

## **UMSU Student Travel and Conference Attendance Policy & Procedure**

### ***Policy***

The University of Melbourne Student Union (UMSU) recognises that travel may be integral to student representative activities, and acknowledges that there may be financial barriers which would prevent students fulfilling these commitments. This policy governs the use of UMSU grants or subsidies available to support travel to and attendance at conferences for student and student representatives.

### ***Objectives***

The policy aims to provide a transparent, financially sustainable, and equitable process for facilitating student travel to conferences.

### ***Definitions***

**Authorising Body** refers to Students' Council, or any UMSU Committee responsible for administering the policy, including the consideration and approval of grants, and in line with the hierarchy between authorising bodies established by the Constitution.

**Conflict of interest** has its ordinary meaning and includes any scenario where there is a perceived, potential or actual conflict between two competing goals of a member of an authorising body, e.g. between the member's public goal of ensuring impartiality and fairness in approving grants or subsidies and private goal of receiving a grant or subsidy as a submitted traveller.

**Departmental social media** is a social media or several social media accounts controlled by the relevant Department for the purposes of advertising Departmental programs, events and activities.

**Grant or Subsidy** means any non-refundable financial assistance provided to a student specifically for the purpose of approved travel or conference attendance in accordance with this policy.

**Report** is a submission to the authorising body by a traveller on the use of their grant or subsidy, using Appendix 2.

**Travel** means a trip taken for a purpose consistent with the objectives established in the UMSU Constitution, for the purpose of attending a conference or travel event, representation in an official UMSU capacity, and/or participation in community service.

**Traveller** means a student or student representative who has applied for and/or received funding pursuant to this policy.

**UMSU Mailing List** refers to an email list and associated regular newsletter maintained by UMSU Marketing and Communications for the purposes of advertising UMSU programs, events and activities.

References to the Constitution are preceded with the prefix C-. References to Regulations are preceded with the prefix R-.

**1. Scope of policy:**

- 1.1. This policy covers any travel or conferences attended by a student or student representative subsidised directly by UMSU; and travel and conference expenses of UMSU Office Bearers or Students' Councillors which is subsidised in part by other organisations, and where the travel or conference attendance arises from their role in UMSU.
- 1.2. Only Grants or Subsidies which further the objectives of UMSU will be considered.
- 1.3. Travel for the purpose of personal or professional development may be considered providing it also fulfils [1.2].

**2. Eligibility for Grants or Subsidies:**

- 2.1. Subject to clause [1], Students whose Travel is contingent upon financial support will be given first preference.
- 2.2. Subject to clause [2.1], in the case of regular or annual conferences, preference for subsidies will be given to first time attendees to those conferences.
- 2.3. To remain eligible for a Grant or Subsidy once allocated, all Travellers must adhere to all UMSU and University policies including the UMSU Acceptable Conduct Policy.

**3. Allowable expenses for UMSU direct Grants or Subsidies to individuals:**

The following expenses are eligible for Grants or Subsidies:

- 3.1. Transport costs to and from the venue for conferences, or travel events outside of metropolitan Melbourne, providing the travel is the most efficient and cost-effective option without imposing an unreasonable burden on the traveller.
- 3.2. Accommodation costs for a travel event or conference held outside metropolitan Melbourne.
- 3.3. Registration fees for the conference or travel event.
- 3.4. Any ancillary or miscellaneous costs deemed acceptable by Students' Council or the relevant committee.

**4. Expressly non-allowable expenses for UMSU direct Grants or Subsidies to individuals:**

The following expenses are not eligible for Grants or Subsidies:

- 4.1. The cost of food or meals not included as part of a conference or a conference registration fee.
- 4.2. Transport costs for a travel event or conference entirely held in metropolitan Melbourne occurring entirely within business hours, unless it forms an indivisible part of a conference registration fee.
- 4.3. Transport costs within the locale of the conference., For example, the cost of transport from the accommodation to the conference.
- 4.4. Accommodation costs for a travel event or conference entirely held in metropolitan Melbourne with activity (formal or informal) occurring entirely within

business hours, unless it forms an indivisible part of a conference registration fee.

