



**WARWICK**  
THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

# **OVERSEAS TRAVEL PROCESS AND GUIDANCE**

at the University of Warwick

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## 1 Introduction

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.

It is in the interests of every individual employee and student proposing to work or visit overseas countries on university business to give adequate and serious thought to their own health, safety and wellbeing 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, safety and wellbeing 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.

**Leisure activities are NOT covered by the University Insurance Policy**, individual travellers must organise their own insurance if they are undertaking such pursuits. Additionally, the **University Insurance Policy does NOT cover family members** at all.

These arrangements have been written to support and should be read in conjunction with the University’s Travel Risk Management Policy and if your trip is over six weeks in duration (applies to any employees or workers (including those engaged through VAM or STP or Unitemps) the International Working Policy.

**Note:** all links to overseas travel information including policies can be found on the University of Warwick [Travel Hub](#) webpage.

## 2 Definition of Overseas Travel & Work

Overseas Travel is for the purposes of work **OR** study by employees and students for research, teaching, marketing, business meetings, philanthropic reasons, **OR** enterprise in countries other than the United Kingdom. This list is not exhaustive but is indicative of why travel overseas is necessary for work or study.

## 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 protection of the health, safety and wellbeing of staff and students and therefore this document aims to provide guidance on controlling the risks associated with working/studying and travelling overseas.

## 4 Scope of the Document

- The document applies to all employees and students at the University of Warwick undertaking all types of work-related activities or study, supported by the University. It provides essential guidance to individuals planning overseas travel
- The document scope includes travel of individuals who are foreign nationals returning to their own country of origin on University of Warwick business
- This document does **NOT** cover the travel of individuals for personal/leisure travel **or** family members

## 5 Risk Statement

If the Insurers or the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) has advised, against all travel, **OR** all but essential travel to a country **OR** an area within a country, 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. No travel arrangements should be made to these places without the approval of the Insurance Services Manager and the individual's Head of Department or School.

## 6 Roles And Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities for the University, Heads of Department/School, Individual Traveller(s) and others have been set out in the University Travel Risk Management Policy, which should be read in conjunction with this guidance. For trips which are over six weeks in length the International Working Policy should be read in full.

## 7 The University of Warwick Travel Process

This section is intended to provide guidance on the factors 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 approving the trip.

Any travel or work overseas should be covered by the University 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 checked for countries where the University Insurance Services Department need to be notified.

The Insurance Services Department 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. **Note:** - the University Insurance Services Department may also need to confirm cover if you are conducting fieldwork or other types of research overseas.

## 7.1 Risk Declaration/Assessment

The risk levels in the country/countries you are travelling to, how you book your travel and accommodation will determine the level of detailed information required by the University and whether a risk assessment is needed to cover travel and accommodation.

In addition to this, a risk assessment maybe required for the type of work being undertaken or if fieldwork is involved.

The nature and complexity of the risk assessment will vary depending on the type of work activity being undertaken and the proposed area to be visited and therefore should be proportionate to the level of the risk identified.

## 7.2 Overseas Travel Flowcharts

These have been developed to assist individuals on what steps they need to follow to get approval for their trip. This is based on risk levels identified in the country/countries being visited, classified on the Solace Secure and FCDO websites as:

Destination	Definition
GREEN	Solace Secure defines the country's overall risk as low or negligible
	FCDO has no specific advice against travel in place
AMBER	Solace Secure defines the country's overall risk as moderate
	FCDO advises against all but essential travel (justification is required)
RED	Solace Secure defines the country's overall risk as high or severe (Insurance cover will not be possible - <b>do not travel</b> )
	FCDO advises against all travel OR countries, areas, territories requiring insurance notification (Insurance cover will not be possible - <b>do not travel</b> )

## 7.3 Green Countries - Travel Declaration Form

For trips to green countries a Travel Declaration Form must be completed (select 'Green' form). Information from Solace Secure and the FCDO website will need to be consulted to complete this, along with a declaration that you have access to up-to-date information e.g., Solace Secure, Amadeus and FCDO webpages.

