

Travel policy for employees and students of Wageningen University & Research

Introduction

Employees and students of Wageningen University & Research take trips domestically and internationally in order to perform their work activities or as a part of their study programme. The WUR travel policy indicates the applicable situations for such trips. In doing so, the responsibilities of WUR (as the employer) are specified as well as those of employees (including PhD candidates) and students. When "the traveller" is mentioned in this travel policy, it refers to both employees and students.

Starting points of the travel policy:

- the responsibility of WUR for sustainable travel: only if it is truly necessary and with as little harm to the environment as possible
- the responsibility of WUR for safe travel (and accommodation); applies to high-risk areas as well
- the ability to locate employees and students quickly and offer help in the event of emergency, if required
- clear and efficient procedures; the goal is a one-stop shop for all travel requests

Regulations regarding the WUR travel policy are:

- *Uitvoeringsregeling Dienstreizen Wageningen UR* (Implementation regulations for WUR business travel)
- *Collectieve reisongevallen- en bagageverzekering t.b.v. Wageningen UR en aanvullende molestverzekering* (Collective travel accident and baggage insurance for WUR and supplementary war risk insurance)
- *Notitie Duurzaamheid Wageningen UR* (Memorandum for WUR sustainability) (29 January 2009)
- *Vaccinatiebeleid medewerkers* (Employee vaccination policy) (October 2016)

1 Travel and sustainability

Travel, specifically air travel, is damaging to the environment due to the emission of greenhouse gases. WUR expects its employees and students to be selective when taking trips and:

1. to limit business or study trips through methods such as increased use of video conferencing;
2. to take the train more often within Europe to get to destinations that are easy to reach by train (e.g. Brussels, Paris, Frankfurt);
3. to use public transport as much as possible (instead of private transport).

2 Travel and safety

2.1 Duty of care

WUR has a duty of care with regard to employees and students who take domestic or international trips for work or their study programme. The duty of care relates to subjects such as informing the traveller properly in advance (see 2.1.1), but also to having a clear procedure for obtaining permission for travel to high-risk areas (see 2.1.2) and, if necessary, being able to quickly determine where travellers are located (see 2.1.3).

2.1.1 Preparing for the trip

Health and safety

WUR has the responsibility of properly preparing the traveller for the trip.

Whether employees or students, travellers to risky areas must be well prepared for the trip, for example by taking the Basic Safety and Security course: <https://www.wur.nl/en/show/Course-basic-safety-security-.htm>

The manager/course supervisor must inform the traveller about this. The course expenses are charged to the unit - either the department or the chair group - of the manager/course supervisor.

Students travelling to tropical or developing countries can also prepare for the trip by taking the courses Analysis and Prevention of Health Risks in the Tropics and Fieldwork in Conflict and Post-conflict Settings, ENT-50303 and SDC-51306 respectively.

Employees are required to book their air travel through the travel agent contracted by WUR <LINK>. Arrangements have been made with the travel agent to provide the travellers with information regarding the trip that includes health and safety aspects and to check whether the travellers have absorbed this information*.

* Traveller information regarding destination risk status (Foreign Affairs), required identification documents (incl. required minimum validity), visa, ESTA, travel and healthcare insurance, coverage in the destination country, other potential (health) risks, required and recommended vaccinations, instructions regarding conduct (e.g. to prevent kidnapping, theft, driving with jet lag, etc.).

For travellers who do not book through the travel agent (employees who have received airline tickets as gifts, employees who do not fly, or students), this information is available on the Intranet: <https://www.intranet.wur.nl/en/people/arbeidsvoorwaarden/reizenwonen/Pages/WUR-reizenwonen.aspx>

Travellers with Dutch nationality need to register (once) with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the 24/7 BZ Information Service: <https://informatieservice.nederlandwereldwijd.nl/>

The service also provides real-time travel advice and contact addresses for emergency situations. Non-Dutch travellers need to report their trip to the local embassy or consulate of their own country as soon as possible. In the event of an emergency (e.g. natural disaster or political unrest), their information will be known and the embassy or consulate will be able to contact the traveller.

Taking preventive measures, such as vaccinations, is the responsibility of the traveller. The WUR vaccination policy stipulates that employees without the necessary vaccinations will not receive permission to travel. Any necessary vaccinations will be paid for by WUR. Students are also expected to have the required vaccinations. Vaccinations that are necessary for a trip in the context of a study programme are currently fully or partially reimbursed by WUR under certain conditions.

