Fleet Vehicles Policy

Section 1 - Preamble

(1) Charles Darwin University ('the University', 'CDU') owns, leases, hires and otherwise has access to vehicles to support operational requirements. These vehicles must be used safely, efficiently and responsibly, in compliance with the University's Governing Documents and relevant legislation.

Section 2 - Purpose

(2) This policy outlines the framework for the proper operation and use of CDU fleet vehicles for University business.

(3) This policy should be read in conjunction with the Travel Policy where relevant.

Section 3 - Scope

(4) This policy applies to all staff and students managing or operating University fleet vehicles.

Section 4 - Policy

(5) The University seeks for vehicle users to conduct safe and responsible operation of vehicles for University business. Vehicles are highly visible and often display University branding, so must be used in a manner that reflects the Code of Conduct - Employees or Code of Conduct - Students, as applicable.

(6) To support sustainability and efficient vehicle use, users are encouraged to car-pool where possible.

(7) Priority of access to CDU fleet vehicles will be given to staff members who require the vehicle for University business and/or University travel.

Authorised drivers

(8) CDU fleet vehicles are primarily used by staff members for the purpose of University business or University travel. On occasion, resident leaders and approved Higher Degree by Research (HDR) candidates and Honours students may access University vehicles. All requests to be an authorised driver must be approved by the relevant supervisor or manager.

(9) University fleet vehicles must not be driven by anyone other than authorised drivers, except that in an emergency a person with a valid and current driver licence may drive the vehicle.

(10) Authorised drivers must have an Application to Drive a CDU Vehicle eform approved by an appropriately delegated University representative.

(11) Approval under the Travel Policy is required for any planned vehicle usage:

a. more than 50km away from the driver's usual place of work or residence; or

b. where an overnight stay is necessary.

Student use of University vehicles

(12) Higher Degree by Research (HDR) candidates and Honours students may book a University vehicle if they require a vehicle for their fieldwork.

(13) Any student use of University vehicles must be related to the HDR candidate or Honours student's fieldwork and research project.

(14) HDR candidates and Honours students must seek approval from the Pro Vice-Chancellor of their home faculty before applying to drive a University vehicle.

(15) If the faculty Pro Vice-Chancellor approves the HDR candidate or Honours student's project to use a University vehicle, the candidate or student may book a vehicle by completing the Application to Drive a CDU Vehicle eform in eCentre.

a. The eform will workflow to the HDR candidate or Honours student's supervisor for consideration and approval.

(16) VET and Higher Education coursework students, except Honours students, are not permitted to operate a University vehicle.

Driver licence requirements

(17) All drivers of University vehicles must hold a current Australian driver licence or recognised international licence appropriate to the vehicle class. A copy of the licence must be provided on request.

(18) Drivers must not drive while their licence is disqualified or suspended. If they do, they void all insurance and are liable for all legal and other costs that are incurred.

(19) Drivers must hold certification in the operation and recovery of 4WD, if operating a vehicle in conditions that can reasonably be expected to require the use of a 4WD.

Driver responsibilities

(20) Drivers must drive safely and comply with the relevant road laws and the University's Work Health and Safety policies and procedures.

(21) Drivers must not operate a University vehicle if they are under the influence of drugs or alcohol or are not medically fit.

(22) Drivers must operate vehicles in a manner that can reasonably be considered safe, responsible, efficient, and in keeping with manufacturer specifications.

(23) Drivers found in breach of the road rules are responsible for all penalties imposed by the Northern Territory Traffic Act 1987 (or interstate equivalent) and any recovery of costs, should the insurer void the insurance cover.

(24) Drivers are personally responsible for any traffic or parking fines imposed on a University vehicle whilst the vehicle is in their possession.

(25) Drivers must advise the University if they become aware of any defects that may affect the safety or roadworthiness of the vehicle.

(26) University 2WD vehicles must not be driven:

a. on designated 4WD tracks; or
b. off-road, where driving a 2WD vehicle would pose a risk or damage the vehicle.

(27) When towing trailers, boats, caravans or other towable equipment, drivers must ensure that:

a. the vehicle to be towed is in good condition;
b. the towing vehicle is suitable for the vehicle/equipment being towed;
c. the load is restrained as required;
d. the towing vehicle is comprehensively insured; and
e. the manufacturer's towing limits are adhered to, including Gross Vehicle Mass (GVM) and Gross Combined Mass (GCM).

