

Guidance for Inclusive Staff Travel

1. Introduction

Travel for university business can present different risks for different members of staff. Factors such as protected characteristics and intersecting identities may mean that some staff experience additional safety concerns, barriers or anxiety when travelling. This guidance aims to help staff and managers identify and mitigate those risks before travel.

The university has a duty of care to all staff travelling on university business and a responsibility to assess and mitigate associated health and safety travel risks. This includes assessing potential hazards associated with protected characteristics shared by staff.

2. Scope

This guidance applies to all staff travelling on university business, whether within the UK or overseas (see the Definitions section). It is intended to support discussions between staff and their line managers or supervisors before, during and after travel.

3. Definitions

Equality Act 2010: The Equality Act 2010 is the UK legislation that protects people from discrimination, harassment and victimisation and promotes equality of opportunity.

Protected characteristics: A protected characteristic is a personal characteristic recognised and protected under the Equality Act 2010. The Act identifies nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. [Equality and Human Rights Commission definition of Protected Characteristics](#).

University Business: See [Finance Policies](#) for definition

4. Before the Trip - Planning Travel

This section outlines how the traveller and their supervisor/ line manager can plan for travel, mitigate any risks identified and provide support and reassurance.

4.1 Overseas Travel Safety and Security Risk Assessment

The Overseas Travel Safety and Security Risk Assessment (OTSSRA) is used to assess potential risks to staff travelling overseas on university business and to document what control measures will be in place to safeguard an individual whilst travelling.

In addition to 'general' travel risks, the OTSSRA must include any mental health risks linked to the travel itself and reference any work activity risks (e.g. during research.)

Staff are encouraged to discuss any factors that may affect their safety, wellbeing or accessibility while travelling with their supervisor/ line manager. Where relevant, staff may choose to share information about any protected characteristics that could help identify appropriate support or risk mitigation.

Risks arising from destination country or region related to protected characteristic, or other individual characteristic (such as tattoos in a country where they have cultural significance) should be included in the OTSSRA form which has a section for staff to share any relevant personal information that may impact their personal safety and security (see Section 4.2 about sharing information).

Intersectional risk (having more than one protected characteristic), the socio-cultural and legal landscape of the destination country/ region can then be considered to adequately assess potential risk posed to the traveller and what mitigation and support is required.

Individual characteristics can change over time, for instance if someone is pregnant, or has become disabled. Therefore, travel risk assessments should always be reviewed before travel, even if someone has been to the destination before.

Refer to the [Travel on University business and off-site working webpage](#) for information on completing the OTSSRA and templates.

Note: Staff will not be penalised for declining high-risk travel, and individuals have the right to withdraw from an activity or refuse to travel if they have a reasonable concern for their own safety.

4.2 Sharing Information About Individual Circumstances including Protected Characteristics

When planning work-related travel, staff may consider whether to share any information about their individual circumstances that would help identify and manage potential travel related risks. This may include information about protected characteristics where these are relevant to travel safety or support needs. Some characteristics may be visible or perceived (for example, sex), while others may not be immediately apparent (for example, religion or belief).

Some staff may have already shared this information with their supervisor/ line manager. For others, this may be the first time they have considered whether to share information about their circumstances, which may create anxiety and concern.

If a member of staff is unsure who to speak to or does not feel comfortable discussing their circumstances with their line manager or supervisor, they can seek confidential advice from Human Resources or the Staff Networks.¹ Staff may also find it helpful to access information and support through the [Staff Wellbeing Hub](#).

Staff should only share information they feel comfortable sharing and only where it is relevant to supporting safe travel planning. Providing relevant information helps mitigate risk whilst travelling.

As part of their planning, staff should read FCDO travel advice for the places being visited to help understand travel risks in each country/region, and how to stay safe whilst there (see section 4.4). This can help determine if a particular characteristic might result in additional risk while travelling and inform their decision about whether they wish to share relevant information to support travel planning. Any information shared for the purposes of mitigating risk and/or supporting the traveller must not be shared and only used in relation to the travel - see section 7.2 Record Keeping.

Supervisors and managers must never make assumptions about an individual's characteristics and must never refuse to authorise travel on the grounds of an assumption that a protected characteristic has not been disclosed.

Travel planning is a shared responsibility between the traveller and their supervisor/ line manager. Travellers may choose to share information about their individual circumstances where this would help identify appropriate support or risk mitigation measures, and supervisors/ line managers should proactively consider destination specific risks and create opportunities for staff to discuss any support needs or concerns.

