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25 October 2023

Reg. no C2023/868

## **Policy for Meetings and Business Travel at Karlstad University**

Decision	RB 116/23	Reg. no.	C2023/868	Replaces	RB35/20, C2019/980
Effective from	30 October 2023	until	further notice	Officer	Cecilia Bladh

## 1. Introduction

A general goal for Karlstad University is to maintain and establish contacts both nationally and internationally. Travelling is therefore a natural part of university activities. Business travel must be justified in the same way that we justify the use of other resources to achieve our goals. Karlstad University's meeting and business travel policy applies to all employees. The policy also covers trips paid for by the University but that apply to non-employees, such as students, external service providers and consultants. The policy should constitute a common ground for the planning of meetings and business travel at Karlstad University and create prerequisites for a safe and secure work environment.

Karlstad University's business travel and other forms of transport, primarily from flights exceeding 500 km, generate carbon dioxide emissions. As a member of the national Climate Framework for Higher Education Institutions with the ambition to reach the Swedish national target of net zero carbon emissions by 2045, emissions must be reduced<sup>1</sup>.

In order for the University to be able to minimise the costs of travel and reduce the environmental impact, meeting formats such as online meetings, video conferences and telephone meetings should be used where appropriate. This also makes it easier for the University's employees to combine work and private life.

## 2. Business travel

These regulations constitute a common ground for managing business trips at the University.

- Business trips must be well justified, coordinated between different units and individuals, and planned well in advance so that the total cost and environmental impact are kept to a minimum. The number of travel days should be reasonable with regard to the purpose of the trip.
- Business trips including costs must be authorised in advance by the immediate supervisor.
- Business trips are booked via the University's travel agency. On some occasions, there may be grounds to book travel-related services elsewhere, for example, a hotel via a conference event or to coordinate with colleagues from other universities.
- The most environmentally friendly alternative should be prioritised when choosing mode of transport.
- In cases where a business trip needs to be planned with consideration to the employee's private life, the consequence may be that the cheapest or most environmentally friendly alternative is not always an option.
- If an employee wants to travel earlier or extend their stay in connection to a business trip for private reasons, this must be authorised by the immediate supervisor and any extended stay must be reasonable in relation to the duration of the business trip. All additional costs related to an extended stay are paid by the employee.
- Any deviations from the regulations for business travel must be authorised by the immediate supervisor.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.kau.se/om-universitetet/om-karlstads-universitet/vart-ansvar/miljo-och-hallbar-utveckling/mal-7-minska>

## **2.1 Security**

It is important that employees at Karlstad University can travel in a safe and secure way. For the University to keep track of where employees are located and to be able to get in contact with them in the event of an emergency, it is important that business trips are booked via the travel agency.

Employees must comply with applicable procedures and guidelines for travel booking and be up to date with information from authorities and other experts, such as the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Public Health Agency, regarding the security situation at the destinations concerned. Employees must always contact their immediate supervisor on their own initiative if they find themselves in a situation that involves security risks, as well as ensuring that they meet any vaccination requirements before travelling.

## **2.2 Choosing meeting format**

Alternative meeting formats, such as video conferences, web conferences, online meetings and telephone meetings, should be used when possible in order to save time and for financial and environmental reasons. Physical meetings should be used when other meeting formats are not an acceptable and/or functioning alternative, for example, when holding a meeting for large groups or when meeting with new contacts.

The organiser of a meeting, conference or training with participants from other cities/workplaces, should facilitate the meeting by preparing the option of participating via video link. Meetings should be planned based on the participants who are travelling to the event, with regard to where they are travelling from, the location and time of the meeting, in order to meet their perspective.

# **3. Administrative guidelines/routines**

## **3.1 Booking trips and accommodation**

The University has an agreement with a travel agency to facilitate the booking of business trips and accommodation. In order to book trips, you must register a traveller's profile. Contact details for the travel agency and information on how to create a traveller's profile can be found on Inslaget under "Travel booking".

All travel-related services such as flights, trains, rental cars and hotels must be booked via the University's travel agency. The frame agreement should primarily be used for choosing a hotel, and bookings should be based on standard and location. Hotels of average standard should be chosen and the location of the meeting, course, etc., should be taken into consideration.

## **3.2 Travel expense claims**

Travel expense claims must be submitted via the self-reporting system Primula within three months following a business trip in order to receive compensation for the trip and for taxation to be correct. Employees forfeit the right to claim expenses a year after the month of travel. Receipts must be scanned and attached in the travel expense claim. Original receipts in paper format are sent to Payroll at the HR Office. Digital receipts are only uploaded in connection with submitting the travel expense claim in Primula.

### **3.3 Vaccination**

The University pays for necessary vaccinations in connection to business trips in accordance with the recommendations of the Vaccination Centre (Vaccinationscentrum). Vaccinations can take place via the University's occupational health service. The cost of necessary vaccination can also be reported as a personal expense in the travel expense claim.

