

## UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX Travel policy under COVID-19 restrictions

### Introduction

1. The University of Essex has developed five levels of protection under which the University will operate during the COVID-19 pandemic:
  - **Advanced Protection**, where essential services only are delivered on campus.
  - **Enhanced Protection**, with many functions delivered remotely, and other, limited services available safely on campus.
  - **Sustained Protection**, a stage providing measures that enable more elements of on-campus activity to resume than within Enhanced Protection; these are envisaged to be required over an extended time period.
  - **Targeted Protection**, the stage that is expected to be a 'new normal' for us for some time, with protective measures continuing but limited to particular groups of individuals that may be especially vulnerable, or to particular activities that pose heightened levels of risk.
  - **Steady State**: a new form of business as usual, as yet undefined.
2. Decisions taken about the University moving between these levels of protection are taken by the Chair of Council and the Vice-Chancellor.
3. This document describes the arrangements in place for international and national travel for University purposes, travel between campuses, and the impact of leisure travel on University work and study, under each of the levels of protection. At all times, advice from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and from the University insurers must be followed. The safety of our staff and students is always our top priority. A summary table appears at the Appendix

### Definitions

4. During the course of the pandemic, the definitions associated with high, medium and low risk countries have changed, in line with the UK Government's associated policy and approach to RAG rating destinations and countries from which visitors will be starting. The University applies the following definitions:

Risk level	As a destination country	As an origin country
High	Drum Cussac rating of 3.0 or above FCDO advice not to travel Red list country Amber list country	Red/[amber] list country
Low	Drum Cussac rating up to 3.0 Green list country	Green list country From 4 October 2021: countries not on the red list

5. These definitions will be updated as necessary in line with Government policy. This policy will be reissued should such changes be made.
6. This policy also refers to travel to England from other destinations within or outside the UK. Any staff or students wishing to travel from overseas or from another home country to England on University business should follow the regulations and guidance in place in both locations at the time, and must contact the University Insurance team well advance (at least two weeks) prior to travel.

7. A separate process exists for the approval of placements and study abroad. The policy and related documentation for these activities should be consulted. This travel policy excludes these activities.

## **International travel**

### Advanced Protection

8. International travel for University purposes to countries deemed by the FCDO to be presenting a high risk to those starting their journeys in the UK at the time of travel is not permitted.
9. No other international travel for University purposes is permitted under Advanced Protection unless approved by the Registrar and Secretary (R&S). Travel for purposes deemed to be essential for the continuing business of the University would only be approved following the satisfactory completion of a risk assessment and its submission to the R&S, accompanied by a proposal explaining the essential reason for the travel, its duration, the successful application of University insurance and the ways in which any risks would be mitigated. These documents must be completed and submitted for consideration at least two weeks in advance of the proposed trip. This applies to all staff and to students undertaking research activities. The R&S's decision following consideration of the proposal and the risk assessment will be final.

### Enhanced Protection

10. International travel for University purposes to countries deemed by the FCDO to be presenting a high risk<sup>1</sup> to those starting their journeys in the UK at the time of travel should be avoided. Travel for purposes deemed to be essential for the continuing business of the University may be permitted, if approved by the R&S or their nominee. A risk assessment for the travel and a proposal explaining the essential reason for the travel, its duration and the ways in which any risks would be mitigated should be submitted to the R&S or their nominee. These documents must be completed and submitted for consideration at least two weeks in advance of the proposed trip. This applies to all staff and to students undertaking research activities. Insurance must be in place for any travel for University purposes to take place. The R&S's decision following consideration of the proposal and the risk assessment will be final.
11. International travel for University purposes to countries deemed by the FCDO at the time of travel not to present a high risk to those beginning their journeys in the UK, and to countries which are accepting those travelling from the UK, may be permitted with approval from the relevant Divisional Head<sup>2</sup>. A risk assessment for the travel and a proposal explaining the essential reason for the travel, its duration and the ways in which any risks would be mitigated should be submitted. These documents must be completed and submitted for consideration at least two weeks in advance of the proposed trip. This applies to all staff and to students undertaking research activities. Insurance must be in place for any travel for University purposes to take place. The decision of the Divisional Heads will be final.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-countries-and-territories-exempt-from-advice-against-all-but-essential-international-travel>

<sup>2</sup> Divisional Heads are the Executive Deans for each Faculty and the Registrar and Secretary for professional services.

### Sustained Protection

12. Travel for purposes deemed to be essential for the continuing business of the University may be permitted, if approved by the Head of Department/Section, following receipt of a risk assessment for the travel explaining its duration and the ways in which any risks would be mitigated. These documents must be completed and submitted for consideration at least two weeks in advance of the proposed trip. This applies to all staff and to students undertaking research activities. Insurance must be in place for any travel for University purposes to take place.