4.3 Potential Risks for Staff whilst Travelling in the UK

An OTSSRA is not required for travel within the UK. Although legal protections are generally stronger within the UK, individuals may still experience harassment, discrimination, accessibility barriers or personal safety concerns linked to protected characteristics. Therefore, all travel on university business should be covered by an appropriate risk assessment. This may be a generic risk assessment (for example 'attending a UK conference') or an activity-specific risk assessment (for example a field trip). Where the assessment identifies additional risk, an individual risk assessment for that person should be undertaken. See the [Risk Assessment: A to Z of health and safety](#) for guidance on the process and for a template form.

When planning travel, consideration must also be given to the accessibility and suitability of transport. Different modes of transport may present additional challenges for some staff, including when planning a journey, purchasing tickets, accessing stations or stops, boarding and leaving vehicles, or during the journey itself. [Transport for All](#) provides information for all travellers in the UK, with a particular focus on support for disabled people.

¹ Information about Staff Networks: [Staff Networks: networks and support](#)

Supervisors/ line managers are encouraged to check in with their staff in the planning stage, particularly for those who have little or no experience of travelling for work, who are disabled, have a long term health condition, are pregnant, are trans, or where consideration of any additional measures or arrangements (such as choosing accommodation that is known to welcome LGBTQ+ travellers) may be required or helpful.

4.4 Potential Risks for Staff whilst Travelling Abroad

Travel overseas can involve risks to all travellers, especially when travelling through or to a country/region with a Foreign Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO) advisory against it. However, people with one or more intersecting protected characteristics may face additional risks due to differences in legal status and protections, cultural and/or religious norms, and or different restrictions such as access to some medications etc. For some staff that have more than one characteristic, there can be a 'compounding' effect where several risks may apply.

Supervisors and line managers should proactively consider whether the destination or activity presents additional risks for particular groups of travellers and ensure these risks are discussed as part of travel planning. This should provide staff with the opportunity to discuss any support needs or concerns they wish to raise, without requiring them to share personal information. Where staff choose to discuss any factors they believe are relevant to their travel, these should be considered as part of the OTSSRA where appropriate to support safe and inclusive travel.

The following sections provide an overview of general factors to consider for travellers and their supervisors/line managers, and signposts to support and guidance:

Supervisors/line managers should familiarise themselves with the legal and cultural context of the destination, identify any foreseeable risks for different groups of travellers, and create an opportunity for the member of staff to discuss any support needs or concerns they wish to raise

Legal issues: Consider the laws relating to protected characteristic(s) in the destination, including any country-level legal protections. Where specific 'anti' laws are in place (such as regarding LGBTQ+ individuals for instance) it does not necessarily preclude someone from traveling, however, staff/ supervisors/ line managers should carefully consider risks of entry/exit, potential risks and the precautions that will need to be taken during travel including actions to take if the traveller is detained.

Cultural concerns: Even if a destination does not have or consistently enforce specific laws related to a protected characteristic, cultural attitudes may increase risks of discrimination, harassment or violence. Consider the cultural norms in the destination and how best to adhere to them.

Safety considerations: Consider general concerns such as crime, terrorism, civil unrest and political risks, and seek information on incidents involving individuals that share the travellers' characteristics. Travellers that regularly travel to the same country/ region should still

undertake safety checks to ensure there have not been any changes or incidents since their last visit.

Health issues: In addition to considering the general health risks in the destination, be aware that certain medications or medical treatments may be illegal, restricted or unavailable. In locations where laws or the cultural climate present concerns, some medications or medical devices may also lead to discrimination or harassment. Ensure the traveller can legally enter the destination with the medication and medical devices they need.

Safeguarding and confidentiality: Where the traveller is being hosted by an external organisation, the host should be briefed on any safeguarding, safety and security expectations. These can be identified through the OTSSRA process. The decision to share information about the traveller with the host organisation should be based on an informed discussion between the individual and the line manager, considering potential benefits and risks. The traveller must consent to any personal information being shared with the host organisation. Where the traveller does not consent to this information being shared, the supervisor/ line manager should discuss with the member of staff if there are any control measures that could be shared, without breaching confidentiality. It is recommended that these are documented on the OTSSRA for clarity.

4.5 Additional considerations for travellers with protected characteristics

The following table lists considerations for staff and their supervisor/line manager to check before travel and signposts to further information and support.

