

Guideline | Possible travel policies at academic institutions to reduce flight emissions from business travel.

Purpose of this guideline

This guideline provides an overview of different ways to make academic institutions' travel policies more sustainable. Depending on the institution, the travel policy may contain only normative or also descriptive elements (e.g., preamble) and general information, respectively. The structure of this guideline is based on the following structure of a travel guideline:

- a preamble, which sets out the importance of sustainability,
- basic criteria and
- specific regulations for the individual modes of transport.

Alternative options are shown in italics. The individual bullet points are to be understood as suggestions for possible text modules for regulating the sustainability aspects in the travel guidelines. The basis of a travel policy are the higher-level laws valid for the institution (e.g., state travel expenses law). Based on this, however, the institution can make more far-reaching regulations. This guideline will be adapted in the further course of the project - also with the help of feedback from users.

Introduction/Preamble

- Why is sustainability fundamentally important
- Why is sustainability important for this institution (e.g., mobility research, but also own implementation in everyday university life, social responsibility as a publicly funded institution)
- One of the institutions goals is to reduce flight emissions from business travel
- The experiences during the Corona pandemic show that flying less is possible

Basic information

- Scope: business trips of employees and invited guests, possibly also students if their trip is paid by the institution or they receive ECTS
- Business trips are to be kept to a minimum without significantly impairing the scientific or operational quality of the institution
- In addition to economic criteria, ecological (and social) criteria also play a role in the choice of travel. These are of equal importance *or ecological and/or social criteria have priority*
- Information about sustainable travel is made available to employees
- Data on greenhouse gas emissions from travel are collected, processed, and made available
- Travel time is working time (if applicable, with the addition: "*if work is performed during travel time*" or "*within the normal working time framework of the institution*")
- The number of travelers shall be limited to the minimum necessary
- When planning trips, try to combine different purposes (e.g., attending a conference and then a research institute)
- Longer stays are preferred where appropriate
- The institution commits itself (*in the period xx?*) to build a virtual infrastructure,
 - which offers a good alternative *to travel in general/by plane*
 - which makes it possible to offer all events in hybrid mode
- Virtual participation will always be offered at meetings and events organized by the institution
- All rules also apply to invited guests of the institution
- Rules of other institutions apply only if they meet the minimum standards of this travel policy

Air travel

- Air travel shall be limited to what is necessary and must be justified and approved. The train has priority over flight wherever possible
- For business travel destinations that can be reached by train or bus in less than 6/8 hours travel time, *the different options must be considered / train or bus must be taken*. An exception may be approved if, for example, flights are the only practical option due to childcare or other care responsibilities
- Destinations within a certain radius (*to be defined*) may only be reached by train
- For air travel, standard economy class must be selected. Premium economy and business class may be allowed for disability or other health reasons. First class travel will not be reimbursed for air travel
- Whenever possible, direct flights *must/should* be chosen, as they generally produce fewer greenhouse gas emissions

Public transport (bus and train travel)

- Additional overnight costs *are reimbursed /can be reimbursed* if the choice of the ecologically best travel option (train, bus) makes an additional overnight stay necessary
- Rail discount cards (e.g., railcard, half-fare card, advantage card, climate ticket) are made available to all employees free of charge; these can also be used privately
- 1st class train journeys can be reimbursed for journeys over x km or over y h
- Journeys by night trains can be reimbursed

Travel by rental car, private vehicle, or cab

- Reimbursement of expenses for the use of rental cars, private vehicles or cabs will only be approved under certain conditions that must be justified in detail (e.g., transport of equipment or for destinations that cannot be reached by public transport or are too dangerous to use)

About FlyingLess

With the internationalization of science and research, the air travel of university members has increased – scientists are among the frequent flyers.

The aim of the FlyingLess project is to support universities and research organizations in reducing air travel, which accounts for a significant proportion of their total greenhouse gas emissions.

FlyingLess develops approaches to reduce air travel in the academic sector, which are implemented at different levels (research, teaching and administration).

The project is being conducted in close collaboration with four pilot institutions - the EMBL (European Molecular Biology Laboratory) and the MPI Astronomy in Heidelberg as non-university research institutions, and the Universities of Konstanz and Potsdam as higher education institutions.

Further information can be found on the website www.flyingless.de.

The project is led by the [ifeu Institute](http://ifeu.de) Heidelberg in close cooperation with the [TdLab Geography](http://tdlab.org) at the Institute of Geography of Heidelberg University. Project manager and contact person is Dr. Susann Görlinger (E-Mail: susann.goerlinger@ifeu.de).

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This compilation is based on various travel guidelines, including those of the University of Edinburgh, ETH Zurich, and the Zurich University of Applied Sciences.