Any travel or work overseas should be covered by the University Travel Insurance Policy. However, to ensure you are covered, before any visits are agreed, booked, or paid for, the Overseas Travel Insurance webpage should be checked for countries where the University Insurance Services Department need to be notified.

**Note 1:** - if fieldwork or any other research activity is being conducted in a Green Country a separate risk assessment for this activity must be completed and uploaded to the online Travel Declaration Travel Form.

**Note 2:** - if you are going to multiple countries and one or more of these are amber, the amber form must be completed (see section 7.4).

## 7.4 Amber countries -Travel Declaration & Risk Assessment Form

For trips to amber countries (whether this is to a single destination, or you are visiting multiple destinations that consists of visiting one or more amber countries) a Travel Declaration Form must be completed (select 'Amber' form), **and** a risk assessment should be completed and uploaded.

Information from Solace Secure and the FCDO website will need to be consulted to complete this, along with a declaration that you have accessed up-to-date information e.g., Solace Secure, Amadeus and FCDO webpages.

A travel risk assessment form **MUST** be completed (or a review of an existing risk assessment) prior to each overseas trip, considering up-to-date information. If the trip comprises of multiple locations (accommodation, flights, risk) all must be included in your risk assessment. This must 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 risk assessment must be sent to the University Insurance Services Manager to confirm with the University's insurer that approval has been granted to travel

**Note:** - if fieldwork or any other research activity is being conducted in an 'Amber Country' a separate risk assessment for this activity must be completed and uploaded to the online form.

## 7.5 Red countries

**Travel to red countries is NOT permitted.**

# 8 Advice on Completing the Overseas Travel Process

Consider the sections below when completing the Travel Declaration and/or Travel Risk Assessment Form.

Information has been populated in the Travel Risk Assessment Form; however, the individual traveller must amend these to ensure that the control measures are based on personal circumstances and advice from the Solace Secure, FCDO and other trusted internet resources.

This list is not exhaustive and does not consider the work activity being conducted, only travel and accommodation arrangements. Further advice on field work and work associated hazards and what to do, can be sought through links contained on the Travel Hub.

# 9 Pre-travel considerations

## 9.1 Travel

- Register with Solace Secure for current travel risk information. To do this:
  - Go to <https://solacesecure.com/aviva>
  - Register using your University of Warwick email address and the current University of Warwick travel insurance policy number ([Insurance](#))
  - Download the emergency contact card and keep it with you on the trip
- Install the Solace Secure app, if possible, on your smartphone and use your log-in details to request updates and emergency information and enable notifications
- Register with the Travel Management Company App, if possible, for assistance with accommodation and flights (if booked through the University's provider). The current provider is Amadeus Mobile Messenger which provides helpful pre and in trip advice, as well as the ability to request emergency assistance. This can be downloaded from the relevant App Store.

Once downloaded, register using the same mobile and email as you used in the travel booking and enable push notifications

- Ensure that your passport is valid (at least six months validity BEYOND your return date and at least two spare pages for entry stamps)
- Ensure that the correct visas, international driving licence requirements (if applicable) and appropriate currency are obtained to travel to the area/s being visited. Ensure any visa is correctly dated and valid with the Individual traveller's passport number
- Book all flights and transfers through the University approved supplier
- Confirm flight times (departure and arrival), onward travel arrangements and the travel itinerary before travelling
- Notify your Departmental Travel Co-ordinator of these travel arrangements (as per local procedure)

## 9.2 Accommodation

All accommodation should be booked through the University TMC and known hotel chains chosen where possible. However, where this is not reasonable, for example when a planned trip is for several weeks/months, other types of accommodation may be used. This is dependent on the traveller having the correct permissions from their Line Manager/Supervisor and in some cases Head of Department/School. (see Overseas Travel Process flowcharts).

