



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
NEW UNIVERSITY

EST. 1891



International Travel Policy



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Purpose

1. Purpose and Rationale

This policy establishes a structured framework for international staff and student travel to ensure that overseas engagement is strategic, safe, coordinated, and aligned with the University's partnership and Transnational Education (TNE) objectives.

The policy aims to:

- Prevent duplication of effort and ensure efficient and safe use of University resources.
- Ensure alignment with institutional partnership and TNE strategic priorities.
- Maximise the benefits and return on investment from international engagement.
- Maintain oversight of TNE-related activities and partnership development.
- Safeguard the health, safety, security and wellbeing of travelling staff members and students, where they are traveling university.
- Foster cross-departmental collaboration and knowledge sharing.
- Enable effective tracking and evaluation of international activities for future planning.

Applicability and Scope

This policy applies to all University staff undertaking international travel (outside the United Kingdom) for BNU business including student recruitment, partnership development, conferences, field trips, and staff/student exchanges. This policy also applies to staff members travelling with students.

Exclusions: This policy does not apply to personal travel or domestic UK travel.

2. Policy Principles

This policy is underpinned by the following principles:

- **Strategic Alignment:** All international travel should contribute to the University's strategic objectives and partnership priorities.
- **Duty of Care:** The University has a duty of care to ensure the safety and wellbeing of staff travelling abroad.
- **Efficiency and Coordination:** Travel should be planned to avoid duplication, enable collaboration, and maximise impact.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** Clear processes and record-keeping support institutional oversight and continuous improvement.
- **Knowledge Sharing:** Outcomes and learnings from international travel should be documented and shared to benefit the wider institution.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** The University recognises the environmental impact of international air travel. Staff should consider whether objectives can be achieved remotely before requesting travel, and where travel is approved, choose lower-impact options where practical.

Policy

3. Pre-Travel Requirements and Process

3.1 Travel Request and Approval

All staff planning international travel within the scope of this policy must submit a travel declaration and complete a risk assessment for approval, **before** making any travel arrangements or commitments.

3.1.a Travel Declaration

Staff must get approval from their line manager and complete an online Travel Declaration via Bucks Apps. The form requires the following information:

- Traveller details: name, department, contact information.
- Travel dates and destination(s).
- Purpose of travel (e.g., partnership meeting, conference attendance, TNE validation visit).
- Objectives of travel (e.g., 'Develop dual-degree pathway with University X', 'Conduct quality assurance review of partner institution Y').
- Expected outcomes and benefits to the University.
- Key contacts at destination.

3.1.b TNE Alignment Review

The External Collaborations team (comprising Director of Collaborative Relationships, Head of Global Collaborations and PVC External Collaborations) will meet regularly to review all travel requests against the following criteria:

- Does the proposed travel advance institutional TNE priorities and strategic objectives?
- Is there potential for duplication with other planned or recent trips?
- Are there any strategic, personal safety, or reputational risks associated with the destination or partner?
- Are there opportunities for collaboration with other departments or teams?
- Is the expected return on investment clear and reasonable?

The team will respond within **five working days** with one of the following decisions:

- **Approved:** Travel may proceed; staff may make arrangements
- **Revisions Requested:** Further information or adjustments needed before approval
- **Declined:** Travel does not align with institutional priorities; feedback provided

The TNE Alignment Summary sets out the institutional framework for evaluating TNE-related travel requests. All staff submitting travel requests connected to partnership development, TNE delivery, or new market exploration must read this summary before submitting their request. This is accessible via the External Collaborations BEN site.

No travel is to be booked without authorisation.

3.2 Risk Assessment and Safety Planning

All staff travelling internationally (and staff travelling with students) under this policy must read and comply with the BNU Overseas Travel Guidance before departure. This document provides essential practical guidance on personal safety, accommodation, transport, health, and emergency procedures. It forms part of the University's duty of care framework and compliance with it is mandatory. Staff must download the UMAL Crisis24 Horizon App before departure and ensure they have reviewed and saved the UMAL Travel Cover Summary and Travel Cover Letter, both available on BEN.

