Overseas Travel - Employee Policy
1. Scope (audience and applicability)

This policy for overseas travel applies to all employees of the Department of Education (DoE), Tasmania, and has been developed to ensure the effective coordination and management of overseas travel.

2. Purpose

This policy sets out the requirements that must be complied with when a DoE employee wishes to travel overseas.

3. Definitions

- **Overseas travel** – Travel outside of Australia by DoE employees

4. Policy Statement

The safety of all employees participating in overseas travel is of paramount importance to DoE.

DoE supports providing opportunities for its employees to participate in overseas travel where there is a clear educational purpose/outcome, available resources and employees will not be exposed to unnecessary risk.

Given the different and potentially increased risks inherent in overseas travel, there is a requirement for travel organisers to clearly identify an educational or business purpose for the travel and to fully assess the associated risks and identified mitigations.

All travel, even once approved by the Secretary and Minister for Education and Training may be subject to cancellation or change by the Secretary, based on travel advice including, but not limited to, that provided by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

5. Requirements for overseas travel

In order to travel overseas the following is to be completed:

- [Employee In-Principle Agreement to Travel Overseas form](#)
- [Overseas Travel Checklist](#)
- [Overseas Travel Minute](#)
- [Employee Travel Warrant](#)
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Travel Advice Form for employees
- Risk Management Plan (within the Overseas Travel Minute template) - country specific risks need to be clearly documented, i.e. country threat level, focus on personal safety such as theft, hydration, etc. (refer 9. Travel advice and 10. Monitoring travel advice).
- Communications Plan (within the Overseas Travel Minute template) - the Crisis Communications Plan is to help prepare the Minister, Agency Executive and the Manager Strategic Media Marketing and Communications with what they should do and say, and who they need to keep informed in the event of a crisis.
• Repatriation Plan (within the Overseas Travel Minute template) - the Repatriation Plan is to contain trigger points for making decisions on tour cancellation prior to travel, and the returning home of individuals when the tour is underway e.g. the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade advisory is above Level 2. The Repatriation Plan is about decision-making before and during the trip. It's about being up-front to say "if X happens, the individual is not travelling, or the individual is coming home straightaway".

• Itinerary

• Destination Map

6. Employee In-Principle Agreement

The Employee In-Principle Agreement to Travel Overseas Form must be completed and signed by your manager, Deputy Secretary and the Secretary before an application for Overseas Travel is submitted. This should be submitted at least six months prior to travel. It is important to note the form is not approval for overseas travel.

7. Overseas Travel Minute

An Overseas Travel Minute (available on the drive, the Ministerial Services Unit webpage, or requested at ministerial.services@education.tas.gov.au) must include the following information:

• Destination of proposed travel.
• Dates of proposed travel.
• Employee’s position within DoE including if there is a travel leader (on group travel).
• How the travel came about e.g. applied for study course, conference, etc.
• Scholarship/Course/Conference etc. information (copy of what the organisation has provided or print out from a website) if applicable.
• Communication considerations such as when undertaking travel, DoE employee will carry a mobile phone at all times that has data access sufficient enough to enable 24/7 communication and is not reliant on Wi-Fi. (Refer also to Section 13 in this document)
• Description of the benefit to DoE/educational value
• Financial considerations (i.e. cost to DoE if any relief costs are required and the source of funding).
• Acknowledgement that all travellers with medical conditions have sought appropriate advice from a medical practitioner about travelling risks. Specialists can provide a suitable care plan that will take into account external factors.

All overseas travel documentation must be submitted through your manager (refer Attachment 1 - Flowchart). On receipt of the documents, your manager will consider the application for overseas travel. If approved, your manager will forward to the Ministerial Services Unit for processing.

8. Ministerial approval

Your application (Overseas Travel Minute and associated documents) for overseas travel is to be provided no later than eight weeks prior to the proposed travel departure date to the Ministerial Services Unit at ministerial.services@education.tas.gov.au via your manager.
Please be advised that applications received by Ministerial Services Unit outside these time frames will not be progressed. If you are unable to meet the time frames specified in this policy you are required to contact the Secretary directly via email (at OfficeoftheSecretary@education.tas.gov.au) outlining the extenuating circumstances. Based on this information the Secretary will decide whether or not your application should be progressed.

*It should be noted that if this timeframe is not met your travel may not be approved.*

All overseas travel for DoE employees requires approval from the Secretary and the Minister for Education and Training.

