



### **Polasaí agus Nósanna Imeachta / Policies and Procedures**

Code	QA213
Title	Taught Student International Travel Policy
Policy Owner	Head of Global Mobility
Date	May 25 <sup>th</sup> 2023
Approved By	University International Committee (Chaired by VPI)

#### **1. Purpose**

The purpose of this Policy is to set out the University's minimum required standards for the organisation and management of international travel for students enrolled on **undergraduate or postgraduate taught programmes**.

#### **2. Description**

As a global university many of our taught programmes have an element of student engagement overseas giving students the opportunity to gain practical work and/or an independent learning experience relevant to their course. University of Galway has a responsibility to its students undertaking international travel to take reasonable care to ensure that they are provided with a safe environment before, during, and after their travel. We recognise student independence and agency in undertaking international travel. Students are expected to give due attention to the planning of their travel especially regarding risks and personal safety.

##### **2.1. Approval and Review of Partner Organisations**

New international partner organisations must be appraised and reviewed before any student overseas travel can take place. Global Galway provides central coordination, advice, and support to appraise and establish successful mobility partnerships across all University Schools and Colleges. New links and placement partnerships are considered and established as per the [Mobility Partnership Process](#) and the [Organisation Assessment for Work-Based Placements Policy](#).

##### **2.2. International Taught Student Travel Management**

Management of international student travel will be dependent on the type of travel that is taking place.

###### **2.2.1. Travel related to, and overseen by the programme of study**

Where students are undertaking international travel which is directly related to and overseen by their programme of study such as study abroad, Erasmus exchange, traineeships, work placement, field trips, and class excursions. The following applies:

- The student must have their mobility approved.

Students must complete a Mobility Assessment. The mobility assessment is necessary to identify any high-risk travel students may be undertaking. The assessment is designed to prompt students to ensure and record that they have considered their own needs, their travel arrangements, health (including public health) factors, local

and regional conditions, and the study and/or work environment they are going to be spending time in.

- The student must complete a student declaration.

Every student must read and sign a Student Declaration. The declaration highlights students' responsibilities around due diligence, adherence to codes of conduct, good public health practices, insurance, and finances. By signing the declaration, the student acknowledges that they have studied, understand, and accept the risks that may be involved in taking part in study or placement abroad, and that they will comply with the detailed requirements.

- Each student must source appropriate travel insurance.

Every student must source appropriate private travel insurance that includes cover for accidents, medical and emergency treatment, personal liability, cancellation/curtailment, and repatriation. Students should ensure they are adequately insured in respect of their personal baggage, effects, and money. The policy must be valid for the entire period of their travel abroad. Students should read the policy documentation very carefully to understand the cover provided and the policy limitations. The responsibility lies with the student to ensure that they are adequately covered.

In some specific instances, for example field trips, the University will provide insurance cover for students. In such an event, faculty members organising trips should confirm with the Director of Insurance regarding cover and students should be made aware that insurance coverage is provided.

Students are guided on the International Office website to appropriate insurers ([link](#)).

- The student must attend at least one pre-departure briefing and attend any mandatory induction session provided by the partner organisation.
- The student must provide emergency contact details, for use in case of emergency.
- The student is responsible for organising their own travel, accommodation, and their own visa (if required).
- The student must inform University of Galway of any issues that may affect their ability to successfully complete their mobility.
- If the student is an Irish citizen, they should register their travel with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Failure to complete the above mandatory steps by the student will result in University support being withdrawn from the student's participation in the relevant international travel.

## 2.2.2 Voluntary/Extracurricular international travel

Any students undertaking international travel that falls outside of the travel detailed in 2.2.1 are wholly responsible for their international travel abroad. However, the University strongly advises students to complete the following:

*Visit the **P&P Repository** on the **Quality Office website**  
for other policies, procedures, regulations, and guidelines*

- The student should source appropriate travel insurance.  
As detailed above under 2.2.1
- The student should be aware of the University of Galway Code of Conduct  
As detailed above under 2.2.1
- The student should complete a Voluntary International Travel Self-Assessment

Students should give due attention to the planning of their international travel especially regarding risks and personal safety. To facilitate this each student should complete a **Voluntary International Travel Self-Assessment** prior to travel. The form is designed as a prompt for students to check that they have appropriately considered their own needs, their travel arrangements, health factors, local and regional conditions, and the overseas environment they are going to spending time in.