Travellers booking accommodation, such as Airbnb, outside of the University TMC must consider the following information **before** booking:

- Public Liability Insurance or equivalent is in place
- Property's portable electrical items have been safety checked on a routine basis e.g., PAT
- Property's fixed wiring has been tested in line with National legislation
- If there is a gas supply to the property that it has been serviced, checked in line with National legislation and there is means of detecting carbon monoxide
- Property has fire detection, alarms, firefighting equipment and information
- Property and bedroom are secure to prevent intruders and security arrangements are in place
- Property has a cleaning service, refuse collection, pest control in place
- If kitchen facilities are provided, they are suitably equipped e.g., hot and cold water, storage, cooking appliances
- Is the tap water fit to drink, brush teeth etc.
- Property's stairs, balconies etc. are in good condition
- Property has access to emergency services, medical assistance
- Property has telephone access (landline or good mobile service cover)

### 9.3 General safety considerations

- Previous knowledge from colleagues familiar with the area, and advice and guidance from contacts in the areas being visited
- Local culture and customs to help keep the traveller informed of these so not to offend
- Obtain information on the local conditions and laws as they will apply to the traveller when visiting that country
- 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.
- 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. Contact Health and Safety Services for further advice
- Be aware of any potential issues and complications that may be encountered with staff and students who identify with one or more Protected Characteristics

### 9.4 Health

Anyone who has a pre-existing medical condition and is required to travel overseas on university business will be able to do so, as long as their GP has advised that they are fit to travel. Any individual who is concerned about their ability to travel should seek GP advice before travelling. Pre-existing medical conditions are insured as long as travel is not against medical advice.

The traveller must seek advice regarding vaccinations, medications and other health considerations 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/Travel Clinic.

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.

If you are travelling to a remote location or for a significant (>6 weeks) period of time, it is advised that the individual visits the dentist prior to the trip. It is easier to obtain medical help than it is to get dental assistance overseas.

Consider what the provisions are to healthcare arrangements in the country being visited and its proximity from the location staying or working.



## 9.5 Preparing for any emergency

Ensure the Emergency Information section is completed on your mobile device including University contacts, next of kin and appropriate consulate/embassy numbers etc. Take 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.

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.

## 9.6 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 sufficient. Additional equipment may be needed but this should be determined by the fieldwork risk assessment (if applicable) e.g., water purification tablets, hand sanitiser, anti-diarrhoea medication, oral rehydration powders, etc. for areas where there is poor sanitation.

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 for the duration of travel.

Ensure you are aware of where to seek medical attention at your destination. If you are based in a remote location, consider in your fieldwork risk assessment how you would be medically evacuated if required.

## 9.7 Use of electronic devices

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. For further information contact IT Services.

- Understand export controls –The University’s Institutional Export Control policy should be read in full before taking any sensitive technology and strategic goods overseas. You may also need to obtain a licence before some encryption software and hardware can be exported (transported) from the UK.
- Read the IS10: Mobile and Remote Working Policy which sets out additional principles, expectations and requirements relating to the use of mobile computing devices and other computing devices not located on University premises, whenever they access University information assets with a classification of protected or above
- Encryption – Many University devices are managed and therefore encrypted to ensure that the information stored on them is secure. However, there are several countries where encrypted devices are seen to be used for military and criminal activities and require permission before these devices can be taken 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 Home  
- Contact an Embassy - GOV.UK (contact-embassy.service.gov.uk)

- Assume everything you do on your device can be intercepted. This risk is higher in some countries. If you assume 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 the IT helpdesk 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 University 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
- Some departments/schools have local arrangements in place regarding taking your electronic devices overseas. Travellers must consult with departmental/school webpages or personnel before planning to take electronic devices overseas

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 contact the IT helpdesk for further advice if you are considering taking an unencrypted device overseas

## 10 While you are overseas (take this guidance document with you!)

### 10.1 Travel declaration and/or travel risk assessment form

Travel declaration and/or travel risk assessment form 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, accommodation does not reflect your booking, political situation, environmental conditions etc. Notifications provided by both the Solace Secure and Amadeus Mobile Messenger App or webpages will help inform you of changes.

