

Official travel for business and professional development handbook

To be used in conjunction with the whole-of-government [Air travel policy](#) and [Official international travel for business and professional development procedure](#).

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Planning

- An International Travel Request must be submitted if an individual is proposing to travel internationally:
 - as part of their employment/role
 - costs (including insurance, expenses and allowances) are either fully or partially funded from departmental or school funds
 - to represent the Department of Education (the department) in any official work-related capacity. This applies even if the participant's costs are funded from external sources, for example, personal funds, fee for service activities, grants, costs covered by a conference organiser, or if the applicant is on leave.
- Minimise the number of school days in travel
- Consider the impact on departmental resources i.e. departmental funding, school staffing, number of trips within a 6, 12 and 18 month period
- Undertake international travel only after exploring alternatives to travel and after consulting with other department areas to ensure there is no duplication of activities
- Minimise the number of people travelling
 - Employees should travel unaccompanied, especially for business and professional development related travel, to maximise limited resources
 - Exceptions apply only if a business case is approved by the Executive Director, Department of Education International (DEi) for more than one person to travel
- [Smartraveller](#) travel advisories are graded across four different levels:
 - Level 1 - Exercise normal safety precautions
 - Level 2 - Exercise a high degree of caution
 - Level 3 - Reconsider your need to travel
 - Level 4 - Do not travel
- If international travel is related to participation in a DEi funded program or DEi branch (e.g. Premier's Anzac Prize, Education Queensland International (EQI) International Business unit) travel requests will be submitted by the responsible DEi business unit.
- All International Travel Requests are subject to an automated approval process whereby the International Travel Unit reviews the request and progresses to the Director-General and/or Minister for approval.

Quarterly forward travel plan

- Departmental business units may submit a quarterly forward travel plan for officers travelling for the quarter.
- Forward travel plans must be submitted to DEi 10 weeks before the first intended trip.

A Forward Travel Plan template can be obtained from DEi by contacting the International Travel Unit by email at international.travel@ged.qld.gov.au.

Costings

The traveller (or a person nominated by the traveller) must estimate all anticipated expenses of the proposed travel to allow the approving officer to make an informed decision, and so they have a full understanding of the maximum potential cost of the travel. For non-departmental employees, this step will be undertaken by the business unit funding the travel. Non-departmental employees who may wish to claim expenses related to official international travel should discuss with the departmental business unit arranging the travel prior to undertaking travel.

Estimated costs for the travel will be based on the following:

- obtaining a quote from [Corporate Travel Management \(CTM\)](#) (departmental employees only) or another travel management company or website
- travel entitlements and allowances outlined in the [International Travelling, Relieving and Living Expenses \(Directive 10/11\)](#).

Best value economy class airfares must include consideration of cancellation/re-scheduling fare conditions.

Officers undertaking official business will have the following expenses covered by the department where the expense is considered a necessary component of the travel. Evidence of the purchase must be retained for reporting purposes (e.g. tax invoice, receipt etc):

- fares and car hire
- accommodation/meal expenses, but only bed, breakfast, lunch and dinner
- tips, portage and laundry
- official telephone calls, facsimiles, emails and postage
- reciprocal entertainment
- passport and visa costs
- airport exit and entry taxes
- vaccinations/travel medication such as malaria tablets
- other necessary expenses considered reasonable by the Minister.

Deposits or any other travel related payments are not to be paid prior to final approval of the International Travel Request.

Itinerary

Itinerary must be feasible, for example meetings must be made for consecutive days and allow appropriate travel times between cities/countries.

If travel coincides with a weekend, this time must be used to plan for upcoming events/meetings. An employee on official travel is entitled to access two (2) rest days following every five (5) work days.

Should event/meetings finish on a Friday it is expected that travellers return to Australia on the Friday or Saturday morning.

Teacher Relief Scheme (TRS) days and costs (school-based employees only)

[TRS](#) days and costs should be indicated in the International Travel Request in the 'Relieving arrangements required while undertaking International Travel' section. These costs should not be included in the Proposed Cost of Travel section.

