SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL GUIDANCE

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST
EST?1845

OUR COMMITMENT

Strategy 2030 makes a clear commitment to embrace the Sustainability Development Goals across all of the University's activities. In support of this, the University's Net Zero Plan sets out the principles for achieving Net Zero carbon emissions by 2040 across all institutional activities including travel.

The University will be a signatory to the UKRI Concordat for Environmental Sustainability of Research and Innovation Practice sustainability research and as such will follow the guidance on business related travel.

The guidance is intended to support staff to make an informed decision and better understand the carbon implications of business-related travel. It aims to encourage the whole University community to reduce, where possible, the carbon impact of the business-related travel and to reduce the carbon impact of required travel.

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PURPOSE OF THE GUIDANCE

- This guidance aims to support staff and students to reduce unnecessary business travel and to travel more sustainably.

- The guidance will support and encourage individuals and departments/teams to reduce the total amount of travel that they undertake (and to travel more sustainably) to help the University achieve its net zero target.

- The guidance takes into account the needs for environmental best practice and the operational needs of the University.

- The guidance aims to support sustainable best practice whilst not disadvantaging early career researchers.

- Travel should be prioritised based on need and potential benefit to the University, balancing operational and business benefit versus carbon impact.

- In adopting this guidance, Line Managers will ensure that staff health and wellbeing remains a fundamental consideration.

- The University will actively promote diversity and inclusion in the implementation of this guidance, ensuring equality of opportunity.

HIERARCHY OF TRAVEL

The University is committed to identifying opportunities to reduce the impact of business-related travel which are required, and have developed an overarching hierarchy of travel (see Figure 1).

The easiest way to reduce our carbon footprint from business travel is to not travel unless necessary. Staff should make use of the decision making tool when establishing the need to travel.

The decision making tool provides support for staff by helping determine the importance of attending a particular conference or event after establishing that there are no alternatives to flying.
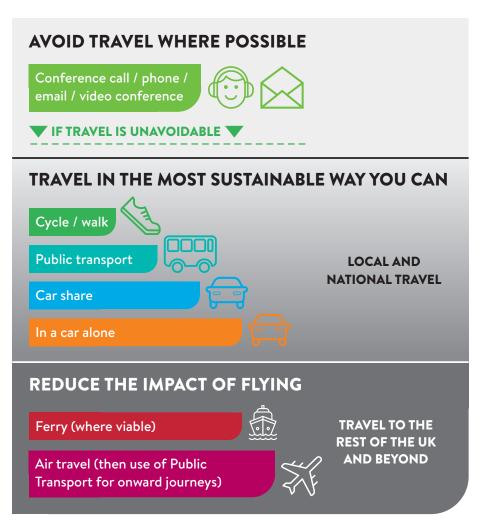
AVOID TRAVEL WHERE POSSIBLE

Conference call / phone / email / video conference

▼ IF TRAVEL IS UNAVOIDABLE ▼

TRAVEL IN THE MOST SUSTAINABLE WAY YOU CAN

Cycle / walk

Public transport

Car share

In a car alone

LOCAL AND NATIONAL TRAVEL

REDUCE THE IMPACT OF FLYING

Ferry (where viable)

Air travel (then use of Public Transport for onward journeys)

TRAVEL TO THE REST OF THE UK AND BEYOND

Figure 1. Hierarchy of Travel

HIERARCHY OF TRAVEL (CONTINUED)

