

Division:	Fellowship Engagement	Ref. No.	POL-3146
Department:	Global Health Scholarships		
Title:	Travel, Safety and Security		

1. PURPOSE

The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) is committed to providing safe and risk-assessed travel for personnel that work with the RACS Global Health Program. In facilitating employee and volunteer travel, RACS will ensure it maintains its employer duty of care, achieves value for money in relation to travel expenditure and reduces the environmental impact of employee travel.

This policy provides a framework for defining duty of care (including insurance requirements), ensuring that expenses are paid for in alignment with the RACS Travel and Accommodation Policy and ensuring that business-related travel expenses are incurred in alignment with the same policy.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to both domestic and international travel by all **people** who contribute to RACS Global Health programs and activities, including:

- Council/Committee members;
- staff and volunteers;
- consultants and contractors; and
- donors.

3. TRAVEL REQUIREMENTS AND APPROVAL

All people within scope of this policy have a responsibility to ensure:

- they are fit for travel in accordance (as outlined in Section 5: Fitness for Travel);
- their travel documents e.g passports are up-to-date;
- their work overseas is covered by relevant insurance (medical indemnity insurance) in accordance with RACS Global Health insurance requirements;
- business-related travel expenses are incurred and accounted for in accordance with Section 7: Coverage of business expenses;
- they have completed the RACS Volunteers Visitor Registration Form and signed the RACS Workforce Code of Conduct, Child Safeguarding Code of Conduct and the Volunteer Agreement;
- they have completed the mandatory RACS Global Health online training in Child Safeguarding, Ethical Images and Stories and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH);
- they are aware of the security, legal and cultural sensitivities of the host country or organisation they are travelling to; and
- that all incidents (including near misses) including those that may affect security and safety are reported.

Prior to making a travel commitment, staff and volunteers must initiate their travel intentions by committing to the following

- **RACS Global Health Staff (including Chairs of the Global Health Program Steering Group and International Engagement Committee if relevant):** completion and approval by Head of Global Health of the RACS Global Health Travel Terms of Reference
- **RACS Volunteers:** Completion and approval by in-country partners and RACS Program Management of the Clinical VMT Activity Plan

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- **RACS Volunteers:** Participation in both a pre-departure meeting and post-trip debrief with the GH program team
- **RACS Global Health Staff and Volunteers:** completion of timely Trip Reporting

The Global Health department is responsible for booking flights and accommodation, which is managed through the RACS Global Health booking process.

4. PAYMENT FOR BUSINESS-RELATED TRAVEL AND RELATED TRAVEL EXPENSES

The preferred method of payment for RACS Global Health Staff is retrospective, following submission of a claim substantiated by a tax invoice. All expense reimbursements are limited to a daily rate available on the RACS website. Staff may apply for a travel advance to cover expenses prior to travel, via submission of a Travel Advance Form. The allowable expenses are listed in the RACS Travel and Accommodation Policy. Funds will be transferred to a staff member's nominated bank account via electronic funds transfer.

The preferred method of payment for RACS volunteers is retrospective, following submission of a claim substantiated by a tax invoice or receipts. Volunteers and staff are required to follow the RACS Global Health Per Diem policy that states the set per diem rate per country, the types of expenses that are reimbursable, and other expenses (such as local sim cards, local taxis etc). All expenses are limited by the program budget that covers the travel costs. Volunteers may apply for a travel advance to cover expenses prior to travel, via submission of a Travel Advance Form. Funds will be transferred to a volunteer's nominated bank account via electronic funds transfer.

5. FITNESS FOR TRAVEL

RACS Global Health is committed to ensuring that reasonable and practical measures are undertaken to ensure the personal health and safety of all individuals travelling on RACS Global Health-approved travel. Travel that is undertaken in developing countries, has inherently higher levels of risk associated with it. Concerns about the likely level of personal health and safety risk are to be taken into consideration when making travel choices and in preparing for any travel. Travellers must take reasonable steps to ensure that they are fit to travel, including:

- a) consulting a travel doctor or your GP to obtain advice on vaccinations required and ensure all vaccinations are up to date prior to departure and/or treatments necessary to protect them from infectious diseases and/or other conditions prevalent in the location of the travel. These costs are covered through a reimbursement of expenses¹;
- b) notifying the RACS Global Health Mobilisation Team and/or Head of Global Health immediately if there are any factors that may affect their ability to participate in international travel; and
- c) A Fit for Travel letter from your GP will be valid for one year. Therefore, if you make multiple trips for RACS Global Health, as long as your health status has not changed, you do not need to provide further Fit to Travel letters.