TRS costs do not need to be included in the actual costs reported on in the International Travel Report upon returning from travel.

Travel documentation

Passports and visas

- Travellers must ensure they hold a valid passport with at least six months validity beyond the intended return date to Australia.
- International airline tickets are issued in the names which appear on individual passports.
- Travellers must clarify with the travel agent, embassy or consulate of the relevant countries, any specific visa requirements.
- Visa conditions are subject to change and applications need to be made well in advance of international travel.
- It is expected that employees participating in official international travel will have their visa costs covered in the overall travel costs.
- Ensure entry requirements for the country, for example some countries require the traveller to enter with a minimum foreign currency on hand.

Vaccinations and medication

- Information about relevant vaccinations and carrying prescription medications can be found on the [Smartraveller](#) website for the specific destination country.
- Alternatively, travellers may seek advice regarding vaccinations from their own doctor. The department cannot provide advice regarding vaccinations.
- Where a traveller may not be able to be vaccinated, the Regional Director/delegate should assess the risk before approving any overseas travel.

Multiple travellers

An International Travel Request allows for multiple travellers to be selected. Once multiple travellers are selected in the International Travel Request the system will generate notifications to the additional travellers to complete their component of the application and submit it to their supervisor for endorsement.

Accompanied travel

Travellers may be accompanied, for example, by a family member or partner, providing that:

- no additional expenses are incurred by the department
- traveller's official duties are not adversely affected
- all accompanying non-employees must be declared to the International Travel Unit.

Accompanying persons' travel expenses

Unless approval is received from the Minister, where an employee is on official business and is accompanied by a non-employee who is not travelling on or in relation to Queensland Government business, the agency should not pay for the accompanying person's travel expenses.

Exchange of a higher-class ticket for a lesser class of travel in order to assist with travel costs for an accompanying person is not permitted. All accompanying personnel should be declared on the international travel request.

Combining official travel and personal travel

Travellers wishing to combine official travel and personal travel must refer to the [Applying for leave combined with official international travel procedure](#).

Taxation

Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT)

- According to departmental policy, employees travelling in an official capacity with ministerial approval are generally not eligible for leave as they may incur an FBT liability for the department.
- Should any private travel occur that has been funded by the department, the details need to be reported to the Corporate Taxation Unit in order to determine if an FBT liability will be incurred.
- Any FBT liability may be cost-recovered from a school/institute/unit. A resulting Reportable Fringe Benefit Amount may be included on an employee's annual salary Payment Summary. This could affect any income-tested government benefits and concessions provided to an employee.

Goods and Services Tax (GST)

- Goods or services that are acquired and consumed outside Australia are generally outside the scope of Australian GST. Domestic legs of international travel are GST-free if they form part of an international travel arrangement.
- Domestic legs must appear on the same booking, itinerary or tickets as international travel.
- An employee may seek reimbursement of certain expenses incurred overseas after

return to Australia. Such reimbursements are to be treated as an acquisition with no GST incorporated into the price. When accounting for corporate credit card expenses that were incurred overseas, these acquisitions should also be treated with no GST in the price.

Individuals who attend formal courses, seminars, conferences or workshops overseas at their own expense at an overseas location while undertaking personal travel may have this activity recognised as work related. This recognition will occur in the form of a letter from the department to be used by the employee to support taxation deduction for the work related part of their travel expenses. This letter does not guarantee acceptance of the claim on the part of the Australian Taxation Office.

Travellers must ensure they:

- seek endorsement from their direct line manager for the period of leave in accordance with the [Applying for leave combined with official international travel procedure](#) and seek delegate approval within the designated timeframe.
- obtain a statement (email) from the department's Corporate Taxation unit confirming the [Fringe Benefit Tax \(FBT\)](#) implications. Submit an enquiry via the [Taxation General Enquiries Form](#) or phone 1300 656 380.
- submit an official International Travel Request on the [Service Catalogue Online](#) (departmental employees only) (search for 'international travel request') and include the FBT statement

Note: any expenses incurred as a result of the personal travel must be met by the traveller, for example additional accommodation, or where airfares are more expensive than they would have been for the official travel component only; and travellers must obtain personal travel insurance for personal leave to be taken outside of official international travel.

