



## Travel

A/1.11.1

### Purpose

To ensure all travel and accommodation arrangements are made in line with its procedural documentation. This policy applies to all staff working at The Uniting Church Queensland Synod, Trinity College Queensland, Raymont Lodge, Alexandra Conference Centre and the presbyteries and congregations associated with the Synod office and members of Synod Office Boards and Committees. The traveller and their relevant manager (or Chair) shall be accountable for all associated travel costs. These costs must be able to meet audit requirements.

### Procedure

#### 1. Corporate Credit Cards

All staff bookings are to be made through the Synod Travel Coordinator. The Synod Travel Coordinator is to use the delegated Synod corporate credit card as the primary mechanism for charging travel related expenses (where possible).

Any additional legitimate travel and accommodation costs incurred that are unable to be charged to a corporate credit card shall be reimbursed by way of the Payment Reimbursement Request Form (FIN003-052019).

#### 2. Pre-Travel Approvals

Prior to travel it is recommended that staff complete the 'Synod Travel Request Form'. Once approved this form is to be forwarded to the Synod Travel Coordinator for action ([reception@ucaqld.com.au](mailto:reception@ucaqld.com.au)).

**Domestic travel** – approval needs to be obtained by the appropriate manager prior to travelling.

**International travel** - approval needs to be obtained by the General Secretary prior to travelling. Overseas travel is to be taken in consideration of the risks involved and the advice from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Homepage | Smartraveller. Details when seeking approval for overseas travel are to include the name of the person travelling, the purpose of the travel, the duration of the travel, the funding source(s), the destination(s), associated recreation or other leave and proposed costs to the Synod.

#### 3. Travel Bookings

The Synod Travel Coordinator is responsible for making all travel bookings. The role currently responsible for this coordination is the Synod Office Receptionist.

The Travel Coordinator will only use a third-party travel agent in the following circumstances:

- Complex International Travel.
- Multi-sector travel.
- Group Bookings i.e., conferences/Synod in Session; and
- As directed by the General Secretary.

Airline bookings shall be made to ensure that the best fare of the day (on any reasonable airline) is offered, as well as the inclusion of any other associated benefits.



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All travel and travel related expenses (i.e., rental/hire vehicle, bus or train fares and taxis – excluded the use of cab charge vouchers) are to be charged to a corporate credit card where possible.

### 4. Air Travel

The normal class for both domestic and international air travel is economy class for all staff.

Travel is to be booked at the most economical fare, with advantage being taken of any discounted or promotional fares and/or packages where possible.

Refunds will be credited to the corporate credit card which was used to make the original booking. Tickets booked through the Qantas or Virgin business portals shall remain associated with the Uniting Church Queensland Synod. Unused official tickets shall not be used for unofficial purposes.

#### Notes:

- The potential loss on any “discount fare” caused by commercial restrictions that are imposed by the airline should be evaluated against the overall savings that are gained from the use of discount fares.
- Circuitous routes or poor-quality airlines will not be used just to obtain lower fares.

### 5. Other Transport

Travel other than by air should involve the most economical commercial service available. In cases where the most efficient and economical means is either a Synod fleet vehicle or, with the owner’s agreement, a private vehicle, these means should be used. For use of a member’s private vehicle the member is paid an allowance at a rate determined by the ATO.

The Synod maintains an agreement with Cabcharge Australia Pty Ltd for the provision of taxi e-tickets across Australia. Reimbursement of taxi or ride share company (e.g., Uber) charges during business related travel may be claimed upon reconciliation of the staff member’s travel expenses. If you are a holder of a corporate credit card this is the most efficient way of paying for taxis.

In those cases where a rental car has been booked, every effort should be made to consolidate its use with other staff members who are also travelling to the same destination. Booking multiple rental vehicles for the same business trip should be avoided where possible.

### 6. Accommodation

Accommodation provided during work related travel will be at a level not exceeding a four-star or less than a three-star rating. Where a different star rating is more suitable for a particular circumstance the relevant Executive Director, or the General Secretary may approve the alteration. The Allowable Expenses Matrix details the maximum costs for accommodation that the Uniting Church Queensland Synod will cover. In order to proceed with the booking of an accommodation whose nightly rate would exceed the amount listed in the matrix prior approval must be obtained by the General Secretary or the relevant Executive Director.

It is the traveller’s responsibility to research and recommend suitable accommodations to the Synod Travel Coordinator that meet the standards set out in the Allowable Expenses Matrix.

