Travel Policy and Procedure

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Responsibility: Chief Operating Officer

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1 Scope and purpose

1.1 This policy covers all long-distance travel undertaken by staff employed by or seconded to the University of London International Academy and all other Travellers where University of London International Academy funds are used to pay for all or part of the travel.

1.2 All financial transactions undertaken by or on behalf of the University of London are also subject to the University of London Financial Regulations.

1.3 The nature of the travel required by the International Academy means that some staff travel extensively and to higher-risk destinations as a normal and routine part of their work. The purpose of this policy is therefore to ensure that all travel arrangements:

1.3.1 satisfy the purpose of travel;

1.3.2 demonstrate due regard for the safety and welfare of the traveller; and

1.3.3 offer value for money.

2 Definitions

2.1 The following definitions are used in this document:

2.1.1 Long-distance travel means travel outside the South-East of England.

2.1.2 Major travel expenses mean the costs of purchasing flights, train tickets, car hire, mileage claims, visa costs and accommodation (including breakfast) that should normally be booked in advance.

2.1.3 Minor travel expenses mean the costs of taxis, buses, business telephone calls and other incidental items incurred while travelling for business purposes.

2.1.4 Living expenses include the cost of meals, gratuities, drinks, personal phone calls and similar costs

2.1.5 Per-diem rate means the allowance paid by the University to cover living expenses
2.1.6 **Travel Coordinator** means a person listed in Appendix A who is authorised to make bookings for major travel expenses.

2.1.7 **Travel Partner** is one or more companies designated in Appendix F as a preferred travel agency for the University of London.

2.1.8 **Long-haul** flights are those flights (including necessary same-day flight connections) that are scheduled to last eight hours or more.

2.1.9 **Checker** means a person listed in Appendix D who is authorised to check claims for expenses submitted by Travellers on their return to the UK and before they are signed off by a budget holder.

### 3 General policy relevant to all types of travel

3.1 The University of London will fund approved, ordinary and necessary travel to undertake the business of the International Academy.

3.2 Travellers are expected to exercise reasonable judgement regarding expenses incurred under this policy and to neither personally gain or lose financially from its implementation.

3.3 All long distance travel plans must be approved in advance by:

   3.3.1 the budget holder (if University of London International Academy funds are being used for any part of the travel); and

   3.3.2 the line manager of the Traveller (if the Traveller is a staff member or seconded to the University of London International Academy).

3.4 All major travel expenses for long distance travel must be booked by a Travel Coordinator. This allows the University to ensure that this policy is observed, to achieve purchasing economies, to best use the time of staff, and to meet its duty of care to employees. See section 14 for the procedure to be followed. If a Travel Coordinator needs to make travel arrangements for their own travel, then these arrangements must be checked in detail by the appropriate budget holder.

### 4 Purpose of travel

4.1 A full disclosure of the purpose of travel must be made when the travel is approved. This must include time spent on non-International Academy business, personal travel, recovery time and any other non-University business related activity.

4.2 The budget holder and line manager may only approve:

   4.2.1 the costs necessary to perform university business;

   4.2.2 in situations where the travel is clearly necessary and alternative methods of working (eg. video conference) would clearly not achieve the necessary business purpose.
5 Air travel

5.1 Air travel should be booked with major airlines that have a good safety record. Generally, flights should be booked using the cheapest available Economy class fare (or equivalent), buying tickets with fixed dates where feasible, as these are generally cheaper. However, the cost of tickets should be considered in terms of “overall value for money” and factors such as the predictability of travel plans, airline schedules and connection times may mean that a more expensive ticket provides better value for money under a specific set of circumstances.

5.2 On long-haul flights, the Traveller should select the more cost effective option from:
   5.2.1 Economy class with sufficient rest time following the flight. The cost of any additional staff time, accommodation and per-diem should be included in calculating the cost of this option.
   5.2.2 Economy Plus (or equivalent) if no rest time is available (i.e. traveller must arrive and go directly to meetings).

5.3 While the traveller may retain frequent flyer benefits, these must not result in any incremental cost to the University. It is acceptable for a Traveller to upgrade flight tickets using loyalty club schemes provided that the upgrade is at no additional cost to the University.

6 Hotel accommodation

6.1 Hotel accommodation should be booked in a safe, convenient hotel that is equivalent to a UK three or four star hotel. Hotel classes, standards and safety can vary significantly between the countries in which the International Programmes operates so some interpretation of “equivalent” is inevitably required. However, safety is always a paramount concern particularly in countries where the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) report a high risk of muggings or attacks on visitors.