## **Procedures**

### **1. Procedure for approving UMSU direct subsidies:**

- 1.1. All Grant or Subsidy opportunities (whether UMSU-funded or funded by an organisation external to UMSU) not falling clearly within the established roles and responsibilities of an office bearer or Students' Councillor must be openly advertised to all those potentially eligible for a period of at least 14 days. Information about conference Grant or Subsidy opportunities will be published on the UMSU website, UMSU Mailing List and departmental social media.
- 1.2. The information must include:
  - 1.2.1. The details of the travel event or conference.
  - 1.2.2. Any particular conditions of the Grant or Subsidy (such as restriction to a particular group or collective).
  - 1.2.3. Closing dates for Grant or Subsidy applications.
  - 1.2.4. The process in which Grant or Subsidy applications will be decided, including specific criteria, application forms, and those who determine applications.
  - 1.2.5. The amounts available to fund individual Grants or Subsidies or the total amount allocated to the particular Grants or Subsidies pool, and the source of the funds.
  - 1.2.6. A copy of the agreement for payment of UMSU direct subsidies to individuals (appendix 1).
- 1.3. Applicants for Grants or Subsidies must complete a questionnaire detailing the conference and their financial situation. The Office Bearer(s) of the Department funding these Grants or Subsidies must create the relevant questionnaire.
  - 1.3.1. If Students' Council is funding the Grants or Subsidies then the General Secretary is the relevant Office Bearer for the purpose of part 1 of this Procedure.
- 1.4. The authorising body will prioritise and determine the recipients of grants and the monetary value of each grant in accordance with the policy above.
- 1.5. If members of the authorising body are unable to vote due to a conflict of interest, the Office Bearer(s) or other UMSU elected representatives must take on the role set out in clause [1.4].
  - 1.5.1. Subject to clauses [1.4] and [1.5], the authorising body must either approve or reject the proposed grants *en bloc*.
  - 1.5.2. Office Bearer(s) and other UMSU elected representatives undertaking the duties set out in [1.4] and [1.5] are excluded from the *en bloc* decision in [1.5.1].
- 1.6. Applicants of approved Grants or Subsidies will be notified by the relevant Office Bearer(s) by email. The notification must set out the details of the conference or event, the amount granted, and attach the UMSU Acceptable Conduct Policy,

and the agreement for payment of UMSU direct subsidies to individuals (appendix 1).

- 1.7. The Agreement for Payment of UMSU direct subsidies for individuals is to be returned prior to the start date of a conference or travel event, or the Grants or Subsidies will be forfeited.
  - 1.7.1. To ensure ample processing time for Grants or Subsidies, individuals should endeavour to return their Agreement for Payment of UMSU direct subsidies two Thursdays before the start date of a conference or travel event.
- 1.8. Students receiving funding pursuant to this Policy must keep receipts or invoices for items relevant to the payment of a Grants or Subsidy.
- 1.9. Successful applicants must provide a report and present it to the relevant authorising body.

## **2. Reporting requirements for Travellers:**

- 2.1. All reports must be submitted to the relevant Office Bearer(s) and/or the General Secretary in the format set out in Appendix 2.
- 2.2. The report must be submitted within a month of the conclusion of the relevant Conference or Event, or the funding will be recovered. Where the Traveller is an Office Bearer, not on a leave of absence, the honoraria for the duration of that the travel or conference will be recovered.
- 2.3. This report must include details of the knowledge and skills gained from the Conference or travel event, the activities undertaken, how this combination of experiences, skills and activities can be used to improve or enhance the student experience for students at the University of Melbourne, and the expenditure of the funding.
- 2.4. Travellers attending a conference on behalf of UMSU or with UMSU's support must comply with these reporting requirements irrespective of whether they have received a Grant or Subsidy.
- 2.5. A Traveller may voluntarily pay back the money or forfeit the subsidy within a month of conclusion if they do not wish to submit a report.

## **3. Accepting reports**

- 3.1. An authorising body may choose to accept or reject a tabled report under this procedure.
  - 3.1.1. Acceptance of a report satisfies the requirements of this procedure.
  - 3.1.2. A report must be rejected where it fails to satisfy the requirements set out in clauses [2.1]-[2.3].
    - 3.1.2.1. A motion to reject a report must also state the reasons for rejection having regard for clauses [2.1]-[2.3].
    - 3.1.2.2. If a report is rejected, the responsible traveller must submit a report in conformity with clauses [2.1]-[2.3] within one (1) calendar month of the motion to reject.
    - 3.1.2.3. Upon receipt of the re-submitted report, clause [3.1] applies.

