



TRAVEL POLICY

(Procedure Dienstreizen)

Purpose

This Travel Policy is a mandatory procedure which applies to all work trips carried out on behalf of Hasselt University.

1. General provisions

1.1. Staff members should always consider whether making a work trip is necessary. Preference should be given to digital meetings where possible (especially in the case of meetings of short duration).

1.1. The Travel Policy applies to all work trips made by staff members in the exercise of their duties at Hasselt University, as well as to all work trips made by guest employees in the context of their activity or mandate at Hasselt University. The Travel Policy also applies to group trips organised or accompanied by staff members or guest employees, e.g. group study trips for students. Work trips that are paid for directly by third parties are not covered by this Travel Policy.

1.2. A work trip takes place when a staff member or guest employee leaves his/her official place of work or home for another destination on behalf of Hasselt University. Travel between the place of work and home is not regarded as a work trip.

1.3. Travellers should always plan their trip in the way that is most advantageous for the university, taking into account practical matters such as travel times, means of transport, etc. This Travel Policy is designed to ensure that Hasselt University does not incur inappropriate or excessive expenses.

1.4. For work trips financed by other authorities (e.g. VLIR-UOS), the rules of the external funding body take precedence over this Travel Policy. This may mean that the trip must be applied for/booked through another travel agency, or that different rules for the reimbursement of travel expenses should be applied. It is recommended that you check the rules of the relevant funding body and liaise properly with the financial unit.

1.5. Exceptions to this Travel Policy may be permitted by the Finance Director in certain individual cases, subject to the provision of well-founded and documented reasons, and possibly after consultation with the relevant budget controller (i.e. dean or general administrator).

2. Application for a work trip

2.1. Making an application for a work trip is mandatory for domestic work trips involving a hotel stay. No application is required for domestic work trips without a hotel stay.

2.2. Making an application for a work trip is mandatory for all foreign work trips, even if you will only be travelling by car. The only exception to this is trips to Maastricht University.

2.3. Applications for work trips are made via FINTRA. Applications must be submitted in a timely manner so that approval can be received prior to travel. After the application has been approved,

an order number will be generated, which must be quoted when booking the trip. An application for a work trip of more than one month requires more detailed justification and involves a longer approval process.

3. Use of means of transport

3.1. Hasselt University has resolutely opted for a sustainable travel policy. If travel is really necessary, travellers should therefore always give preference to a means of transport that is as sustainable as possible.

3.2. For short- and medium-distance journeys, the use of the following means of transport is recommended in the following order of priority:

Bicycle

3.2.1. For short journeys, e.g. between the two campuses, Hasselt University electric work bicycles are available for staff members.

3.2.2. A bicycle commuting allowance may be requested for journeys by private bicycle. The rate for this can be found on the Hasselt University intranet.

Public buses, shared transport and domestic rail transport

3.2.3. For short journeys, for example between the two campuses or between the railway station and the final destination of a work trip, the use of public buses is recommended as a second option after cycling. For cost reasons, a ten-journey ticket is recommended.

3.2.3. For short and medium distances, the use of public shared transport is recommended if available. The associated costs can also be reimbursed.

3.2.3. For domestic rail travel, the use of a ten-journey ticket is recommended for cost reasons. Depending on the external funding body, certain guidelines may apply regarding class of travel or use of tickets. It is recommended that you check the rules of the relevant funding body and liaise properly with the financial unit.

Hasselt University car

3.2.4. For domestic trips or trips to neighbouring countries, a number of Hasselt University cars are available for staff members to use. If the distance allows, preference should be given to an electric Hasselt University car.

Private car

3.2.5. For reasons of cost, time or availability, private cars may be used for work trips involving short or medium-distance journeys. When several people are travelling together, carpooling is strongly recommended.

3.2.6. A kilometre allowance may be requested for the use of a private car for distances of more than 5 kilometres (exceptions are possible subject to a manager's approval). Reimbursement for the use of a private car for journeys of more than 5 kilometres is calculated on the basis of the standard rate per kilometre and the length of the journey:

a. For occasional journeys, either (1) the distance between the Diepenbeek/Hasselt campus and the destination, or (2) the actual distance travelled is used. Reimbursement is always based on the shorter of (1) or (2).

b. For regular trips (e.g. three trips to Maastricht per week), reimbursement is calculated on the basis of the distance between the Diepenbeek/Hasselt campus and the destination, unless

another arrangement has been agreed between the staff member concerned and the head of department. In the latter case, a formal authorisation from the head of department is added to the 'Expenses reimbursement request'.

