

International Travel Procedure for Postgraduate Research Students

Contents

1. Section 1: Overview of Approval Process	1
1.1 Conference travel funded through Research Student Development Fund (Graduate School) 4	
1.2 Conference travel funded by Doctoral Training Partnership or other funder/sponsor	5
1.3 Self-funded Conference travel.....	6
1.4 Overseas fieldwork/data collection funded by University or other University administered funding source such as research project or research council training grants (DTP etc.)	7
1.5 Self- funded overseas fieldwork/data collection	8
1.6 Vacation travel.....	8
1.7 Combining vacation with conference travel or other research travel	9
1.8 Placements/secondments abroad	9
2. Section 2: Key Contacts.....	9
2.1 Graduate School.....	9
2.2 College Research Office Contacts:	9
3. Section 3: Post-approval information.....	9
3.1 Before you leave	9
3.2 While you are away.....	10
3.3 Travel Insurance.....	10
3.4 Travel Insurance Claims.....	11

1. Section 1: Overview of Approval Process

All Postgraduate Research (PGR) students who need to undertake travel for **University business** must comply with the procedures set out in this document, which are underpinned by the University's [Safety Management Standard](#) for international travel.

University business includes travel for;

- conferences,
- fieldwork,
- placements
- any other trips directly related to your research or study regardless of whether the travel is University or self-funded. **Vacation trips or travel back home, if you are an international student, are NOT considered University business and are, therefore, not within the scope of this policy**

IMPORTANT: Failure to comply with the University procedure may mean that you are not covered under the University's insurance policy should you get into any difficulties.

The procedure(s) to be followed may vary depending on the reasons for travel and funding so please read this document as well as the [Safety Management Standard](#) for international travel to ensure that you are following the correct procedure.

The table below summarises the different process to be followed depending on the nature and purpose of the travel. It should be read in conjunction with the more detailed notes that follow.

Purpose of travel and funding	Eligibility/available funding check	Ethical approval	Travel risk assessment	Approval process	Travel booking	Graduate School confirmation
Centrally funded conference travel (Research Student Development Fund)	Required as 1 st step – check with PGR Admin Team pgr_general@aston.ac.uk	Not required	Required for all risk levels. Follow the process for your College and seek further guidance from your College Research Office if unclear	Application for funding needs to be approved by Director of Research Degree Programme before you can register or book travel	Flights and accommodation must be booked via Click Travel. Your College Research Office can advise	Please notify PGR Admin Team once travel booking is confirmed and before travel. Please include dates of the trip
Research grant/ Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP) or other funded conference travel	Please check with the relevant Principal Investigator/ project manager or your College Research Office	Not required	Required for all risk levels. Follow the process for your College and seek further guidance from your College Research Office if unclear	Please seek approval from the relevant Principal Investigator/ project manager or your College Research Office before you register or book travel	Flights and accommodation must be booked via Click Travel. Your College Research Office can advise	Please notify PGR Admin Team once travel booking is confirmed and before travel. Please include dates of the trip
Self-funded conference travel	Not required	Not required	Required for all risk levels. Follow the process for your College and seek further guidance from your College Research Office if unclear	Formal approval not required, provided supervisor is aware of and supports the trip	Booking via Click Travel not required	Please email confirmation of risk assessment and authorisation to travel to PGR Admin Team before travel. Please include dates of the trip
Research grant/ Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP)/University or other funded fieldwork/data collection trip	Please check with the relevant Principal Investigator/ project manager or your College Research Office	Ethical approval is required before any data collection/field work and related travel can be undertaken. Please follow University/ College guidance and procedure for	Required for all risk levels. Follow the process for your College and seek further guidance from your College Research Office if unclear	Please seek approval from the relevant Principal Investigator/ project manager or your College Research Office	Flights and accommodation must be booked via Click Travel. Your College Research Office can advise	Please email confirmation of ethical approval and risk assessment and authorisation to travel to PGR Admin Team before travel. Please include dates of the trip

Purpose of travel and funding	Eligibility/available funding check	Ethical approval	Travel risk assessment	Approval process	Travel booking	Graduate School confirmation
		ethical approval				
Self-funded fieldwork/data collection trip	Not required	Ethical approval is required before any data collection/field work and related travel can be undertaken. Please follow University/ College guidance and procedure for ethical approval	Required for all risk levels. Follow the process for your College and seek further guidance from your College Research Office if unclear	Formal approval not required, provided supervisor is aware of and supports the trip	Booking via Click Travel not required	Please email confirmation of ethical approval and risk assessment and authorisation to travel to PGR Admin Team before travel. Please include dates of the trip
Placement/secondment	Separate policy and procedure applies – details tbc					
Vacation	Not required	Not required	Not required	Supervisor must authorise annual leave	Booking via Click Travel not required	Please submit annual leave request to PGR Admin Team before travel. Please include dates of the trip