Applying

Automated process

An automated email will be generated at the following submission points:

Point 1: completion and submission of an International Travel Request (traveller/primary contact)

Point 2: progression to manager for endorsement (manager)

Point 3: when approved or not approved by the Minister and/or Director-General (traveller).

Note: it is the responsibility of the traveller to follow up on the progress of applications to ensure they meet the approval timelines.

Travel arrangements – before and during travel

Variations to approved travel

Travellers must submit a variation via the [International Travel Request](#) (departmental employees only) through the departments Service Catalogue Online where:

- additional destination/s that require new flights, accommodation AND where travel costs are less than \$1000 (inc of GST/other taxes)
- change to staff travelling, for example if a staff member is unable to travel and is replaced for the duration of the trip by another staff member or non-staff member.

Travellers must complete a new [International Travel Request](#) where:

- change is more than seven (7) calendar days from the original departure or arrival dates
- adding destination/s that require new flights, accommodation AND where travel costs are more than \$1000 (inc of GST/other taxes).

Cancelling or postponing travel

In the event that travel is cancelled or needs to be postponed please contact the International Travel unit to discuss.

Flights and accommodation bookings

The [Queensland Government Procurement Office](#) has negotiated an arrangement with Corporate Travel Management (CTM) to supply international travel management services for all department-funded travel involving Queensland Government employees, contractors, consultants and members of official delegations.

As a whole-of-government arrangement, use of CTM for departmental employee international travel is recommended if it provides the best value fares/rates. The domestic leg of an international journey is considered part of an international trip.

Book and pay all personal/private components of the proposed international travel prior to departure and in the same FBT year. Note: the FBT year runs from 1 April to 31 March.

Chief Executives may only travel business class if offered by the carrier but they must not choose air travel based solely on the availability of business class travel.

Other officers must travel best value fare economy class for both domestic and international travel unless the Chief Executive considers that special circumstances apply. Examples of special circumstances might include health and safety issues or travelling with the Minister or Chief Executive.

Travel insurance and safety

All travellers participating in international travel must use [GoSafe Travel Insurance](#) to ensure consistency of benefits and assistance in an emergency situation. Prior to the purchase of travel insurance, all prospective travellers or parent/guardian must be issued with the [GoSafe Target Market Determination document](#). Travellers need to be aware of the extent and nature of travel insurance coverage by reading the [Product Disclosure Statement](#).

Travel insurance should be organised dependant on the circumstances and can be organised in two ways:

- Flights booked through CTM - the traveller's details are automatically provided to the department's travel insurance provider GoSafe. The traveller should print the [Product Disclosure Statement](#) and [customer care emergency assistance contact details](#) (departmental employees only) and take this information with them during their travel.
- Booked outside of CTM, the traveller must purchase an insurance policy with [GoSafe](#) directly. You must enter the email address of the individual insured (or parent/guardian) in the designated 'Travellers Details' field of the GoSafe website to ensure receipt of policy documentation by the insured party.

Please refer to the department's [supply arrangements](#) OnePortal page for more information on the mandatory GoSafe Travel Insurance including [frequently asked questions](#) and [pricing](#) (departmental employees only) documents. International travel and health insurance cover is valid only for the period of travel. If the injury or illness of the employee persists on the employee's return home, please refer to the Claims and insurance section on the [WorkSafe](#) website.

Travellers must check the [Smartraveller](#) travel advisories and any other externalities that may affect the travel. It is advisable that each traveller subscribes to the [Smartraveller](#) website to receive the latest travel advice.