Once approved by the Secretary and the Minister for Education and Training, the DoE employee/s will be notified by email (with a copy to your manager).

9. Travel advice

Acknowledgement of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trading (DFAT) [International Travel Advice form](#) that is required to be signed and returned to the Ministerial Services Unit for all DoE employees no earlier than two weeks prior to departure.

Overseas travel offers many benefits to DoE employees. However, it also carries risk, and the safety and wellbeing of DoE employees is given the highest priority.

All travel even once approved by the Secretary and the Minister for Education and Training is subject to changes in the level of risk including DFAT travel advice. DoE is required to follow the DFAT travel advice and this is why the Ministerial Services Unit request that the signed DFAT form advising that the travel advice has been noted is to be returned no earlier than two weeks prior to departure. This ensures that the travel advice signed off is current. The Ministerial Services Unit keep a register of approved travel and monitor the DFAT travel advisories.

10. Monitoring travel advice

Overseas travel offers many benefits to participants. However, overseas travel is subject to a number of serious risks. That is why DoE monitors information from a number of sources, including, but not limited to, travel advice from DFAT.

Once travel is approved, if travel advisories (i.e. DFAT travel advice) change, or the Secretary determines that the level of risk has changed, the Secretary may cancel travel, or if already underway, changes may be made to the itinerary which may include returning home at the earliest opportunity. Any such instruction must be followed. Reflecting the high priority placed on the duty of care, failure to do so will result in the initiation of an Internal Code of Conduct investigation.

If DoE employees do not follow travel advice, apart from neglecting their duty of care, DoE employees will not be covered for travel insurance.

Below is a summary of some potential risks/ issues:

- Terrorism
- Civil Unrest/ Political Tension
- Crime
- Local Travel
• Airline Safety
• Natural Disasters
• Local Customs
• Health/Medical Issues
• Drug/Alcohol issues.

DFAT (through its website) issues travel advisories for the majority of countries. Each advisory is headed by an overall advice level. Most countries have only one advice level but some countries have different advice levels for region/s of the country. The travel advisory level for each country (or region/s of a country) is represented below.

The Ministerial Services Unit may seek additional travel advice from the Department of Premier and Cabinet, Office of Security and Emergency Management.

DoE employees must be registered with Smart Traveller http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/ to ensure individuals are registered with the Australian Government for overseas travel. This is a free email service to provide travellers with the latest updates to DFAT travel advice.

The four advisory levels are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Exercise normal safety precautions</td>
<td>Travel is permitted to countries or regions subject to this advisory level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Exercise a high degree of caution</td>
<td>Travel is permitted to attend special events at the Secretary/Minister for Education and Training's discretion to countries or regions subject to this advisory level. Additional Risk Management treatments are required at this level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Reconsider your need to travel</td>
<td>Travel is not permitted to countries or regions subject to this advisory level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Do not travel</td>
<td>Travel is not permitted to countries or regions subject to this advisory level.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The advisory levels reflect DFAT’s assessment as to the overall security situation in the relevant country. They also take into account DFAT’s assessment of the capacity of the relevant foreign government to deal with any risk occurring.

For a full description of the DFAT advice levels refer http://smartraveller.gov.au/resources/pages/travel-advice-explained.aspx#level3

Level 1. Exercise normal safety precautions

DFAT issues an ‘Exercise normal safety precautions’ advice for a functioning law and order system and stable government – this level indicates an overall security environment similar to a large Australian city.

• If DoE employees propose to travel to a country (or region/s of a country) for which DFAT has issued an ‘Exercise normal safety precautions’ advisory, such travel will be progressed for approval.

Level 2. Exercise a high degree of caution

DFAT issues an ‘Exercise a high degree of caution’ advice when there are numerous or significant risks, such as a weak law and order system (where violent crime is prevalent), or in some cases reflects an underlying volatility where the security environment could change with little warning.
• Travel to a country (or region/s of a country) for which DFAT has issued ‘Exercise a high degree of caution’ advisory, is permitted to attend special events at the Secretary/Minister for Education and Training’s discretion.

• DoE employees proposing to travel at ‘Exercise a high degree of caution’ travel advisory, you must first consult with your manager for advice regarding a decision on the appropriateness of the travel before the Overseas Travel Minute is submitted. It is recommended that this is done before significant planning is undertaken.

   Consideration should be given to whether expected outcomes from the travel could be achieved in other countries or regions. If a decision is made to proceed with the application, then this will need to be specifically addressed within the Overseas Travel Minute.