Regardless of the type of business travel you are undertaking, the following points should be noted:

- All travel plans must be discussed with your supervisor as a first step, as supervisor support is essential in the approval process.
- Before you make any travel plans Check the latest travel advice at the [Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office](#) and www.drum-cussac.net (enter your University email address, click register and follow the instructions online).
- Information about the University's International Travel Policy and related forms and guidance can be accessed [here](#).
- Approval must be secured before you register for a conference or book travel, or incur any expenditure, unless you are funding the costs yourself. Requests for retrospective approval will NOT be considered.
- Before you travel, it is your responsibility to check whether a visa is required and to seek advice from the Visa Compliance Team at the earliest opportunity.

1.1 Conference travel funded through Research Student Development Fund (Graduate School)

Step 1

Check with the PGR Admin Team whether you have sufficient funds available and the proposed travel meets the eligibility criteria, by emailing pgr_general@aston.ac.uk.

Step 2

Undertake a travel risk assessment. All PGRs must complete part A of the [Travel Risk Assessment Form](#). If there are any changes to the arrangements pre-travel, you must also complete part B and if the travel is moderate to high risk, you will need to complete part C also. and the completed form must be submitted to your College Research Office (see Section 2: Key Contacts) for approval by the relevant Health and Safety partner or other authorised risk assessor. Please allow at least two weeks for this part of the process. If you have not provided all the required information for the risk assessment it may take longer.

Step 3

Complete and return the Research Student Development Fund Application Form to pgr_general@aston.ac.uk with a copy of the of [Travel Risk Assessment Form](#) which has been approved by the Health and Safety partner or authorised risk assessor for your College and confirms that you have permission to travel, so that this can be passed to the College Director of Research Degree Programmes for approval. The PGR Admin Team will notify you regarding the outcome. Please allow at least two weeks for this part of the process. If you have not attached the required evidence regarding the risk assessment, it may take longer.

Step 4

If the request is approved, you can book travel and accommodation using Click Travel. **You must not use any other company or provider.**

Please email your College Research Office (see Section 2: Key Contacts) to request an account. When you email the College Research Office please attach the Graduate School email confirming the Director of Research Degree Programmes has approved your application for the conference funding

Once you have an account, please create a basket of travel items (e.g. accommodation, travel, etc) for conference attendance. You will need to save the basket with a name using the following format:

Name - PGR Conference – Destination

Once the basket is saved, you will need to view your basket and then share the basket with the College **nominated booker** for this process (see Section 2: Key Contacts)

The system will ask for a Job Code and an approver, please use the job code and name name of approved provided by your College Research Office (see Section 2: Key Contacts)

There is a FAQ document [here](#) for gaining help with using Click Travel.

The College Research Office will check your travel details, and the documents from the Graduate School, and approve the booking provided all the relevant approvals have been secured.

Please allow two weeks for this part of the process.

Step 5

Please email the PGR Admin Team pgr_general@aston.ac.uk before you travel with dates of travel. The PGR Admin team will record the dates of the trip and will issue any letters you need for visa purposes.

1.2 Conference travel funded by Doctoral Training Partnership or other funder/sponsor

Step 1

You should check eligibility and available funding with your College Research Office (see contacts listed above). Your College Research Office (see Section 2: Key Contacts) can also advise regarding the approval process you need to follow.

Step 2

Undertake a travel risk assessment. All PGRs must complete part A of the [Travel Risk Assessment Form](#). If there are any changes to the arrangements pre-travel, you must also complete part B and if the travel is moderate to high risk, you will need to complete part C also. and the completed form must be submitted to your College Research Office (see Section 2: Key Contacts) for approval by the relevant Health and Safety partner or other authorised risk. Please allow at least two weeks for this part of the process. If you have not provided all the required information for the risk assessment it may take longer.

Step 3

If your request is approved, you can book travel and accommodation using Click Travel. **You must not use any other company or provider.**

Please email your College Research Office (see Section 2: Key Contacts) to request an account.

Once you have an account, please create a basket of travel items (e.g. accommodation, travel, etc) for conference attendance. You will need to save the basket with a name using the following format:

Name - PGR Conference – Destination

Once the basket is saved, you will need to view your basket and then share the basket with the College **nominated Booker** for this process.

The system will ask for a Job Code and an approver, please use the job code and name name of approved provided by your College Research Office (see Section 2: Key Contacts)

There is a FAQ document [here](#) for gaining help with using Click Travel.