Where possible, RACS Global Health will make reasonable adjustments to facilitate travel for employees or volunteers with known disabilities, in line with RACS Disability Inclusiveness Policy.

¹Volunteer vaccination reimbursement costs are capped at \$200 AUD.

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6. INSURANCE

RACS Global Health insurance covers all work-related travel made in accordance with this policy including:

Personal accident and sickness	Medical and additional expenses and cancellation and curtailment expenses
Kidnap and ransom / extortion cover	Personal accident and sickness
Hijack and detention	Search and rescue expenses
24/7 Emergency assistance	Loss of deposits
Baggage, electronic equipment and money	Alternative employee/resumption of assignment expenses
Personal liability	Rental vehicle excess waiver
Extra territorials' workers compensation	Missed transport connection
Political and natural disaster evacuation	Overbooked flight

This cover is only valid when staff and volunteers are registered with the Insurer prior to their departure.

Staff and volunteers must inform themselves of the RACS Business Travel Insurance Policy coverage prior to travelling. A copy of the relevant Insurance Policy Schedule is provided staff and volunteers.

Staff and volunteers are encouraged to download the International SOS phone app and are provided with the relevant RACS membership details.

7. CLASS OF TRAVEL

RACS Global Health, in line with RACS Value for Money Policy, will use their practical judgment and book the best available fare for the circumstances, consistent with this policy and the terms of people's employment contract.

- a) RACS Global Health standard class of travel is economy class for both domestic and international travel. Travellers may choose to use their personal accumulated frequent flyer points for upgrade to premium or business class, however more expensive fares cannot be purchased to facilitate an upgrade; and

8. COVERAGE OF EXPENSES

RACS Global Health reimburses those within scope of this policy for ordinary, necessary, and reasonable travel expenses that are directly connected with, or required, for the transaction of RACS Global Health's business. People are expected to exercise prudent business judgement regarding expenses covered by this policy. When submitting expense reports to claim for reimbursement, people are neither to gain nor lose financially following reimbursement. Volunteers should be aware of what is a reimbursable expense as per diem rates provide for some, local expenses such as sim cards and taxis.

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9. TRANSPORT AND ACCOMMODATION

The RACS Global Health Team exercises practical judgement in deciding on transport and accommodation that best suits the circumstances and is approved, taking into account working locations, transport, safety and security whilst enabling optimal working conditions (i.e. Internet/Wi-Fi), cost effectiveness, risk. RACS Global Health engages accommodation providers that have been assessed by the in-country team, team leader or International SOS as safe and secure.

10. SECURITY AND SAFETY – Smartraveller and International SOS considerations

All travellers must follow security advice provided by the Global Health Volunteer Mobilisation Team, aligned with the Australian SmarTraveller website and supported by advice from International medical and security support provider International SOS.

Prior to departure, volunteers and staff will be provided with a RACS Travel Safety Guidelines and the 24/7 emergency medical and security support number and a list of other important contact numbers including local embassies and other key program contacts. Staff and volunteers must also keep their personal and emergency contact details up to date.

International SOS produce travel notices, advisories and alerts to both travellers and RACS management regarding the conditions on the ground, immediate actionable advice for staff and volunteers in-country. Staff and volunteers are also required to download the Travel Assistance App prior to departure so they can receive pre-trip travel advice and in country travel alerts. There are 4 levels of travel alert notices that staff and volunteers can receive from International SOS and are outlined below.

1. BE AWARE

Events that pose potential disruption to travel where there is potential impact on the safety of staff.



2. BE PREPARED

Events that increase risks to travellers or cause substantial disruption to travel and potential impact on the safety of staff.

3. ACT NOW

High priority alert of an incident posing a clear, immediate or direct threat. Includes terrorism, natural disasters and transport accidents.



4. PREPARE FOR POSSIBLE EVACUATION

Issues when events meet predefined escalation triggers to increase evacuation readiness. Four levels of evacuation: Warning, Stand By, Evacuation of Non-essential Staff and Full Evacuation.

The International SOS Tracker function also allows International SOS to send targeted messages and locate travellers near significant events or incidents. The geo-location provides a two-way multi-module communication between RACS Global Health team and volunteers and staff and functionality so volunteers and staff can 'check-in' to notify others that they are safe.

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Travellers may only travel to **high-risk destinations** if:

- they have taken into account the advice of and registered with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) [Smartraveller](#) website or the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade [Safe Travel](#) website and are able to demonstrate that appropriate precautions have been taken to ensure their safety;
- travel has been approved by the Head of Global Health.

