

GUIDANCE ON OVERSEAS TRAVEL PROCEDURES

at the University of Warwick

Version 1.0
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GUIDANCE ON OVERSEAS TRAVEL PROCEDURES FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The University of Warwick has a commitment to develop internationalisation within its research and education activities. The purpose of this document is to outline the steps which should be taken by staff and students to ensure their personal safety when travelling and working outside of the United Kingdom, in places which are not under the direct control of the University of Warwick.
- 1.2. It is in the interests of every individual employee and student proposing to work in or visit overseas countries on University business to give adequate and serious thought to their own health and safety and the likely conditions and situations they expect to encounter. The University of Warwick has a responsibility to ensure it has effective management arrangements in place designed to protect the health and safety of its employees and students. However, it remains the responsibility of each individual employee/student to actively participate and cooperate with the University in the execution of its responsibilities. All individuals should take heed of the advice, training, instruction and guidance provided to them in preparation for an overseas trip and to act upon it.
- 1.3. When planning any overseas work activity the health, safety and wellbeing of the individual/s must be considered of the paramount importance.
- 1.4. These arrangements have been written to support, and should be read in conjunction with the University's [Travel Risk Management Policy](#).

2. DEFINITION OF WORK OVERSEAS

Work Overseas covers any work activity carried out by employees and or students for the purpose of research, teaching, marketing or enterprise in countries other than those of the United Kingdom. Such work-based activities could include business meetings, research or teaching and attendance at conferences in overseas countries. This list is not exhaustive but is indicative of the overseas work-based activities in which individuals could be involved.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this document is to inform all staff and students of the issues they need to consider and be aware of to help ensure a trouble-free experience while working or studying overseas on behalf of the University. Of utmost importance is the health and safety of individuals on work- or study related travel and this document aims to provide guidance on controlling the risks associated with working and travelling overseas.

4. SCOPE OF DOCUMENT

- 4.1. The document applies to all employees and students at the University of Warwick undertaking all types of work or study, supported by the University, but undertaken as a result of the employee/student working at the University of Warwick. It provides essential guidance to individuals planning an overseas trip.
- 4.2. This document includes the travel of individuals who are considered to be foreign nationals even when returning to their country of origin on University of Warwick business.
- 4.3. This document does not cover the travel of individuals for leisure purposes or for any leisure activity conducted whilst on University of Warwick business.

5. RISK STATEMENT

If the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has advised against all travel, or all but essential travel to an area, University employees/students **must not** attempt to travel to or through those areas. If travel is required to these areas the employee/student will have to demonstrate the visit is of national importance or for humanitarian reasons. If this is confirmed no travel arrangements should be made without the approval of the Insurance Services Manager.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The roles and responsibilities for the University, Heads of Department, individual travellers and others have been set out in the University's [Travel Risk Management Policy](#), which should be read in conjunction with this guidance.

7. HEALTH, SAFETY AND SECURITY BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER TRAVEL OVERSEAS

This section is intended to provide guidance on the things that should be considered when undertaking a trip overseas, including links to sources of useful information, and should be read by the individual traveller and anyone making arrangements for the trip (if different).

7.1. PLANNING AN OVERSEAS VISIT

7.1.1. Any work overseas will be covered by the University's travel insurance policy. However, to ensure you are covered, before any visits are agreed, booked or paid for, the [Overseas Travel Insurance](#) page should be referred to for the countries that need to be notified to the Insurance office (by email). The Insurance Office must be given at least 14 days' notice for certain countries to confirm cover and it is worth noting that there are restrictions where currently the insurance cover may not be guaranteed.

7.1.2. Undertake a risk assessment (or review an existing risk assessment) prior to each overseas trip, taking into account up-to-date information. This should be conducted by the individual traveller in collaboration with their line manager/supervisor and peer-reviewed in line with the department's procedures to ensure adequacy. The nature and complexity of the risk assessment will vary with the type of work-related activity being undertaken and the proposed area to be visited and therefore should be proportionate to the level of the risk identified. Some of the considerations listed below are included in the [Pre-Travel Risk Assessment form](#) and there is information within this to enable the author to adapt the form to make it appropriate for the country or area being visited. This list is not exhaustive and does not consider the work activity being conducted. Further advice can be sought from [Health and Safety Services](#).