The College Research Office will check your travel details and approve the booking provided all the relevant approvals have been secured.

Please allow two weeks for this part of the process.

Step 5

Please email the PGR Admin Team pgr_general@aston.ac.uk before you travel with dates of travel. The PGR Admin team will record the dates of the trip and will issue any letters you need for visa purposes.

1.3 Self-funded Conference travel

Step 1

Undertake a travel risk assessment. All PGRs must complete part A of the [Travel Risk Assessment Form](#). If there are any changes to the arrangements pre-travel, you must also complete part B and if the travel is moderate to high risk, you will need to complete part C also. and the completed form must be submitted to your College Research Office (see Section 2: Key Contacts) for approval by the relevant Health and Safety partner or other authorised risk. Please allow at least two weeks for this part of the process. If you have not provided all the required information for the risk assessment it may take longer.

Step 2

If you are given permission to travel, please forward details of the conference and a copy of the risk assessment to the PGR Admin Team – pgr_general@aston.ac.uk and confirm dates of the travel. The PGR Admin team will record the dates of the trip and will issue any letters you need for visa purposes.

1.4 Overseas fieldwork/data collection funded by University or other University administered funding source such as research project or research council training grants (DTP etc.)

Step 1

You will require ethics approval before fieldwork or data collection which involves human participants. Please seek guidance from your supervisor. Your College Research Office (see Section 2: Key Contacts) can also support you with this process. You can find information about the University Research Ethics procedures [here](#).

Step 2

Undertake a travel risk assessment. All PGRs must complete part A of the [Travel Risk Assessment Form](#). If there are any changes to the arrangements pre-travel, you must also complete part B and if the travel is moderate to high risk, you will need to complete part C also. and the completed form must be submitted to your College Research Office (see Section 2: Key Contacts) for approval by the relevant Health and Safety partner or other authorised risk assessor. Please allow at least two weeks for this part of the process. If you have not provided all the required information for the risk assessment it may take longer

Step 3

Email pgr_general@aston.ac.uk details of your planned trip, with a copy of the letter confirming ethical approval and a copy of the signed [Travel Risk Assessment Form](#) confirming you have been risk assessed and have permission to travel. The PGR Admin team will record the dates of the trip and will issue any letters you need for visa purposes.

Step 4

If you have permission to travel, you must use Click Travel to book your flights and accommodation if you have funding from the University or any other funding source which is managed by the University such as UKRI training and development funds. Please email your College Research Office (see Section 2: Key Contacts) to request an account.

Once you have an account, please create a basket of travel items (e.g. accommodation, travel, etc) for conference attendance. You will need to save the basket with a name using the following format:

Name - PGR Conference – Destination

Once the basket is saved, you will need to view your basket and then share the basket with the College **nominated booker** for this process.

The system will ask for a Job Code and an approver, please use the job code and name name of approved provided by your College Research Office (see Section 2: Key Contacts)

There is a FAQ document [here](#) for gaining help with using Click Travel.

The College Research Office will check your travel details, and the documents from the Graduate School, and approve your travel

Please allow two weeks for this part of the process.

1.5 Self- funded overseas fieldwork/data collection

Step 1

You will require ethics approval before fieldwork or data collection which involves human participants. Please seek guidance from your supervisor. Your College Research Office (see Section 2: Key Contacts) can also support you with this process. You can find information about the University Research Ethics procedures [here](#).

Step 2

Undertake a travel risk assessment. All PGRs must complete part A of the [Travel Risk Assessment Form](#). If there are any changes to the arrangements pre-travel, you must also complete part B and if the travel is moderate to high risk , you will need to complete part C also. and the completed form must be submitted to your College Research Office (see Section 2: Key Contacts) for approval by the relevant Health and Safety partner or other authorised risk assessor. Please allow at least two weeks for this part of the process. If you have not provided all the required information for the risk assessment it may take longer

Step 3

Email pgr_general@aston.ac.uk details of your planned trip, with a copy of the letter confirming ethical approval and a copy of the signed [Travel Risk Assessment Form](#) confirming you have been risk assessed and have permission to travel. The PGR Admin team will record the dates of the trip and will issue any letters you need for visa purposes.

If you are funding the trip yourself, you do not need to use Click Travel.

1.6 Vacation travel

If you are travelling overseas for personal reasons such as holiday or return to your home country, you do not need to follow any of these procedures and the University insurance policy will not cover your travel. You do, however, need to submit a vacation request to pgr_general@aston.ac.uk before you take the leave.

