**Standard Operating Procedures for Student Travel in the Academic Year 2021/22 - Arrangements in light of Covid-19**

**Student Guidance**

**Version 5.2 (1st April 2022)**

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is prepared as a framework, to provide clear guidance to students and students travelling abroad for student mobility. The term student mobility for this SOP is used to refer to exchanges, study abroad, summer schools, placements, fieldwork, internships and research. It outlines the required protocols that are in place in light of Covid-19 risks and will continue to operate until globally the risk of Covid-19 infection is no longer a risk. This SOP is designed to be used alongside existing policy and guidance, for example, the [Fieldwork Guidance](https://staff.port.ac.uk/departments/services/corporategovernance/healthandsafety/activitiesevents/fieldwork/). Post graduate research students should normally follow the student travel guidelines and work with their Supervisor and Faculty Finance Teams.

This is intended as a live document and will be updated from time to time.

**Introduction**

In light of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic globally, following the change in the UK Government advice on international travel, the University has introduced this standard operating procedure to cover student travel internationally. This is so that students can benefit from the experience of a period abroad where and when this is possible, in line with our commitment to enabling students to develop their global mindset. The prevalence of Covid-19 necessitates the introduction of stricter safeguards in order to mitigate the risks of international travel, ensuring this is undertaken as safely, as possible, and to discharge the University’s duty of care to its students.

**Responsibility**

The University will:

* Establish through this SOP and associated documentation a system which enables student mobility and travel to take place whilst suitably managing the risks to students involved.
* Provide guidance to staff on the protocols and procedures in place to manage, mitigate and approve the risks for student mobility to take place, including additional risk mitigation requirements to manage the risks associated with Covid-19, in order to ensure that these processes are consistently and rigorously applied.
* Adhere to UK Government guidance as it relates to international travel, as provided by the [Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office](https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice) including travel guidance in light of the Covid-19 pandemic.

**The Procedure for Students and Graduates undertaking Mobility in 2021/22**

The process for selecting and deciding on where and what mobility to undertake and the application process will continue to follow the current existing Faculty/School process for these activities, in line with course requirements and the nature of the mobilities. Please contact your School/Department exchange or Placement Coordinator for more information. Additional general guidance can be found on the Exchange and Study Abroad webpage

[Study Abroad – Outbound Students](https://www.port.ac.uk/study/exchanges-and-study-abroad/outbound-students-study-or-work-abroad). Existing processes for placements, internships and fieldwork abroad will likewise continue to apply.

All mobilities must be approved through completion of the [**Permission to Travel Form**](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf54Nv7XzegtjJ11UUsSrdPrn4E7H-Xavm3--k_ZZxxngc7jw/viewform?pli=1). This needs to be submitted with the internal application form for mobility and an initial [risk assessment](https://www.port.ac.uk/study/exchanges-and-study-abroad/study-and-work-abroad-coronavirus-faqs). Once this has been approved and arrangements have been made for your mobility you will then need to seek a final risk assessment approval prior to travel. Non-submission of the final risk assessment or late submission is automatically regarded as non-approval for travel by the University.

Submit the international application form and the risk assessment form for each mobility to one of the below email addresses for approval, depending on where you study.

**1. Faculty of Technology:** mobility-tec@port.ac.uk

**2. Faculty of Science and Health:** mobility-sah@port.ac.uk

**3. Faculty of Cultural and Creative Industries:** mobility-cci@port.ac.uk

**4. Faculty of Humanities and Social Science:** mobility-hss@port.ac.uk

**5. Faculty of Business and Law:** bal-exchange@port.ac.uk

In addition to the normal guidance for arranging mobility, the following additional Covid-19 requirements will apply:

* Student mobility will be permitted for ‘open’ countries (a country not on the ‘red’ list).
* Students will **NOT** be permitted to travel to [red list countries](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/red-list-of-countries-and-territories) and no exceptions will be permitted. For the avoidance of doubt, the decision is based on the status of the country at the time of the submission of the initial and final risk assessment. For example, if the country is on the red list it will be rejected even though potentially the country could move to the ‘open’ list in the near future. Conversely, if the country is on the ‘open’ list and then moves to the red, unfortunately travel would not be permitted and arrangement would need to be cancelled. Students are required to submit the risk assessment based on the status of the government guidance applicable at the time of the submission and not on the potential status at the time of travel.
* Students have to comply with the vaccinations including Covid vaccinations required for the country where the mobility is to take place (including country of transit where this is applicable)**.** This is a precondition for the approval for travel. If there are medical or religious reasons for not having the vaccination then approval need to be sought from the authorities in the country of destination. The [Corporate Health and Safety Team](https://staff.port.ac.uk/departments/services/corporategovernance/healthandsafety/healthandsafetyteam/) when the initial risk assessment is submitted can help support that but the decision is ultimately that of the authorities in the destination country.
* Where travel to the host country requires testing prior to flying and on arrival, the student will need to ensure compliance and to factor these costs into their budgets for the travel.
* When the student has decided to undertake a period of student mobility abroad a risk assessment will be required at the application stage – the initial risk assessment. This is to ensure that no commitments are made until the risk assessment has been completed and approved. The risk assessment can be found in [online](https://myport.port.ac.uk/life-at-uni/travel-study-or-work-abroad) and will also be on the [internal website](https://staff.port.ac.uk/departments/services/corporategovernance/healthandsafety/healthandsafetyteam/). This has to be submitted by the applicant (with appropriate supporting documentation) and approved by the School/Department or Faculty as appropriate. Each School/Faculty can designate an individual/s who will have the authority to approve the risk assessment on behalf of the Faculty/School/Department as stated above.
* Once the initial risk assessment is approved the applicant can then proceed with the application for a place on the relevant mobility, accommodation, visas and travel.

All students and staff traveling on university **APPROVED** travel will be covered by the [University’s Travel Insurance Policy](https://www.port.ac.uk/about-us/structure-and-governance/legal/insurance). It should be noted that graduates who are going on graduate placement or internship programmes are NOT covered by the University Travel Insurance policy and will need to arrange their own travel insurance. The University will need confirmation of insurance cover before the travel is approved either through the University (students and staff) or an independent travel insurance policy (graduates) and this can be confirmed during the submission of the final risk assessment as above.

In light of the current pandemic and the fact this is now a known risk, there are exclusions to the insurance cover which is currently as follows:

Cover relating to Cancellation, Curtailment, Re-arrangement, Replacement, Missed Departure and Travel Delay has been removed in respect of Countries where:

* 1. the Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO),
	2. or, any other comparable body for Insured Persons whose permanent place of residence is not in Britain, e.g. US State Dept. https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html/
	3. or, World Health Organisation (WHO), or similar governing body, or,
	4. any other legally empowered regulatory body or government or local authority

advises against all travel, or advises against all but essential travel, or prevents, or restricts, or denies the Insured Person from travelling.

* The exclusion removes cover where there is advice against travel, or laws / guidance / regulation prevents, restricts or denies travel, at the time that the trip is booked, and
* The exclusion removes the cover if the Insured Person goes ahead with travel when restrictions or regulations are in place, and puts themselves at known risk of curtailment, rearrangement etc.
* All external journey travel involves two or more countries, and as a result there is potential need to consult not only the FCDO, but also WHO or other similar bodies, or governments of another country who may put in place restrictions.

The insurance exclusion wording effective from 1st November 2020 Renewal follows:

# Section B4.1 Cancellation, Curtailment, Rearrangement, Replacement, Missed Departure & Travel Delay Cover Covid-19 Exclusion

*In respect of any Trip (including where the Operative Time extends to Business and Leisure Travel) booked on or after 1st November 2020 the following Exclusion is added to the Cancellation, Curtailment, Re-arrangement, Replacement, Missed Departure and Travel Delay Insurance Section*

*The Company will not pay* *any claim which is directly, or indirectly, as a result of, or, is contributed to by, or, is as a consequence of:*

* + 1. *severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-COV-2) or B. coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) or C. any derivative or mutation of either A. or B.*

*where the Insured Person is arranging or booking to travel to or from, or, is travelling to or from, any country, or, area within a country, where there is any law or guidance or regulation by any of the following:*

*i) the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office, or, ii) any other similar body for Insured Persons not resident in Britain, or iii) any other legally empowered regulatory body or government or local authority* *which advises against all travel, or advises against all but essential travel, or prevents, or restricts, or denies the Insured Person from travelling.*

For travellers going abroad, you should check the most up to date advice from the [FCDO](https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice) or the appropriate body. If the FCDO have shown a country as advising against all but essential international travel and have then exempted that country and allowed travel, then cancellation, curtailment, re-arrangement, replacement, missed departure and travel delay will operate, but only where the exemption applies.

Where it is known that the exemption will be lifted and a booking is made before it is implemented, cover will not be in place.