- Information and advice on your destination from the [Foreign and Commonwealth Office](#), [Control Risks website](#), and [World Aware](#).
- Previous knowledge from colleagues familiar with the area, and advice and guidance from contacts in the areas being visited.
- Consideration of local culture and customs must be included in the risk assessment and travellers informed of these so not to offend.
- Obtain information on the local conditions and laws as they will apply to you when visiting that country.
- Information from University approved travel agencies
- Individual factors such as health considerations and whether an individual is fit to travel.
- Entire travel process including departure/arrival times, onward travel arrangements, accommodation, and travel health concerns e.g. deep vein thrombosis (DVT) etc.
- Provision of local healthcare and its proximity from the location being visited.
- Political landscape of the overseas area being visited and planned unrest such as elections, religious festivals or potential terrorism.

- Work activities including the type of data being taken; this may include consideration of data gathered which may be politically sensitive.
- Environmental conditions e.g. monsoons, extremes of temperature, tropical storms, Earthquake, volcano, resulting tsunami, landslide, loss of infrastructure, etc.
- Travel with emergency contact details, including the Emergency Medical Assistance Helpline, the Insurance Security Consultants and relevant University numbers, cash and credit cards (stored separately in case of theft). Have the University insurance travel card with you.
- Consider the use of personal alarms, travel portable carbon monoxide detector, door handle alarms or other portable security devices for accommodation doors and personal possessions (padlocks, chains, etc.). Method of internal transport between towns/cities.
- Remote or lone working may not be permissible depending on risk. Additional control measures may be required before approval.

7.1.3. Book all flights, transfers and accommodation through [University approved suppliers](#).

7.1.4. Register with World Aware for current travel risk information. To do this:

- Go to <https://my.worldaware.com/affiliates/aviva/>
- Register using your University of Warwick email address and the current University of Warwick travel insurance policy number, found [HERE](#)
- Alerts can be set up for countries where you frequently travel so that the risk assessment continues to be suitable and sufficient.
- Download the [travel pack and card](#) and keep with you on the trip.

7.1.5. Install the TravelKit – Mobile Traveller app (by Red24) on your smartphone, and use your WorldAware log-in details to request updates and emergency information.

7.1.6. Health

- Anyone who is required to travel overseas on University business may still do so if they have a pre-existing medical condition UNLESS their GP has advised that they are not fit to travel, as they will NOT be covered by the University's travel insurance. Any individual who is concerned about their ability to travel should seek GP advice before travelling.
- The traveller should seek advice regarding vaccinations required for their intended destination and must ensure that they are adequately covered by the relevant up-to-date vaccinations required for travel to that destination. The traveller should consult the [NHS travel vaccinations website](#) or their GP. Travellers should be aware that some vaccinations may take months to complete and become effective, so appointments with your GP should be made in good time and at least 8 weeks prior to travelling. Costs incurred by individuals for vaccinations and prophylaxis medication required for overseas travel on University business will be covered by the University and can be claimed back via expenses.
- It is the traveller's responsibility to ensure that they take ample supplies (to cover the duration of the trip and for any contingencies such as travel delay) of any medication which has been prescribed to them in the UK. Medicines taken from the UK should always be covered by a medical certificate (obtained from your GP), which certifies they are for personal use and the certificate carried with them when they travel. Be aware that certain countries have [specific regulations](#) that may prevent you from taking some medicines (particularly in excess quantities) into the country. The travel insurance policy does not cover regular medication required by the member of staff/student.
- If deep vein thrombosis (DVT) is considered a risk factor procure compression socks when travelling on a long haul flight. Travellers should consult their GP for advice.
- Individuals with musculoskeletal problems should be aware of the risks such as long haul flights, travelling on uneven roads, carrying excessive luggage and equipment on overseas trips. If these risks apply, they should be addressed within the risk assessment and controls put in place.