Digital and Technology Services (DTS) must be aware of all international travel, and all travellers must adhere to the latest BNU device policy. Any queries relating to devices while travelling should be referred to DTS.

3.2.a Travel Risk Assessment

Prior to approval, the traveller must conduct a risk assessment using the approved template based on:

- Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) travel advice.
- Country-specific security, health, and political stability information.
- Partner institution reputation and reliability (where applicable).
- Any specific concerns related to staff member's health, accessibility needs, or personal circumstances.

High-Risk Destinations

BNU staff must not travel to any country or region where the FCDO advises against all travel. This is a mandatory requirement and not subject to individual discretion. Where a staff member believes such travel is genuinely essential to institutional objectives, they must seek written approval from the Vice-Chancellor or USG member before any arrangements are made. Such approval will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and will require a detailed safety plan.

All staff must check the FCDO travel advice pages for their destination before submitting a travel request, and again within one week of departure. Any change in FCDO advice between approval and travel must be reported to the External Collaborations team immediately. Approved travel may be suspended or cancelled where FCDO advice changes materially.

3.2.b Health and Safety Requirements

Before departure, travelling staff (and students) must:

- Complete any required vaccinations and obtain necessary health documentation.
- Register travel with the University's travel tracking system (Key Travel).

- Provide emergency contact details and itinerary to their line manager and/or College Business Manager.
- Review destination-specific safety and security guidance provided by the University.
- Ensure appropriate travel insurance coverage (arranged by the University).
- Book all overseas travel only via the University's approved travel management company (TMC) in use at the time e.g., Key Travel. Bookings outside of the TMC are prohibited.

3.3 Central Travel Log and Coordination

3.3.a International Opportunities Log

All approved international travel will be recorded in a centralised International Opportunities Log maintained by the External Collaborations team. This log serves as a comprehensive record of international engagement and enables identification of trends, opportunities for collaboration, and ROI analysis.

3.3.b Travel Calendar

Approved trips will be added to a shared document accessible to relevant teams (e.g., Global Collaborations Office, Collaborative Relationships, Health and Safety, DTS, Marketing). This calendar enables:

- Coordination of overlapping visits to the same region.
- Identification of opportunities for joint activities.
- Visibility of international engagement activity across the institution.

3.3.c Internal Communication

The External Collaborations team will circulate monthly email alerts to key stakeholders listing upcoming international trips, objectives, and staff contacts. This enables colleagues to contribute expertise, provide relevant contacts, or coordinate complementary activities.

3.4 Visa and Immigration Compliance

Staff (and students) must ensure that appropriate visa or entry permissions are in place before travelling. It is the responsibility of the travelling staff member to confirm visa requirements for their destination(s) in advance of booking. The University will not reimburse costs arising from travel undertaken without the correct documentation. Staff must not undertake activities in a host country that fall outside the permitted scope of their visa or entry conditions. Any uncertainty about the permissible scope of activities should be raised with the External Collaborations team before travel is confirmed.

4. During Travel: Safety and Security

4.1 Safety and Wellbeing

The University is committed to safeguarding the health, safety, security and wellbeing of staff and students travelling internationally. Travellers are expected to:

- Exercise reasonable caution and adhere to local laws and customs.
- Maintain daily contact with their line manager or designated University contact.
- Report any safety concerns, incidents, or changes to travel plans immediately.

- Keep copies of important documents (passport, insurance, emergency contacts) accessible.
- Follow any specific safety protocols provided for high-risk destinations.

4.2 Emergency Support

In the event of an emergency (medical emergency, security incident, natural disaster, political unrest), staff should:

1. Contact local emergency services as appropriate.
2. Notify the University immediately via the designated 24-hour emergency contact line: +44 (0)1494 605070.
3. Contact the British Embassy or Consulate in the destination country (for non-medical emergencies).
4. Follow instructions from University Emergency Incident Protocol.
5. Expect the University's approved travel management company (TMC) to make contact with guidance and support.

The University will provide support including liaison with insurance providers, emergency repatriation if necessary, and ongoing communication with family members if appropriate.

