

BBSRC Safety for Business Travel Policy

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Policy Statement

BBSRC has a commitment to provide a safe and healthy workplace and in accordance with the relevant legislation, statutory requirements and good practice, to as far as reasonably practicable ensure the health and safety of its employees.

In addition to those general duties in law, BBSRC and its establishments, have a specific obligation under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 to ensure that risks from overseas travel on establishment business are suitably considered and, as far as reasonably practicable, controlled.

This Policy sets out the arrangements for the control of work related travel in the UK or abroad, taking into account the requirements of the relevant legislation, statutory requirements and good practice.

This policy has been agreed with the BBSRC Health and Safety Advisors and the Trade Union Side and complies with statutory best practice.

1. Policy Scope

- 1.1 For the purpose of this Policy, 'Business' is the generic term used for activities associated with, and agreed through BBSRC or its establishments; such as lecturing, research, work placements, visits, fieldwork, business promotion, and conference attendance.
- 1.2 This policy applies to all individuals employed on BBSRC terms and conditions. It should be read in conjunction with the Research Council Travel, Subsistence and Expenses Policy.
- 1.3 A list of relevant legislation, regulations and supporting frameworks that provide background to this, as well as related BBSRC policies and strategies are listed in Appendix 1.

2. Policy Aims and Objectives

- 2.1 BBSRC considers as a priority the health, safety and wellbeing of those travelling for work related activity. The aim of this policy is to raise awareness of possible risks associated with travel, and to seek to minimize these through appropriate control measures.

3. Responsibilities

- 3.1 This policy follows the principles of responsibility outlined in the BBSRC Health and Safety Policy [Appendix A9.1](#). However, the following additional responsibilities also apply.
- 3.2 Directors are responsible for ensuring that the establishment health and safety management system has the capability to consider the adequacy of risk assessments carried out by line managers and :
 - Ensuring that a robust system is in place to manage employees who may be off- site within their areas of control;
 - Receiving reports of significant residual risks (risks that remain after mitigations have been implemented) and making considered decisions on their acceptability involving the Health and Safety team and members of the Senior Management Team as appropriate, in accordance with the risk statement;
 - Establishing the risk statement in relation to UK and overseas travel, and considering this statement when strategic decisions are made in relation to working off-site;
 - Considering any requests for off-site visits where significant residual risks exist, or where requests are made to travel to areas outside the published risk statement;
 - Taking suitable action to manage incidents arising which may involve BBSRC employees;
 - Ensuring proper organisational arrangements, such as a 24 hour contact

point, are established and the role and responsibilities of all concerned are clearly understood;

- Ensuring that individual members of staff or groups of employees travelling and working outside the UK are as well prepared as is reasonably practicable.

3.3 Line managers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that a suitable risk management system is in place, and monitored within their groups/departments which adheres to the requirements of this policy;
- Ensuring that employees who undertake travel as part of their work are suitably trained and supported;
- Responding to incidents and feedback which is reported by employees.

3.4 Employees are responsible for:

- Completing a risk assessment (when travelling to areas that are not classified as low risk – see Section 5) and submitting it to their line manager or nominated person prior to gaining approval to travel;
- Ensuring the travel arrangements are suitable, completing an itinerary and providing contact details to their line manager or nominated person prior to departure;
- Contacting the Foreign Office for any relevant travel advice, <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>;
- Obtaining the address, telephone number and opening hours of the British Embassy or consulate for the country they are travelling to;
- Seeking medical advice to determine necessary vaccinations, immunisation and first-aid requirements;
- Obtaining information on climate, culture and local information as appropriate;
- Ensuring that tickets, visas and any other necessary documentation for travel are in place;
- Ensuring that all travel and expenses claims comply with the RCUK Travel, Subsistence and Expenses Policy [Appendix A11.1i](#);
- Having a valid passport which complies with the necessary entry criteria;
- Ensuring adequate insurance is arranged before travelling;
- Co-operating in the monitoring of arrangements while away and reviewing arrangements upon return;
- Reporting any accident/incident to the appropriate local authority while they are away and reporting it as soon as possible using the employer's reporting process.

