



## ABSTUDY Travel – Overview

This factsheet gives an overview of ABSTUDY travel entitlements for secondary students who need to study away from home. This factsheet should be read in conjunction with the other factsheets on ABSTUDY travel arrangements:

- ABSTUDY Travel – The start and end of year and school holidays
- ABSTUDY Travel – Other types of travel

### Fares Allowance eligibility

The purpose of Fares Allowance is to cover the costs of travel for students who need to live away from home to study, while allowing students to maintain contact with their home community.

The amount of Fares Allowance payable is determined by the rate of the mode of travel that is the most practicable and cost-effective for the journey. The mode of travel must also be assessed as reasonable in the circumstances. For secondary students to qualify for Fares Allowance, they must meet the following criteria:

- they must be eligible for Schooling B Award,
- their permanent home must vary from their school address,
- they must be an approved traveller and the type of travel must be approved, and
- for interstate travel, the journey must not be precluded under interstate travel rules (as per Chapter 87.3 of the ABSTUDY Policy Manual).

### Types of travel

For secondary students, the types of travel approved for Fares Allowance include:

- travel at the start and end of study for the year,
- travel home and back to school for each school holiday period,
- travel home and back to school for compassionate reasons,
- special purpose visit travel to encourage family or community engagement in school,
- orientation travel for the student to attend interviews or selection procedures.

### Approved Travellers

In addition to the student, other people may be approved travellers for Fares Allowance purposes, including:

- **supervisor travellers**, to supervise students while in transit who are either a parent/guardian, community representative or representative of the school/hostel,
- **family or community member travellers**, who are either a parent/guardian, partner, close family member or community member with significant ties to the student,
- **education institution representative travellers**, who can travel to a community where it is more effective to do so,
- **travelling companions**, to accompany an ill, injured or disabled student who is travelling, or
- **dependent travellers**, who live with the student at their school address.

## Mandatory Supervision

Before travel is pre-booked, the Department of Human Services (DHS) may determine that a student requires mandatory supervision when travelling. In these cases, a supervisor must accompany the student. Supervision is mandatory if:

- the student is under 12 years,
- the student is considered a vulnerable student,
- supervision is a requirement of the travel carrier, or
- DHS pre-book weekend travel.

## Booking travel

Travel arrangements may either be pre-booked by DHS or reimbursed by DHS to the person or institution who booked and fully paid for the travel undertaken.

In line with changes made to the ABSTUDY Policy Manual (section 90.3 and 90.6), DHS will book travel that is reasonable in the circumstances. This includes minimising the number of days of school missed by the student due to travel arrangements.

For DHS to pre-book travel:

- bulk travel arrangements must be submitted to DHS at least 6 weeks before the travel date,
- individual travel requests must be submitted to DHS at least 7 days before the travel date, either by the student or their representative.

There may be urgent unforeseen circumstances where these timeframes cannot be met.

To seek reimbursement for travel from DHS, the person or institution must:

- have organised and fully paid for the travel, and
- lodge a claim for reimbursement with DHS before 1 April in the year after the year of study.

DHS will reimburse either the cost of the trip or the cost of the most reasonable travel, whichever is cheaper.

Where DHS pre-books travel, they provide the school or boarding provider a copy of each student's itinerary. It is important that the itinerary is then passed on to the student, their family and others as needed before the trip.

## Other travel costs

The costs associated with overnight accommodation may also be met in certain cases. This includes the reasonable costs of both meals and accommodation. These costs may be met if the student or other approved traveller:

- needs to stay one or more nights at an in-transit location, which the travel carrier does not cover, or
- is unable to avoid staying one or more nights at the travel destination before returning to their usual place of residence.

The number of nights' accommodation that can be approved is determined on a case-by-case basis based on reasonable costs, depending on the number of nights' accommodation that is needed in the particular circumstances.

**Top Tip:** *family members or community members can receive support to attend school events, this can help to improve engagement between school and family.*