### Targeted Protection and Steady State

13. All international travel for University purposes will be permitted using existing and established University processes. The FCDO website should always be consulted prior to travelling. Risk assessments and insurance must be in place for any travel for University purposes to take place.

### **National travel**

#### Advanced Protection

14. No national travel for University purposes is permitted under Advanced Protection unless approved by the Registrar and Secretary (R&S). Travel for purposes deemed to be essential for the continuing business of the University would only be approved following the satisfactory completion of a risk assessment and its submission to the R&S, accompanied by a proposal explaining the essential reason for the travel, its duration, the successful application of University insurance, if necessary, and the ways in which any risks would be mitigated. These documents must be completed and submitted for consideration at least two weeks in advance of the proposed trip. This applies to all staff and students undertaking research activities. The R&S's decision following consideration of the proposal and the risk assessment will be final.

#### Enhanced Protection

15. Travel within the UK for University purposes deemed to be essential for the continuing business of the University may be permitted, if approved by the relevant Head of Section or Department. A risk assessment for the travel and a proposal explaining the essential reason for the travel, its duration, the successful application of University insurance, if necessary, and the ways in which any risks would be mitigated should be submitted to the Head of Department or Section. These documents must be completed and submitted for consideration at least two weeks in advance of the proposed trip. This applies to all staff and students undertaking research activities. Public transport should be avoided if at all possible.

### Sustained and Targeted Protection and Steady State

16. Travel within the UK for University purposes will be permitted using existing and established University processes.

### **Travel between campuses**

17. Travel between campuses is permitted during all states of protection as long as:
  - The travel is undertaken for University purposes

- The traveller has completed their Individual Health Risk Assessment, and any identified controls have been applied

18. During **Advanced** and **Enhanced Protection**, travel to no more than one campus should take place on the same day, and public transport should be avoided if at all possible.

#### **Effect of leisure travel**

19. Members of the University community (staff and students) may wish to travel for leisure during their non-working times. All staff and students are asked to consider such journeys carefully and to refer to national and FCDO travel guidance prior to making them, as the rules about quarantine may change prior to their return, limiting their ability to undertake subsequent work or study.

#### **Additional issues that must be considered**

20. When making travel arrangements, the University's designated suppliers (Diversity Travel and Key Travel) must be approached in the first instance to arrange travel and accommodation. If these suppliers are unable to help, then the travel organiser will have to contact the CPU or Finance Compliance Team to discuss alternatives before any bookings are made.

21. As with many insurance providers, the University's insurer now excludes covid related cancellations from its policy. This means that should a trip be cancelled; any travel cost losses will have to be absorbed by the Department/School/Section budget that originally funded the expense. There is not a central fund to assist with such losses.

22. Colleagues must also note that the University's travel insurance will not cover travellers if they add personal holiday time on to a trip, nor will personal possessions be covered by the insurance policy.

23. Additional information on travel and insurance can be found on the FPD I SharePoint.

13 September 2021

## Appendix: Summary table

The following table plots the University's approach to travel during the COVID-19 pandemic, and under each of our operational levels.

Operational level	International travel	National travel
Advanced	<p>International travel to high-risk countries not permitted.</p> <p>Any other international travel must be approved by the Registrar and Secretary, following receipt and approval of a risk assessment.</p>	Any national travel must be approved by the Registrar and Secretary, following receipt and approval of a risk assessment.
Enhanced	<p>International travel to high-risk countries should be avoided. Travel for purposes deemed to be essential for the continuing business of the University to these countries must be approved by the Registrar and Secretary or their nominee.</p> <p>Other international travel for University purposes may be permitted with approval from the relevant Divisional Head<sup>3</sup>, following receipt and approval of a risk assessment.</p>	Travel within the UK for University purposes may be permitted with approval from the relevant Divisional Head for staff, following receipt and approval of a risk assessment.
Sustained	Travel for purposes deemed to be essential for the continuing business of the University to these countries must be approved by the Head of Department/Section, following receipt and approval of a risk assessment.	Travel within the UK for University purposes will be permitted using existing and established University processes.
Targeted	All international travel for University purposes will be permitted using existing and established University processes.	Travel within the UK for University purposes will be permitted using existing and established University processes.
Steady State	All international travel for University purposes will be permitted using existing and established University processes.	Travel within the UK for University purposes will be permitted using existing and established University processes.

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<sup>3</sup> Divisional Heads are the Executive Deans for each Faculty and the Registrar and Secretary for professional services.