- If travelling to areas where there is a risk of contracting diseases after being bitten by insects, the traveller should consider procuring mosquito nets, and must always take effective insect repellents.
 - If travelling to an EU country, if valid/applicable an EHIC card should be taken by the traveller.
- 7.1.7. **First Aid Provision** – If visiting a country/area with poor medical standards, a travel first aid kit with basic sterile equipment (syringes, sutures, needles and dressings) should be taken. Otherwise, a first aid kit with sufficient provisions to deal with minor cuts and bruises should be taken. Additional equipment may be needed but this should be determined by the risk assessment, e.g. water purification tablets, hand sanitiser, anti-diarrhoea medication, oral rehydration powders, etc. for areas where there is poor sanitation. Also consider whether there is a requirement for one or more of the travelling party to be a trained first aider; this will vary depending on the work activities being undertaken and the environment within which the person is travelling. All first aid kits should be checked to ensure they are fully stocked and in-date before travel.
- 7.1.8. Ensure that your passport is valid (at least six months left before expiry and at least two spare pages for entry stamps)
- 7.1.9. Ensure that the correct visas, international driving licence requirements (if applicable) and appropriate currency are obtained to travel to the area/s being visited.
- 7.1.10. Confirm flight times (departure and arrival) and the travel itinerary before travelling.
- 7.1.11. Be aware of any potential issues and complications that may be encountered with staff and students who identify with one or more [Protected Characteristics](#).
- 7.1.12. Ensure the Emergency Information section is completed on any mobile device including University contacts, next of kin and appropriate consulate numbers etc. Consider taking a paper copy of this information in case of smartphone theft, and upload copies of all important documents to a “cloud” account that can be accessed from any device worldwide.
- 7.1.13. Use of electronic devices overseas
- Ensure your device is safe to use and keep it with you when travelling. Assess the risks when deciding to take an encrypted or unencrypted device. Further information can be found [here](#)
 - Understand export controls – you may need to obtain a licence before some encryption software and hardware can be exported (transported) from the UK.
 - Encryption – Many University devices are managed and therefore encrypted to ensure that the information stored on them is secure. However, there are a number of countries where encrypted devices are seen to be used for military and criminal activities and require permission before these devices can be brought into the country.
 - Understand local legislation – Before you travel check for current information regarding travelling with encrypted devices and data. Failure to follow the requirements of the visiting country may result in the confiscation of the device, fines or other penalties including detention. Further advice can be found at [Foreign Embassies in the UK](#) or by contacting TravelAdvicePublicEnquiries@fco.gov.uk
 - Assume everything you do on your device is being intercepted: This risk is higher in some countries. If you make the assumption that your data is being intercepted, you will be more aware of potential risks and it will help to keep your device and data safe. If Customs or other officials take your device out of your view consider it compromised.
 - If you are unsure whether to take your devices overseas please contact informationsecurity@warwick.ac.uk for further advice.
 - General considerations
 - Theft of your device – Make sure you know where your device is at all times (including your mobile phone which is particularly vulnerable).
 - Device Security – Be wary when charging your device in free charging kiosks, connecting to unsecure networks or connecting to other devices. Networks and devices can be used to intercept usernames

and passwords, introduce viruses etc. Switch off Wi-Fi, Bluetooth and GPS when you do not need them.

- Where possible, always ensure that information is handled and stored in line with the [information classification and handling procedure](#).
- Countries which you can freely enter with an encrypted device
 - A group of countries has negotiated a set of rules which attempt to facilitate travelling with encrypted software; known as the [Wassenaar Arrangement](#) (Category 5, part 2). This allows travellers to enter a [participating country](#) with encrypted devices under certain circumstances and without any licence or permission. However, they may still ask you to divulge the contents of your device by logging in or unencrypting it; you should assess the risk and consequences of this happening before departure.
- Countries which you will need permission to enter with an encrypted device
 - Countries which are not part of the Wassenaar arrangement may need a licence through application to the government of the country in question. It is your responsibility to check with the visiting country's Embassy or Consulate in advance of your trip to ensure you have the correct paperwork in place.

Travelling with an unencrypted device may be an acceptable alternative in **some** circumstances. Can you take a device which has been cleared of confidential data and unnecessary software? It is your responsibility to check with [Information Security](#) for further advice if you are considering taking an unencrypted device overseas.