Contact while overseas

- Travellers must ensure they are contactable by the department at all times where possible during official international travel.
- Contact with your supervisor and the nearest Australian embassy, consulate or high commission should be made if a traveller becomes aware of a safety or security risk while travelling.
- The 24-hour Consular Emergency Centre in Canberra can also be contacted for assistance from anywhere in the world on +61 2 6261 3305 or 1300 555 135 if in Australia.

Use of corporate card while on official international travel

- Employees issued with corporate cards may incur appropriate expenses on their card while undertaking official international travel.
- Employees are required to retain receipts for the purpose of corporate card reconciliations and travel claims (including incidentals) and maintain a travel diary for reference purposes. It is recommended that travellers take a photo of receipts when they receive them should they become misplaced or illegible.

- Bank institution is aware that there will be international transactions for travel card and/or corporate credit card.
- Employees issued with corporate cards must use this card for the payment of meals, official entertainment and incidental items whilst on official international travel. The use of this card shall be in accordance with relevant legislation, whole-of-government directives and Department of Education policies, standards and procedures outlined in section 5 and not used for the purchase of alcohol.
- More information regarding the use of the Queensland Government corporate card can be found on the department's [Corporate Card](#) OnePortal page (departmental employees only).

Frequent Flyer programs and Lounge club memberships

- Frequent flyer points or other loyalty program benefits accrued in the course of official travel may, at the discretion of the employee, be accrued using an employee's personal frequent flyer account. The use of these points for either business or personal travel is also at the discretion of the employee.
- However, in booking travel, employees must ensure that:
 - the airfare was booked at competitive rates
 - an airline was not favoured over another airline (to the detriment of budgets) based on an employee's membership of a particular airline's frequent flyer program
 - air travel is kept to reasonable levels
 - employees are not pursuing excessive travel with a view to maximising the accrual of frequent flyer points
- Membership of lounge clubs may be considered an operational requirement for Chief Executives. Membership must not be provided for other employees (existing memberships at the time this policy is released may continue until the expiry date) unless they are frequent travellers as determined by the Chief Executive.
- An employee might be regarded as a frequent traveller if their normal duties require that they travel at least three times a month. This policy does not prevent travellers with private memberships from making use of lounge club facilities.

Excess baggage

Travellers must consider alternatives to paying excess baggage such as couriering or posting material prior to departure. Personal excess baggage should be paid for by the traveller when not directly related to official travel.

Valet parking

Use of valet parking must be approved by the Chief Executive.

Gifts and benefits

Refer to the department's OnePortal page [Gifts and benefits](#) (departmental employees only).

Alcohol

Refer to the department's OnePortal page [Approval for purchase and use of alcohol](#) (departmental employees only).

Post-travel requirements

International travel reporting and expenditure

- An International Travel Report is automatically generated within the International Travel Request (departmental employees only). An email with a link to the travel report is sent to the traveller on the date of return to Queensland. The report must be completed within two weeks of returning from overseas and submitted to their supervisor for review.
- Where international travel has been submitted via a forward travel plan and corresponding travel variation memo, the International Travel Report should be submitted in the Excel spreadsheet format. The report must be completed within two weeks of returning from overseas and submitted to their supervisor for review.
- An [International Travel Report Validation](#) (school employees only) must be completed and approved by the school or business unit's financial officer and approved by the direct line manager and attached to the traveller's travel report. Corporate travellers are to attach the expense allocation form or any document that supports your total travel costs.
- TRS costs do not need to be included in the actual costs reported on in the International Travel Report upon returning from travel.
- If there is a total variance of more than \$1000 between the estimated costs and the actual costs, a brief explanation for the variance is required.
- Non-employees whose travel costs are fully or partially funded by the department must be included in the International Travel Report.
- Expenses for official travel are generally paid directly by the department through CTM or by using a departmental Corporate Card. If the traveller is unable to pay for purchases through CTM or by using a Corporate Card and pays for expenses personally, the traveller may be able to claim reimbursement where deemed reasonable. For any other out of pocket, travel claims/acquittals and corporate card reconciliations and claim periods please refer to the [ExpenseMe Pro](#) (departmental employees only) website.
- Departmental employees undertaking official travel are entitled to travelling expenses. The department applies the same entitlements to non-Queensland Government employees travelling on behalf of, and at the expense of, the department. Employees making a claim for travel expenses must do so in accordance with the [International Travelling, Relieving and Living Expenses \(Directive 10/11\)](#).
- An employee must produce documentary evidence (e.g. receipts, itemised statements, certification, etc.) before expenses can be paid. Each officer undertaking international travel is responsible for collecting receipts for all official costs incurred