## 10.2 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 on the contact card or via the Solace Secure App/webpages. 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 Risk and Resilience team for advice on the appropriate action to be taken, including medical repatriation.

## 10.3 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.

## 10.4 Personal safety

Take precautions to avoid being a target of crime, avoid wearing conspicuous clothing or jewellery, do not carry large amounts of money or valuables, separate cash from credit cards and identification, do not leave drinks unattended and avoid accepting drinks from strangers, avoid demonstrations and protests at all costs, as these can escalate rapidly into extreme civil unrest. etc.

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. on the University's accident/incident reporting system. Highlight these incidents during the debrief meeting on return to help with future travel arrangements.

## 10.5 Accommodation

It is recommended, if a safe is not available to keep your passport and travel documents in, then keep them 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. (see Section 12).

## 10.6 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.

## 10.7 Driving

Avoid driving overseas if possible and only drive if 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 a vehicle. Ensure the vehicle is roadworthy before use e.g., lights work,

tyre pressure, screen wash, oil levels are sufficient for the journey, spare tyre or emergency puncture repair kit is present etc. The hiring of motorbikes, quadbikes, scooters and/or mopeds is **NOT** permitted.

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, toolkit etc.

Driving at night in many countries poses an increased risk of accidents, prolonged breakdown recovery times and carjacking/robbery, and must be avoided wherever practicable. Do not travel by moped/motorcycle.

## 10.8 Skin protection

Avoid the midday sun, use sunscreen, wear a hat and cover skin where possible with appropriate clothing. Some insects are particularly attracted to specific coloured clothing e.g., tsetse flies and dark blue/black and therefore should be avoided where possible (follow advice from your GP/Travel clinic).