In cases where a conference or event is being hosted within a hotel itself, and the staff member/s wish to stay at that hotel, approval for this accommodation booking can be granted if permission is obtained from the General Secretary or an Executive Director.

In the situation where a staff member utilises a private residence for travel lodgings (e.g., a friend or family member’s home) reimbursement for accommodation costs will not be provided. Minor expenses for provisions that are incurred may be reimbursed with tax receipts attached to a Payment Reimbursement Request Form.



## 7. Meals

Where meals are not included as part of a prearranged function (e.g., conference, flights, etc) expenditure on meals during official travel can be claimed for reimbursement, provided they meet the standard listed in the Allowable Expenses Matrix.

The Allowable Expenses Matrix details the maximum cost for meals that the Uniting Church Queensland Synod will cover. Where costs likely exceed the amounts in the matrix, prior approval must be obtained by the General Secretary or the relevant Executive Director.

No expense claim may be made for meals where a person eats at a non-commercial property (e.g., at a friend or family member's home).

## 8. In Room Facilities

Where available, staff may have access to in-room facilities. These facilities may be chargeable/claimable dependent upon the following provisions:

- Mini-bar – Mini-bar expenses are not considered claimable except in exceptional circumstances and where approved by the line manager. Unusual circumstances may include, but are not limited to, a late arrival at a destination. No alcohol items are claimable at any time.
- Wi-Fi – Internet use should be facilitated through a hotspot connection using an organisational mobile phone. In those circumstances where a staff member does utilise a given accommodations' WI-FI service they must ensure that they comply with the Synod Office's Information Technology policy. The associated charge should be linked to the accommodation charge.
- Laundry - In house laundry services are not considered claimable, except in exceptional circumstances and where approved by the line manager
- Pay TV/Movies - Charges incurred using in room Pay TV/movies are the responsibility of the staff member and will not be reimbursed or paid for by Uniting Church Queensland Synod.
- Room Service (meals) – Staff may use room service for meals when they are in adherence to the requirements set out in the meal section above.

The use of in room facilities, unless agreed to and paid prior to the travel by the Synod Travel Coordinator, are to be paid by the staff member at the point of departure from the accommodation. Staff members are then free to lodge an associated Payment Reimbursement Request Form.

## 9. Expenses

Agreed incidental costs will need to be paid for and then recovered through a completed Payment Reimbursement Request Form. The completed form and the associated tax receipts should then be emailed through to accounts payable ([apinvoices@ucaqld.com.au](mailto:apinvoices@ucaqld.com.au)) for processing, copying in the Synod Travel Coordinator ([reception@ucaqld.com.au](mailto:reception@ucaqld.com.au)).

All expenses that are incurred will require a tax receipt for reimbursement or for reconciliation of corporate credit card purchases.

Reasonable costs associated with official pre-approved travel will be paid for; including but not limited to airfares, taxi, meals and parking.

It is understood there may be occasions where a personal holiday may be taken before or after an official work-related trip. All additional costs in relation to the holiday part of the travel are the responsibility of the staff member.

Unreasonable or excessive expenses may be declined or require reimbursement by the employee.



#### 10. Travel Insurance

Travel insurance for domestic travel is covered automatically.

Travel insurance for international travel is subject to special arrangement. The traveller must contact the insurance division at the earliest opportunity to ensure that necessary arrangements are put in place.

#### 11. Reconciliation

It is the responsibility of staff members to submit reimbursement claims within a reasonable period of time. Claim reimbursements are to be submitted within a three-month period from the date of travel. Excessively late reimbursement claims may be reasonably denied.

#### 12. Documentation

The Synod Travel Coordinator is responsible for maintaining travel and accommodation documentation, including the retaining of itineraries, costs and all other paperwork.

#### 13. Synod Office Travel Coordinator

This role is held by the Synod Office Receptionist.

### Related documents

- A1.11 Travel Policy
- A1.11.1.1 Allowable Expenses Matrix
- A1.11.2 Synod Travel Request Form
- Payment Reimbursement Request Form (FIN003-052019)
- Travel Insurance Policy

### Revisions

Document number		A/1.11.1			
Version	Approval date	Approved by	Effective date	Policy owner	Policy contact
1	24.10.2022	Executive Leadership Team	24.10.2022	Executive Director Shared Services	Corporate Governance Manager
Next scheduled review		23.10.2025			