Protected Characteristic	Considerations	Where to find more information and support
Age	Experience of travel, perception of personal safety and security risk, anxiety or concern about travel. Age-related health conditions and physical ability, travelling with medications.	Inexperienced travellers are encouraged to speak with their supervisor, line manager and work with peers/ others that have travelled when planning. Supervisors/ line managers can seek advice from Occupational Health Advice for young travellers ABTA Take medicine in or out of the UK - GOV.UK Travel advice - NHS Travel vaccinations - NHS
Disability	Accessibility, availability of support, travelling with	The following provides comprehensive guidance on what to consider when

Protected Characteristic	Considerations	Where to find more information and support
	wheelchairs, specialised medical equipment or assistive devices (including assistance and guide dogs,) transport and accommodation.	planning travel: Disability and travel abroad - GOV.UK ABTA - The Travel Association provides information and a checklist for disabled and less mobile Passengers. Consult disability organisations in the UK, specialist tour operators and travel providers for specific advice. Take medicine in or out of the UK - GOV.UK Travel advice - NHS Travel vaccinations - NHS Supervisors/ line managers can seek advice from Occupational Health
Sex	legal protections for women, gender-based violence or harassment, cultural expectations.	Advice for women travelling abroad - GOV.UK
Marriage and civil partnership	Legal status, cultural expectations.	Check the Foreign travel advice - GOV.UK for country specific advice.
Gender reassignment Sexual orientation	Legal status, discrimination, criminalisation, access to support.	Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender: foreign travel advice - GOV.UK – provides general travel advice and links to additional international associations and resources ILGA World Database: gives data on legal frameworks for LGBTQ+ issues around the world
Pregnancy and maternity	Access to healthcare, health risks (e.g. where the Zika virus is present), travel restrictions, insurance.	Travelling in pregnancy - NHS Air travel and pregnancy RCOG

Protected Characteristic	Considerations	Where to find more information and support
Race	Passport or nationality issues, racism, political or ethnic tensions.	Check the Foreign travel advice - GOV.UK for country specific advice.
Religion or belief	Restrictions on religious practice, dress, dietary requirements or observance, impact of a lack of religion/ belief	Check on the Foreign travel advice - GOV.UK for country specific advice.

4.6 Support and Travel Safety Advice

When planning the trip, consider any reasonable adjustments that are needed to aid travel and to provide necessary support to the traveller. The university has a [Workplace Adjustment Toolkit](#) to support discussions on arranging, implementing and reviewing adjustments for staff.

See the FCDO - [Support for British nationals abroad - GOV.UK](#) and [Travel Aware - GOV.UK](#) for general travel advice.

The university's insurer, UMAL also have general travel advice: [Travel Hub - UMAL](#). Staff travelling on university business can access travel advice, security information and 'Risk Alerts' through Crisis24, a service provided through the university's insurance provider. Staff can download the Crisis24 Horizon app to access the advice and to receive alerts for any incidents occurring in the destination country or region. Alerts can be configured by country, proximity, severity and/or category to ensure that the traveller receives the alerts they need. See <https://umal.co.uk/travel-hub/pre-travel-advice/> for details on registering.

4.7 Pre-Travel Training

Where potential risks have been identified, training and/or safety briefings should be considered by the traveller and their supervisor/ line manager. General travel training is outlined in the Health Safety Wellbeing Team webpages: [Training courses: Health and Safety](#) and covers personal safety and security in addition to other areas of travel safety.

It may be beneficial for supervisors/ line managers to undertake allyship and/or awareness training related to the traveller's protected characteristic(s). Visit the [Staff Learning and Development pages](#) for more information about course availability.

Where staff and/or supervisors/managers identify specific training would be beneficial, this should be documented on the OTSSRA.

5. During Travel

The following travel tips apply to all travellers, however the resources listed in section 3.4 can be used for specific advice.

5.1 Getting Around

The OTSSRA prompts the traveller to consider how they will keep in contact with their supervisor/ line manager and what arrangements will be in place for check in's etc. but in addition:

- **Plan your journeys in advance**, including how you will travel to and from airports, stations, hotels and meeting venues.
- **Let a trusted contact at home know your itinerary** and, if possible, enable location sharing on your phone.
- **Use reputable transport providers** where possible (e.g. licensed taxis or trusted ride-hailing services) and avoid unofficial taxis.
- **Keep your phone charged** and consider carrying a portable power bank, particularly if you will be relying on maps, translation apps or electronic tickets.
- **Have offline access to key information**, such as maps, accommodation details, emergency contacts and travel documents, in case mobile data is unavailable.
- **Keep valuables secure**, including your mobile phone
- **Stay alert** when you are traveling and avoid disclosing personal information to strangers.
- **Know where the closest police stations and diplomatic facilities are** in relation to your planned destinations.
- **Consider general precautions** such as avoiding isolated areas and not walking alone after dark.