- If the student is an Irish citizen, they should register their travel with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

### 2.3. College Mobility Assessment

The Colleges must undertake a Mobility Assessment for each taught student mobility. The assessment examines Student Preparation, Study or Work Conditions, Student Medical and Support Services, Public Health Factors, Location and Regional Factors, and Other Risks. It guides appropriate pre-mobility preparations.

The University of Galway International Committee in conjunction with Colleges will monitor developments in the level of risk associated with travel to international destinations based on Department of Foreign Affairs guidance.

If a destination moves to a higher risk level at any time, the International Committee will inform Colleges of any decision to restrict travel to that destination for students. If a destination moves to a higher risk level whilst students are in that destination, the **Critical Incident Protocol** (2.6) is activated.

### 2.4. Monitoring and Communication for travel related to, and overseen by the programme of study

The University of Galway monitors international student travel to ensure the student is achieving their learning objectives, and to address any concerns or issues.

The following table sets out the minimum communication touchpoints that should occur during an international student mobility. Touchpoints will vary depending on the duration of the Student Mobility.

Timeframe	Guidelines	Responsibility
Pre-Departure	Student provided with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact details of their College Representative</li> <li>• 24-Hour Emergency Contact Number</li> </ul>	College Representative

*Visit the **P&P Repository** on the **Quality Office website** for other policies, procedures, regulations, and guidelines*

<b>Within 4 weeks of arrival</b>	Student to complete survey to confirm arrival and to provide initial feedback on overseas mobility progression.	Student and College Representative
<b>Resumption of semester</b> (Where applicable)	Students to confirm their return to international location, and college representative to follow up with non-respondents.	Student and College Rep/ Erasmus Office
<b>Mid-2<sup>nd</sup> Semester</b> (Where applicable)	Student surveyed for feedback on the international mobility progression.  For students on placement, mid semester virtual check-in.	Student and College Representative
<b>Post Mobility</b> (Return to Ireland)	Student surveyed for feedback on international mobility. Opportunities for improvements and/or testimonials identified.	Student / College Representative / Mobility Team

Any feedback provided is used in the review of ongoing partnership relationships as per the **Mobility Partnership Process** for Higher Education Partners, and **Organisation Assessment Policy for Work-Based Placements**.

In all instances, if a concern arises, the College Representative will attempt to contact the student. All communication and attempts at communication must be documented.

## 2.5. Taught Student Overseas Central Register

Global Galway keeps a central register of all Taught student mobilities.

To ensure the University has the correct contact details in case of an emergency, students must provide the following information for use during their international travel:

- Their contact information while abroad
- Emergency contact / next of kin contacts for student

Colleges input this information directly into a database which is held centrally and managed by Global Galway, and accessible by College Representatives. A reminder to update data will be issued each year - in August (for semester 1), and in December (for semester 2). From September 2024, this information will feed directly from the Student Record System to an online mobility database.

The sending College or Centre must record ad hoc mobilities (e.g., occurring on non-standard academic calendar dates) on an ongoing basis.

Colleges nominate access requirements to individuals. In the interests of GDPR access is limited to those who need it for to manage the duty of care of students.

<b>Mobility</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Erasmus (All Colleges)	Outbound Erasmus Coordinator
CBPPL (International Only)	Study Abroad Officers
CASSCS (International Only)	Mobility Officer

Visit the **P&P Repository** on the **Quality Office website** for other policies, procedures, regulations, and guidelines

CoSE (International Only)	Nominated College Representative
CoMNHS (International Only)	International Officer
CDC (not incl in Erasmus)	CDC Placement Office
Shannon (All students incl Erasmus)	Shannon

## 2.6. Critical Incident Protocol

### 24-hour Emergency Contact Number

Before travelling, students receive the phone number for the Head of Global Mobility/third party provider for use in case of emergency on a 24-hour basis.

A **General Critical Incident Protocol** is set out below to allow the University to react in a responsible way when Critical Incidents do arise.

For this protocol, the **Vice President International** will be responsible for managing the University response for the incident. In their absence, the Director of Global Galway will assume this responsibility.

### General Critical Incident Protocol

This protocol relates to, but is not limited to:

- Pandemic
- Outbreak of Infectious Disease
- Natural Disaster
- Outbreak of conflict
- Accidents
- Physical harm
- Missing student

If a student is affected by an incident or critical incident the following steps should take place:

#### 1. Gather the information

The recipient of the information should gather all relevant information from the informing source regarding the situation. Establish the facts of the situation.