Level 3. Reconsider your need to travel

DFAT issues a ‘Reconsider your need to travel’ advice if it considers there is a serious and potential life threatening level of risk, such as ongoing threat of terrorism, frequent incidents of violent crime, ongoing civil unrest, widespread disease, or other safety risks.

DoE will NOT permit DoE employees to travel to countries or regions subject to this advisory level.

Level 4. Do not travel

DFAT issues a ‘Do not travel’ advice if it considers there is an extremely dangerous security situation, such as a high threat of terrorist attack, ongoing armed conflict, violent social unrest, or critical levels of violent crime.

DoE will NOT permit DoE employees to travel to countries or regions subject to this advisory level.

Change in Advisory PRIOR TO DEPARTURE

If, after travel has been approved, but prior to departure, DFAT changes the advisory in respect to a country (or region/s of a country) to above Level 1 – Exercise normal safety precautions, or if the Secretary determines that the level of risk has changed, the travel must be:

• assessed as per DFAT Level 2 – Exercise a high degree of caution advisory requirements; or

• re-routed so that the itinerary no longer includes travel to any countries (or region/s of countries) which are above DFAT Level 1 – Exercise normal safety precautions advisory; or

• postponed (until such time as the DoE employee is able to satisfy their manager that the travel will not pose an undue level of risk – for example, if the travel advisory is changed to reflect a lower assessment of risk); or

• cancelled as a last resort.

Change in Advisory AFTER DEPARTURE

If, while overseas travel is underway, DFAT changes the advisory in respect to a country (or region/s of a country) to above Level 1 – Exercise normal safety precautions, or if the Secretary determines that the level of risk has changed, the travel leader must consult with their manager to determine whether it is safest to:

• continue with the overseas travel as planned; or

• re-route the overseas travel; or
• return home at the earliest opportunity.

The travel leader must comply with any directives issued by their manager. *Employees are to exercise their own duty of care but this does not override their manager.*

Managers are to consult with the Deputy Secretary/Secretary and keep them informed at all times. Deputy Secretary/Secretary will ensure the Ministerial Services Unit and Strategic Media Marketing and Communications are kept up to date.
11. Travel insurance

Travel cover and assistance for travel approved by DoE in Tasmania is provided by Accident and Health International (AHI) under the Corporate Travel AHI ASSIST policy [www.acchealth.com.au](http://www.acchealth.com.au).

Refer DoE Travel Insurance Policy.

Please note only DoE employees are covered by this insurance. The insurance will not cover accompanying adults (unless a spouse or dependent of the DoE employee).

In the email confirming your travel has been approved, you will receive advice from the Ministerial Services Unit regarding travel insurance. The Ministerial Services Unit will provide you with an electronic copy of the business travel insurance schedule and letter.

12. Authorised class of travel

All travel must be economical and travel arrangements as efficient as possible. The following limits apply to the class of travel:

- Heads of Agency (and other officers with a relevant provision in their contract of employment) – up to business class.
- Other officers and employees – economy class, unless specific approval by the Head of Agency.

13. Email Access (Outlook)

The Tasmanian Government has implemented a block on access to Outlook Web Access (OWA) from outside Australia and New Zealand, except to “whitelisted” users to increase the security of the email service.

By default, all users are blocked from accessing OWA from overseas. This means you will not be able to access your DoE staff email via the [http://mail.connect.tas.gov.au](http://mail.connect.tas.gov.au) web access.

Users are be able to access email via ActiveSync and/or other methods as normal. Only OWA is impacted by this change.

If you are travelling overseas and need to access email via OWA you will need to log a request with the ITS Helpdesk [https://help.education.tas.gov.au](https://help.education.tas.gov.au) to enable your account to be added to the ‘whitelist’. Once you return from your overseas travelling your account will be changed again and removed from the ‘whitelist’ so that your account is more secure.

14. Personal leave

If an employee decides to undertake personal leave before or after their work related duties while overseas, then that employee is responsible for any additional costs incurred by DoE as a result, including Fringe Benefits tax. For further information please contact the Manager Financial Services on 6165 5657.