6.2 Wherever possible, breakfast should be included in the rate. If this is not possible, the cost of breakfast should be claimed as a receipted expense in addition to any per-diem claim.

6.3 In the event that the Traveller is attending an event hosted at a higher standard hotel, or has a business need for a higher standard hotel, then approval in advance is also required from the Chief Operating Officer (COO) or Dean.

6.4 Upgrades to executive floors/rooms are not normally acceptable unless the hotel offers them on an entirely complimentary basis (as could be the case for frequent visitors). However, in circumstances where staff have to meet with local institutions representatives or need a suitable location to prepare for visits or write up reports, then the booking of such accommodation may be necessary and therefore will be acceptable. For audit trail purposes, Travel Coordinators must ensure that a note is put on record justifying the booking of such accommodation.
7 Ground transport

7.1 Train travel should be booked in a class equivalent to UK standard class.

7.2 Hire cars should be booked using a category sufficient for the number of passengers and luggage to be carried. Insurance policies for hire cars must be checked carefully as these may differ from those available in the UK and should provide full cover for liabilities to third parties, passengers and the driver. Hire car usage should be restricted to situations where personal safety, travel time, weight of luggage, inaccessibility of the destination by public transport, or the cost of group travel by public transport makes a hire car clearly necessary.

7.3 Taxi use should be restricted to situations where personal safety, travel time, weight of luggage, inaccessibility of the destination by public transport, or the cost of group travel by public transport makes a taxi journey clearly necessary.

7.4 Where a Traveller is willing to use a private car, then the University will pay mileage for the actual distance covered at the agreed University mileage rates up to and not exceeding the cost of equivalent public transport or a hire car, whichever is lower. Travellers are advised to check that their motor insurance policy includes business use. The cost of such insurance cannot be claimed as an additional expense.

8 General exceptions

8.1 The COO or Dean may approve requests for upgrades to the class of travel where there is a documented health issue with corresponding medical advice and/or where there are other circumstances (eg. sustained international travel, no opportunity for rest time, need for working space while travelling) that justify the additional cost involved in such a decision.

8.2 Evidence that the COO or the Dean has approved a request for an upgrade to the class of travel should be provided to the Travel Coordinator at the time of the request for a higher class of travel.

8.3 The COO or Dean may approve a request to purchase membership of an airport lounge access programme (eg. Priority Pass) by a Traveller who spends more than 40 nights per year away from home on International Programmes business and who frequently requires working space while waiting at airports.

9 Safety

9.1 Before any international travel, a “Safety Check” (see Appendix B) will be undertaken by the Travel Coordinator for relevant health and safety information relevant to the country(ies) being visited. Travellers who may have specific health issues or who are not British Citizens are strongly advised to obtain their own travel advice in addition to the information that will be supplied as a result of these checks as the Travel Coordinator will not have access to personal information about each Traveller.
9.2 Where the UK FCO advises against all travel, or all but essential travel, to a specific country or to the part of the country to be visited, then specific advance authorisation for the booking is required from the COO who will require that a more detailed risk assessment is undertaken. Depending on the level and type of risk involved, specialist advice, additional emergency security and/or repatriation protection may be arranged.

9.3 Prior approval from the COO is required for travel to the following countries as these fall under a special category in the University of London Travel Insurance:

- Columbia
- Iraq
- Mexico
- Nigeria
- Philippines
- Venezuela
- Yemen

9.4 Travellers are expected to apply for and travel with a University RBS OneCard. This should be used to provide any contingency funds in case of emergency. In the event that a Traveller cannot apply for a University card and does not have sufficient personal credit to provide a contingency, the advice of the COO should be obtained (see Appendix C for further details on cash withdrawal abroad).

10 Travel expenses

10.1 Major travel expenses items must be booked in advance and will be paid through arrangements made by a Travel Coordinator. Where it is not possible to pay in advance, the Traveller may be asked to make payment at check-in (eg. hotels) using a University RBS OneCard instead.

10.2 Major travel expenses should normally include

10.2.1 the cost of travel by train from the nearest departure station to the airport.
10.2.2 breakfast with any overnight accommodation.

10.3 Minor travel expenses will usually be incurred during travel and include necessary short journeys (taxis, buses etc) and entertainment costs. Where possible, the Traveller should use a University RBS OneCard to pay for these expenses. Where that is not possible, an expenses claim (supported by receipts) should be submitted upon return (see Appendix D for further details on how to make a claim).

