Travel FAQs

What do I need to do before I travel?
There are a number of actions you need to take:

- Visit the [Foreign and Commonwealth Office website](https://www.gov.uk/government/world) and check the latest travel advice
- If you wish to visit a high-risk area (as per FCO advice), you will need to get permission from the Vice Chancellor before you travel
- Use one of the University's [travel management companies](https://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/finance/Insurance/fcs-ins-business) to arrange your travel and accommodation
- Complete the [risk management form](https://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/finance/Insurance/fcs-ins-business) so that you are covered by the University’s travel insurance policy

Insurance, visas and finance

- **Am I covered by a University travel insurance policy?**
  When you travel on the business of the University of Reading you are covered by AIG travel/emergency medical insurance - you must complete an online risk management form before you travel. Find both the form and the policy on the insurance office (business travel) webpage - [https://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/finance/Insurance/fcs-ins-business.aspx](https://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/finance/Insurance/fcs-ins-business.aspx)

- **Are my family members covered by the University travel insurance policy?**
  Your immediate family members are also covered by the policy if you take a holiday immediately before or after your University-related business abroad, as long as you remain within the same country.

- **Why do I have to complete the risk management form before I travel?**
  There are a number of reasons. The University has a duty of care to its staff and students; if you have completed the form, we know where you are in the case of any emergency and you are covered by the University’s travel insurance policy. Also, if you have not completed the form and used a travel management company, any expenses you have incurred will not be reimbursed, unless by prior agreement in exceptional circumstances.

- **What should I do if I am caught up in an emergency abroad whilst travelling on University business?**
  In most overseas emergency situations you should contact the University`s insurers (AIG) – you can find the telephone numbers for different types of situation on the University Insurance Office webpage: [https://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/finance/Insurance/fcs-ins-business.aspx](https://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/finance/Insurance/fcs-ins-business.aspx)
  Always quote the policy reference 0015865874 when contacting them. You must have completed a risk management form before you travel to be covered by the policy.

- **What happens if I need to make an insurance claim?**
  You need to follow the advice on the insurance office (business travel) webpage, which gives a list of actions you must take - [https://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/finance/Insurance/fcs-ins-business.aspx](https://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/finance/Insurance/fcs-ins-business.aspx)
Who can help me with my visa requirements for my trip?
Contact the University's Insurance office by emailing insurance@reading.ac.uk as early as possible for assistance with your visa requirements.

Can the University provide me with foreign currency to take on my business trip abroad?
The University does not provide foreign currency. However, in some circumstances the University may provide an advance against expenses in GBP that you can then exchange for the currency you will need. To find out if this will be possible for you, email invoices@reading.ac.uk. Your spending will still be subject to the expenses policy and when you return from your trip, you will still need to complete an expenses form as normal, providing details and receipts for the money you have spent.

What subsistence expenses am I allowed whilst travelling on University business?
The current daily amount is £45 or local equivalent – check the expenses policy to confirm the latest rate.

System and processes

Do I have to use CTM's online portal to book my travel and accommodation or can I phone them up?
You have the option to either use the online portal or phone the booking team on 0845 3702666. The fee for telephone bookings is slightly higher, but this is worthwhile for more complicated or detailed requirements.

I need to take a multi-leg journey, including stop-overs and different outward and return airports. How can I book this through CTM?
For complex requirements, such as multi-leg journeys, you need to phone the CTM booking team on 0845 3702666.

CTM's online system doesn't hold flight prices while I generate a PO on Agresso, so I am not getting the best price I could have done. How do I get round this problem?
Schools and Departments can set up a ‘call-off’ PO for a larger amount before any travel is booked. This means that you already have a PO number to use during the booking process and individual bookings can then be marked against this larger amount on Agresso. When the sum has been used up, or nearly used up, another larger PO can be set up again. For help and advice in setting this up, please email procurement@reading.ac.uk.

I have received a travel invoice that is not from a CTM email address, is this correct?
CTM is part of a group of companies with a parent company called PPL. Occasionally invoices and other correspondence will be sent from the parent company and using email details from PPL, so you can process them as normal. If you receive anything purporting to be associated with travel from any other company name (except our official travel providers), please contact the Procurement team to check whether this is valid.

Using CTM

Why do I have to use a travel management company to book my travel?
By using travel management companies, we are able to better understand the travel requirements and amount spent in this area across the University as a whole. This provides a number of benefits, including increased negotiating power, efficient internal processes, such as invoice management, and analysis of requirements. We are also better able to manage our duty of care as an employer, by knowing where and when our staff and students are travelling.

- **What does the CTM booking fee cover?**
The booking fee for each transaction has been calculated to cover all aspects of the travel management service, including all booking and system activities, consultancy and negotiation with suppliers, account management and data provision for duty of care and analysis purposes.

- **The prices quoted by CTM are often higher than the price I can get by booking directly with the airline or hotel myself. Why do I still have to book through CTM if it is costing my School and the University more?**
The pricing model within the travel and accommodation sector is often very complicated and it is not always possible to compare prices on a like for like basis. For example, some tickets include more flexibility than others, which can be helpful on certain types of trip. Even if some individual tickets are higher, overall we are getting a better deal for the University. If you feel that you are being asked to pay a price by CTM that is not competitive, please email travelfeedback@reading.ac.uk so that we can investigate for you.

**Other options**

- **I am travelling to a conference with a group of colleagues, how do we book our flights?**
Any travel, accommodation or venue booking for a group of 9 people or more should be booked through our group travel providers, - Ian Allan Travel, the NST Study Group (formerly Studylink) or Study Trips (formerly ISIS Education).

- **I am making travel and accommodation arrangements for a student study trip, how do I book flights and accommodation?**
Any travel or accommodation booking for students should be booked through our student travel providers - the NST Study Group (formerly Studylink) or Study Trips (formerly ISIS Education).

- **The conference I am attending offers a preferential hotel room rate for delegates – can I use this option?**
If you are attending a conference and it includes a discounted hotel rate for participants, please use this option as no-one else will be able to match the room rate or value of staying in the same location as other conference attendees. You can book this direct and pay via a purchase order (PO) and invoice or purchase card.

- **How can I use my SDA money to pay for my travel and accommodation?**
We recognise that researchers will often use funds from research grants and from their Staff Development Accounts (SDAs) to pay for goods and services, including travel. In these circumstances, you still need to use a travel management company and follow the University policy and processes.
- **Can I use Airbnb to book accommodation while I am away?**
  We do not believe that this is a suitable option for accommodation booking on University business, as we are unable to meet our duty of care to staff and students through this unregulated provider. Airbnb is not regulated by any travel association (such as IATA, ATOL or ABTA) and since these are privately-owned dwellings, there are potential health and safety risks including carbon monoxide leaks and fire risks. There are often insufficient contact details in case of emergencies, complaints or issues.

- **I want to use my air miles to help with flight costs. How do I do that?**
  To do this you will need to book your flight direct with the air miles provider. You will still need to pay the associated taxes and will need to use a University purchase card to pay them. You will also need to make sure that you have completed the appropriate insurance forms, so that the University is aware of the flight you have taken and can support you if needed during an emergency.

- **How do I buy a train ticket?**
  You can book train tickets at a station, via the Trainline.com or via National Rail; you should still use a purchase card or purchase order to pay for your ticket, rather than claiming it back through expenses.