* Students are advised to avoid paying deposits or making commitments until as close to the travel date as possible. As the spread and impact of the Covid-19 pandemic continues to fluctuate in different countries at different times it would be prudent to wait as long as possible before the commitment to travel is made. However, in some cases this may not be possible and the student will need to assess the risk of the mobility being cancelled or postponed before making any commitment of this nature.
* Fifteen working days prior to travel the student will need to undertake and submit a refresh of the risk assessment to ensure that the risk profile has not changed and that the mitigations proposed are still appropriate for the relevant risk - **the final risk assessment.** This needs to be resubmitted to the School/Department/Faculty for final approval for travel together with:
* the travel schedule and itinerary;
* confirmation of the completion of the Covid-19 vaccination programme either in the UK or your home country;
* completion of the [permission to travel](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf54Nv7XzegtjJ11UUsSrdPrn4E7H-Xavm3--k_ZZxxngc7jw/viewform?pli=1) form.

If this is not submitted fifteen working days prior to travel then the initial approval is automatically withdrawn and the student is not permitted to travel. The School/Department/Faculty may permit an exception for a delay of up to five days. This decision is non-appealable.

 Students will receive the confirmation of approval within five working days of the submission of the final risk assessment.

* The School/Department/Faculty MyPort Hub administration will put the student’s travel details and itinerary into the Healix Sentinel system so that the student can be provided with further travel information and country risk profile and we can monitor the changing risk profile for the students. A record also needs to be kept of the staff member responsible for ensuring regular check-ins with the student when on mobility (see below).
* Students must download the Healix Sentinel version of the Travel Oracle App before departure (guidance can be found here) and enable it. When students travel abroad they will then need to switch on the GPS tracking on the app so that active monitoring of risks in that country can occur and support provided if the situation presents a risk to the student.
* All other normal processes and procedures with regards to the mobility (which vary depending on the nature of the mobility) will continue to operate and be applicable. This SOP is intended to sit above those procedures as an additional level of risk management and mitigation in light of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic globally.

**When Mobility has Commenced**

* When the student has arrived at the destination, the student should confirm safe arrival and this should be sent to goabroad@port.ac.uk.
* Staff/Tutors responsible for organising the mobility in their school/department will need to ensure that there is a process of regular check-in with the student whilst on mobility. This can be delegated to other colleagues such as their personal tutor, Exchange Coordinator, Module Leader or Course Leader as appropriate. The expectation is that these will be at least once a fortnight for short mobilities (defined as mobilities for a semester or teaching block or shorter) and monthly for year-long mobilities. During the check-in staff should discuss with the student as to whether the risk profile as assessed in the risk assessment has changed particularly in relation to Covid-19 and whether any additional adjustments to the mitigations are needed.
* Students should continue to reassess the risk from time to time to ensure that the risks identified in the risk assessment and mitigations continue to be appropriate and relevant. Where the risk has changed then the student should contact their tutor in their School/Department to reassess the risk and the mitigations to ensure that appropriate mitigation measures are in place and that it is safe and appropriate to continue with the mobility.
* Where the host country status has moved to the red list, the default position is that the University will need to recall the students’ home and this decision will be made by the University through consultation between the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Global Engagement and Student Life) and Executive Deans and the Faculty Global Engagement Leads of the relevant Faculties. However, there may be circumstances such that it may be safer for the student to remain where they are and abide by the restrictions in place instead of travel which could pose additional risks to the student.
* The responsibility of the student in such circumstances will be to abide by the instructions of the University in order to ensure that the University is able to discharge its duty of care and health and safety responsibility to the student. The student should also follow the instructions provided by Healix Sentinel. If the student has issues using the Healix system, they should speak to the relevant person in their Department/School/Faculty. If further help is required the student can contact the Health and Safety team via hsservicedesk@port.ac.uk.
* Where students encounter a medical emergency or get caught up in a natural disaster they should refer to the guidance provided at <https://www.port.ac.uk/about-us/structure-and-governance/legal/insurance> .

 At all times students should follow the advice of Healix who will advise on what to do in those circumstances as they provide a 24-hour emergency assistance to our staff and students whilst abroad.

* Where repatriation is needed then the University will work with the individual students and their Schools/Departments in order to organise repatriation which may require the use of alternative travel arrangements. Where possible the University will claim via their travel insurance where this is covered but where this is not possible then the students may need to contribute a proportion of the costs. Where there are individual cases of hardship then an application can be made to the hardship fund to support or cover some of the repatriation costs.

