



The Bionic Ear Institute

TRAVEL POLICY

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Introduction:

The Bionic Ear Institute has implemented the following Travel Policy to ensure that all Institute-related travel is reasonable and meets not only the professional needs of staff and students but also the strategic needs of the Institute.

The Institute recognizes that Institute-related travel, such as attendance at conferences, is important for the professional development of its staff and students as well as enhancing the scientific standing of the Institute.

All Institute staff and students who conduct Institute-related travel are expected to comply with the conditions of this policy.

Purpose:

The Institute's travel policy is designed to inform and guide staff in the purchase of travel, and the payment/reimbursement of travel expenses when on official Institute business. This policy endeavors to ensure that all travel funded by the Institute complies with legal (taxation) obligations and budgetary limitations and has been written in consideration of the well-being (ie safety and comfort levels) of employees whilst on Institute-related travel.

References:

University of Melbourne Travel Policy

Authorisation:

Tim Griffiths
General Manager
The Bionic Ear Institute

Guidelines for Institute-related Travel

The following guidelines refer to all Institute-related travel except that related to research performed under the CRC and Bionic Technologies Australia (BTA). Researchers who are seconded to work on CRC projects should refer to the section “Third party agreements”.

Institute staff, who are Chief Investigators of externally awarded funds, such as NHMRC and ARC grants and fellowships should read the following guidelines in conjunction with the section “Third party agreements”.

Students and staff who seek funding from the Institute for Institute-related travel are strongly encouraged to apply for travel awards, where appropriate eg peer reviewed grants, Harold Mitchell Travel Fellowship. Approval for Institute funding may in some instances be conditional upon students and staff applying for external funding support. In instances where staff and students may personally receive travel awards, such awards must be used for work related travel costs not personal travel costs.

Staff should note when considering their itinerary that the weekend will not normally be considered as Institute-related travel if the Friday and the following Monday do not include Institute-related activities, such as conference attendance or a lab visit.

Staff and students returning from Institute funded travel will be asked to complete a brief written report highlighting the benefits gained, eg new research findings or directions which may be of interest to the group, potential research collaborations and any other points of interest. Researchers may also wish to highlight this through the Wednesday seminar program.

Please refer to the [Procedure for Employment Related Travel](#) for specific details about how to submit a request for such travel and other procedural details.

Types of Travel

The main categories of Institute-related travel include conference attendance, professional development and Institute business.

Specific details about the eligibility and level of support for these main categories are detailed below.

Conference attendance

Staff should understand that travel is a considerable expense to the organization and requests to attend conferences need to be well justified and fully supported by the staff member’s supervisor.

Requests for support of conference attendance should ideally be made before the beginning of the financial year. This is important for budgeting purposes. Any requests less than four months in advance can pose considerable difficulties and significantly reduce the likelihood of approval.

Eligibility

Research staff (including Post Doctoral, Research Assistants/Technicians) and general staff must be employed for at least 12 months before they are eligible. PhD students will normally be twelve months into their candidature. Other students (Honours, UROP) would generally not be eligible.

Research staff (Postdoctoral and above) will generally be eligible to obtain support from the Institute to attend one national conference per annum and will typically involve presenting an oral presentation or poster.

Research Staff (Postdoctoral and above) will generally be eligible to obtain support from the Institute to attend one international conference requiring overseas travel every two years, subject to funding.

Funding may also be available for Research Staff to visit relevant research groups and organizations as an adjunct to conference attendance. Such visits should be scheduled either immediately prior to or after the conference so as to minimize unnecessary expenditure.

In general, staff funded by peer-reviewed or other grants would be expected to fund, or substantially fund, expenses associated with conference attendance and travel through that grant.

For Research staff seeking funding support from the Institute for visits to research laboratories, confirmation must first be obtained from the Institute that the cost of these visits will be covered prior to confirming such arrangements. The Institute will normally pay for one night's accommodation associated with these laboratory visits.

Research Assistants/Technicians and General Staff applications for support will be considered on a case-by-case basis and will be subject to funding.

PhD students whose primary academic supervisor is a BEI employee, will be eligible to obtain support from the Institute to attend one national conference per year. Presentation at the conference will be strongly encouraged.

Requests by PhD (BEI) students to attend an overseas conference will normally only be considered by those in their final year. This is to allow students sufficient time to build up a body of published research prior to exposure to an international audience, as well as ensuring that the benefits of an overseas trip are maximized. A case may be put forward for review if PhD students wish to be considered to attend an overseas conference at an earlier stage than their final year. Should approval for funding be granted then it will be under the proviso that the student's presentation is approved by their supervisor prior to attending the conference. This will usually include the student presenting it as part of the Wednesday seminar series prior to the conference (in consultation with their supervisor).

Honours and Masters students. Honours students will not normally be eligible for funding. Masters students will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Professional Development & Institute Business

In addition to travel associated with conference attendance, Institute staff and students may attend training workshops, meet with external research collaborators, or act as a representative of the Institute at meetings, etc.