(28) CDU vehicles, occupants of those vehicles, and any equipment contained within or transported by them must only be for conducting CDU related work activities. All other usage is prohibited.

a. Drivers must not transport passengers who are not engaged in University business (e.g. family and friends) in University vehicles. In exceptional circumstances, written permission may be sought from the relevant supervisor or manager.

(29) No pets or other animals, except assistance/support animals and animals required for research or University business needs, may be transported in University vehicles.

(30) Any approved animals transported in University vehicles must be safely and appropriately restrained.

Risk management

(31) Drivers must conduct a risk assessment before using a University vehicle. This can be found on the Waterhole at Remote Travel and Fieldwork.

(32) Health and safety risks associated with vehicles and driving must be managed in accordance with the Work Health and Safety Policy.

(33) Vehicles must be fit for the intended use (e.g. for off-road, or ability to handle correct towing capacity).

Driver fatigue

(34) All drivers must be aware of the signs and effects of fatigue when driving during the course of their work or study.

(35) Where possible, factors that contribute to fatigue (e.g. extended work hours, lack of adequate breaks) should be eliminated.

(36) Driving during normal sleeping times contributes to fatigue. Where possible workers should consider staying overnight if the driving time exceeds normal working hours.

Training

(37) If the off-road capabilities of a University vehicle may be required, drivers of 4WD vehicles must:

a. complete the VTP420 Travel Safely in Remote Areas training; or
b. demonstrate significant experience in off-road driving by completing the refresher course.

(38) Any training courses must be successfully completed before off-road travel is conducted.

Daily operational requirements

(39) Prior to operating the vehicle, the driver must check:

a. safety equipment;
b. operation of lights and horn;
c. tyre pressure and condition; and
d. fluid levels.

(40) At least once per day of vehicle operation, drivers must record the following details in the provided logbook:

a. date of vehicle operation;
b. start and end odometer readings;
c. driver name; and
d. purpose of journey/s on that date.

Reporting accidents/incidents

(41) If a University vehicle is involved in an accident, the driver must check whether anyone is injured and, if safe to do so, remove passengers from dangerous situations.

(42) The driver and passengers must seek emergency assistance or medical aid if required.

(43) If practicable, move the vehicle to a safe position off the road while awaiting assistance.

(44) The driver must record:

a. the location, date, and time of the accident;
b. driver licence and vehicle registration details of other drivers and cars involved in the accident;
c. a summary of the accident;
d. any injuries sustained;
e. any damage to University or other vehicles;
f. details of equipment damaged or lost; and
g. photos of the vehicle/s after the accident.

(45) Drivers involved in an accident should not prejudice their rights under applicable insurance contracts and should not admit liability prior to an insurance investigation.

(46) Accidents must be reported to the driver’s supervisor and Property and Facilities.

Fringe Benefits Tax

(47) The provision of a university fleet vehicle to a staff member may attract Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT). Typically, FBT is imposed when a vehicle is:

a. considered a 'car' under FBT legislation definition;
b. available for private use by a staff member; and
c. not used in a minor, infrequent and irregular manner.

(48) The FBT legislation clarifies that when a car is 'home garaged' by the staff member, it is 'available for private use' regardless of circumstances.

(49) The FBT is not payable by the staff member, however, a reportable fringe benefit amount to the ATO may be declared for that staff member when a car is solely available for private use by that one staff member for a significant duration of the FBT year (1 April - 31 March). Please contact treasury@cdu.edu.au for advice.

Section 5 - Non-Compliance

(50) Non-compliance with Governance Documents is considered a breach of the Code of Conduct – Staff or the Code of Conduct – Students, as applicable, and is treated seriously by the University. Reports of concerns about non-compliance will be managed in accordance with the applicable disciplinary procedures outlined in the Charles Darwin University and Union Enterprise Agreement 2022 and the Code of Conduct – Students.

(51) Complaints may be raised in accordance with the Code of Conduct – Staff and Code of Conduct - Employees.

(52) All staff members have an individual responsibility to raise any suspicion, allegation or report of fraud or corruption in accordance with the Fraud and Corruption Control Policy and Whistleblower Reporting (Improper Conduct) Procedure.

Status and Details

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Effective Date	6th October 2023
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Approval Authority	Vice-Chancellor
Approval Date	5th October 2023
Expiry Date	16th December 2024
Responsible Executive	Penny Szybiak Vice-President Corporate
Implementation Officer	Anthony Hornby Director Property and Facilities
Enquiries Contact	Anthony Hornby Director Property and Facilities --- Property and Facilities

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Home faculty" - The Faculty in which a Higher Degree by Research candidate is enrolled. The Menzies School of Health Research is the home faculty for students of Menzies.