

**Subject:** Implementation of Mandatory Metadata Checks for Prepaid Travel Cost Requests  
**From:** Office of Financial Compliance and Systems  
**Date:** 13 November 2017  
**To:** Finance Officers, Administrative Coordinators, Researchers  
**Category:** System Policy Update – Immediate Action Required

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Dear Colleagues,

As part of the 2018 Internal Controls Action Plan, the university is rolling out a **mandatory metadata validation protocol** for all **prepaid travel cost requests**. This change responds to recurring audit findings involving **incomplete or inconsistent data in payment records**.

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## Background

A joint review conducted by the Finance Directorate and the Internal Audit Unit revealed that:

- Over 12% of prepaid cost records lacked **valid permit IDs** or had mismatched **budget numbers**
  - Several payments were processed despite **missing approvals**
  - Project coding errors caused reimbursement delays and retroactive corrections
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## What Is Changing

Starting **2 July 2018**, the travel cost system will enforce automated pre-checks before allowing a Request for Payment to proceed. Specifically:

- **Valid permit IDs must be attached** for all international travel
  - **Budget and project numbers must match** those recorded in the permit
  - **Incomplete or “UNKNOWN” entries will block submission**
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## Revised Workflow Requirements

1. **Permit Approval** must be complete (SUPERVISOR and DIRECTOR levels)
  2. **Metadata fields** (Organizational Unit, Task, Budget, Project) must be populated and match across permit and request
  3. If a permit was not required (e.g., domestic or certain grants), justification must be noted in the comment field
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## System Changes

- A new **error screen** will alert users when required fields are missing or inconsistent
- Finance staff will no longer manually override blocked submissions

- A list of common issues and support guidance will be distributed separately

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This measure aims to reduce audit risk, improve data accuracy, and support future digitization of travel workflows.

We thank you for your cooperation during this transition.

Sincerely,

**Eva Müller**

Head of Financial Compliance Systems