4. Travel Planning

4.1 Prior to any planned activity, permission should be sought from the line manager or head of group/department. Establishments will need to develop suitable approval protocols to meet their needs, without creating unnecessary bureaucracy. For some destinations the visit may need to be authorised by the establishment Director.

4.2 Employees and line managers should consider:

- Security risks, particularly for travel to areas of political instability;
- Natural disasters and extreme climates;
- Areas of endemic and epidemic disease.

4.3 The line manager should refer any requests for travel which present unusual or high residual risks to the establishment Director who will review the travel plan and decide whether the residual risks associated with the travel are unacceptable.

4.4 In the interests of safety, employees who wish, or are required, to travel overseas on establishment business must ensure they check information being provided by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, web address: <http://www.fco.gov.uk>, which is updated on a regular basis.

4.5 When travelling to higher risk destinations it will be necessary for the employee to keep the risk assessment under review until the point of departure, to ensure that the most current information is used.

4.6 The current risk statement for BBSRC is as follows:

RISK STATEMENT- BBSRC

No BBSRC employee is permitted to travel to, or through any country or area where the FCO advise against 'all' or 'all but essential travel'.

The FCO define 'essential travel' as consular work, emergency humanitarian aid, etc., and not business, personal travel, etc.

Additionally no employee should be expected to travel to a country or to a specific area where there are legitimate concerns about personal health or safety expressed by the FCO, e.g. due to a high risk of sectarian violence, terrorism, etc.

All travel not falling within the above definition is considered on a case by case basis, with significant residual risks being referred to the establishment Director for approval.

5. Risk Assessment

5.1 Once permission has been granted, all off-site overseas work visits carried out should be categorised according to risk. In the first instance, this categorisation should be determined by the person intending to travel, referring to the Overseas Travel Risk Assessment flow chart at Annex B. Establishments will need to introduce a mechanism to ensure the approval process picks up on any mis-categorised visits.

5.2 Risk Category: One (Low Risk)

These are low risk trips which do not require a specific risk assessment to be completed for each visit. Such visits would include attendance at conferences in the UK, regular visits to non-volatile, easily accessible environments within the EU and hosted visits to Overseas Universities/Research Institutions. There should be no significant additional risks associated with the visit and nothing on the FCO website which indicates a high risk status in any respect.

5.2.1 The health and safety protocol for such visits should be as follows:

- The line manager or nominee must put in place a system to approve the visit or a series of visits;
 - A travel checklist must be completed for overseas visits - see Annex A;
 - Arrangements should be in place so that a process exists to enable start and return dates to be recorded for the duration of any visits;
 - A travel itinerary should be provided for overseas visits, held by the line manager for the duration of the visit.
- 5.2.2 The line manager or nominee must ensure that current home emergency contacts are held for the employee and that employees leave contact information for themselves whilst they are away, including accommodation details, in-country contacts when overseas and mobile phone details.
- 5.2.3 Accommodation should be booked via a reputable external event organiser (e.g. conference host), through an approved agent, or a local administrator with travel booking responsibilities; due consideration should be given to the location of the accommodation and safe travel to the event.
- 5.2.4 For overseas visits, the participant must be authorised under the travel insurance provisions and be issued with an emergency contact card or other agreed means of obtaining assistance in case of emergency.
- 5.3 Risk Category: Two (Medium or High Risk)
- 5.3.1 In addition to the requirements above, all other higher risk travel arrangements must be supported by a written risk assessment which covers the activity. It may be possible for one basic risk assessment to be prepared which covers a number of trips to the same destination. However, this must be frequently reviewed prior to departure to ensure any changes to the risk status of the destination are taken into account.
- 5.3.2 Examples of visits falling into category two would include visits to areas for any purposes where the travel advice states there is a high risk for security and terrorism, any visit to a remote area, fieldwork and research with significant risks attached.
- 5.3.3 If there is a need to obtain vaccination prior to travel this may be an indication that there are risks associated with the visit which require special control measures being adopted.
- 5.3.4 An approval process for risk assessments completed by employees should be in place. Any significant residual risks which remain in place following the risk assessment should be clearly flagged up to the establishment Director or other nominated senior management representative. They will then need to consider whether the residual risks identified are acceptable, and if necessary, seek additional advice from Health and Safety and the individual's line manager.
- 5.3.5 A reporting-in procedure, commensurate with the risks associated with the travel, should be included as part of the risk assessment (this could be as basic as confirming arrival at destination and hotel etc.). This may be by phone, email or text. Frequency of reporting will be determined by risk assessment. Establishments should consider the action to be taken in cases of non-reporting-in.