4.3 Lone Working and Staff Wellbeing

Staff undertaking extended international travel, particularly those conducting multi-destination recruitment tours or spending extended periods abroad without colleagues, should be aware of the additional personal safety and wellbeing considerations that arise from lone working in unfamiliar environments.

If a staff member misses a scheduled daily check-in without prior notice, the line manager must attempt contact and escalate to the Emergency Contact if contact cannot be established.

Staff experiencing harassment, personal safety concerns, or significant psychological distress during travel should contact their line manager or the designated University emergency contact immediately. The University will provide appropriate support, which may include early return or reallocation of planned activities.

Staff who identify as LGBTQ+ or who have other personal characteristics that may affect their safety in certain destinations are encouraged to discuss any concerns with their line manager or the External Collaborations team before travel is confirmed and must reference the potential risk as part of the risk assessment. The FCDO travel pages provide destination-specific guidance for LGBTQ+ travellers.

5. Post-Travel Requirements

5.1 Travel Debrief Report

Within **one week** of return, staff travelling for the purposes of TNE development must submit a brief Post-Travel Debrief Report via the online form accessible via the External Collaborations BEN site. The report should include:

- Key contacts made and institutions visited.
- Outcomes achieved against stated objectives.
- Next steps and follow-up actions required.
- Recommendations for future engagement with partners or destinations.
- Lessons learned and suggestions for improving the travel process.
- TNE relevance and strategic value of the trip.

Outcomes and key learnings from international travel will be recorded centrally, shared with relevant teams, and surfaced in quarterly updates where significant.

5.2 Financial Reporting

All travel expenses must be claimed through the University's standard Expenses Policy. Failure to operate in line with this policy will result in expenses claims not being approved.

6. Risks and Mitigations

This policy addresses key risks associated with international travel through the following mitigations:

Risk	Description	Mitigation
Safety and Security	Staff travelling to unfamiliar or high-risk destinations may face health, security, or political risks	Pre-travel risk assessment based on FCDO advice; mandatory safety briefings for high-risk destinations; 24-hour emergency support line; comprehensive travel insurance
Strategic Misalignment	Travel that does not advance TNE priorities or institutional strategy wastes resources and time	Mandatory TNE alignment review by External Collaborations before approval; clear articulation of objectives and expected ROI in travel request
Duplication of Effort	Multiple staff members may unknowingly visit the same partners or regions without coordination	Central travel log and shared calendar; monthly communication of upcoming

		trips to relevant teams; UCC oversight
Reputational Risk	Engagement with unsuitable or unreliable partners may damage institutional reputation	Due diligence checks on prospective partners; UCC review of partner reputation and reliability as part of approval process
Lost Opportunities	Lack of communication may mean missed opportunities for collaboration or leveraging existing relationships	Pre-travel coordination alerts to teams; post-travel knowledge sharing; central log for institutional memory
Insufficient ROI	Travel may not generate tangible outcomes or strategic value	Clear articulation of expected outcomes in travel request; post-travel debrief to assess results; annual audit of travel trends and ROI

7. Training and Support

7.1 Staff Training

To ensure staff understand TNE priorities and the travel approval process, the External Collaborations team will provide:

- **TNE Strategy Summary:** A concise one-page summary of institutional TNE priorities with examples of aligned and non-aligned travel purposes.
- **Annual Training Session:** A 60-minute session covering TNE goals, the travel approval process, safety protocols, and best practices for international engagement.
- **Resource Hub:** An online repository of guidance documents, templates, country-specific briefing notes, and cultural awareness resources.

7.2 Ongoing Support

The External Collaborations team is available to provide guidance and support throughout the travel lifecycle, including advice on partnership development, cultural considerations, travel logistics, and troubleshooting challenges. Staff are encouraged to contact the team at External.Collaborations@bnu.ac.uk for assistance.

Responsibilities

8. Monitoring and Review

External Collaborations will conduct an **annual audit** of international travel activity to:

- Analyse travel trends (e.g., frequency of visits to specific regions, partnerships developed).
- Assess return on investment and strategic impact.
- Identify opportunities for improvement in process efficiency.
- Gather staff feedback on the effectiveness of the policy and support provided.