1.7 Combining vacation with conference travel or other research travel

Please follow the relevant steps above for the research related part of the travel. For the vacation part, you must take out private travel insurance (unless the holiday element is shorter than the length of the business travel **and** no longer than 7 days) and forward proof of this with the other documentation required, to pgr_general@aston.ac.uk

1.8 Placements/secondments abroad

There will be separate guidance for PGR students undertaking a placement abroad and this will be available shortly. In the meantime, please email pgr_general@aston.ac.uk if you have any questions in relation to travel for a placement.

2. Section 2: Key Contacts

2.1 Graduate School

PGR Admin Team – pgr_general@aston.ac.uk

2.2 College Research Office Contacts:

- Business and Social Sciences - bss_ro@aston.ac.uk
- Engineering and Physical Sciences – eps_art@aston.ac.uk
- Health and Life Sciences – please contact g.m.pilfold@aston.ac.uk in the first instance for signposting to team for risk assessment and booking travel

3. Section 3: Post-approval information

3.1 Before you leave

- Download the GlobalRiskManager app for travel advice, security information and to receive alerts for any incidents occurring in your destination country or region. Alerts can be configured by country, proximity, severity and/or category to ensure that you receive the alerts that you need: [Download for Apple](#); [Download for Android](#).
- Check with your doctor to see if you need any vaccinations, anti-malarial treatment etc. If you have to take any medication for any ongoing medical condition, ensure that you have an ample supply for the entire duration of your trip. This should be split up between your hand luggage and checked-in luggage in case one of your bags is lost. Check if your medication is legal in the country you are visiting. Search online for 'Can I take my medicine abroad NHS'.

- Get a UK Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC). This will entitle you to free or low-cost treatment for medical problems. Details of how to apply for this and which countries are covered can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/global-health-insurance-card>
- Make sure you have a copy of the [Travel Cover Summary](#)

3.2 While you are away

In the event of an emergency whilst travelling, call Global Response for advice and assistance. This service is operated by a team of multi-lingual coordinators at Global Response in the UK, who can be contacted 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Global Response will assist you with requirements and decide on the most appropriate course of action to help you through an emergency. Should you need to use this service whilst travelling, their contact details are:

Tel: [+44 \(0\)2920 662425](tel:+44(0)2920662425)

E-mail: UMAL@global-response.co.uk

Reference: UMAL/117

Contact Global Response before incurring any substantial medical expenses or being admitted as an in-patient at any hospital, clinic or nursing home. Do not arrange repatriation without the prior approval of Global Response.

Full details of services available from Global Response are set out in the [Travel Cover Summary](#).

3.3 Travel Insurance

All Aston employees and students on any trip outside the UK or any trip within the UK which involves an overnight stay and/or a flight, made primarily on University business, including incidental holidays (the holiday element must be shorter than the business and no longer than 7 days), will be covered by our Travel and Group Accident Cover administered by U. M. Association Ltd (UMAL), provided that the appropriate approval has been obtained.

Please ensure that you review the Benefits that are provided by Aston's Travel and Group Accident Cover which are outlined in the [Travel Cover Summary](#).

It is recommended that you download and keep a hard copy of the [Travel Cover Summary](#) with you.

Main restrictions and exclusions

Cover will NOT be provided in the following circumstances:

- Age limit: 80 years or over. Individual Travel Insurance must be arranged for any travellers aged 80 or more. Please contact the insurance team well in advance of travel for insurance cover to be put in place.
- Where travel is undertaken against the advice of a Qualified Medical Practitioner or for the purpose of obtaining medical treatment or medical advice.
- Theft or damage claims that are not reported to either the local Police or, where appropriate, the airline (or other carrier) within 24 hours and obtain a written report.
- Disruption – please note that there is no travel insurance cover for cancellation, curtailment, disruption, etc. caused by or due to Covid-19.
- Emergency Medical Expenses – if you need any medical treatment, you must contact Global Response immediately. Failure to contact Global Response immediately may result in any claim for medical expenses being rejected. If you need any medical treatment, you must allow UMAL or their representatives to see all of your medical records and information. Please be aware that if you accept the offer of private treatment (inclusive of treatment in a private room) without the specific authorisation of UMAL/Global Response, you may be liable for the cost.
- Mobile phones are excluded from cover.
- Cancellation claims where circumstances existed prior to trip registration.
- Property left overnight in any vehicle.

NOTE: Do not pack money or valuable items in your checked-in luggage when in transit. Retain these as hand luggage.

For a full summary of benefits and restrictions, please refer to the [Travel Cover Summary](#) or contact: insurance@aston.ac.uk

3.4 Travel Insurance Claims

- Travel Insurance Claim forms can be downloaded [here](#).
- Please send all completed claim forms and accompanying documentation to insurance@aston.ac.uk