5.4 Risk Assessment Criteria for Category Two visits

5.4.1 The following hazards (not an exhaustive list) should be assessed as part of the risk assessment process:

- Hazards associated with the activities carried out during the off site visit;
- Fatigue at place of work due to travel frequency, duration times, and ability to take breaks and rest periods;
- Fatigue when travelling and driving following flights;
- Inability to maintain an appropriate work life balance;
- Health effects due to long haul flights;
- Lone working and personal safety;
- Dealing with the public;
- Terrorism and security threat including kidnap;
- Awareness of the culture of the location being visited;
- Unable to get access to or send communications, or to be able to summon help in an emergency;
- Inability to be able to locate and/or get hold of the employee in an emergency;
- Unable to access medical care (despite insurance cover some hospitals overseas will only accept cash up front to provide treatment, even in a critical life threatening emergency); in country medical care presents threats e.g. infection risks from syringes
- Climate;
- Natural Disasters;
- Contact with animals;
- Food and drink Hazards;
- Transportation in country.

5.5 Minimum Standards for Overseas Travel

5.5.1 In order to achieve consistency in the risk assessment process, the following standards have been set down with respect to certain control measures which need to be in place throughout establishments.

5.5.2 Flights and accommodation should, wherever possible, be arranged through the establishment approved travel agency. The approved travel agent should provide a mechanism to track employees who are overseas at any given point in time, if the risk assessment requires such mitigation.

5.5.3 All employees who regularly travel overseas as part of their duties should be issued with 'contact cards' by their establishment. These will detail personal details, key contacts and the emergency response numbers.

5.5.4 In the case of long-haul flights or other extended travel episodes (e.g. when the period of travel is longer than approximately 5-6 hours' duration), employees should not undertake duties and/or lengthy drives without an adequate rest period. A reasonable period for rest and/or acclimatisation should be allowed for within travel itineraries, even where this may involve an additional night's accommodation whilst abroad, or additional time away from the establishment upon return.

- 5.5.5 It is best practice for the establishment to grant a recovery day following return from an extended period of overseas travel, especially after long haul flights. This will both allow the employee to recover from the overseas trip and acknowledges the fact that on many occasions the daily routine may exceed the standard working day whilst overseas. Time differences will need to be considered.
- 5.5.6 It should be standard practice for the risk assessment to identify how many employees are required to attend an event for reasons of safety; this may include restricting the number of senior managers travelling together in case of an airplane or other travel disaster.
- 5.5.7 Standards of accommodation may vary from country to country. It is expected that employees will stay in accommodation which does not present any health and safety concerns. The risk assessment should detail extra requirements which may be necessary from the hotel. Examples may include:
- a need to avoid dubious localities;
 - a need to ensure that a chauffeur service exists to avoid kidnap risk;
 - a need to ensure a cash advance would be forthcoming in the event of emergency;
 - the presence of English speaking employees.
- 5.5.8 A method for communication must always be available to employees whilst abroad, this may mean hiring a satellite phone for visits or purchasing SIM cards whilst abroad.

