Applying the University policy regarding student travel 2021-22
Updated November 2021

The University aims to support travel for undergraduate or postgraduate taught students where this is in line with FCDO advice. The University does not support student travel where this is against FCDO advice.¹ Learning from the experience of students and staff during the 19-20 and 20-21 academic years, it is important to clarify the University’s policy regarding student travel for the 2021-22 academic year.

As of 1 April 2021, students remain responsible for making their own travel arrangements and arranging insurance covering, amongst other things, travel, healthcare, repatriation and living costs whilst overseas. Students who travel should understand that borders may close at short notice with limited UK government assistance for travellers and the University is unlikely to be able to assist with repatriation.

University assessment of risk
The UK government has revised its advice on overseas travel, even during periods of national lockdowns, and recently stated that travel for educational purposes is permitted where it is undertaken “for academic studies or professional qualifications where physical presence outside the UK is reasonably necessary or where activities must be completed overseas.” UK government guidance for education or work placements overseas can be found here.

For travel in the 2021-22 academic year, Schools are asked to assess the options for students and how they may complete the learning outcomes of their course.²

As a University, we encourage everyone to take up the offer of the Covid-19 vaccine when they become eligible as it is one of the best ways of keeping yourself and those around you safe from that virus. Vaccines have been shown to reduce the likelihood of severe illness in most people but as no vaccine is completely effective, those who have received the vaccine should continue to take recommended precautions such as regular testing to avoid infection. Students should also ensure they speak with their GP before travelling to ensure they have had all appropriate vaccines and to discuss any medical risk to them personally of their proposed travel.

Where broader FCDO advice is against all but essential travel to the country, regardless of advice on quarantine rules for Covid19, Schools should review the host country/partner as a suitable destination and make a decision based on the University travel policy. Schools should ensure they consider objectively if travel is necessary should such advice from the FCDO be in place. Advice regarding wider university travel policies and requirements for senior level approval can be found here. Schools cannot approve travel where FCDO advice is against all travel.

¹ This policy does not apply to PGR students who should refer to the University travel policy for staff and doctoral students. FCDO advice is used as the frame of reference for all students regardless of their nationality.
² Schools are advised to review any marketing materials and the offer made to the students prior to the start of their course as per CMA requirements.
Quarantine and exit/entry requirements
As part of pre-departure processes, students are required to attend preparatory sessions run by Schools and Registry and Academic Affairs and to read all guidance provided. Destination countries will have varying requirements for entry to their borders and students may have to prove uptake of appropriate vaccinations, proof of a negative COVID test on exit and entry and undertake a period of quarantine through local or governmental arrangements.

Students are responsible for understanding the requirements for their destination country and any countries through which they may transit, abiding by the rules and arranging should it be necessary quarantine on arrival. Any costs incurred for testing or quarantine are the student’s responsibility. Those students who receive a University grant for widening participation are eligible to apply for the SFE travel grant which may assist with these costs.

Where travel is necessary or essential for successful progression within the degree programme, Schools may need to consult with students who have a legitimate reason not to travel in 2021-22 or who raise concerns about travelling prior to an initial or booster dose of a COVID 19 vaccination. In these cases, Schools may need to consider alternative options for these students. This may include support for students to undertake remote study or placements, deferral of the year of study/registration, deferral/switching of the overseas placement period, withdrawing from the overseas placement period or transfer to an alternative degree programme where available.

Students should follow local restrictions or requirements at all times when overseas and keep up to date with changes that may apply.

Ignoring FCDO advice and University advice
The University is clear that students who choose to travel despite the advice from the FCDO, and the consequent formal instruction from the University that they should not travel, are doing so against the advice of the University. If students disregard the advice, they must recognise and accept that they are willingly and voluntarily exposing themselves to a multitude of risks, including:

- being trapped overseas, in isolation away from family and friends – potentially without access to resources (e.g. money, food, accommodation) or support;
- their travel insurance becoming invalid or unfit for purpose;
- the closure of the institution or workplace they are attending;
- in the event of becoming unwell, finding themselves in a health system that is not one with which they have any familiarity and where family cannot get to them and which may not be able to treat them or if they can to do so without suitable payment in advance; and
- embassy facilities closing, leaving them without any recourse to support.

It is likely that costs incurred in attempting to return home or other contingency costs in any of these circumstances would be substantial. For the avoidance of doubt, the University would not provide funding for such costs. While we will not end a student’s registration if they disregard the safety advice and we will continue to support their academic learning
wherever possible, but all other support will be severely limited in its scope. It is for these reasons that we strongly advise against ignoring the FCDO advice and highlight the risk a student takes by doing so.