15. Travel Report for the Minister

DoE employees are to submit a [Travel Report](http://www.doe.tas.gov.au) (International Travel Report for the Minister) within one month of return from overseas.
### Roles and responsibilities

DoE is accountable to the community, through the Minister for Education and Training, for ensuring appropriate and safe overseas travel.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Minister for Education and Training</th>
<th>• Approve overseas travel through the Overseas Travel Minute.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secretary:</td>
<td>• Monitor travel advisories.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Write to the employee, travel leader if group travel, reminding them of the risks and requirements of overseas travel.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Approve overseas travel through the Overseas Travel Minute.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Provide recommendations to the Minister through the Overseas Travel Minute.</td>
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<td>• If the need arises make the decision to cancel travel, change the itinerary, or require the party to return home at the earliest opportunity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deputy Secretaries:</td>
<td>• Monitor travel advisories.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Clear the Overseas Travel Minute as outlined in this procedure.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide recommendations to the Secretary through the Overseas Travel Minute.</td>
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<td>• Provide guidance to managers on overseas travel.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• If the need arises, assist the Secretary to make a decision to cancel travel, change the itinerary, or require the party to return home at the earliest opportunity.</td>
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<td>Strategic Media Marketing and Communications:</td>
<td>• Provide communications advice as per requirements outlined in Crisis Communications Plan.</td>
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<td>Ministerial Services Unit:</td>
<td>• Monitor the DFAT travel advice.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Be the conduit for approval of the Overseas Travel Minute.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Provide quality control of the Overseas Travel Minute.</td>
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<td>• Provide guidance to DoE employees on overseas travel.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Manage required documentation as outlined in this policy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Managers:</td>
<td>• Monitor the DFAT travel advice.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Provide advice to employees when there is a change in advisory from DFAT.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Clear the Overseas Travel Minute as outlined in this procedure.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Ensure adherence to the Overseas Travel Employee Policy and Procedure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Manage required documentation as outlined in this procedure e.g. Employee In-Principle Agreement to Travel Overseas form and Overseas Travel Minute.</td>
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<tr>
<td>DoE employees:</td>
<td>• Adhere to all directions issued by the Secretary and senior DoE personnel before and during travel.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>• Ensure all requirements as set out in this policy are adhered to.</td>
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16. Attachments

Attachment 1 – Travel Approval Flowchart for Employees
Attachment 2 – Chain of Command

17. Associated documents

DoE International Travel Advice Form for Employees (DFAT)
Employee In-Principle Agreement to Travel Overseas form
Employee Travel Warrant
Overseas Travel Checklist
Template – Overseas Travel Minute to the Minister
Travel Report
Travel Insurance Policy
Tasmanian Government Overseas Travel Policy and Guidelines

Authorised by: Jenny Gale
Position of authorising person: Secretary
Date authorised: July 2017
Developed by: Ministerial Services Unit
Date of last review: July 2017
Date for next review: New

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revision Date</th>
<th>Revision Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>January 2018</td>
<td>Included new section on Outlook Web Access while overseas (section 13)</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Attachment 1. Travel Approval Flowchart for Employees

Step 1: Employee Overseas Travel Policy and Procedure
- Employee consults manager on intention to travel overseas
- Employee plans travel adhering to the policy and procedure
- Employee consults MSU if any concerns

Step 2: Employee In-Principle Agreement to Travel Overseas form
- Employee submits form to manager
- Manager signs form and submits it to MSU
- MSU submits form to Secretary for signing
- MSU provides copy of signed form to employee and discusses any concerns. This is not approval for travel.

Step 3: Overseas Travel Minute
- Employee submits Minute to Manager
- Manager approves Minute and submits it to MSU
- MSU submits Minute to Deputy Secretary for clearance
- MSU submits Minute to Secretary for approval
- MSU submits Minute to Minister for Education and Training for approval

Step 4: Travel insurance
- MSU emails approved Minute and insurance documents to employee and manager
- MSU holds a copy of approved Minute and associated documentation

Step 5: DFAT Travel Advice form
- Employee and DoE monitor DFAT travel advice before travel
- Employee submits signed DFAT Travel Advice form to MSU (two weeks prior to travel)
- MSU holds a copy of employee’s DFAT Travel Advice form
- Employee and DoE continue to monitor DFAT travel advice during travel

Change in Travel Advisory level, including DFAT
- Secretary makes decision on travel (may cancel, change itinerary, or repatriation)
- Employee must adhere to directive from Secretary
- Employee must remain contactable by mobile (sufficient data access for 24/7 communication)
- Repatriation and Crisis Comms Plans’ to be adhered to
Attachment 2. Chain of Command

The following diagram outlines the line of command for decisions to be made during overseas travel. As outlined in the Overseas Travel Policy all directives to Department of Education employees participating in overseas travel must be adhered to.