5.6 Good Practice for Overseas Travel

- 5.6.1 Employees who travel overseas frequently are advised to register with the FCO and subscribe to email or social media updates. For those wanting to subscribe, go to <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice> and select the country you are travelling to. On the right hand side, click on "Email Alerts" and then enter your email address.
- 5.6.2 Travel advice updates will also be issued via the FCO Twitter account @fcotravel and on their Facebook page: www.facebook.com/fcotravel.
- 5.6.3 If possible, no appointments should be made on the day of travel where the total duration of travel is over 6 hours; itineraries should take account of travel time, travel mode and allow for meal breaks.
- 5.6.4 Where working days are likely to significantly exceed 7.5 hours then appropriate consideration should be given to the potential for fatigue when preparing the itinerary for the following day.

5.7 Individual Risk Assessment for Overseas Travel

- 5.7.1 Employees should be advised to seek the advice of their GP prior to travel, having given them an outline of the destinations to be visited and the type of work to be carried out. The employee can obtain the necessary vaccinations via their GP or travel clinic; any costs will be reimbursed by the establishment.
- 5.7.2 Any employee who is required to travel on any work related matter should not do so if their GP has advised against this. Any employee who is concerned

about their ability to undertake overseas visits should seek their GP's advice before travelling.

5.7.3 An Occupational Health referral may be appropriate for employees who have specific health needs. One outcome from the referral process may be that Occupational Health will make specific recommendations regarding the travel arrangements which need to be put in place for an individual. Decisions can then be made on the viability of travel plans.

5.8 Experience and knowledge of the traveller

5.8.1 One of the critical elements when looking at the safety of working overseas is the experience and/or knowledge by the employee of the country they are travelling to.

5.8.2 As well as referring to the published sources of advice it is likely that those going to medium/high risk destinations will need:

- A briefing by another employee with experience of the country/area;
- A familiarisation visit (where practicable) with another member of staff who has previously visited the country/area;
- Awareness of cultural issues together with local knowledge of do's and don'ts for each destination.

5.8.3 For travel to new destinations it will be necessary to provide these briefings through other mechanisms. This may include networking with colleagues in other establishments or organisations.

5.8.4 Research ventures may require specialist competencies or technical skills. If this is the case, details should be included in the risk assessment.

6. **Incident Reporting**

6.1 A mechanism should be in place to manage any incidents which are reported during or after an overseas visit. Examples might be threatening behaviour, ill health, poor standards of accommodation.

6.2 Emergency contact numbers should be supplied for emergency medical assistance and to facilitate repatriation in the event of a security incident. Employees should ensure that their line manager or nominee is alerted to any serious difficulty at the earliest opportunity.

6.3 After an incident, the risk assessment in place should be reviewed. If necessary, changes to the risk assessment should be completed. It may be that a formal investigation is required so that improvements may be implemented across establishments.

7. **Insurance**

7.1 Establishments must ensure there is adequate cover in place for its employees travelling overseas on business. It should be noted that some countries may require specialist travel insurance .

7.2 Generally, medical expenses cover provided under a travel policy is not a full health insurance; it will only cover emergency treatment and associated expenses.

- Routine, preventative or other elective treatments would not be covered;
- Pre-existing medical conditions would only be covered if travel is being undertaken in line with medical advice;
- Cover would not be provided for anyone travelling against medical advice or for the purpose of undertaking treatment.

7.3 Should any employee require medical assistance whilst abroad, they should contact the appropriate advisor using the contact details on the travel medical card issued when obtaining travel insurance.

7.5 Travel within the UK, including to and from points of departure/return should be covered by establishment insurance.

8. Special Leave and Sick Leave

8.1 Return visits to the UK may be granted in the event of a serious illness or death of a close relative. Further information can be found in the Research Council Special Leave Policy.

8.2 If the employee dies overseas, the establishment will meet the reasonable expenses of either repatriating the body or attendance of the next of kin at an overseas funeral.