Findings from the annual audit will inform adjustments to the policy, process, or support resources as needed.

9. Policy Review Cycle

This policy will be formally reviewed on a biennial basis or sooner if institutional strategy shifts, significant risks emerge, or feedback indicates the need for substantial revision.

Contact Information

For queries regarding this policy or the international travel approval process, please contact:

External Collaborations

Email: External.Collaborations@bnu.ac.uk

24-Hour Emergency Contact: +44 (0)1494 605070.

Appendix: Equality Impact Assessment

As a university, we are committed to enhancing equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). We have a legal (Equality Act 2010) and ethical obligation to ensure our policies, systems and processes are fair, inclusive and ensure every member of the BNU community can thrive.

Whilst we all have protected characteristics, we know there are certain characteristics and communities that are marginalised and underrepresented in Higher Education and the workplace. These are: different ethnicities (including Gypsy, Roma, Traveller, Showmen and Boaters, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers) Disabled individuals; neurodiverse individuals; pregnancy (including maternity and paternity impact); the LGBT+ community; carers; people of different faiths; people impacted by menopause and individuals from a range of backgrounds including: socio-economic disadvantage, homeless, alcohol and/or substance misuse, people experiencing domestic and/or sexual violence, ex-armed forces, looked after children and care leavers. We also know individuals have multiple intersectional experiences and different points in their lives and careers.

1. With reference to the above characteristics, in what ways does this policy enhance equality and the access of opportunity at BNU?

This policy establishes a standardised and transparent governance framework that ensures international travel opportunities are accessible to all staff based on merit and strategic alignment. Key enhancements include:

- **Equitable Resource Allocation:** By centralizing the approval process through the External Collaborations team, the policy ensures that travel resources are distributed fairly and consistently across the institution.
- **Inclusive Safety Planning:** The mandatory risk assessment process explicitly accounts for individual accessibility needs and health requirements, ensuring that every traveller receives tailored institutional support.
- **Proactive Support for Diversity:** The policy includes specific provisions for staff with personal characteristics that may impact their safety abroad, providing a safe channel for consultation and destination-specific guidance to mitigate risks.
- **Information Accessibility:** The commitment to providing all policy documentation in alternative formats ensures that essential travel and safety information is accessible to the entire University community.

2. In what ways does the policy adversely impact individuals from marginalised and underrepresented communities?

This policy is designed as a protective framework to ensure that no staff member or student is placed in a position of vulnerability during international engagement.

- **Safety-First Restrictions:** The policy strictly adheres to FCDO travel advice to prevent any individual from being exposed to high-risk environments, ensuring the University’s duty of care is maintained for all personnel.
- **Supportive Disclosure:** While the policy requests the disclosure of potential risks related to personal characteristics, this is framed as a supportive measure to allow the University to provide appropriate safety protocols and emergency repatriation coverage.
- **Destination Mitigation:** In regions where local customs or laws may impact marginalized groups, the policy mandates pre-travel briefings to ensure travellers are fully informed and institutionally protected before departure.

3. How does this proposal work towards achieving the BNU Equality Objectives as outlined in the [Equality Strategy 2023-2028](#)? Please signpost objectives and actions in the BNU Equality Strategy.

This policy operationalizes the BNU Equality Strategy 2023–2028 by embedding inclusive practices into the University’s global operations.

- **Evidence-Based Oversight:** Through the use of a centralized International Opportunities Log and annual audits, the University can monitor participation trends to ensure continued diversity in international activities.
- **Enhanced Duty of Care:** The policy directly supports the strategic goal of fostering a secure and inclusive environment by providing a 24-hour emergency support line and comprehensive insurance coverage for all authorized travel.
- **Strategic Consistency:** By aligning travel with institutional TNE priorities, the policy ensures that international engagement reflects the University’s commitment to global partnership and ethical collaboration.

Signed: Chris Garrett
Name: Chris Garrett, Head of Global Collaborations
Date: 24 April 2026



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