10.4 The University will not normally pay for:

10.4.1 Personal telephone calls, other than to announce safe arrival.
10.4.2 Personal Internet access.
10.4.3 Parking fines or traffic offences.
10.4.4 Mini-bar or in-room entertainment.
10.4.5 Clothing or any other items that the Traveller may reasonably be expected to bring from home.
10.4.6 Excess luggage costs, unless the Traveller is required to travel with significant quantities of business materials.
10.4.7 Laundry costs and dry-cleaning, except for travel lasting more than 5 days.
10.4.8 Membership of airline clubs or similar.
10.4.9 Meals, drinks, gratuities and similar items if a per-diem (see below) is claimed, except for breakfast if it cannot be included in the hotel rate.

10.4.10 Travel insurance (see para 13.).

10.5 Any claim that contains an item listed above (or similar) will require explicit approval by the COO or Dean.

10.6 Under dispensation agreed with the Inland Revenue, the University usually pays a “per-diem” rate (see Appendix E) to cover daily living expenses for a given trip including meals (except Breakfast), drinks, gratuities, etc. The terms of payment agreed by the Inland Revenue (as described in para 10.7) are strict and monitored by the Inland Revenue who aim to ensure that per-diems are not a form of untaxed income. The per-diem can be claimed in advance or when the Traveller returns and does not require any submission of receipts.

10.7 The per-diem is payable from the time of first international arrival until the time of final international departure for each whole period of 24hrs. At the end of a trip where the traveller does not depart for at least 10hrs hours but less than 24hrs, then a single “10hrs or more” rate may be paid. Where a Traveller benefits from hospitality for a dinner then the “24hrs” rate must be reduced to the “10hrs or more” rate. Similarly, when a Traveller is attending a fully-catered conference, the rate that they will receive will be the 10hr rate.

10.8 Alternatively, the Traveller may choose to claim actual receipted expenditure for daily living expenses instead of a per-diem.

10.9 Two mobile phones are available to those staff travelling and who do not possess a University phone on a permanent basis. The phones are kept in the Executive Office and released on demand. These phones are on our corporate contract but overseas calls are not included in our free minutes so these would be charged. The phones must be returned to the Executive Office immediately when staff return to work.

11 Entertaining and gift expenses

11.1 The offering and accepting of hospitality is a normal part of working and building business relationships in many of the countries in which the International Programmes operates. If the travel requires business entertaining or the presentation of gifts, then:

11.1.1 Any entertainment or gifts provided must be consistent with the image and reputation of the University of London as a UK public body that is subject to full public disclosure.

11.1.2 An expenses claim must be submitted with the names of all beneficiaries, including any staff members in attendance.

11.1.3 The cost must be covered by an approved budget-line.

11.2 In the event that the Traveller is offered hospitality (over and beyond that that would otherwise have been paid for by this policy) or gifts (other than small typical business items such as pens, paper weights, etc with an estimated combined value of less than £20) while
undertaking the travel, then a full declaration must be made in the *International Academy Register of Gifts and Hospitality* held by the COO.

11.3 Gifts or hospitality must not be offered or accepted in any way that could be construed as a bribe or inducement.

**12 Time off in lieu**

12.1 University of London International Academy clerical grade staff (up to level 6) may request time off in lieu for time spent working/travelling on a Saturday (1.5 times actual time worked), Sunday (2.0 times actual time worked) or general University holiday (actual time worked).

12.2 University of London International Academy management staff (level 7 and upwards) may request time off in lieu for the actual time spent working/travelling on a Saturday, Sunday or general University holiday.

12.3 Time off in lieu should normally be used within one month of returning from the travel and is subject to approval by the line manager.

**13 Travel insurance**

13.1 The University has a travel insurance policy with Chartis Europe Limited which covers all University employees and “representatives of the University of London International Academy not on the University payroll but working in association with the University and for whom the University has accepted responsibility for travel insurance”. This policy covers medical emergencies, cancellation, delay, personal effects, etc while engaged in international travel “primarily for business purposes, including incidental holiday”. A copy can be supplied upon request to a Travel Coordinator and Travellers are strongly advised to check in advance that the policy is adequate for their needs.

