

COVID-19: Business Related Travel and Reimbursement of RMO Training Related Expenses – Updated 27 April 2022

With the opening of New Zealand borders this document has been developed to provide advice to RMOs on the process for approval of both domestic and international business related travel. This advice is accurate as at 27 April 2022. Advice may however change given the nature of the health system response to COVID-19 and any changes to Government alert levels.

Domestic Travel

While at Red and Orange Alert Levels of the National COVID-19 protection framework, domestic business related travel can occur provided it is completed safely and the travel is approved by the DHB as per the process outlined on page 2.

International Travel

With the easing of border restrictions for vaccinated New Zealanders, international travel for business related purposes will be approved in some instances provided it is completed safely and travel is approved by the DHB as per the process outlined on page 2.

Current government advice is that while our borders have reopened for fully vaccinated New Zealand citizens, it is important to remember that international travel is different and there are additional things you need to think about when planning your trip overseas. Whatever the reason for international travel, people need to plan for the possibility of having travel disrupted with an understanding that circumstances are constantly changing and border entry/MIQ requirements may change again.

Due to the possibility of travel disruptions, virtual attendance or attendance at New Zealand based alternatives is recommended where possible. International travel may however be appropriate in some instances including travel for examinations, presentation at events, requirements for training where there are no NZ based or virtual alternatives or events where virtual attendance provides limited value.

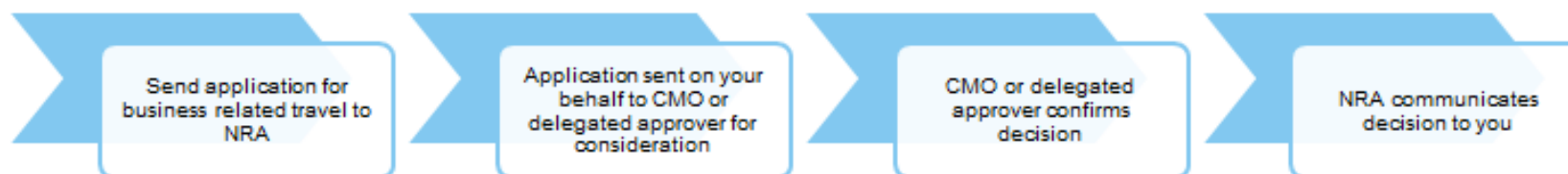
All requests for international travel will require approval and will be considered on a case by case basis. Travel bookings should not be made until approval is granted. The exception to this will be bookings for examinations. Where you are required to book and pay for examinations which will be held in Australia, proceed with the booking. However, you must hold off booking the associated travel and accommodation until CMO approval to travel is granted.

It is important to note that where leave is approved for domestic and international business related travel, approval via the process outlined below is still required before proceeding with booking.

Application Process

Detailed below is the application process to seek DHB approval for business related travel, including travel training, education, conference, examination and seminar or meeting attendance. In considering applications, consideration will be given to balance individual training requirements and service needs.

Applications for business related travel are to be sent to moreimbursements@nra.health.nz.



Please ensure you include the following information to ensure a timely response;

- Name and details of course/conference/exam
- Travel location and dates
- Vocational pathway

Where applications are for international travel, the following supporting documentation is required,

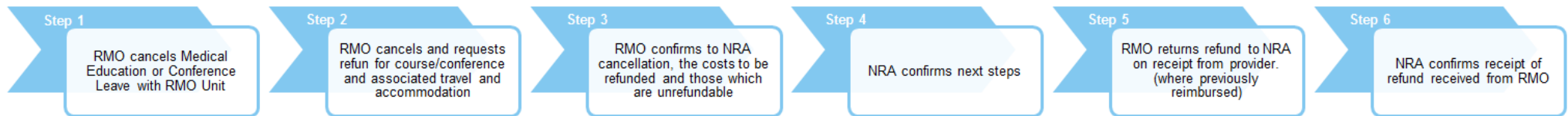
1. Evidence from the course, conference or training provider confirming that,
 - a. There are no New Zealand based alternatives
 - b. Remote meeting options are unavailable or inappropriate
2. A letter of support from your Supervisor of Training or VTC Chair for attendance at courses and conferences. To note, this is not required for travel for examinations.

3. Confirmation from your Clinical Director supporting your travel including cover arrangements and mitigations if your return to work is delayed due to COVID-19 (e.g. a lockdown or isolation requirements)

To note, the reimbursement of any course/conference is subject to meeting the standard reimbursement criteria. Clarification on these criteria is available at: <http://www.aucklanddoctors.co.nz/rmos/currentemployees/>

Refund Process

Detailed below is the process for refund and reimbursement of RMO training related expenses and continuing medical education (where applicable) due to restrictions on business related travel. The expectation is that refunds will be sought for all course/conferences and associated travel and accommodation in the first instance.



FAQs

To support with the application of the process and clarify next steps for seeking reimbursement or refund of training related expenses the following FAQs have been developed:

International Travel

1. I haven't booked any travel or accommodation for my international course/conference yet
 - a. Consider whether;
 - i. activities can be undertaken via zoom/skype
 - ii. there are other New Zealand based alternatives
 - b. If there are no alternatives, apply to NRA approval to travel. Do not book any travel or accommodation until approval to travel has been granted.

- c. If you proceed with the booking of an international course/conference and related travel and accommodation and travel and approval has not been granted by the CMO, you may not receive reimbursement of these costs.
- d. Claim reimbursement of the cost from NRA
- e. If there are travel restrictions and you are unable to travel, you will need to request a refund from the provider
- f. You will need to confirm to NRA whether a full, partial or no refund is received and provide evidence. NRA will confirm next steps specific to your situation.
- g. All full or partial refunds received are to be repaid to NRA for any costs already reimbursed.

2. The date for my examination has been confirmed in Australia and I have to book to secure my place,

- a. Proceed with the booking of your examination
- b. Apply to NRA for approval to travel internationally for your examination
- c. Do not book any travel or accommodation until approval to travel is granted by the CMOs
- d. Claim reimbursement of the examination cost from NRA
- e. If there are travel restrictions and you are unable to travel for your examination, you will need to request a refund from the provider
- f. You will need to confirm to NRA whether a full, partial or no refund is received and provide evidence. NRA will confirm next steps specific to your situation.
- g. All full or partial refunds received are to be repaid to NRA for any costs already reimbursed.

Domestic Travel

3. The dates for my domestic examination/course/conference have been confirmed and I need to travel domestically to attend,

- a. Proceed with the booking of your examination/course/conference
- b. Apply to NRA for DHB approval to travel domestically for your examination/course/conference
- c. Do not book any travel or accommodation until approval to travel is granted
- d. Once approval is granted, proceed with booking travel and accommodation
- e. Claim reimbursement for the cost of your examination/course/conference and travel and accommodation