UQ Travel Fund for Staff with Disability

Images (clockwise from top left corner): Image of UQ Disability Inclusion Group winning the UQ Excellence Award; Cover of the UQ Disability Action Plan 2018-2021; Amanda at International Women’s Day event and; Cover of the UQ Strategic Plan 2018-2021.
1. Overview

The UQ Disability Travel Fund (Travel Fund) provides funding to cover the additional costs associated with disability when staff with disability are travelling for work-related purposes, as per the University Travel Management Policy and other relevant policies. The Travel Fund may be used for a diverse range of reasonable supports, including:

- a travelling companion or in-location carer/guide;
- a person to assist with communication in-location;
- assistive mechanisms, such as a wheelchair; and/or
- hiring medical equipment in-location.

Funds may be disbursed prior to or after the travel, as appropriate to the staff member’s situation and the circumstances pertaining to the travel.

2. How to apply

The process for applying for funds, including the eligibility criteria, is outlined below.

2.1 Eligibility criteria

To be eligible for the Travel Fund applicants must:

- be a current fixed-term or continuing UQ staff member with a disability;
- be accepted into the activity they are travelling for, such as a conference, and have funding to cover their own attendance and travel, outside of any additional costs that may be incurred due to their disability;
- require additional financial assistance in order to accommodate adjustments to travel arrangements that are necessary because of their disability;
- other grants, such as funding from the School or external grant funding supporting the project, are not sufficient to cover all disability related expenses; and
- have support from the Head of their organisational unit to support the activity.

If the funds are to cover assistance or support by family members or friends, this may be subject to the University’s FBT policy. In these cases, applicants must demonstrate that this level of support is the least expensive option compared to other methods of achieving the desired outcome or if higher, be willing to self-fund the difference between the less expensive option.

Example

A visually impaired staff member requires an in-location guide for travel at an overseas destination. The staff member provides quotes for hiring a guide in-location compared with the cost of taking a companion/guide from Australia on the trip. If the cost of the companion’s travel, insurance and accommodation is lower than the cost of hiring an in-location guide, this will be the preferred option.

If approved, WD&I will consult with relevant stakeholders to ensure that all travel is booked according to UQ policies and procedures.
2.2 Application process

Eligible staff may apply for support from the Travel Fund at any time during the year. Generally, staff will only be able to access the Travel Fund once per year.

To apply for the Travel Fund, staff should submit an application via email to their local decision maker or to Workplace Diversity and Inclusion in situations where non-disclosure of the disability is preferred (see Figure 1) which:

- confirms their eligibility to access the Travel Fund;
- outlines the nature of the travel and impact on career outcomes;
- outlines how the Travel Fund will be used;
- an itemised account of intended costs;
- includes any other relevant information.

Applications should be no more than 500 words in length (excluding supporting documentation).

There is no limit on the amount of funding that can be requested, as the Travel Fund is designed to meet the needs of staff with disability. However, applicants must demonstrate that all other sources of funds have been exhausted.

Applications will be considered by a Funding Panel using the principles outlined in Section Three.

The application process for the Travel Fund is outlined below.

![Flowchart of the application process for the Travel Fund]

**Figure 1: Overview of the application process for the Travel Fund**

3. Funding Allocation Process

Funding Panel membership will include the Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Office of the Provost, the Chair or nominated representative of the Disability Inclusion Group (Committee) (DIG) and the Chief Human Resources Officer, or nominee/s. Where appropriate, the panel may consult internal and external parties to ensure an informed decision is made. Applicants may be asked to provide medical certificates and/or complete a risk assessment to support their application.
The Panel will endeavour to convene to consider requests within three weeks of receiving an application for the Travel Fund.

The Panel will assess applications for the Travel Fund using the following principles:

- applicant meets the eligibility for the fund;
- the purpose of the travel is of benefit to the University and the applicant’s professional and career development/progression;
- request for financial assistance mitigates barriers that may prevent the applicant from participating in the career development activity;
- the proposed mode of travel and adjustments are reasonable; and
- any other relevant considerations.

If approved, it may be necessary to inform other parties of the outcome, including (among others) Campus Travel and UQ Governance and Risk. In these cases, the privacy of the applicant will be upheld as much as is practicable in the circumstances.

Where the application involves support for a carer, it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the carer is insured to perform the agreed duties.

4. Questions and feedback

Please contact Workplace Diversity and Inclusion if you have any questions or concerns on ideals@uq.edu.au or 07 334 60402.
Contact details

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