Travel Policy

Section 1 - Preamble

(1) Charles Darwin University ('the University', 'CDU') recognises that travel may be required for legitimate business or study purposes.

(2) Travel bookings and approvals must follow the University's established processes. Travel requires accountable and transparent practices to ensure that the University's duty of care to travellers is maintained and its prudential, legal and tax obligations are complied with. Travellers have an obligation under the Code of Conduct - Employees and the Code of Conduct - Students to comply with this and other Governance documents while undertaking their duties.

Section 2 - Purpose

(3) The purpose of this policy is to:

a. support employees and others to effectively and efficiently manage travel arrangements and associated expenses on behalf of the University;
b. adopt the highest standards of safety and wellbeing for travellers; and
c. ensure that travel is only made when essential for achieving the University's objectives.

(4) This policy should be read in conjunction with the Delegations Policy and the Fleet Vehicle Usage Policy and Procedure for travel in fleet vehicles.

Section 3 - Scope

(5) Travel is defined as a destination of more than 50km from the traveller's normal place of work or residence, or where an overnight stay is necessary away from the traveller's normal place of residence.

(6) This policy applies to all University travel arrangements (domestic or international) and to all travellers who travel on official University business, regardless of the source of funds, duration of the travel or business purpose. This may include, but is not limited to, employees, persons accompanying employees who are representing or engaged in University business, students, adjuncts, associates, including members of Council, consultants and other persons and/or visitors whose travel is associated with the University.

Section 4 - Policy

Environmental sustainability

(7) To achieve the University's strategic goal of prioritising environmental and organisational sustainability, travellers should consider alternatives such as:

a. reducing or eliminating flights by using technology;

b. planning travel requirements over twelve (12) months to minimise total trips and distance; and
c. Carpooling where practical and using public transport.

Pre-approval and approval

(8) Pre-approval is required on all travel, including travel at no cost to the University, prior to commencing a travel booking.

a. Travel paid for by another organisation must also be declared through the Gifts and Benefits eform in accordance with the Gifts and Benefits Policy.

(9) The bookings of any associated travel arrangements, such as airfares, accommodation and conference bookings must not be made prior to the approval of the travel being granted.

(10) Failure to obtain pre-approval prior to booking travel that is subsequently considered unreasonable or unnecessary may result in disciplinary action and the University may seek to recover costs from the traveller.

(11) All domestic and international travel requests undergo a two tiered approval process, in accordance with the delegations in the Delegations Register. The second-tier approver must always be a Senior Executive Team member. Travellers must not approve their own travel or travel expenses. Employees must not approve travel or travel expenses for an individual to whom they report to.

(12) The relevant organisational unit for the traveller will be responsible for funding the approved travel arrangements, except where otherwise stated in this policy.

Student Travel

(13) All student travel must be approved in accordance with the Delegations Register. The second-tier approver must always be a Senior Executive Team member.

International Travel

(14) All international travel requests will adhere to the two tiered approval approach in accordance with the Delegations Register. The second-tier approver must always be a Senior Executive Team member.

(15) International travel requests must be submitted for pre-approval with as much notice as possible prior to the proposed date of travel.

(16) Evidence must be retained by both the traveller and approving delegate for audit and record management purposes.

Bookings

(17) To assist the University in maintaining its duty of care obligations, pre-approval all authorised travel must be sought, and all authorised travel must be booked or recorded and approved in the University's online booking tool. This includes the following types of travel:

a. flights on commercial carriers to domestic or international destinations;
b. accommodation;
c. car or bus hire, including the use of University fleet or personal vehicles;
d. air charters; and
e. field trips and travel to remote areas.

(18) Travel must be booked in economy class at the lowest fare available at the time of booking for the journey, that reasonably meets the business needs of the traveller, unless there are exceptional circumstances such as a documented medical condition, current written employment contract, or approval by the Vice-Chancellor or Chancellor.

(19) For further guidance on booking, recording and approving travel refer to Travel forms and important information.

Expenses

(20) Travellers must ensure that any expenditure they incur while travelling is for legitimate University business purposes. Incidental costs such as meals and transportation will be reimbursed by the University in accordance with the approved methods under the Charles Darwin University and Union Enterprise Agreement 2025. For example, a travel allowance, utilising a corporate purchasing card or expense reimbursements. Pre-approval for expenses must be obtained. Expenses of a personal nature will not be reimbursed.

(21) In the case of external grant funded travel, travellers may have agreed expenses covered by a cash advance, which must be acquitted upon return.

Private travel

(22) The practice of combining private travel with official travel is not encouraged. Where private travel is requested in conjunction with official university travel, the reason for travel is determined based on the numbers of days between private and official travel.

a. Incidental private travel: private travel is considered incidental to official travel where the private component is less than 30 per cent of the total travel period. The traveller will not be required to make a co-payment towards the cost of airfares or travel insurance as long as the private component does not result in increased cost to the University.
b. Dual purpose travel: travel is considered to be dual purpose where the number of private days is more than 30 per cent and less than 50 per cent of the total travel period. Where travel is dual purpose, the costs between official and private will be apportioned and the traveller will be required to pay the private component calculated as follows:
    i. The traveller will be required to pay 50 per cent of the cost of return airfares between place of residence and destination of the last day of official travel.
    ii. Accommodation and other incidental costs relating to private days are the responsibility of the traveller.
c. Where the number of private travel days exceeds 50 per cent of the trip, the reason for travel will be regarded as private and the traveller will be required to pay 100 per cent of the costs associated with the travel.