**Key Contacts for this SOP**

Health and Safety Office: Charlotte Downs/Joe Shoebridge (hsservicedesk@port.ac.uk)

Global Mobility Team:  Dan Wightman (studyabroad@port.ac.uk)

Insurance Enquiries: Anita Randell (insurancesupport@port.ac.uk)

Owner of the SOP – Chris Chang, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Global Engagement and Student Life)

**STEP-BY-STEP CHECKLIST FOR OUTBOUND STUDENT MOBILITY**

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|  **BEFORE TRAVEL** |
| **ACTION** | **COMPLETE 🗹** |
| Discuss and select the type of mobility (study, work etc.) with your Exchange Coordinator, Course Leader or Personal Tutor.\****Note:*** *if you are undertaking two mobilities, you need to do this process twice.* | □ |
| Check with the Exchanges and Study Abroad team in UoP Global on availability, funding programme and costs.\****Note:*** If you are a Faculty of Business and Law student, please first consult the Faculty Global Support Office. | **□** |
| Once a decision is made, please simultaneously complete the following:1) The internal mobility application form 2)Complete the initial risk assessment form 3) Complete the [Permission to Travel form.](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf54Nv7XzegtjJ11UUsSrdPrn4E7H-Xavm3--k_ZZxxngc7jw/viewform)3) Submit the internal application form and the risk assessment form for each mobility to one of the below email addresses for approval, depending on where you study.**1. Faculty of Technology:** mobility-tec@port.ac.uk**2. Faculty of Science and Health:** mobility-sah@port.ac.uk**3. Faculty of Cultural and Creative Industries:** mobility-cci@port.ac.uk**4. Faculty of Humanities and Social Science:** mobility-hss@port.ac.uk**5. Faculty of Business and Law:** bal-exchange@port.ac.uk  | **□****□****□****□** |
| Let your Tutor/Exchange Coordinator/Placements Officer know you have submitted the risk assessment. | **□** |
| **If your initial risk assessment has been approved, continue following the below steps:** |
| Once your place at the host institution/organisation has been confirmed, arrange flight, visas and accommodation bookings. | **□** |
| Begin relevant application for funding and support. Please contact the Exchanges and Study Abroad team (goabroad@port.ac.uk)and will be able to advise you on this. | **□** |
| Once all previous arrangements have been confirmed, revise for resubmission the final risk assessment with an update of the current position. This must be submitted **NO LATER** than 15 working days prior to departure. **\**IMPORTANT - PLEASE NOTE*:** late submissions will not be accepted and failure to submit by the deadline means that the mobility is automatically withdrawn. | **□** |
| Submit the final risk assessment **15 working days prior to travel** with the travel itinerary, schedule for the mobility (where relevant), confirmation of completion of Covid-19 vaccination programme and any other required vaccinations required by the country of destination and transit.*\*****Note****:* Submit to the same MyPort Hub that you sent the initial one to.**\**IMPORTANT - PLEASE NOTE*:** late submissions will not be accepted and failure to submit by the deadline means that the mobility is automatically withdrawn. | **□****□** |
| Receive confirmation of approval of risk assessment and make final arrangements for travel. You can find more guidance on the University website: <https://www.port.ac.uk/study/exchanges-and-study-abroad/outbound-students-study-or-work-abroad/what-to-do-before-you-go> | **□** |
| **ON ARRIVAL** |
| **ACTION** | **COMPLETE 🗹** |
| Confirm with the exchange coordinator or the tutor who is supporting your mobility that you have arrived. | **□** |
| Complete the relevant forms for confirmation of the commencement of your mobility, (Certificate of Arrival). | **□** |
| To have a regular check-in with the Tutor/Exchange Coordinator/Placements Officer who is supporting your mobility. This should be once a fortnight for one teaching block/semester or shorter mobilities, and once a month for year long mobilities. | **□** |
| Regularly review the risk assessment especially around Covid-19 infections in your host country and region. | **□** |
| Where the risk profile changes, please contact the Tutor/Exchange Coordinator/Placements Officer who is supporting your mobility to ensure that the mitigations are appropriate and, if not, whether additional mitigations can be put in place as appropriate. | **□** |

**Appendix 1- Healix Oracle App User Guide**

Please follow this [link](https://insurance.docstore.port.ac.uk/A937953.pdf) to access the latest version of the Healix App User Guide for the University of Portsmouth