

Subject: Introduction of Pre-Approval Review Step for International Travel Declarations
From: Office of Risk & Compliance
Date: 15 October 2017
To: Heads of Department, Project Leads, Faculty Coordinators
Category: Compliance Directive – Action Required

Dear Colleagues,

As part of the **Q1 compliance update** and in response to the findings of the 2017 external audit on research mobility expenditures, we are implementing a **structural modification** to the international travel declaration process.

Background

The audit uncovered discrepancies between authorized travel budgets and submitted reimbursement claims, particularly in **project-coded travel**. A key finding was the absence of an intermediate review prior to supervisory sign-off, leading to insufficient checks on:

- Project code misuse
- Meal and incidentals beyond per diem rates
- Travel dates inconsistent with approved permits

To mitigate these risks, we are instituting a **Pre-Approval Step** before supervisor final approval.

New Step: Declaration Pre-Approval

Effective immediately, all international declarations must include an **initial review by a designated Pre-Approver**. This role may be fulfilled by a project controller, senior administrator, or departmental finance officer, depending on local structure.

Revised Process:

1. **Permit Submission → Supervisor Approval → Trip Execution**
2. **Declaration Submitted → Pre-Approval → Supervisor Final Approval → Payment Trigger**

This change does not affect the permit flow itself but applies to **post-travel declarations** only.

Implementation Notes

- **Effective Date:** 21 May 2018
- **Transition Period:** Declarations without pre-approval submitted before 30 June 2018 will still be processed but flagged.
- **Responsibility:** Departments must designate at least one Pre-Approver per travel cost center.

We appreciate your support in strengthening our financial controls and ensuring continued eligibility for research mobility funding.

Best regards,

Sophia Claassen

Chief Compliance Officer

Office of Risk & Compliance