8.3 If an employee is sick while overseas, the same conditions apply as in the UK i.e. the procedures for reporting and certificating absences as set out in the Research Council Sickness Absence Management Policy will apply. If the employee needs to return to the UK on medical grounds, this will be at official expense.

9. Amendment history

Version	Date	Comments/Changes

Appendix 1: Relevant Authoritative Bodies and Related Documents

Authoritative Bodies

<i>Health and Safety Executive</i>	<i>The HSE's work covers a varied range of activities from shaping and reviewing regulations, producing research and statistics, and enforcing the law.</i>
<i>Foreign and Commonwealth Office</i>	<i>The FCO is the government department responsible for foreign policy and representing Britain abroad. Their work focuses on areas like: helping British citizens abroad, promoting British business and trade agreements.</i>

Related Documents

<i>Health and Safety at Work Act 1974</i>	<i>Often referred to as HASAW or HSW, this Act of Parliament is the main piece of UK health and safety legislation. It places a duty on all employers "to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all their employees".</i>
<i>Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999</i>	<i>Regulations that place a duty on employers to assess and manage risks to their employees and others arising from work activities.</i>
<i>BBSRC Health and Safety Policy</i>	<i>Policy that describes requirements for BBSRC establishments with regard to maintaining a healthy and safe working environment for employees and others that may be affected by their work activities.</i>
<i>BBSRC Driving at Work Policy</i>	<i>Policy that describes the requirements of BBSRC establishments with regard to implementing effective safety controls for workplace driving activities.</i>
<i>Research Council Travel, Subsistence and Expenses Policy</i>	<i>Policy for travel on Research Council business, including related aspects such as overnight accommodation.</i>
<i>BBSRC Employment Code A9.9 Annex A: Checklist for Travellers</i>	<i>Checklist for completion prior to any overseas travel.</i>
<i>BBSRC Employment Code A9.9 Annex B: Overseas Travel Risk Assessment Flowchart</i>	<i>Flowchart used to determine what controls are required when planning business travel overseas.</i>

Annex A

Checklist for Travellers

Before the trip, assess the potential risks for the area or country you are visiting. These will vary depending on where you are going, the time of year, and the kind of accommodation you will stay in. Please ensure that you have consulted your GP, received general health advice, and arranged any immunisations and anti-malarial medication required. Health preparations may need to begin several months before the trip.

If a significant risk associated with overseas work is believed to exist, stop the proposed visit or modify or change the high-risk aspects of the visit.

Task	Completed
All travel documents prepared? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel tickets/documentation in hard copy • If applicable, accommodation details in hard copy • If not familiar with the area, a map detailing locations for the visit. • Details for local contact in hard copy • Passport & Visa in date with sufficient validity 	<input type="checkbox"/>
Itinerary checked and up to date?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trip registered and authorised to proceed by organisers/employers?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Copy of itinerary given to line manager/responsible person?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emergency contact arrangements made (family and work colleagues)?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contacts: Details of hotel accommodation given to relatives/line manager. If necessary, contact made within 2 hours of: 1. Arrival at destination. 2. Return from destination. 3. Start of each day in destination.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Insurance information obtained (insurance cards and details)?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consideration given to contingency plans in the event of interruption to travel or disruption at accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mobile phone available and coverage checked	<input type="checkbox"/>
First-aid & medication materials provided (if necessary)?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any individual special requirements provided for?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local conditions and risk factors:	
Civil unrest, robbery, kidnap	<input type="checkbox"/>
Culture, religion and language	<input type="checkbox"/>
Climate and geology (e.g. sun index, monsoon season, storms, avalanche, earthquake, pollution)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Diseases (including infectious diseases such as malaria and yellow fever) venomous /biting/stinging creatures	<input type="checkbox"/>
Food hygiene - poisoning and allergies	<input type="checkbox"/>
All necessary training/briefing completed?	<input type="checkbox"/>

Traveller Signature

Date

Annex B

OVERSEAS TRAVEL RISK ASSESSMENT