**Remaining overseas when FCDO advice changes**
Where local requirements or FCDO advice is for UK nationals to leave the country and return to the UK, whilst the student is overseas, the University advice to students is to return home and for Schools to support and offer alternative learning options. Students must undertake any decision to go against this advice carefully and with due consideration given the risks they would be accepting cited above.

Students who have any concerns about the financial implications of returning home due to FCDO advice are advised to contact the financial support team at financialsupport@nottingham.ac.uk for support and advice on loans or bursaries that may be available to assist them with these costs.

Where a student decides to remain in country against the FCDO advice, students are required to assess their ability to remain in country safely and check any limitations on the insurance which they have purchased for the period of study or work. Where students wish to remain in country, the University will continue to support their academic learning, wherever possible, but all other support will be severely limited in its scope as noted above.

Where students can no longer remain in country due to the change in FCDO advice, they should consult with their home School and host university or placement provider to confirm their ability to switch to online or virtual means and/or if this will require a reduction of their time on the placement. Schools should advise students accordingly on minimum requirements of weeks spent overseas and any impact this may have on their academic progression.

Students should be aware that changes to FCDO advice may indicate further lockdowns will occur and consider carefully the implications of this. They will likely be isolated from friends and family with a health service that is unknown to them, they may potentially incur significant costs where insurance ceases to be valid or is limited, they may not be able to return to the UK and they may face significant barriers in areas where their first language may not be the language spoken. Please also refer to advice in the section above on ‘Ignoring FCDO advice and University advice’.

**Credit Earned**
Where a student’s time abroad is expected to include the opportunity to earn credit that contributes to their degree at Nottingham then that credit would be recognised in the normal way for their course notwithstanding Covid-19 policies or processes in the relevant country or the FCDO and subsequent University advice.

As an example, if a student was already in country and had to return owing to FCDO advice we would take the credit they had already earned into consideration if that was normally the case for their course. Individual schools would discuss this with the relevant student on a case by case basis.
**Financial and fee arrangements**

Students remain responsible for making their own travel arrangements and arranging suitable insurance covering, amongst other things, travel, healthcare, repatriation and living costs whilst overseas. Students are advised not to make any financial commitments until the activity and travel has been confirmed.

Students who undertake an international study or work abroad period (including remotely) for a minimum of a semester of study are eligible for reduced fees at UoN and will usually receive a fee waiver from the partner institution.

Where a work or study placement or exchange which is in accordance with FCDO and UoN advice is cancelled or unable to proceed and students continue their studies in the UK, the UK based fee will apply. However, if the cancellation occurs on or after 1 September for Semester one or 1 December for Semester two the University will honour the lower fee for the 2021/22 academic year. Please note that the reduced fee only applies if confirmed arrangements are cancelled on or after the dates shown. Students who decide to withdraw from an international study or work abroad period are not eligible for a reduced fee rate.

Where students incur costs as a result of a cancelled study or work abroad period, the expectation is that these costs will be pursued under insurance policies. Where students are in financial hardship whilst pursuing insurance claims they will be able to apply for financial assistance via the University’s Hardship or Crisis Funds. These funds do not indemnify students from financial loss (including additional costs) and cannot be relied upon instead of appropriate insurance.

Home students who have their study abroad year cancelled or amended after the 1st of September may still be entitled to funding from Student Finance. Students may be required by the University to submit an interruption for any period where they are not in active study either in the UK or abroad. If this is the case students will not be eligible for any instalment of their maintenance loan and tuition fee loan during the period of interruption. If an interruption is submitted retrospectively this may put students into an “overpayment” of their maintenance loan. Student Finance will seek to recover overpayments (usually within 30 days of notification of interruption) with students able to choose between repaying immediately or having the overpayment deducted from their next instalment of maintenance loan. Students required to interrupt will have their tuition fee loan entitlement reassessed by Student Finance and reduced be each instalment where the student was not in active study. Please note tuition fee loans are released in the following instalments T1 25%, T2 25%, T3 50%, and maintenance loans are paid to the student in equal instalments at the start of each term.

Students who have their study abroad year cancelled or amended after the 1st of September who remain in active study may still be eligible for bursaries and support funds from the University.

**Student Conduct**

Students remain registered throughout their degree at the University of Nottingham and as such are subject to the Student Code of Conduct, even when overseas. Students should
make sure they understand and follow the University of Nottingham rules regarding conduct, including special arrangements relating to COVID 19 measures, and those of the host country and host University or placement provider.

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