5.2 Meeting People

The OTSSRA includes personal safety arrangements when meeting people for work purposes, including where you may need to meet people in unfamiliar spaces and/or their own homes for research activity for instance. Additional travel advice to consider is:

- If you are planning on meeting people socially during your travels, only meet in public places, tell a trusted contact at home where you will be and who you are meeting and do not travel to a second location.
- Do not accept food or beverages from strangers and never leave your food or drink unattended.
- In some countries, mobile apps and websites used by particular communities (for example LGBTQ+ dating or social networking apps) may be restricted, monitored or

used to target individuals for harassment, blackmail, arrest or violence. Before travelling, check whether using these services presents any legal or personal safety risks and exercise caution where appropriate.

5.3 Contacting Authorities

If the traveller experiences discrimination, harassment, or believes a protected characteristic has affected their treatment by the police or other authorities, consider the following:

- If available, the traveller should contact the tourist police, who may be more experienced in assisting international travellers.
- Contact the nearest British Embassy, High Commission or Consulate, particularly if the traveller has concerns about their treatment or require consular support.
- Contact Crisis24 for travel security advice and assistance (See section 4.6)
- Inform the University in line with section 6.1.

5.4 Seeking Medical Treatment

Some staff, such as transgender and non-binary individuals, may experience discrimination, harassment and even legal issues when seeking medical care abroad. Plan ahead and check with the nearest diplomatic facility on where to seek medical care. An external travel medicine specialist may need to be engaged to determine whether medication is available in the destination country and/or it's legal status to be brought into the country.

6. Following The Trip

Once the member of staff has completed the trip/ returned to the UK, supervisors/ line managers are encouraged to check in with the traveller to discuss the success of the trip and to check in on their wellbeing. The 'Travel Checklist' in appendix 1 can be used to facilitate the discussion.

Where the travel is regularly repeated, a review of the OTSSRA or the UK travel /activity risk assessment should take place shortly after the trip, especially if there was an issue or incident, to capture any learning and improvements.

Consider any reasonable adjustments that were implemented and whether these should be maintained going forward (see section 4.5).

7. Other Considerations

7.1 Complaints and Anonymous Reporting

Staff are encouraged to speak with their supervisor/ line manager in the first instance where there is a concern or complaint about travel on university business. Where the issue cannot be resolved with the supervisor/ line manager, staff can follow the [Complaints procedure for staff](#).

The [Report + Support](#) tool is available to staff (plus students and visitors) to raise concerns and access support related to issues such as bullying, harassment, discrimination, hate incidents, sexual violence and domestic abuse. The tool provides reporting and support pathways, including options for anonymity. Reporters can submit a report and be contacted by a trained advisor to discuss support options and possible next steps. Users can submit reports anonymously if they prefer, while engaging in secure messaging with an advisor for guidance without revealing their identity.

7.2 Record Keeping

Any personal information shared for the purposes of mitigating risk and/or supporting the traveller must not be shared with other teams or departments and only used in relation to the planning and management of the travel.

Mitigations and measures to support the traveller should be stated in an individual risk assessment (such as the safety and security risk assessment (OTSSRA)), however risk assessments covering groups of staff should not include measures specific to an individual. In this case an individual risk assessment must be in place for the traveller and only essential information shared with others on a need-to-know basis.

Immediate access to the individual risk assessment must be available in the event of an incident and/or urgent need to contact the traveller. An electronic copy must be securely stored on a safe, cloud-based University-supported storage option locally/ within their team/ department. If helpful, paper copies can be made available for the duration of the travel but must be kept in locked cabinets and then shredded on return/ completion of the trip.

Access control to both electronic and paper formats must be set and limited to only those staff that need to view and access the forms. The form must only be shared internally if it is necessary based on the principles of data protection legislation. Personal information shared by the traveller will not be collected and used for equality monitoring purposes.

A digital copy of the individual risk assessment must be maintained securely for 5 years after the period of travel has ended, following the university [retention schedule](#) and related principles. At the end of the retention period, forms must be disposed of securely.