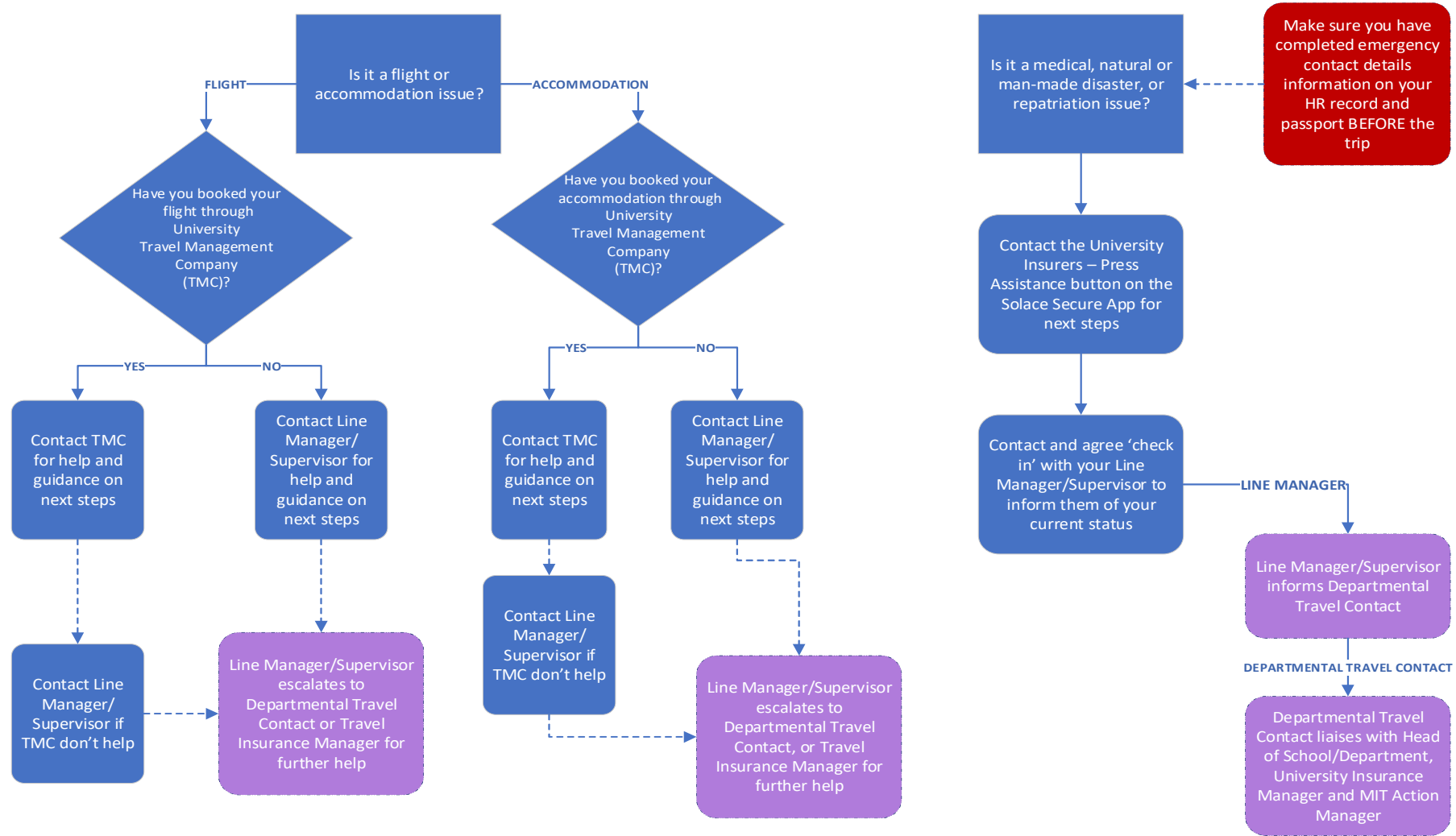
## 10.9 Other health concerns

For information on zoonotic infection (a disease able to spread from animals to humans e.g., rabies etc.) and blood and vector borne disease, sexual health, insect bite avoidance and food/water hygiene follow all health advice given to you by your GP, vaccination clinic and the NHS website.

# 11 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
- Solace Secure operates a "Check-in" service so you can keep them up to date with your location and any changes to your itinerary and receive the latest information on developing situations. This should be considered when visiting remote or amber countries in conjunction with the University's insurer
- In locations that have been identified as being at high risk of civil unrest (e.g., surrounding an election), terrorism, kidnapping, natural disasters, etc., it is advised that you 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 their department's management team to update them of their circumstances. The traveller should also contact the University TMC and/or Solace Secure on their emergency numbers for assistance. For security and emergency medical attention the traveller should contact the Solace Secure assistance helpline on +44(0) 1243 621066 (**make sure you have a copy of the insurance policy number**). Keep the University informed through your department's management team about any difficult situations you may be experiencing (section 12).

# 12 Escalation process



## 13 After the trip

### 13.1 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.

### 13.2 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.

### 13.3 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 incident 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.

### 13.4 Work/fieldwork risk assessment review

Following any incidents/accidents, the project/fieldwork risk assessment should be reviewed, and lessons learnt implemented.

## 14 Version history/Change control

Date	Version	Author	Comments
22.08.2019	1.0	John Phillips	First issue
11.08.2022	2.0	Ian Graham	Update of links, change to Solace Global
24.05.2023	2.0	M. Bagnall, G. Hakes, M. Patel, R. Campbell-Kelly, R. Levett-Millett, C. Griffin	Updated links, addition of changes in process including Solace Secure, declaration form and risk assessment form and escalation
16.10.2023	3.0	M Bagnall, G Hakes, M Patel	Updated link to Travel Hub, removed specific departmental links
08.01.2024	3.0	M Bagnall, G Hakes, M Patel	Removed all hyperlinks in the document. Added to the introduction that all information (and specific links) can be found on the Travel Hub.