



RHODES UNIVERSITY

Grahamstown • 6140 • South Africa

The Rhodes University Travel at Risk Policy

Policy Volume	Support Services
Policy Chapter	Infrastructure, Operations, and Finance
Responsible Committee/Unit/Division/Faculty	Institutional Forum
Responsible Chairperson/Director/Manager	
Dates of First and Subsequent Council Approvals	New Policy
Policy Approval Pathways (e.g. committee, Senex, Senate, Council)	Institutional Forum - Faculty Board - IPC - Senate - Council
Revision History: Approved Reviews	New Policy
Review Cycle (e.g. every 2/5/7 years etc)	Every 3 years
Next Review Date	2023



1. POLICY PARTICULARS

1.1. Policy Title	The Rhodes University Travel at Risk Policy
1.2. Policy Statement (State in a single paragraph the policy mandate and how this relates to the University Mission and Vision)	Rhodes University maintains a high level of engagement, both locally and internationally. This is an important part of maintaining the status and standing of Rhodes University. Rhodes University subscribes to the values of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (“the Constitution”). In particular, Rhodes University commits itself to promote democracy, equality, and the elimination of discrimination, including on the grounds specifically prohibited in the Constitution, namely race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth.
1.3. Reason for Policy (What this policy aims to achieve)	Unfortunately, not all of the locations we may potentially travel to are equally respectful of these rights. Travelling to such places in the course of one’s employment, enrolment or tenure at Rhodes University may, therefore, place some people at personal risk and/or create an ethical conflict. Rhodes Universities values all members of the university community and respects the human rights, ethical convictions and academic freedom of the university community.
1.4. Policy Objective/s (What are the measurable objectives of this policy)	Rhodes University must act to protect the personal safety and the psychological well-being of all members of the university community. The objective of the policy is to provide a mechanism for members of the Rhodes University community to opt out of travel where university community members: 1. May feel at risk due to their identity or possible prosecution or persecution, whether by the state, other entities, or society; AND/OR 2. May feel ethically conflicted in travelling. Equally, Rhodes University does not want to excessively restrict or prescribe where people travel and recognises the autonomy and agency that members of our community should have in making these decisions.
1.5. People affected by this Policy (e.g. All units of the University)	All Rhodes University Departments; Divisions, Institutes All Rhodes University students
1.5. Who should read this Policy (People who need to heed this policy to fulfil their duties)	All Rhodes University Departments; Divisions, Institutes All Rhodes University students
1.6. Implementers of this Policy (Who will manage the implementation of this policy)	All Rhodes University Departments; Divisions, Institutes
1.7 Website address/link for this Policy	https://www.ru.ac.za/institutionalresearchplanningqualitypromotion/policies/

2. RELATED DOCUMENTS FORMS AND TOOLS

(University Policies, Protocols and Documents (such as rules/policies/protocols/guidelines related to this policy))

Relevant Legislation (Legislation/Regulatory requirements/Organisational Reports – name these)
Related Policies
Related Protocols
Forms and Tools (documents to be completed in support of this policy implementation)
TRAVEL OPT OUT FORM

E.g. Policy template for the policy itself. Documents pertaining to procedures for implementation, as well as monitoring and evaluation of the policy.
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3. POLICY DEFINITIONS

(Technical or Conceptual terms used in the policy)

No	TERM	DEFINITION
3.1		
3.2		
3.3		
3.4		
3.5		

4. PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THIS POLICY

OVERVIEW
Rhodes University strives to carry out the following, as far as is reasonably practicable:
4.1. It is therefore proposed that members of the university community, who for reasons as are set out herein, or otherwise, feel at risk or ethically compromised, may select not to attend such travel on behalf of the university, without fear of prejudice or other negative consequence, as staff or students.
4.2. It is proposed that the best mechanism to achieve this would be a self-identification mechanism by means of a form (attached as "Addendum A"). This would be more flexible and would avoid the need for the university to be prescriptive or judgmental.
4.3.
4.4.
4.5.
4.6.

5. DIRECTIVES FOR IMPLEMENTING THIS POLICY

(Actions and processes by which the objectives of the policy will be achieved.)

STUDENTS:
5.1. For students, the opt out would have to be approved by the Director of Student Services, acting jointly with the relevant Head of Department. Where an opt out is approved, it may be necessary to prescribe an alternative academic requirement to substitute for one that is being forgone.
5.2. Rhodes University's retains the right to exercise its discretion in the event of any staff member/student changing his/her mind regarding the opt-out decision.
STAFF:
5.4.

For staff the opt out would have to be approved by the relevant Head of Department or the person to which the staff member ordinarily reports. Should a person receiving such an opt-out application not feel able or willing to decide the matter, they may refer it to the executive in charge of that unit of the university (or a Dean, if an academic).

TIMES FRAMES:

5.5.

Where practically possible, opt outs should be filed as soon as possible after the travel requirement arises, but not less than 21 days in advance of the travel, unless the notice to travel was shorter.

5.6.

An opt out request should normally be considered by the responsible person within three working days.

5.7.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

(Roles and responsibilities of Key personal/Divisions/Faculties/Departments)

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITY
ROLE 1 e.g. Line Managers	
ROLE 2	
ROLE 3	
ROLE 4	
ROLE 5	

7. CONTACTS

Area of Concern	Division/Faculty/Department	Telephone	Email

8. POLICY REVIEW PROCEDURE

(Actions and processes by which the policy will be reviewed)

Communication of the review process

9. POLICY CONTEXT: RELEVANT DOCUMENTS CITED/CONSULTED/ADOPTED

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	

LIST OF APPENDICES

TRAVEL OPT OUT FORM

I, [full name], with student/staff number [insert appropriate detail], hereby elect to withdraw from travelling to [insert country] to attend to the following academic obligation on behalf of Rhodes University: [insert detailed obligation]. The basis for my objection is that the practices/rules/prevailing situation in [insert country] place me in an ethically or physically compromised position. The basis for this compromise is as follows:

I acknowledge that I am making this decision from the position of a *bona fide* conscientious objector, and that my objection is directed at the effect that the practices/rules/prevailing situation in [insert country] have on my personal belief systems and my physical integrity. This objection is not informed by any other factors extraneous to this.

I also acknowledge that by signing this form, I confirm that Rhodes University may retain the right to refer to this form and its contents when making further decisions regarding attendances to various obligations on behalf of Rhodes University. By doing so, I acknowledge and consent to that the fact that Rhodes University has a right, should it wish to exercise it, to reasonably withhold its consent regarding further travel allowances for similar obligations in due course, notwithstanding the country in which such obligations are to be hosted.

I acknowledge that unless stated otherwise, the contents of this form are to remain private and confidential as between myself and Rhodes University.

DATED:

APPROVED/NOT APPROVED

DATED:

NOTE: STUDENTS SHOULD HAVE THIS REQUEST APPROVED BY THE DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES ACTING TOGETHER WITH THE RELEVANT ACADEMIC HEAD OF DEPARTMENT. STAFF SHOULD HAVE THIS REQUEST APPROVED BY THE PERSON THEY REPORT TO, WHO MAY REFER IT TO A MORE SENIOR STAFF MEMBER FOR CONSIDERATION.