7.2. WHILE YOU ARE OVERSEAS

- 7.2.1. **Risk Assessment** – The risk assessment may need to be reviewed dynamically at any point while overseas by the traveller/s if any additional hazards become apparent or situations change e.g. change in travel arrangements, political situation, environmental conditions etc.
- 7.2.2. **Illness acquired whilst travelling** – If you develop an illness, ANY rash, feverish and diarrhoeal symptoms, whilst you are overseas which requires medical attention, you should contact the Aviva emergency medical assistance number on the contact card. The line manager/supervisor should be informed as soon as practicably possible. Where the severity of the situation warrants it, the line manager/supervisor should contact the Institutional Resilience team for advice on the appropriate action to be taken, including medical repatriation.
- 7.2.3. **Avoidance of fatigue** - Individuals should ensure that they have adequate rest before, during and after their trip. The University recommends that rest periods are taken during international travel and these should be appropriate to the nature, destination and duration of the trip.
- 7.2.4. **Personal safety** – Take precautions to avoid being a target of crime such as do not wear conspicuous clothing or jewellery, do not carry large amounts of money or valuables, separate cash from credit cards, identification etc., do not leave drinks unattended and avoid accepting drinks from strangers. If you do not feel safe at any point during your trip remove yourself from the situation and seek help from your collaborators, line manager/supervisor etc. Report all incidents during or after an overseas visit e.g. threatening behaviour, ill-health, poor standards of accommodation etc. during the post-trip debrief and on the University's accident/incident reporting system. Avoid demonstrations and protests at all costs, as these can escalate rapidly into extreme civil unrest.
- 7.2.5. **Accommodation** – Always keep your passport and travel documents on your person – do not leave them in your room. Always put valuables in the hotel room safe. If your room does not have a safe, ask at reception to see if they provide a safe facility. Avoid putting the “please make up my room” sign on the door when you go out; this implies the room is vacant. Familiarise yourself with emergency provisions within your accommodation, locate your nearest fire exit and fire extinguisher. If you do not feel safe at any point during your trip remove yourself from the situation and seek help from your collaborators, line manager/supervisor etc.

- 7.2.6. **Taxi and arranged driver** - Where possible, travel by a pre-arranged driver or pre-booked taxi rather than walking with a map and luggage. Ask your hotel to arrange a taxi for you or use one of their approved drivers. Ask the hotel what colour the taxi will be and, if possible, the name and number of the driver. Have the address of your destination or hotel written in the local language. Compare the driver's face with the photo licence. Always wear a seatbelt.
- 7.2.7. **Driving** – Avoid driving overseas if possible and only drive if absolutely essential. Ensure individuals hold a full valid [international driving licence](#). As part of the risk assessment process consider the selection of reputable companies from which to hire vehicles, ensure the vehicle is roadworthy before use e.g. lights work, tyre pressure, screen wash, oil levels are sufficient for the journey, spare tyre present etc. Ensure that you adhere to local road legislation including speed restrictions, tyre type (winter), emergency breakdown kit e.g. warning triangles, hi-vis etc. and breakdown cover is included in the hire price. The Department/School's arrangements should also include what pre-planned route individuals are taking, food/water provision, blanket, tool-kit etc. Driving at night in many countries poses an increased risk of accidents, prolonged breakdown recovery times and car-jacking/robbery, and must be avoided wherever practicable. Do not travel by moped/motorcycle.
- 7.2.8. **Skin protection** – Avoid the midday sun, use a sunscreen, wear a hat and cover skin where possible with appropriate clothing.
- 7.2.9. **Blood-borne diseases/Sexual health** – Certain countries (particularly in the developing world) have extremely high levels of incurable, life-long blood-borne diseases (including hepatitis B and C, and HIV), as well as other sexually-transmitted infections. High-risk activities such as intravenous drug use and unprotected sexual intercourse must be avoided at all times.
- 7.2.10. **Insect Bites** – To prevent insect bites, particularly in areas identified as being at risk of malaria, Japanese encephalitis, yellow fever, Zika virus, Dengue fever, etc., ensure you use effective insect repellents, cover exposed skin with loose, long clothing, and use mosquito nets and knock-down sprays in your accommodation. Take suitable medication as advised by your GP, and seek medical attention if you develop any symptoms after having been bitten.
- 7.2.11. **Rabies** - Rabies is a viral disease that is endemic to many areas of the world, including Europe, and is usually fatal to humans if untreated. It is carried mainly by dogs, cats, monkeys, rodents and bats, and the virus is transmitted via saliva and other bodily fluids by bites or scratches. Avoid all contact with any such animal, no matter how healthy it appears. If bitten or scratched, ensure the wound is cleaned and dressed, and seek medical assistance immediately. Download [this leaflet](#) containing advice from Public Health England before you travel.
- 7.2.12. **Food and Water** - Strict food and water hygiene methods should be adhered to at all times due to the risk of exposure to water and food-borne disease. Always wash hands with soap and water before eating and after using the bathroom when travelling. Use hand sanitiser if there are no immediate facilities to wash your hands. Do not eat under-cooked meat and only drink bottled water. If bottled water is unavailable, boil or sterilise water using water purification tablets before drinking. Avoid ice in drinks, salads and fruit that cannot be peeled, consume only pasteurised milk and dairy products, or use powdered or canned milk and cured cheeses. Avoid street vendors and unregulated food establishments. Brush your teeth in bottled water in areas where using tap water is unsafe.
- 7.2.13. **Altitude sickness** - Some people may experience adverse health effects at altitude. Ascend gradually to allow acclimatisation and remain watchful for signs of altitude sickness or more severe manifestations
- 7.2.14. **Dealing with an emergency**
- Remember to take the University's insurance [Travel Card](#) wherever you go – this has all the emergency contact details you need in the event of a medical emergency, security issue, or if you have lost all your money.
 - The TravelKit smartphone app has an emergency contact number on the front page, and a map of “safe havens” local to you that you should go to in the event of a security situation, natural disaster, etc.
 - WorldAware operate a “Check-in” service so that you can keep them up-to-date with your location and any changes to your itinerary, and receive the latest information on developing situations.