- What occurred?
- Who is affected?
- Are they currently safe?
- When did the incident occur?
- Where did the incident occur?
- How are they affected?
- Has anyone else been informed?
- Contact details for recipient.

#### 2. Communicate with responsible staff member

- If the incident is alerted by way of the 24-hour emergency Contact Number, the Head of Global Mobility will determine if the incident is to be escalated to the Vice President International.

- If the incident is alerted to any other member of staff, they should alert their Vice Dean International who will determine if the incident is to be escalated to the Vice President International.

### 3. Manage the ongoing situation

The Vice President International will determine if the University needs to respond to the incident. If the incident involves a **Missing Student** or **Student Bereavement**, the established University policies for these will be followed.

### 4. Assess the risk

- Establish the status of the affected students.
- Determine if real or perceived risk.
- Determine the scale and impact of the incident.
- Establish students' proximity to the incident and collate their contact details including Emergency Contact details available on the International Student Central Register.
- Contact Department of Foreign Affairs
- Contact Partner Organisation

### 5. Establish a Critical Incident Management Team composed from

- Vice President International
- Relevant Vice Dean International
- Director of Global Galway
- Head of Global Mobility
- Chaplain
- Student Liaison Officer
- Communications Officer
- Additional support if needed

The Critical Incident Management Team will be responsible for

- 5.1 Appointing a **Student Liaison Officer** to reach out to the affected student(s) offering key messages. This will usually involve asking the student to confirm that they are safe, signposting support available to them including that provided by the Department of Foreign Affairs, student support services provided by the University's Student Services such as Counselling and Chaplaincy support and the to provide University contact information.
- 5.2 Appointing a **Communications Officer**, if required. Responsible for communicating the response to both internal and external stakeholders.
- 5.3 Addressing action necessary to maintain the safety and health of student(s).
- 5.4 Preparing a list of persons to be alerted.
- 5.5 Addressing health, safety, public relations, and legal liability issues.
- 5.6 Developing and helping with an evacuation plan should one become necessary; the University will consider the following factors in deciding to require students to return to their home country:
  - Travel warning and/or specific directive by the Department of Foreign Affairs
  - Health warning and/or specific directive by the World Health Organization
  - Outbreak of hostilities between host country and any other country.
  - Terrorist activities and/or a declaration of martial law in the host country
  - Civil unrest or violence
  - Declaration of war by a third country against the host country
  - Protracted or indefinite closure of the partner organisation

- Prolonged disruption of public utilities and/or services at the partner organisation, site, or country.

## 6 All communications during the handling of the Incident must be documented.

## 7 Perform a post-incident review

A critical incident report must be completed following any Critical Incident.

The report should be used to evaluate the efficacy of incidence response with those involved and recommend modifications as needed.

### 2.7. Training for Responsible Staff

Relevant and appropriate briefing sessions must be provided to staff involved to enable them to comply with the Policy.

Each College must identify the staff who need training and ensure they attend.

### 2.8. Limitations

This policy does not cover international travel related to postgraduate research students. Enquiries in this regard can be directed to the Dean of Graduate Studies.

## 3. Responsibilities

Name	Responsibility
Head of Global Mobility	Policy Owner, deliver staff training related to this policy, 24-hour Emergency Phone contact
Quality Office	Assign QA Codes.
Vice President International	Managing the University response for a critical incident.
Director of Global Galway	Managing the University response for a critical incident in the event the Vice President International is not available.
Vice Deans Internationalisation	Act as point of contact for college for incident escalation, ensuring staff receive training related to this policy
All students	Ensure they are aware of the requirements for completing international travel as a registered student. Complying with the policy.
Outbound Erasmus Coordinator	Completing the Student Overseas Central Register for Erasmus students
Placement Officer	Completing the Student Overseas Central Register for students on work placement
Study Abroad Officers	Completing the Student Overseas Central Register, advise students of the requirements for completing international travel as a registered student, reviewing mobility assessments.

## 4. Related Documentation

[Mobility Partnership Process](#)

[Organisation Assessment for Work-Based Placements Policy](#)

[Mobility Assessment](#)

[Student Declaration](#)

**Non-Credit Bearing Outbound Mobility Self-Assessment**

*Visit the **P&P Repository** on the **Quality Office website** for other policies, procedures, regulations, and guidelines*