For reasons of safety and cultural sensitivity, on a first trip to a risky area, it is required that someone who is fairly familiar with the area in question helps prepare the traveller, preferably also accompanying them on the trip.

Travel insurance

WUR has an adequate collective travel accident and baggage insurance policy for travellers, including an additional war risk insurance policy for areas with an increased or identifiable security risk (source: Foreign Affairs), supplementary cover for high-risk activities where applicable (e.g. mountain climbing, scuba diving, motorcycling) and a supplementary travel insurance policy for stays of longer than 550 days.

Health insurance

Dutch law requires everyone, including employees and students of WUR, to have a health insurance policy. Depending on the choice of the traveller, this may or may not provide coverage abroad. WUR has a supplementary health insurance plan for employees. Students are not covered in this plan. They are responsible for ensuring that they are adequately insured for the area in question. In the event that repatriation is required, the traveller must communicate with the contact person of their own travel insurance policy. Any direct costs for the employee, such as used excess, resulting from illness during or due to the trip, will be reimbursed by the employer.

2.1.2 Application procedure for travelling to or through a code yellow, orange, or red area

• General, scope of the regulations

The WUR travel policy uses codes from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to determine the degree of risk in a specific area:

Code yellow

Be alert, safety risks. In this country or area, there are safety risks that are higher than what you are accustomed to in the Netherlands.

Code orange

Only necessary travel. Due to serious safety risks in this country or area, dangerous situations may arise for travellers. For this reason, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs recommends to only travel to this area if it is truly necessary. Holiday trips or trips that can be postponed are not necessary.

Code red

Do not travel. Due to very serious safety risks, a life-threatening situation may arise for travellers, such as a war. For this reason, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs recommends not to travel to this area.

In principle, travelling to or through areas with a safety risk is **NOT** permitted. It may happen that a trip to or through a risky area is still considered to be necessary. If this is the case, then prior written permission must be requested via an application form, in accordance with the procedure described below. A more stringent policy applies to students than to employees, due to the duration of the stay.

The application form *Reizen naar risicogebied* (Travelling to a risk area) <LINK> must be filled out so that all information is available in order to properly assess the request.

The information requested includes:

- the justification for the necessity of the trip to that specific area
- a detailed travel plan, so that the manager/course supervisor is aware of the traveller's accommodation at all times (incl. contact availability and registration with the embassy)
- risk analysis emergency plan
- information about the availability of the emergency contacts
- information about preparation for the trip

International cooperative relationships ensure that the units (sciences groups, chair groups, institutes) have the relevant knowledge and experience that are needed to make decisions about travel requests to risky areas.

In principle, the management of the relevant unit decides, on behalf of the Executive Board, whether the trip to the risky area may take place.

Requests from employees for travel to risky areas are presented to the management by their manager. Requests from students for travel to risky areas are presented to the management by the course supervisor, via the chair holder.

For WUR-related travel to risky areas that is done upon personal invitation, e.g. invitations from national or international organisations, permission must also be requested according to the outlined procedure. For students, the travel policy regards trips that are taken in the context of the study programme, this includes both courses from the prescribed programme and free electives. Free electives at a foreign institution in a risky area are **NOT** permitted, not even in areas with *code yellow*: there is no WU course supervisor on location in these cases.

However, taking free electives is permitted at universities in *code yellow* areas for which a formal exchange agreement is in place with Wageningen University. Students implicitly have permission for travelling to these *code yellow* areas.

The 'triarchy' advice

For management decisions regarding employee travel to *code orange* or *code red* areas and, in special cases (see above), student travel to *code orange* areas, a unanimous, positive advice from an advisory group is required 'employee triarchy' or 'student triarchy'. If the triarchy is divided, then the Executive Board will decide. A unanimous negative advice from the triarchy is binding for the management, a unanimous positive advice can be changed by the management, if required.

The composition of the 'employee triarchy' and 'student triarchy' overlap in order to promote clarity and continuity in policy at the WUR level. For *code yellow* areas, no further advice is needed, and the decision is made by the management of the unit. WU exchange students who travel to *code yellow* areas implicitly obtained the necessary permission.

Travel requests that have been approved in accordance with the applicable procedure are approved on behalf of the WUR Executive Board. If the traveller has not received permission, but still travels to the area in question, then it will be considered that they are taking this trip as a private individual. This is entirely at their own expense and risk. For students this also means that this trip is no longer considered as being taken in the context of the study programme and, therefore, no credits can be obtained.