See also:

- [University of Sussex Dignity, Respect and Inclusion Policy](#)
- [Equality and Human Rights Commission – Protected Characteristics](#)
- [Safeguarding: University of Sussex](#)

8. Document Control

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Appendix

Travel Checklist: Supporting Staff Travelling for Work

This checklist can be used in several ways:

- to aid a member of staff in their own planning for travel for work
 - to support a discussion between a traveller and their supervisor/ line manager about potential risks associated with their own individual characteristic(s) and the measures that could be taken to mitigate risk and provide reassurance
 - by a supervisor/ line manager supporting a member of staff that has shared a protected characteristic(s) and the individual is concerned this may present a risk when travelling on university business
 - to aid a discussion following travel to identify any issues and lesson learned and whether reasonable adjustments need to be reviewed as part of any future travel
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1. Initial planning and discussion

- ☐ Supervisors/ line managers proactively consider destination specific risks and create opportunities for staff to confidentially discuss any support needs or concerns.
- ☐ Supervisors/ line managers check in with travellers that have little or no experience of travelling for work, who are disabled, have a long-term health condition, are pregnant, are trans, or where consideration of any additional measures or arrangements (such as choosing accommodation that is known to welcome LGBTQ+ travellers) may be required or helpful.
- ☐ Confirm member of staff can decline/withdraw from high-risk travel without penalty

2. Sharing Personal Information and Support

Travellers may choose to share information about their individual circumstances where this would help identify appropriate support or risk mitigation measures.

- ☐ Supervisors/ line managers reinforce that sharing personal information including in relation to protected characteristics is voluntary and that no assumptions will be made about the individual.
- ☐ Any reasonable adjustments needed are discussed and agreed ([Workplace Adjustment Toolkit](#).)
- ☐ Staff member has been signposted to any necessary support ([Staff Networks](#), [Staff Wellbeing Hub](#).)

3. Risk Assessment (OTSSRA² / UK)

- ☐ OTSSRA or appropriate individual risk assessment for UK travel/ activity risk assessment completed.
- ☐ OTSSRA/ individual risk assessment kept secure and only essential information shared with others on a need-to-know basis.

In addition to 'general' health and safety travel risks, the following are considered:

² Overseas Travel Safety and Security Risk Assessment
HS G913 v1.0

- ☐ Access to medical and support services
- ☐ Accessibility issues
- ☐ Country/ region specific FCDO advice for relevant protected characteristic(s)
- ☐ Cultural norms and attitudes
- ☐ Intersectional risks (the increased risk that occurs when a person faces multiple overlapping disadvantages—such as their gender, ethnicity, disability or age. These factors can interact and make the overall impact greater than each risk factor on its own.
- ☐ Legal risks in destination
- ☐ Mental health risks
- ☐ Medication/ medical device restrictions
- ☐ Personal safety and security risks

4. Host Organisations

- ☐ Where the traveller is hosted by an external organisation, the host is briefed on any safeguarding, safety and security expectations.
- ☐ Personal information shared with the host organisation is based on an informed discussion between the individual and the line manager, considering potential benefits and risks.
- ☐ The traveller has consented to any personal information being shared with the host organisation.
- ☐ Where consent to personal information being shared is not given, the supervisor/ line manager discusses with the traveller whether there are any control measures that could be shared with the host without breaching confidentiality, and these are documented on the OTSSRA/ individual RA.

5. Pre-Travel Training and Preparation

- ☐ Pre-travel training identified and completed
- ☐ FCDO [Support for British nationals abroad - GOV.UK](#) and [Travel Aware - GOV.UK](#) considered, along with advice from the university's insurer, UMAL [Travel Hub - UMAL](#).
- ☐ Traveler is aware of travel advice, security information and 'Risk Alerts' available through [Crisis24](#), a service provided through the university's insurance provider.

6. Support During Travel

- ☐ Call in/ Check in process followed
- ☐ [Crisis24 Horizon app](#) installed to access advice and to receive alerts for any incidents occurring in the destination country or region. (Alerts can be configured by country, proximity, severity and/or category to ensure that the traveller receives the alerts they need.)
- ☐ Traveler is aware of reporting processes for incidents or near misses whilst travelling
- ☐ Aware of Report + Support tool

7. Post-Trip Review

- ☐ Supervisor/ line-manager has checked in with the member of staff once the travel has finished
- ☐ Staff member signposted to wellbeing support as needed
- ☐ Any incidents or issues raised during the travel are discussed

- ☐ Where travel will be repeated, OTSSRA/ individual risk assessment and controls reviewed
- ☐ Any reasonable adjustments reviewed and any lessons learned captured
- ☐ Any personal data that was shared was handled confidentially
- ☐ Information was used appropriately and only for the purposes of the travel