- 3.1.3. Where a report is rejected, the traveler may not receive additional grants or subsidies under this policy from the relevant authorising body until a subsequent report subject to clauses [3.1.3.2] and [3.1.3.3] is submitted and accepted.

4. **Appeals against decisions**

- 4.1. A traveler may appeal a decision of an authorising body subject to clause [3] to the Students' Council.
- 4.2. If the authorising body is Students' Council, the Grievance Tribunal will hear the appeal.

## Appendix 1:

### Agreement for the Payment of UMSU direct subsidies to individuals

*This agreement must be returned before the conference start date.*

This Agreement is between a successful applicant for a Grant or Subsidy to attend the [conference name], and the [department/division/initiative] of UMSU Inc., as represented by the [committee or council].

[name] \_\_\_\_\_ and the [department/division/initiative] of UMSU Inc. agree as follows:

1. That a sum of money shall be given from the [department/division/initiative] to the above applicant, as determined by a selection panel comprising of two UMSU elected representatives. This sum has been set for the above applicant as: [amount \$] \_\_\_\_\_.

2. That the above sum shall be given in the form of reimbursement upon provision of receipts or other proofs of purchase by the successful applicant to the [department/division/initiative], unless otherwise agreed upon by both parties.

3. That the money given, whether as reimbursement or by other agreed-upon means, only be used for expenses directly pertaining to the applicant's attendance of the [conference name], hosted by [host name and location].

Specifically, these expenses are limited to:

- a. Travel to and from the conference, including airfares, and/or petrol, and/or public transport, but not including public transport or other travel costs within the designated location of the conference.
- b. Conference registration.
- c. Accommodation for the duration of conference.

4. That the sum determined by the selection panel is the maximum subsidy that the above applicant is eligible to receive. In the event that the applicant does not spend that amount, or is unable to provide receipts or suitable proofs of purchase up to that amount, they will only be eligible to receive a subsidy up to the amount spent and evidenced by receipts or suitable proofs of purchase. In the event that the applicant spends more than the maximum subsidy allocated to them, they are not eligible to receive any subsidy beyond that maximum.

5. That the applicant will provide, within 1 month of the closing date of the Conference, a written report to the [department/division/initiative]. This report will detail the knowledge and skills gained by the applicant at the Conference, the activities undertaken by the applicant, and how this combination of knowledge, skills and activities undertaken can be used to improve or enhance the student experience for students at the University of Melbourne.

6. That in the event that the applicant fails to adhere to clause 5 (above) by providing a written report in a timely manner to the [*department/division/initiative*], UMSU Inc. they may forfeit eligibility for any future grants or subsidies from UMSU Inc.

7. That in the event that the applicant fails to adhere to clause 5 (above) by providing a written report in a timely manner to the [*department/division/initiative*], UMSU Inc. may seek to recover some or all of the subsidy given to them if this is applicable.

Applicant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:

UMSU Representative Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:

## Appendix 2:

### Conference/Travel Event Report Template

<p><b>University of Melbourne Student Union</b></p> <p>Report of [<i>Name</i>] to [<i>Students' Council/Relevant Committee</i>]</p> <p>[<i>Conference/Travel Event Name</i>]</p>
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#### Introduction of Event

A summary of what the event was about, who it was for and the logistical details of the event.

#### Knowledge and Skills gained

A dot point list of the knowledge and skills that were gained from the event.

#### Key Activities

A list of key activities attended and how that applied to your knowledge gain.

#### Implementation of knowledge in the University of Melbourne community

How can these experiences, skills and activities be used to improve or enhance the student experience?

#### Further Comments

Anything further you'd like to add.

#### Expenditure

Please fill out this table, the second row is an example.

Please attach photocopies of receipts and invoices to this report.

Item Description	Item Type and Supplier	Amount (\$)	Comment
Flights from Melbourne to Sydney return	Travel; Qantas	\$100.00	Travel date: 1/1/18 - 3/1/18