3.2.7. In the case of carpooling for trips of more than 5 kilometres, the standard rate for the driver is increased by half. The employees who travel with the driver are not entitled to an allowance. To obtain this carpooling rate, a driver concerned must state the names of the Hasselt University fellow-passengers in the 'Expenses reimbursement request'.

3.2.8. The standard rate and carpooling rate are available on the Hasselt University Finance Directorate intranet.

3.3. In the case of longer journeys, the use of train or bus is recommended for destinations that can be reached in less than 8 hours (more information about this can be found on the Hasselt University intranet):

International rail travel

3.3.1. International rail travel is only allowed in economy class or equivalent. Exceptions to this are only possible for valid medical reasons and only if they have been approved by the Human Resources Department; in exceptional cases, the financial unit must be contacted in connection with the booking.

Air travel

3.3.3. Air travel is only allowed in economy class or equivalent. Exceptions to this are only possible for valid medical reasons and only if they have been approved by the Human Resources Department; in exceptional cases, the financial unit must be contacted in connection with the booking.

3.3.4. It is recommended that flights be booked through the travel agency with which Hasselt University has a framework agreement (see point 4).

3.3.5. Travellers should avoid stopovers and transit flights as far as possible and replace them with a direct flight or rail connections where possible, since a stopover causes more CO2 emissions and is therefore inconsistent with Hasselt University's sustainable travel policy.

3.3.6. Travellers are expected to offset the CO2 emissions of their flight or flights. This should be done as soon as the trip is booked. The travel agency with which Hasselt University has a framework agreement offers this. It is usually also an option when booking flights online.

3.3.7. Travellers should plan and book air travel well in advance, so that the cheapest possible tickets can be obtained. When (more expensive) flexible tickets are booked, careful consideration must be given to cost, time and availability. For sustainability reasons, it is best to avoid stopovers and transit flights. You should replace these with rail travel where possible.

Rental cars

3.4. Use of rental cars is permitted abroad (e.g. in combination with a flight). The choice of rental car should be carefully weighed up against use of public transport or a taxi, depending on cost, time and availability.

Taxis

3.5. Use of taxis is allowed for short distances (e.g. between railway station and final destination). The choice must be weighed up against the use of public transport, shared transport, a Hasselt University car or a private car.

4. Booking

Air travel, international rail travel and hotel stays

4.1. Air travel, international rail travel and hotel stays can be booked either through a travel agency or directly with the airline, rail company or hotel.

Booking through a travel agency

4.1.1. Hasselt University recommends using a travel agency for air travel, international rail travel and hotel bookings. The travel agency's services include suggesting travel schedules, assisting with cancellations or changes, providing travel advice and news updates, direct invoicing to Hasselt University, etc. The travel agency charges a fixed fee for this service according to agreed rates.

4.1.2. When booking through a travel agency, it is mandatory to use the travel agency with which Hasselt University has concluded a framework agreement. Other travel agencies may only be used in the following cases:

- a. for trips that are financed using FWO 'travel credits';
- b. for group trips for students, the cost of which is passed on in full to the traveller.

4.1.3. The name of the traveller, the name of the relevant faculty or office and the order number (in the application for a work trip) must be stated for every booking. This information is important for processing the travel agency's invoices.

Booking directly with an airline, rail company or hotel

4.1.4. When booking a flight, it is mandatory to make a price comparison between three airlines (for economy class flights); these prices and the reason for the choice made must be specified when asking approval from the budget manager. CO₂ emissions are a valid reason for deviating from the cheapest price.

4.1.5. If certain expenses are rejected by the relevant funding body due to failure to comply with public procurement legislation, the traveller (and the relevant faculty) will bear full responsibility for all financial and legal consequences.

4.1.6. The name of the traveller, the name of the relevant faculty or office and the order number (in the application for a work trip) must be stated for every booking. This information is important for processing Hasselt University credit card statements or incoming invoices.

Other means of transport

4.2. Other means of transport such as domestic rail travel, taxi, rental car and bus (e.g. for group trips) can be booked directly with the relevant transport company.

4.3. Hasselt University cars are booked through Ultimo. Electric bicycles are booked via onthaal@uhasselt.be.

5. Hotel stays

5.1. In principle, hotel stays are not permitted for domestic trips. However, if a hotel stay is necessary, for example in the context of a conference, the reason for the stay must be added to the application for a work trip.

5.2. In the case of a hotel stay, the actual cost of a standard room plus breakfast will be reimbursed up to the 'accommodation allowance'. The rates per country for an accommodation allowance are available on the Hasselt University Finance Directorate intranet. These rates are

maximum amounts, and the expenses will only be reimbursed on presentation of original supporting documents.