and to present them pasted onto A4 sheets of paper or scanned in chronological order, dated and clearly identified. In the event the traveller is unable to produce receipts a statutory declaration must be completed.

- The Chief Executive has discretion to refuse or reduce any claim for expenses considered unreasonable.
- Travellers cannot claim for expenses that are paid directly by the department – such as for accommodation or for meals provided at conferences.
- A claim for payment must be within 12 months of:
 - the date of completion of the work; or
 - incurring the expense; or
 - the conclusion of the circumstances leading to the claim.

The Chief Executive's approval is required to pay claims that are submitted outside the 12 months timeframe.

- The Department of Education Annual Report contains information on all official international travel undertaken by departmental officers, contractors or consultants during the relevant financial year. Actual costs incurred while travelling overseas must be recorded and reported. The department has an exemption from annual reporting of employee international travel for the purpose of School Study Tours where there are no agency funds used.

Contacts

International Travel Unit

Department of Education International

Email: international.travel@qed.qld.gov.au

Submit any enquiries via the [International Travel Enquiry](#) form (departmental employees only) through the department's Service Catalogue Online.

Fringe Benefit Tax

Corporate Taxation Unit

Phone: 1300 656 380

Submit any enquiries via the [Taxation General Enquiries Form](#)

Flights and accommodation bookings

Corporate Travel Management (CTM)

Phone: 1300 368 145 (includes After Hours service and Group booking support)

Email: qldgov@travelctm.com

GoSafe Travel Insurance

Website: <http://www.gosafeinsurance.com.au>

Email: travel@gosafetravelinsurance.com.au

Telephone: (07) 3054 1010

Definitions

Agency means entities and other organisations within the department's portfolio.

Best value fare is the lowest cost fare available at the time of booking to suit the agency's business needs and traveller's entitlements. Best value is determined having regard not only to airfares but also to other relevant costs, such as accommodation and waiting time. Travellers are not expected to undertake circuitous itineraries or to travel in circumstances where there is unacceptable safety or security concerns in order to access lower fares.

Business development travel means official travel by employees marketing and promoting the Queensland state education system overseas or developing commercial relationships with international agencies, organisations and schools

Chief Executive means the Director-General of the Department of Education.

Domestic travel means official travel within Australia including Australian territories.

Employee travel means official travel by an employee where:

- the employee's travel costs, including expenses and allowances, are either fully or partially met from agency (departmental) funds; or
- travel costs are funded from other (external) sources, e.g. fee-for service activities, costs covered by a conference organiser, grants, scholarships and other funds.

Non-employee travel means travel where costs are fully or partially met by the agency (i.e. the department) for:

- agency's clients, e.g. patients, carers, witnesses, children in care,
- students, family members
 - consultants and contractors
 - international job candidates
 - members of official delegations.

Official travel means agency-approved travel for agency and/or government business.

Professional development travel means official travel acquiring skills, knowledge and ongoing learning opportunities to improve an individual's ability to do their role and grow as a professional. Examples could include - attending conferences, seminars, forums, courses, delivering a paper, carrying out research or participating in activities related to sister school relationships.

Travel costs means any costs, fees, allowances or expenses associated with or incidental to official travel, including but not limited to travel fares and accommodation expenses.