 2029
Approval Authority	Chief Operating Officer
Approval Date	17th December 2024
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Unit Head	Meg McKenchnie Chief Financial Officer
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