Employee travel application procedure for code yellow, code orange, or code red areas

1. Travel requests to *code yellow, orange, or red* areas will be presented to the management by the manager.
2. For travel requests to *code yellow* areas, the management decides.
3. Travel requests to *code orange* or *code red* areas are presented for advice to the *employee triarchy* (C-HR, CSA* and C-CM) by the management, provided the management supports the application.
4. After the triarchy grants a unanimous, positive advice, the management can grant permission for the trip on behalf of the Executive Board.
5. If the triarchy grants a unanimous, negative advice, no permission can be granted for the trip.
6. In the event that no unanimous, positive advice is possible, the triarchy presents the request to the Executive Board for a decision.

* due to their international expertise

The passenger is expected to check the security situation again shortly before departure.

Student travel application procedure for code yellow or, in very special cases, code orange areas

Students are **NOT** permitted to travel to or through *code orange or red* areas

A hardship clause applies which allows students to request permission for a trip to a code *orange* area in the context of an MSc work placement or a Disaster Studies MSc graduate course. In that case, the request is presented to the "student triarchy" by the management. Travel requests from students are presented to the management via the professor.

Exchange students implicitly have permission for the travel to the specific code yellow area.

1. The course supervisor will present the request via the relevant professor to the management of the sciences group at which the course supervisor works.
2. For a travel request to a code yellow area, the decision is made by the management of the unit.
3. For a travel request to a *code orange* area from students who are travelling in the context of an MSc internship or Disaster Studies thesis, the management provided it supports the application, will request an advice from the *student triarchy* (ESA, , CSA*, and C- CM).
4. After the triarchy grants a unanimous, positive advice, the management can grant permission for the trip (via the chair holder).
5. If the triarchy grants a unanimous, negative advice, no permission can be granted for the trip.

In the event that no unanimous, positive advice is possible, the triarchy presents the request to the Executive Board for a decision.

The passenger is expected to check the security situation again shortly before departure.

2.1.3. Emergencies, locating travellers

During their trip, travellers may face (personal) emergencies and/or increasing risk conditions locally. Whether an emergency has arisen is based on the evaluation of the situation by Wageningen University & Research or the traveller. It is important that, in such situations, the traveller requests expert assistance as quickly as possible and that contact is made between the traveller and WUR for the sake of the traveller, their emergency contacts, and WUR.

For this reason, the manager/course supervisor need to ensure that travellers register with the 24/7 BZ Information Service: <https://informatieservice.nederlandwereldwijd.nl/>, or - in case of non-Dutch travellers - ensure that they register with their embassy or consulate in the risky area.

For travellers who have booked their trip *via the WUR travel agent*, the travel agent plays a role to a certain extent. In the very short term, this involves sharing information regarding the chosen destinations, but also concerns changing their ticket bookings. WUR can respond adequately for all employees and students, *provided that the person involved has explicitly disclosed the travel destination to the sciences group in advance*, either to their manager/course supervisor/study adviser/exchange coordinator and/or via their Outlook calendar. In the event of emergency, the digital calendar of the traveller can be disclosed by the relevant secretarial office.

Information about students who have travelled to a risky area will always be known to the course supervisor. Information about student travellers who will not be travelling to a risky area and/or do not have a work placement or thesis contract is not automatically known.

The information available regarding the accommodations of the student can be disclosed fairly easily through intervention from the education coordinators of the chair groups. Should circumstances require, the WUR spokesperson will request the information in this manner.

Notification of (personal) emergency by an employee

- The employee will request expert assistance via the 24/7 emergency number of the WUR travel insurance agent (Hienfeld, <https://intranet.wur.nl/umbraco/en/frequently-asked-questions/am-i-insured-abroad-through-wur/>) or via the emergency number of their own travel insurance.
- The employee contacts their embassy or consulate if needed.

- The employee will contact their manager.
- The manager will inform the management immediately.
- The management will inform the head of HR and Corporate Communications about the emergency.
- The management, in consultation with the safety officer and the WUR spokesperson, will initiate the required actions, including staying in communication with the emergency contacts.

Notification of (personal) emergency by a student

- The student will request expert assistance via the 24/7 emergency number of their travel insurance.
- The student contacts their embassy or consulate if needed.
- The student will contact their course supervisor.
- The course supervisor will inform the chair holder immediately.
- The chair holder will inform the management, ESA and Corporate Communications about the emergency.
- The chair holder is the first point of contact in case of emergency and informs the management. The management, in consultation with the safety officer and the WUR spokesperson (and potentially the Executive Board), will initiate the required actions with regard to the student, but also with regard to the student's emergency contacts.