6. Meals and miscellaneous minor travel expenses

6.1. For work trips lasting at least one full working day, the actual cost of meals and various minor travel expenses will be reimbursed up to the maximum 'daily allowance'. The rates for each country for a daily allowance (for meals and various minor travel expenses, excluding hotel accommodation) are available on the Hasselt University intranet. These rates are maximum amounts, and the expenses will only be reimbursed on presentation of original supporting documents.

Per diem system

6.2. For trips abroad of 14 days or more, a fixed daily allowance - the so-called 'per diem' - can be applied. This allowance covers all costs of the stay for meals and various minor travel expenses, excluding hotel stays. The rates for each country for a fixed daily allowance are available on the Hasselt University intranet. When the per diem system is applied, supporting documents do not need to be submitted.

6.3. Prior to the work trip, all staff members and guest employees must have approval from the budget manager for the use of the per diem system; the budget manager has the option to reduce the applicable rate.

6.4. The calculation of the per diem allowance is based on the number of nights. The duration of the stay must be apparent from the details in the application for a work trip.

6.5. If the relevant external funding body does not accept the above per diem system, this must be reported to the staff member before the start of the trip by the relevant financial unit so that the staff member can apply the appropriate system and keep the original supporting documents.

7. Advances

7.1. For foreign trips lasting more than 3 days (i.e. more than 2 nights), staff members who do not have a Hasselt University credit card may request an advance. The standard advance is 50% of the fixed daily allowance and is paid into the staff member's bank account five working days before departure. The advance is settled within 10 working days after the end of the work trip.

7.2. For trips abroad to certain countries (e.g. DR Congo) where credit cards are not accepted, an exceptional request may be made for an advance of 100% of the fixed daily allowance.

7.3. The choice of whether to request an advance should be made in the application for a work trip. The advance is calculated on the basis of the number of overnight stays, as shown in the information in the application for a work trip.

Per diem system

7.4. When the per diem system is applied, the following procedure is used:

- a. For stays shorter than one month, the per diem allowance is paid into the beneficiary's bank account five working days before departure.
- b. For stays longer than one month, from the second month onwards the per diem allowance is then paid monthly on the first working day of the month.

7.5. For the period during which the per diem system applies, the Hasselt University credit card may only be used to pay for the hotel stay (room plus breakfast).

8. Reimbursement

8.1. Work trip expenses paid by a staff member will be reimbursed by Hasselt University after an Expenses Reimbursement Request has been submitted via FINTRA. Reimbursement will be made in accordance with the above provisions regarding means of transport, hotel stays and meals and various minor travel expenses.

8.2. As a general rule, reimbursement of expenses should be requested within three months of the time when they were incurred. This is to reduce the chance of losing the original supporting documents. If expenses are submitted late, there is a chance that they will no longer be recoverable if the project to which they relate has already been completed.

8.3. Costs are only reimbursed on the basis of the original supporting documents, except when the per diem system is used. For reimbursement of hotel charges, the original hotel bill showing detailed charges is required. For reimbursement of restaurant charges, the link with the work activity must be clear; the number of people, the capacity of these people and the reason for the activity must be stated in order to substantiate the work-related nature of the expense; extra justification is required for restaurant charges on days off or during the weekend.

8.4. Costs will not be refunded in the following cases (non-exhaustive list):

- expenses relating to personal travel, excursions, recreational activities, etc.
- costs of flights in a class higher than economy without prior approval
- costs of 'upgrades' of booked seats without prior approval
- expenses incurred by accompanying family members or other persons
- charges relating to traffic offences, fines, lost keys, etc.

9. Insurance

9.1. For all work trips, employees have Hasselt University insurance for civil liability and physical injury as standard. If they use a private car or a Hasselt University car for work reasons, this is also comprehensively insured. An application for a work trip is not required for these insurance policies.

9.2. For foreign work trips, all employees have Hasselt University travel insurance as standard.

9.3. Hasselt University cancellation insurance is not available as standard for air travel or international rail travel. In certain cases and if available, separate cancellation insurance or flexible tickets may be chosen, always taking the extra cost into consideration. Note that certain external funding bodies will not pay the cost of cancellation insurance.

9.4. When rental cars are used, Hasselt University comprehensive insurance is not ordinarily available for damage to the rental car. It is recommended that you take out extra comprehensive insurance when booking, i.e. the CDW (collision damage waiver), if this is not already included in the rental price as standard.