13.2 The Policy can also be consulted by clicking on the following link: [https://intranet.london.ac.uk/2854.html](https://intranet.london.ac.uk/2854.html)

13.3 For medical and emergency travel expenses please call + 44 (0) 1273 400850 or visit [www.mylifeline.co.uk](http://www.mylifeline.co.uk). For Political Evacuation, please call the 24/7 crisis centre, from anywhere in the world (freephone) + 1-817-826-7000

**14 Booking procedure for all major travel expense items**

14.1 The traveller must complete Part A of the Travel Booking Form at the earliest possible time ([https://intranet.london.ac.uk/1361.html](https://intranet.london.ac.uk/1361.html))

14.1.1 Generally, early bookings allow the University to secure the most cost-effective rates.

14.1.2 If the Traveller requires flexible tickets, this should be clearly indicated on the Travel Booking Form and the reason(s) outlined.
14.2 The Traveller should pass the Travel Booking Form to a Travel Coordinator.

14.2.1 The Travel Coordinator will liaise with an International Academy Travel Partner to identify the best options for travel that meet the legitimate needs of the traveller.

14.2.2 The Travel Coordinator may also consider options from other travel agencies or book directly with a provider (eg. Easyjet) if that proves to be more cost effective.

14.2.3 If the travel involves an international destination, the Travel Coordinator will check for guidance regarding visas and travel safety for the country concerned (see Appendix B).

14.2.4 Any relevant information will be attached to the Travel Booking Form.

14.3 The Travel Coordinator will complete Part B of the Travel Booking form with the recommended bookings (and any optional/alternative components) and return it to the traveller.

14.3.1 The Traveller and the Travel Coordinator may need to discuss changes and alternatives to reach an agreed itinerary and schedule.

14.3.2 The Traveller signs Part C to confirm that the booking should be made.

14.4 The Traveller obtains the necessary manager and budget holder approvals for the booking (Part C) and returns the form to the Travel Coordinator.

14.4.1 For staff employed by or seconded to the University of London International Academy, the Traveller’s manager must sign the form.

14.4.2 If University of London funds are paying part or all of the cost, then the appropriate budget holder must sign the form.

14.5 The Travel Coordinator makes the necessary bookings and provides confirmation to the Traveller (Part D).

14.5.1 For safety reasons, the Travel Coordinator retains a copy of all travel arrangements and contact details until after the return of the Traveller.

14.6 Alternatively, the above process can be done via email as long as all the necessary quotes and approvals have been obtained and are available should evidence be requested as part of an audit trail

**IMPORTANT**

14.7 Travel Coordinators must ensure that they log in all bookings into Travel Tracker (see Appendix G) to ensure full visibility of travellers’ locations at all times.

**15 Annual Review Meeting**

15.1 A meeting of the Travel Coordinators, Checkers and any other relevant members of staff of UoLIA will take place annually in order to deal with any issues which may have arisen in relation to the terms of this Policy.
15.2 The meeting will also allow for staff to propose changes to the Policy. Any changes will need to be approved by the UoLIA SMT.
Appendix A – Travel Coordinators

Travel Coordinators are approved from time to time by the COO. These individuals are the only people authorised to make bookings for major travel expenses on behalf of the University of London International Academy.

- Ainhoa Goenaga
- Reetu Kensal
- Christian Otta
- Holleigh Marsh
- Sophie Harries
- Sarah Slater

Travel Coordinators are not authorised to make bookings outside the limits set in this policy without the explicit approval of the COO or Dean.

Appendix B – Safety check

For international travel, the Travel Coordinator will perform a search on the following websites and attach any country specific information to the Travel Booking Form.

- [http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk](http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk)  
  'fitfortravel' is a public access website provided by the NHS (Scotland). It gives travel health information for people travelling abroad from the UK. Remember that you should always discuss your particular needs with your own doctor or nurse.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office provides in-depth advice for every country in the world, updated regularly for all British travellers.

- [https://tracker.red24.com](https://tracker.red24.com) (authorised access only)

- [www.mylifeline.co.uk](http://www.mylifeline.co.uk)  
  ‘mylifeline’ in association with Red24 and International SOS provides pre-travel advice including in-depth country guides.  
  To access the information within this site, you will need the UoL Travel Insurance number (0015865156). Travel Angel (e-learning security and situation awareness tool) requires the creation of an account.  
  ‘mylifeline’ also provides medical and non-medical emergency assistance whilst travelling

Appendix C – Withdrawing Cash Abroad
Please note that all RBS OneCard cardholders have their cards enabled to allow them to withdraw cash abroad in case of an emergency. However, only staff authorised to do so will be allowed to withdraw cash abroad in a non-emergency situation. These are currently as follows:

- GNC: Lisa Pierre and Katherine Bull
- CPQ: all Review Secretaries
- ULP Office: Professor Jenny Hamilton, Simon Askey and Michael Davis
- Dean: Professor Jonathan Kydd
- COO: Mr Andrew Bollington

The withdrawal of cash overseas should only be within the limits set out below:

These staff have been authorised to withdraw cash as they will need to pay for organisational expenditure (e.g. a photographer or a catering company) while abroad in situations where a credit card cannot be accepted.