Deterioration of safety level, locating travellers, study delay and possible early return

During a trip, the safety level in a certain area may deteriorate in such a way that increased or demonstrable safety risks arise (code yellow, orange, or red; source: Foreign Affairs). It is the traveller's responsibility to stay informed (e.g. through the 24/7 BZ Information Service: <https://informatieservice.nederlandwereldwijd.nl/>).

The travel agent will notify the Executive Board spokesperson of the deterioration of the safety level, and will provide the management of the units and the Executive Board spokesperson with an overview of the employees located in the relevant crisis area(s) within 1 hour, if requested.

The manager will attempt to contact the employees staying in the area in question, including those employees whose information is not available from the travel agent. The management will, in turn, engage in further discussion with the safety officer and the WUR spokesperson in consultation with the manager(s) and will make a decision regarding the potential return of the traveller. The management, in consultation with the safety officer and the WUR spokesperson, will initiate the actions required, including staying in communication with the emergency contacts.

For students, if the safety situation in the area deteriorates during their stay to a code *yellow, orange, or red*, the course supervisor will contact the student as soon as possible and, upon consultation with the student, will make a proposal to the management regarding the return of the student. The management will keep the WUR spokesperson up to date. The management, in consultation with the safety officer and the WUR spokesperson (and potentially the Executive Board), will initiate the required actions with regard to the student, but also with regard to the student's emergency contacts.

Any study delay caused by an early return due to safety risks will be compensated (*FOS - circumstances beyond one's control*), unless a customised solution is possible to finish the course, internship or thesis on time.

2.1.4 24-hour service during the trip and stay

24-hour service

For expert assistance in the event of (personal) emergencies, the traveller will have the telephone number of their travel insurance agent. Employees who have booked through the contracted travel agent

have the contact information of the supplementary travel insurance provider of WUR, Hienfeld. Each traveller has also made arrangements with their manager or course supervisor/study adviser regarding who they can contact at WUR 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in the event of an emergency. If deemed necessary, prior to departure, the individual sciences group or unit will arrange for the employee to have a satellite telephone at their disposal while abroad.

Travellers who have booked through the travel agent can reach the service desk of the travel agent (by telephone or e-mail) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The travel agent will assist them in the event of problems with tickets and hotels and in the event of an emergency. The contact information of the travel agent's service desk and the travel insurance contact person will be stated on every ticket booked.

3 Uniform tools for travel requests and employee travel expense claims

Every travel procedure leads to administrative expenses. Over the past several years, this process has been organised to run as efficiently as possible, so that the resulting expenses are kept as low as possible. This has been done by standardising the process, whereby tools have been developed for both the online booking of business trips and for the online submission and processing of expense claims.

Booking classes

- Air travel:
All air travel is booked in economy class. It is not permitted to book with "black-listed airlines" as listed on http://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/air/safety/air-ban/index_nl.htm
- Train:
During a foreign business trip by train, the employee may travel second class.
- Rental cars:
Economy class rental cars are used and must at least meet European emissions standards. Only the actual expenses incurred can be claimed.

Employee Accommodation Expenses

The foreign business travel regulations apply to employees and these regulations stipulate the amount that will be reimbursed for travel and accommodation expenses.

Appendix I Roles in the procedure of travelling to risky areas: areas with code yellow, orange, or red (source: Foreign Affairs)

I Foreign travel student, not "exchange"

Role of course supervisor:

- Provides information regarding the application procedure and the required courses, refers to the relevant websites (internal and external), ensures that the work placement or thesis contract is completed and includes contact information
- If necessary, initiates the (interim) application procedure for travel to or through a risky area, including the completion of the "risky area" application form <link>
- Connects the student with an expert in the relevant area
- Presents the travel request to the professor
- Establishes the student destinations
- Acts as the contact person for the student in the event of emergencies; informs the professor of any emergency situations

Role of the professor:

- Presents the student travel request to the management (and thereby implicitly agrees to the funding of the Basic Safety and Security course) for travel to or through a code yellow area (or in special cases, code orange area); requests for travel to or through code red areas are always rejected
- Acts as the contact person for the course supervisor in the event of a student emergency; informs the management of any emergency situations

Role of the management of the unit:

- Informs the course supervisors regarding their role and responsibilities in these processes
- Makes decisions regarding student travel requests to or through code yellow areas, excluding exchange courses
- Via the CSA, presents student requests for travel to or through code orange areas for MSC work placement or the Disaster Studies graduate course to the "student triarchy", provided that the management supports the application
- Makes decisions regarding the potential return of the student in the event of an increasing risk level during the trip
- After being notified of the emergency by the professor, coordinates setting the required actions into motion if necessary, in consultation with the safety officer, the WUR spokesperson, and potentially the Executive Board

Role of the student:

- Fills out the "risky areas" application form with their course coordinator or the exchange coordinator
- Prepares well for the trip and takes the necessary (required) preventive measures* (incl. taking the required and recommended courses)
- Ensures they are acquainted with the necessary (supplementary WUR) insurance policies
- Provides their contact information to the course coordinator WUR
- Registers with the 24/7 BZ Information Service
<https://informatieservice.nederlandwereldwijd.nl/>
- Registers with embassy or consulate

* Courses, vaccinations

Role of management ESA:

- Informs Team Exchange of their role in travel requests in the context of international exchange programmes
- Notifies education contact persons for chair groups of their role in the disclosure of student travel and accommodation information

Role of the WUR spokesperson, WUR safety officer:

- Consults with the management regarding potential actions in the event of (personal) emergencies in the region

II Foreign travel exchange student

Role Exchange Coordinator:

- Informs exchange student about the risk level of the area involved
- Inform exchange student about how to handle in case the risk level deteriorates: contact about possible return
- Manages and if necessary unlocks the students' contact information

Role of the student:

- Fills out the "risky areas" application form with their course coordinator or the exchange coordinator
- Prepares well for the trip and takes the necessary (required) preventive measures* (incl. taking the required and recommended courses)
- Ensures they are acquainted with the necessary (supplementary WUR) insurance policies
- Provides their contact information to the course coordinator WUR
- Registers with the 24/7 BZ Information Service
<https://informatieservice.nederlandwereldwijd.nl/>
- Registers with embassy or consulate

III Foreign travel employee

Role of the employees supervisor:

- Provides information regarding the application procedure and the required courses by referring to the relevant websites (internal and external)
- Presents travel requests to the management council
- If necessary, initiates the (interim) application procedure for travel to or through code orange or code red areas, incl. the completion of the "risk areas" application form <link>
- Connects the employee with an expert in the relevant area
- Consults with the management council in the event of emergencies
- Establishes the employee destinations

Role of the management of the unit:

- Informs supervisors regarding their role and responsibilities in these processes
- Makes decisions regarding employee travel requests to or through code yellow areas
- Via CSA ([Huub.Loffler@wur.nl](mailto:Huib.Loffler@wur.nl)), presents employee requests for travel to or through code orange or red areas to the 'employee triarchy', provided the management council supports the application
- Makes decisions regarding the potential return of the traveller in the event of increasing risk levels during the trip

- After being notified of the emergency by the supervisor, coordinates setting the required actions into motion if necessary, in consultation with the safety officer, the WUR spokesperson, and potentially the Executive Board

Role of the employee:

- Completes the 'risky areas' application form
- Prepares well for the trip and takes the necessary (required) preventive measures* (incl. taking the required and recommended courses)
- Ensures they are acquainted with the necessary (supplementary WUR) insurance policies
- Books the trip or has it booked with the contracted travel agent
- Provides their contact information to the WUR manager, even if risky area registration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (via Kompas) is not required
- registers with the 24/7 BZ Information Service:
<https://informatieservice.nederlandwereldwijd.nl/>
- Registers with embassy or consulate

* Courses, vaccinations

Role of the WUR spokesperson, WUR safety officer:

- Consults with the management regarding potential actions in the event of (personal) emergencies in the region

III 'Quadrarchy', WU-contracted travel agent, Facilities and Services account manager

Role of the 'quadrarchy'* under the direction of CSA:

- Monitoring the implementation procedure of *Reizen naar risicogebieden* (Travelling to risky areas)
- Keeps track of the (international) developments with regard to travelling to areas with a safety risk
- Ensures the distribution of relevant information (e.g. recent WOTRO guidelines), incl. via WUR websites
- If necessary, makes proposals for the modification of the current policy with regard to foreign travel by students and employees

* *Merger of the 'student' and 'employee' triarchies*

Role of the WUR-contracted travel agent:

- Provides information to the traveller
- Informs the traveller's WUR contact and the WUR spokesperson regarding potential increasing risk levels and/or international emergencies

Role of the Facilities and Services Account Manager for the WUR-contracted travel agent:

- Checks compliance with agreements with regard to providing the traveller with information
- Handles any required follow-up