UNSW SCIENCE SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL POLICY

Version	Approved by	Approval date	Effective date	Next review
1.0	UNSW Science Faculty Board	24 September 2020	24 September 2020	November 2021
Policy Statement				
Purpose	Reduce the carbon footprint of UNSW Science through environmentally responsible travel.			
Scope	This policy applies to all UNSW Science staff and students.			
Preceding Documents	Business Expense Policy Business Expense Procedure HS406 Fieldwork Guideline HS917 Fieldwork Procedure Travel Procedure Travel Policy			

CONTEXT

Environmental sustainability is a key component of the UNSW 2025 Strategy. UNSW has established a science-based target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net zero in line with a 1.5°C global warming scenario as set out in the Paris Agreement. UNSW Science recognises that travelling is an important part of work-related activities for Science students and staff. UNSW Science also recognises that we need to make ambitious changes to business travel to demonstrate environmentally responsible stewardship. Air travel is acknowledged as a disproportionately polluting means of travel and an area where UNSW Science can make significant strides.

University travel, predominantly air travel, contributed to approximately 13.6% of UNSW Science's total carbon dioxide equivalent (CO_2e) emissions in 2019 [1]. Reducing the CO_2e emissions of university travel will assist UNSW Science with meeting the CO_2e emissions goals set out in the UNSW Environmental Sustainability Plan 2019-21 and will also enable UNSW Science to fulfill its own vision to be a world leader in sustainability and environmental innovation.

POLICY

UNSW Science travellers, travel arrangers, approvers and delegated officers must always exercise an appreciation for UNSW's environmental sustainability goals when booking, authorising and undertaking university travel, by adhering to the following policy principles:

1. **AVOID travel** if you can achieve your goals without it.
2. **REDUCE CO_2e emissions** from travel by making sustainable travel choices.
3. **OFFSET CO_2e emissions** from travel if it is feasible to do so.

AVOID TRAVEL if you can achieve your goals without it (Principle #1)

This principle guides UNSW Science staff and students to avoid travel if goals can be achieved by other means. It is understood that some travel will continue to be unavoidable, particularly for early stage academics building their networks.

UNSW Science staff and students should:

- Be leaders in virtual conferencing and networking. Virtual attendance should be considered as the preferred method of participation at events. Alternatively, if conference or workshop attendance is considered absolutely necessary, large research groups should consider sending a subset of members (prioritising Equity Diversity and Inclusion objectives and student mobility).
- Enable all large-scale events hosted by UNSW Science to be attended virtually (refer to our Science Digital Event Guidelines).
- Treat virtual participation in meetings equally to in-person participation for the purposes of promotion and relief from other duties.
- Seek to reduce the number of interstate and international meetings, field trips, seminars and conferences being attended in-person.

REDUCE CO2e EMISSIONS from travel by making sustainable travel choices (Principle #2)

This principle encourages UNSW Science staff and students to actively seek ways to minimise CO2e emissions when travel cannot be avoided. This principle always sits under the UNSW Travel Procedure which requires travel to be purchased based on 'the most efficient, safe, common sense and cost-effective means of transportation'.

UNSW Science staff and students should:

- Refrain from air travel for short trips such as those that would take under four hours via alternative modes of transport.
- Seek the most direct travel routes and, where feasible, combine business trips to the same region.
- Prioritise public transport and active transport such as walking and cycling for local trips.
- Select the most CO2e efficient rental car option appropriate for the trip such as a small, electric or a hybrid car. Consider travelling together in the same vehicle if other colleagues share the same travel plans.
- Travel in economy class. See exceptional circumstances in the UNSW Business Expense Procedure.
- Consider calculating the CO2e emissions of proposed travel plans to understand the environmental impact of different routes and transportation modes. See an example of a carbon calculator here.

OFFSET CO2e EMISSIONS from travel if it is feasible to do so (Principle #3)

This principle encourages UNSW Science staff and students to consider offsetting the CO2e emissions of essential travel as part of their normal travel planning and acts as an interim measure until UNSW manages the offsetting of all university travel from 2022.

UNSW Science staff and students should:

- Seek to incorporate the cost of offsetting participant air travel into event fees when organising large-scale paid events hosted by UNSW Science.
- Consider offsetting CO2e emissions related to essential travel through a reputable offsetting program. See an example of such a program here.
- Confirm with their funding provider the reimbursement rules for offsetting travel. For example, offsetting is not an allowable travel expense under ARC funding rules.

UNSW Science supervisors and managers should:

- View the carbon offsetting of travel as an essential travel cost for the purpose of university travel reimbursement. Grant recipients should adhere to the funding conditions of their individual funding provider.

EXEMPTIONS

It is understood that certain circumstances warrant exceptions to the policy such as safety, terrain and medical exemptions. In such cases the most environmentally sustainable travel decision should be made.

[1] Unpublished UNSW Document, 2020 (TBA).