This will also apply in situations where taxis or other modes of transport have to be paid for by Review Secretaries for Review Panel members.

Please note that staff should convert any unused cash into Pound Sterling and return it to the University immediately on their return to the office using an RV1 form (see link below)

https://intranet.london.ac.uk/2396.html

Offsetting a personal claim for expenses against an unused cash balance withdrawn for organisational expenditure will not be an option in the future as the audit trail can be difficult to follow. The two processes must therefore be treated separately from each other.

All cash withdrawn using a University RBS OneCard must additionally be accounted for correctly by completing the electronic statement using the following description:

Cash withdrawn overseas to pay for ……state purpose……: the unused cash (£xxx) has already been returned to the University (copies of all relevant documents and receipts are available).

**Extract RBS OneCard policy & procedures @ para 5.2.9):**
All cardholders are reminded that they must submit the original receipts attached to a copy of the monthly statement to the Financial Services Unit. Please note that photocopies of receipts are not acceptable. Receipts must be made available to the Approver for potential review before being approved on SmartData Online

Appendix D – Checking and Processing of Claims for Expenses incurred abroad

A process has been set up for the checking and processing of claims for expenses. Claims will be signed off by the budget holder of the event. For staff located within a directorate but claiming against a budget held in a different directorate, the claim will be checked and processed by the checker of the directorate where the budget is held.
Current checkers are listed below:

- **AISS:** Ainhoa Goenaga
- **CPQ:** Christian Otta
- **Executive Office:** Ainhoa Goenaga
- **GNC:** Sophies Harries
- **Student Services:** Ainhoa Goenaga
- **ULP Office:** Holleigh Marsh

Please ask your Travel Coordinator to whom you should submit your claim for expenses.

Staff should claim using the University Claim for Expenses form (see link below)

[https://intranet.london.ac.uk/2439.html](https://intranet.london.ac.uk/2439.html)

Please note that this form is for University contracted employees only. Those travelling on behalf of the International Programmes and not direct employees of the University but who may have to submit a claim, must do so via a letter and enclose all relevant original receipts. A payment request form ([https://intranet.london.ac.uk/2441.html](https://intranet.london.ac.uk/2441.html)) will need to be completed by the member of staff dealing with the claim and authorised by the appropriate budget holder.

Checkers should ensure that a claim is fit to be submitted for sign off e.g. that all calculations and rate conversions are correct and that all receipts and paperwork have been provided in support of the claim.

**Appendix E – Per-diem rates**

Per-diem rates are approved from time to time by the COO. These rates are deemed to cover all living expenses. Breakfast should normally be included in the hotel rate and is therefore excluded from the rate.

The full list of per diem rates can be found at [https://intranet.london.ac.uk/1361.html](https://intranet.london.ac.uk/1361.html)

Should a per-diem rate be required for any another country, please contact Catherine Skelton at catherine.skelton@london.ac.uk.

If a per-diem rate is not considered adequate to cover actual costs incurred in a given location or is not available, then the staff member should claim actual receipted expenses instead of a per-diem.

When the Traveller benefits from hospitality for dinner then the 24hrs rate must be reduced to the 10hrs or more rate.

**Appendix F – Travel Partner**
Travel Partners are approved from time to time by the COO. At least one Travel Partner must be consulted in any pricing for a trip. However, the policy allows for services to be purchased from other suppliers if they provide better value for money.

- Key Travel (www.keytravel.co.uk)

Appendix G – Travel Tracker

Red24 is “the world’s leading security specialist”.

Red24’s Travel Tracker is an online travel management system that gives an organisation the ability to track and manage employee travel worldwide. Travel Tracker offers quick access to

- staff’s travel itineraries and contact details
- Red24’s risk matrix to view the security situation of any country at a glance and the current security risks associated with countries worldwide

It also provides automated triggered access to email alerts before and during travel ensuring that all concerned have the latest possible safety information at hand in order for informed decisions to be made at all times.

All nominated Travel Coordinators are given access to Travel Tracker to enable them to log in travel bookings into the database. This is essential as it will allow for up to the minute information on the whereabouts of all travellers at any one time.