(23) Travellers must ensure, before their travel is booked, that any leave for private travel has been requested and approved.

(24) In approving dual-purpose travel, travel approvers should ensure that private days do not interfere with the University's official business requirements of the trip, including returning to report outcomes, and should be incidental to the business requirement.

(25) Travellers approved for dual purpose travel must ensure that travel insurance is obtained to cover the private component of the trip as the University’s travel insurance policy does not extend to cover private travel.

Accompanied travel

(26) Family and friends accompanying employees on official travel is not encouraged. In exceptional circumstances a partner and/or dependent(s) may accompany a University traveller provided that:

a. supervisor approval has been received prior to making any commitments;
b. the business/activity of the University is not compromised; and
c. any expenses incurred for the accompanied travel are privately funded.

(27) Individuals approved for accompanied travel are responsible for obtaining their own insurances.

Travel diary

(28) It is an Australian Taxation Office requirement that all travellers keep a Travel Diary for travel that:

a. exceeds six (6) consecutive nights; or
b. includes any private travel.

Remote travel/field trips

(29) Air travel to remote locations must only be in an aircraft operated by an air charter company which is duly licensed for the regular transportation of fare paying passengers. Travellers must not pilot a personal or leased aircraft or travel using a private plane or non-approved air charter unless an exception is granted by the Vice-Chancellor.

(30) Where remote travel requires chartering flights, travellers should always attempt to coordinate their travel with other business units, government agencies or organisations in order to share the cost of the charter flights and other transport.

(31) Remote travel and field trips are subject to additional requirements which include approved field work plans and risk assessments.

International travel

Passport and visa requirements

(32) It is the traveller’s responsibility to ensure they have an up-to-date passport with an expiry date extending at least six months beyond the period of travel. Passport costs are the responsibility of the traveller, unless otherwise approved by the University.

(33) Visa costs associated with travel for business will be covered by the University. Any additional visa costs associated with private travel are the responsibility of the traveller.

(34) Travellers must complete an Activity Risk Assessment prior to all international travel.

Vaccinations

(35) Travellers are responsible for ensuring all immunisation and health guidance per the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade recommendations are appropriately adhered to.

a. Costs related to required vaccinations for travel on behalf of the University will be reimbursed by the University.
b. Any vaccinations required for private travel are at the cost of the traveller.

Insurance

(36) The University maintains corporate travel insurance that provides cover for travellers on approved University business only.

a. A traveller approved for incidental private travel must obtain separate personal travel insurance which covers the entire duration of the trip. The traveller's private travel insurance cover is the primary insurance plan under which an employee makes a claim if the injury or loss occurs during the private component.

b. Personal travel insurance must be arranged privately for an approved accompanying person.

Health and safety

(37) Reasonable steps must be taken by a traveller to ensure they are fit to travel and that they avoid undertaking activities that creates or increases the risk to their health and safety. As a representative of the University, the traveller must ensure that their behaviour is at all times appropriate to the purpose of the travel, compliant with local laws and customs and consistent with the University's Code of Conduct - Employees and the Code of Conduct – Students.

(38) In the event of a significant incident such as, but not limited to, civil unrest or natural disaster whilst travelling, the traveller must follow any advice issued by the relevant local authorities and/or the University.

Travel warnings/restrictions

(39) Travel will not be approved to areas on the University's restricted travel list unless a travel memo available at Travel forms and important information is completed. The travel memo must include specific approval from an authorised officer in accordance with the Delegations Register.

(40) Risks are to be assessed and managed in accordance with the University's work health and safety obligations and taken into consideration prior to approval, and again before departure.

Lounge/frequent flyer memberships

(41) Lounge and frequent flyer memberships are the responsibility of the individual traveller except where the employment contract allows for this cost to be covered by the University.

Section 5 - Non-Compliance

(42) Non-compliance with governance documents is considered a breach of the Code of Conduct - Employees 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 2025 and the Code of Conduct – Students.

(43) Complaints may be raised in accordance with the Complaints and Grievance Policy and Procedure - Employees and the Complaints Policy - Students.

(44) All employees 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

Status	Current
Effective Date	28th November 2025
Review Date	18th March 2028
Approval Authority	Vice-President Governance and University Secretary
Approval Date	19th November 2025
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Bryce Dorrian Chief Financial Officer
Implementation Officer	Al Flores Associate Director Financial Performance
Enquiries Contact	Al Flores Associate Director Financial Performance Finance

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"University" - Charles Darwin University, a body corporate established under section 4 of the Charles Darwin University Act 2003. The University is comprised of the various faculties, CDU TAFE, organisational units, and formal committees, including the governing University Council and Academic Board.

"Governance document" - means policy or procedure published in the Governance Document Library. Policies and procedures are collectively called ‘governance documents’ and are often referred to as ‘policy’ or ‘University policy’.