Avoid the travel where possible and reduce the frequency of essential trips	Staff should make use of existing and emerging technology to replace the need to travel; saving time, money and carbon. Centrally bookable meeting rooms are being upgraded with conferencing facilities; and All large central lecture theatres are now upgraded to facilitate a hybrid experience offering in room and virtual attendees a comparative experience. It is appreciated that for many journey purposes, projects and business needs there is a requirement to travel. It's still possible to reduce emissions, however, by exploring options to reduce the frequency of the trip you need to undertake. Some examples of how this could be achieved include: • Use the travel decision tool to consider the benefit of the trip in terms of learning, networking opportunities and building new relationships versus its carbon impact. • Combine trips to the same region. • Optimising the number of people attending the same event. • As part of the bid process for research funding, consider committing to a reduced frequency of meetings/trips at the outset.
Travel by the most sustainable form of travel possible	Where travel is required, there are often opportunities to minimise the carbon impact of journeys and this is often dictated by the destination and the transport options available. To support and inform travel decisions, a series of destination-specific information to guide staff on how carbon savings could be achieved and to provide details on the support available from the University.
Reduce the impact of flying	If you still need to fly seek opportunities to reduce the carbon impact of those trips. Some key actions that staff can take to reduce the impact of their trip include: • Flying economy – this has the lowest CO_2e emissions per passenger. • Prioritising carbon saving over cost of flights – for instance direct flights generate significantly less carbon than multi-leg journeys. • Fly into a main airport, which might be a more expensive option, provides greater opportunities for onward travel by public transport. • Use of fuel-efficient carriers – to save on the carbon of individual flights.

DESTINATION SPECIFIC GUIDANCE

The following outlines the key approaches to each 'destination area' and provides guidance on sustainable travel options to areas.

DESTINATION SPECIFIC GUIDANCE (CONTINUED)

TRIPS WITHIN NORTHERN IRELAND

Where possible, trips within Northern Ireland should be undertaken by active travel or public transport, especially those within Belfast. Where car travel is unavoidable, steps can be taken to reduce the carbon impact.

Hierarchy of Travel Option*	Advice
Walking/Cycling	Wherever possible, for trips within Belfast travel by active modes of travel.
Public Transport	Instead of travelling by car when travelling between urban areas consider public transport as the first option instead of a taxi.
Private Car	If travelling by car is the only option, ensure the impact of the trip is minimised through: • Car sharing where possible with colleagues.

TRIPS TO & FROM THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

The consultation process with staff highlighted that a significant amount of travel takes place between Belfast and the Republic of Ireland and whilst much of this is to the Dublin urban area, opportunities to travel by sustainable travel modes is more limited.

Hierarchy of Travel Option*	Advice
Public Transport	Travel to Dublin should be by train.
Private Car	If travelling by car is the only option, ensure the impact of the trip is minimised through: • Car sharing where possible with colleagues. • Use of hire cars (to allow for sustainable travel on the commute to and from work).

* The Hierarchy of Travel Option diagram can be found on P3.

DESTINATION SPECIFIC GUIDANCE (CONTINUED)

TRIPS TO AND FROM THE REST OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

The University accepts that travelling outside the island of Ireland for most people will be by plane, whilst ferry might be a viable option in some circumstances - and it is important to seek opportunities to minimise the impact of those trips – focusing on both the overall carbon impact.

Journey Leg	Advice
Getting to the Airport	Staff should prioritise getting to and from the airport by public transport, where possible.
Onward travel within Great Britain	Flights to UK airports with good onward connections, should be prioritised. This will allow for more people to travel by public transport to final destinations. The following should be used: **SOUTHERN ENGLAND** London Heathrow, London Gatwick, London City, Luton. **MIDLANDS** Birmingham and Luton. **NORTHERN ENGLAND** Manchester. **SCOTLAND** Direct to destination city – Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen.

DESTINATION SPECIFIC GUIDANCE (CONTINUED)

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

For travel beyond the UK, whether it be for research, conferencing or other business purposes, the following guidance should be used to minimise the carbon impact caused.

Item	Advice
Getting to the Airport	Staff should travel to and from the airport by public transport where ever possible.
Onward travel	Staff should prioritise flights to destination airports with good onward connections and make use of public transport where possible.
Class of Flight	International flights should take place in economy class due to the lower carbon impact per passenger.
Direct Flights	Take-off and landing generate a significant proportion of the carbon of a flight. Flying direct wherever possible, should be prioritised.
Fuel Efficient Carriers	When booking flights (through the TMC) flight options with the lowest total carbon impact should be selected wherever possible.

Queen's University Belfast
Belfast
BT7 1NN
Northern Ireland

sustainability@qub.ac.uk

www.qub.ac.uk