### **3.4 Debit card**

Employees can apply for a personal debit card to pay for costs incurred in connection to business trips. A travel expense claim is then submitted in accordance with established procedures to receive compensation for the costs. Rules and information on debit cards can be found on Inslaget under Employee & Manager/My employment/Business Travel.

### **3.5 Travel advances**

Travel advances are only granted in exceptional cases in connection with business travel. All employees who travel more than once a year for purposes that involve travel advances should apply for a debit card and use that instead.

The travel advance must be reported in a complete travel expense claim no later than one month following the month of travel. Travel advances are regulated via the employee's salary even if no travel expense claim is made. If the advance paid is more than the expenses that may be claimed, the difference is deducted from the next salary payment.

## **4. Choosing mode of transport**

When choosing mode of transport, you must always consider cost, including ticket price, any overnight stays and other travel-related costs. It should be possible to combine business travel with family life. This means that travelling time and the chance to avoid overnight stays etc., may be taken into consideration when choosing mode of transport. Environmental aspects have to be taken into consideration as well.

### **4.1 Train**

Train should be the first choice for trips shorter than 500 km one-way.

Normally a second-class ticket should be booked. Depending on the route, cost and need to work undisturbed, some trips can on rare occasions be booked in first class.

For long train journeys, that is, journeys exceeding 500 km one-way, first-class tickets may be justified based on reasons of comfort and convenience as the University wants to encourage environmentally friendly ways of travelling for long trips as well. Trains should also be an option for international travel, whenever possible.

### **4.2 Bus**

When domestic travel by train is not a time-efficient option or involves many time-consuming connections, bus may be the most suitable mode of transport. If possible, employees should choose to travel by bus for short connecting distances for domestic as well as international travel.

### **4.3 Domestic flights**

In cases where it is not possible to travel by train in accordance with Section 4.1, it is permitted to choose domestic flights. This could entail a combination of transport modes, for example, train to and from the airport.

### **4.4 International flights**

International business trips may include flights, with the exception of travel according to section 4.1. Combining flights with other modes of transport to and from an airport in both Sweden and the rest of the Nordic region can be the best option based on the grounds that determine the choice of transport.

### **4.5 Rental car**

If a car is the best option, the main rule is to choose a rental car for cost, safety and environmental reasons. Environment-friendly vehicles should be the first choice. Rentals must go via an auto company with whom the University has an agreement.

### **4.6 Private car**

Employees can use their own private car for trips shorter than 100 km. For trips longer than this, employees may only use their own private car in exceptional cases and following the approval of the immediate supervisor. Examples of exceptions may be that it saves time, shortens the journey or if the employee uses a private environmentally friendly car.

### **4.7 Taxi**

Public transport should be the first choice. When it is not reasonable to walk or cycle or to use public transport, or when these options are not suitable for other reasons, it is permitted to take a taxi. It may also occasionally be the most appropriate option to travel to and from the place of activity.

## **5. Business travel insurance**

Employees of Karlstad University are covered by the Swedish state business travel insurance via the Legal, Financial and Administrative Services Agency (Kammarkollegiet). The business travel insurance applies to all trips on official business in Sweden and abroad that you make on behalf of the University. The insurance is valid for the entire duration of the business trip.

When travelling abroad, employees should bring an insurance certificate that verifies that they are insured via the Legal, Financial and Administrative Services Agency. You can request a certificate from Payroll at the HR Office. When travelling within the EU, it is also recommended that you bring your European Health Insurance Card, issued by the Social Insurance Agency (Försäkringskassan), should you find yourself in need of medical care. Employees working abroad during a longer period of time need to be covered by a URA insurance.

More information about insurance can be found in the section under Employee & Manager / Work Environment and Health / Insurance, or under A-Z, "Insurance".

## **6. Internal conferences**

Guidelines for internal conferences can be found in the Policy for Representation, Meal Allowance and Gifts at Karlstad University, C2023/527. Events that comply with these guidelines give participants the right to compensation for any travel costs in connection with the event according to applicable regulations for business travel. Internal conferences do not allow for daily allowance/subsistence allowance.

More information about representation can be found on Inslaget under A-Z, "Representation".

## **7. Additional information**

Service provider bonuses (SJ Prio, SAS bonus, etc.) are not private benefits; it goes to Karlstad University and may only be used in connection to business travel. Meals paid by the employer must be reported under Meals in the travel expense claim, even if they were paid using bonus points.

Travel compensation in the event of a delay go to the the individual employee who is travelling, as it is he or she who is inconvenienced by the delay.

Up-to-date information regarding business travel, the University's travel agency, expense allowances and other information can be found on Inslaget under "Travel booking".