Other types of leave, such as Special Studies Leave, will be examined on a case-by-case basis.

Level of Support

Travel support provided by the Institute may include:

- Registration fees e.g. conference, workshop
- Economy return travel e.g. airfare, train
- Accommodation costs (see below)
- Meals and incidentals (see below)

Institute support of staff and students traveling overseas to high-risk destinations for Institute-related purposes will in part be based on advice from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

Insurance

All Institute staff and students, who are traveling for Institute-related purposes, will be covered by the Institute's travel insurance policy (please refer to the Finance Department should you require further information).

Record Keeping

For Occupational Health & Safety reasons, a detailed travel itinerary must be submitted to the HR Officer, Susanne Clarke prior to departure.

On their return, staff/students wishing to claim reimbursement for travel-related expenses incurred, including meals and incidentals, must complete an "Employee Travel Expense Request" and attach all tax invoices. Additional costs may be claimed via your personal taxation return; staff and students wishing to do so should consult with their taxation accountant.

Intellectual Property

Prior to presentation of research at a conference, staff must complete a "Request for Publication/Presentation of Research" in order that any IP discussed is appropriately protected or approved for public release. BTA staff please refer to "BTA Publication Approval Process".

Third Party Agreements

The obligations and entitlements of Institute staff who undertake travel as part of research programs conducted under a third party agreement or contract, such as the CRC or BTA, are subject to the third party agreement. Please check with the relevant CEO/Director of these organizations.

Institute staff who are Chief Investigators of externally awarded funds, e.g. NHMRC and ARC project grants and fellowships, should be aware that the Institute enters a funding contract, as the administering institute, with the funding body. Such funding contracts are considered third party agreements. The expenditure of these funds for travel may be subject to the conditions outlined in the funding contract. The Institute, as the administering institute of the funding, must ensure that all expenditure associated with such funding bodies complies with the funding contract conditions. The Institute will be held liable should this funding be misused.

Whilst the Institute has endeavoured to ensure that staff obligations and entitlements under such agreements are equivalent to those for unencumbered research, this may not always be possible. Institute staff participating in research conducted under a third party agreement should be fully aware of their obligations and entitlements, and the conditions associated with Institute-related travel.

Institute Staff participating in CRC research with any concerns about this should in the first instance contact the Executive Officer of the CRC (Treacy Block) or CEO of BTA (Russell Tait)

Institute staff participating in research conducted under other third party agreements should in the first instance contact Linda Peterson, Executive Officer.

Accommodation

The Institute's standard for Australian and overseas accommodation is that rate which is deemed "reasonable". In general, this would be a single room rate, at a 3-4 star hotel, or as approved by the Director.

International/Domestic Travel Bookings

For Institute supported international travel, staff and students must obtain written quotes for airfares from at least two sources. One of these quotes must be from the Institute's preferred travel agency (Travelscene on Eastern Hill 9417 4320). Staff and students should request an airfare for the most direct flight path.

For domestic travel, it is suggested that staff may prefer to obtain competitive quotes directly from airline websites.

Institute approval must be obtained from the Executive Officer prior to booking. Please refer to Procedure for Institute-related Travel.

Procedure for Institute-related Travel

1. Complete and submit “Conference & Travel Request” Form. *(For overseas travel please ensure that this is completed a minimum of 2 months prior to the anticipated date of departure. For interstate travel at least 2 weeks prior to departure)*

2. Provide a budget estimate and attach:

For Domestic Travel:

- quote for accommodation
- quote for interstate airline ticket
- conference registration fees
- accommodation, meals & incidentals

For International Travel:

- two quotes for overseas travel (including one quote from the Institute’s preferred travel agent (Travelscene on Eastern Hill, Ph 9417 4320))
- quote for travel insurance
- conference registration fees
- accommodation, meals & incidentals

Include a ”Travel Itinerary”, clearly indicating official and private activities with estimated arrival and departure dates

3. Submit “Conference & Travel Request Form”, quotes and “Travel Itinerary” to the Executive Officer for approval. **Note:** requests for conference attendance, in particular those requiring overseas travel, should ideally be flagged on an annual basis in the respective Department budget.

If the Institute agrees to provide support towards the conference and travel request then staff should:

4. Domestic Travel: Arrange their bookings via the internet.
5. International Travel: If the Institute’s preferred travel agent has been selected, this may be billed directly to the Institute.
6. Prior to departure lodge your final travel itinerary with HR (Susanne Clarke)
7. Complete a leave form indicating it is “Special Leave to attend a conference”
8. Ensure that you have completed the “Request for Publication/Presentation of Research”.
9. Whilst on Institute-related travel remember to record travel expenses and keep tax invoices for all expenses over \$50 if you wish to claim reimbursement.

On your return:

10. Reimbursement for travel expenses may be made by completing the Employee Travel Expense Request and lodge with Finance Department(Pauline Graafmans).
11. Complete a brief written report highlighting the benefits gained, new research findings or directions, potential research collaborations or any other points of interest.