- In locations that have been identified as being at high risk of civil unrest (e.g. surrounding an election), terrorism, kidnapping, natural disasters, etc., you should keep a small “grab bag” containing emergency items (passport, flight and other travel tickets, money, credit card and mobile phone) on your person at all times, in case you need to leave quickly. A money belt is a useful device for this purpose.
- Employees already overseas when a local situation arises/changes should contact a member of the management team and University approved travel supplier on the emergency number if it is related to travel arrangements. For emergency medical attention the traveller should contact the assistance helpline on +44(0) 1243 621066 (quote reference NUBT 0105 and policy 100005565GPA). In the event of a security emergency, the number to call is +44 (0)207 741 2074 or use the red button within the TravelKit app (quote reference NUBT 0105). Keep the University informed through the management team about any difficult situations you may be experiencing.

7.3. AFTER THE TRIP

- 7.3.1. **Personal health** – Some infections acquired overseas only become apparent after you return to the UK. It is particularly important to see your GP immediately (or hospital Emergency Department in extreme cases) to have investigations into ANY rash, feverish and diarrhoeal symptoms that develop for up to three months post-trip; especially if you have travelled to areas at high risk of disease. You should inform your GP/Emergency Department Doctor where you have travelled to.
- 7.3.2. **Debrief following the trip** - It is important that a debrief takes place with the Line Manager/Supervisor in line with departmental processes, upon return to the UK. This may not be necessary if the time overseas is short e.g. following a conference, but lengthy overseas trips or those to remote, less-developed parts of the world or high risk trips should be discussed at a debrief meeting.
- 7.3.3. **Incidents during the trip** – As a result of information received at a debrief meeting there may be a requirement to report incidents on the University reporting system, recommend a referral to Occupational Health or any other support services. These should be completed as soon as possible. Any lessons learnt should be shared with other members of the group as well as your representative on the departmental health and safety committee so that any post-trip recommendations which may affect other areas of the department or wider University can be implemented.
- 7.3.4. **Risk assessment review** – Following any incidents the project risk assessment should be reviewed and lessons learnt implemented.

8. Version history

| Date | Version | Author | Comments |
|------------|---------|---------------|--------------|
| 22.08.2019 | 1.0 | John Phillips | First issue. |
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