Any travel to high-risk destinations, will require a security briefing by International SOS or other security provider. Other security provisions may include security transport, tracking devices and additional pre-departure security training. A security extract will be provided to volunteers and staff.

11. DURING TRAVEL – MEDICAL ADVICE AND TREATMENT

For any medical condition, injury, accident, harmful or potential contagious exposure and security or mental health incident, people are requested to liaise with the relevant RACS Global Health manager or clinical partner, for referral or recommendation for suitable and immediate medical treatment, and to contact International SOS for further advice. Staff and volunteers are to complete an Incident Report and email to their line manager or team leader. RACS Global Health will liaise with International SOS for monitoring, approvals and tracking as required. This process includes triage for any security, mental health and/or risk event.

12. EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND EVACUATION

In the case of an emergency or crisis, staff and volunteers are required to contact International SOS, the 24/7 international medical and security support provider, who will provide emergency medical assistance and advice including case management with the hospital/medical provider.

If an evacuation/repatriation is required, International SOS team will manage the emergency evacuation process by providing advice, practical and logistical support to facilitate an emergency evacuation and will communicate directly with RACS Insurance provider Chubb and RACS Senior Management. International SOS is provided with all travel itineraries of RACS staff and volunteers. Itineraries are loaded into their tracker system so that they can contract RACS travellers to provide advice and support, where required.

RACS Senior Management will be notified by International SOS of any serious incidents, hospitalisation and/or evacuation of staff or volunteers via a Notification of Case procedures.

13. COMMUNICATION DURING TRAVEL

Those within scope of this policy will establish a communications protocol with their manager (or delegate) or the RACS People and Culture Business Partner. It is strongly recommended that this occurs daily irrespective of the travel location (i.e. low or high risk). Check-in can be via phone, e-mail, text, Teams or WhatsApp, while travelling and agreed arrangements must be in place before travel commences.

RACS Global Health staff and volunteers will ensure they possess a reliable means of emergency communications whilst undertaking business travel. This may include the use of mobile phones, local sim cards or internet. At all times, staff should be able to rely on a backup direct means of communication in the event that the primary means fails. The backup should be a mobile phone, radio or satellite phone (staff are to check with International SOS that satellite phones can be legally used in the destination, if this is a preferred option). In high or extreme risk environments, it is desirable for a second alternate means of communication to also be available, such as spot devices.

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14. RACS WORKFORCE CONDUCT AND POLICY COMPLIANCE

All those within scope of this policy are required to follow the RACS Workforce Conduct Policy and comply with all relevant policies including Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy, Child Safeguarding Policy, and Fraud and Corruption Prevention Policy. Any violation of these policies can result in staff dismissal and volunteers no longer being eligible to volunteer with RACS Global Health.

15. GENDER-RATED RISKS AND VULNERABLE TRAVELLERS

It is acknowledged that RACS Global Health female staff and volunteers travelling for RACS Global Health, are at potentially greater risk of safety, security and workplace issues or incidents of sexual misconduct in-country, than their male colleagues. Risks can also be higher for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people travelling in some countries. To help minimise risks, a link to the "[Advice for LGBTI travellers](#)" on the DFAT Smartraveller website is included in the Travel Safety Guidelines provided to all staff and volunteers.

All staff and volunteers travelling must ensure they are aware of the potential and/or heightened risks when travelling to particular countries or regions and take all necessary precautions before, during and after travel. All incidents of misconduct, including sexual harassment, misconduct and/or assault, occurring when working internationally or domestically, should be reported in line with RACS Global Health's Incident Reporting Guidelines.

16. TRIP REPORT

All staff, volunteers and other RACS travellers must provide a written report of the trip to their relevant manager or the Mobilisation team contact within **2 weeks of return** from travel. This Trip Report should, as a minimum, outline the extent to which the objectives of the trip, as outlined in the Terms of Reference, were met.

17. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

Child Safeguarding Policy
 Fraud and Corruption Prevention Policy
 Incident Reporting Guidelines
 Prevention of Sexual Exploitation Abuse and Harassment Policy
 RACS Workforce Conduct Policy
 Value for Money Policy
 Deployment Guide for Staff and Volunteers
 COVID Safe Protocols for Volunteer Deployment
 RACS Global Health Crisis Management Plan
 RACS Global Health Country Security Plan - PNG
 RACS Global Health Country Security Plan - Timor Leste

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