



University of Oxford

# GUIDE TO SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS TRAVEL 2020

A practical guide to lower-carbon business travel, brought  
to you by the University's Sustainability Team.

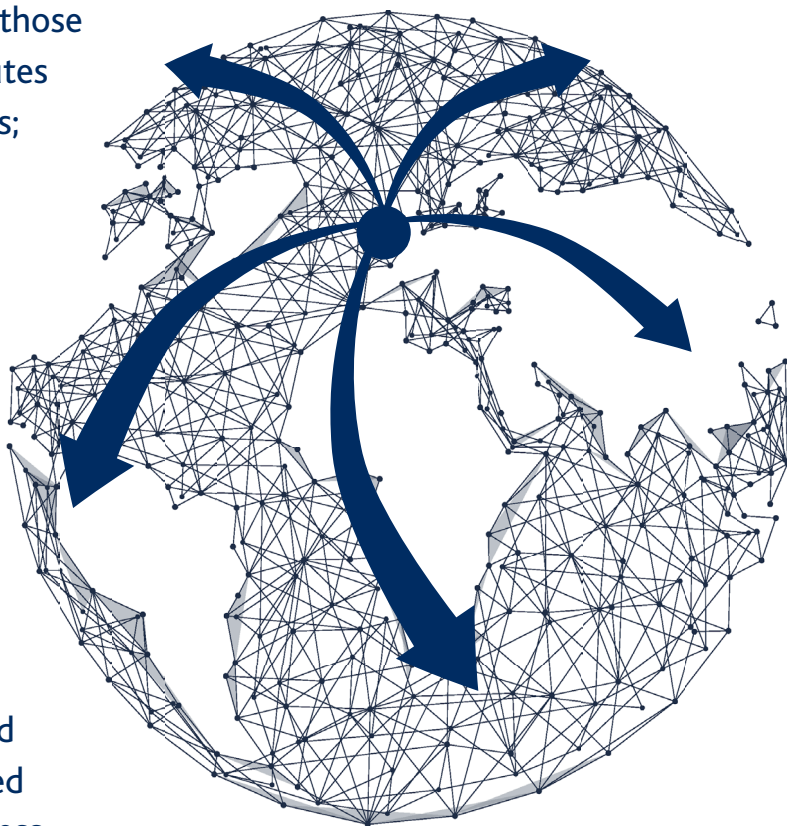
Introduction | Avoid travel | Reduce your travel |  
Travel without flying | Fly when there are no alternatives

# INTRODUCTION

Business travel is often required for those working in academia, but it contributes significantly to our carbon emissions; we have committed to cutting our carbon emissions by 50% by 2030 so we need to make lower carbon business travel choices.

This guide aims to help staff understand the carbon implications of their business travel and reduce their carbon emissions.

We estimate that in 2018-19 around 30,000 tonnes of carbon was emitted from the University's aviation business travel. This is around half the carbon emitted from the University's entire Buildings Estate.



## TRAVEL HIERARCHY

For local travel in and around Oxford, walking, cycling and public transport are the default travel options. Follow the Travel Hierarchy every time you may be asked to travel domestically or internationally beyond Oxford:

### 1. AVOID TRAVEL

### 2. REDUCE YOUR TRAVEL

### 3. TRAVEL WITHOUT FLYING

### 4. FLY WHEN THERE ARE NO ALTERNATIVES



# I. AVOID TRAVEL

The easiest way to avoid emitting carbon is not to travel. Use technology to replace travel by connecting virtually. Avoiding travel saves time, money and carbon. Consider the alternatives:

## VIRTUAL MEETINGS

- Video calls can replace face-to-face meetings
- For convening larger virtual meetings, **Zoom**, **Skype** and **“Teams”** are good options. Useful features include:
  - ‘screensharing’ so presentations or other desktop applications can be seen by the group
  - ‘hand-up’ to make it easy to ask questions
  - ‘chat’ space so individuals can text comments to groups or sub-groups within the meeting
- IT Services can provide further advice **here** or by calling **(01865 6)12345**

## VIRTUAL CONFERENCING

- Consider hosting a virtual conference for all participants
- Find out if your conference offers a remote participation option
- Always ensure conferences you organise provide for virtual participation

### THE HIVE

The Saïd Business School has invested in the Oxford Hub for International Virtual Education (HIVE) the first virtual classroom of its type in the UK and only the second in the world.

The HIVE is a physical space with a 4D high-video wall creating a uniquely immersive learning and teaching experience. The technology is fully interactive so a session lead can address the participants individually or in smaller groups. It is

designed for the presenter to be present in Oxford with up to 84 participants to connect remotely.

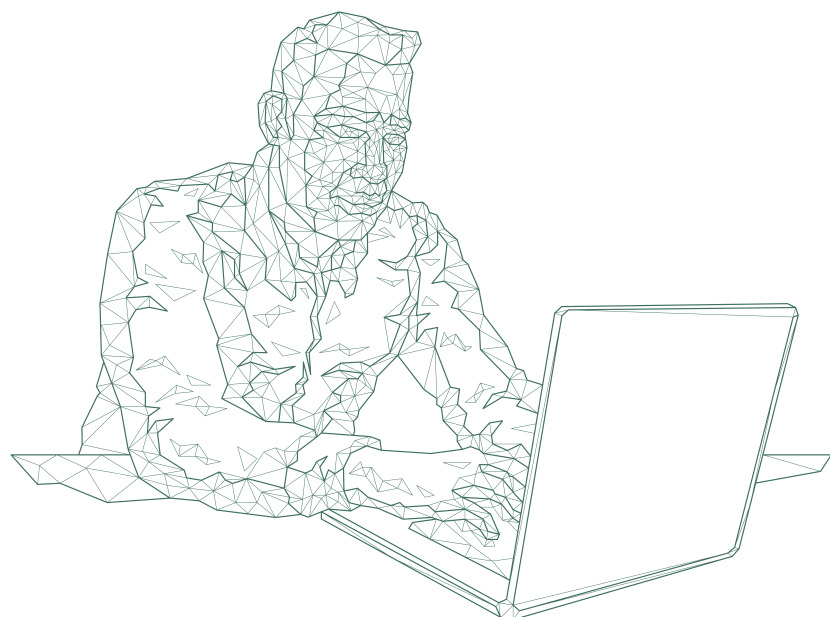
The HIVE can be booked via the Conference Team: **conference@sbs.ox.ac.uk / 01865 288846**

## HYBRID CONFERENCES

A conference organised by the Department of Psychiatry in 2020 was a hybrid conference using ePosters and was live streamed as a hybrid of physical and virtual participation.

Each ePoster was accompanied by a short Zoom session prior to the conference so attendees (physical or virtual) could quiz the presenter which was also recorded for use at the event.

Other options for hybrid conferences include a ‘local hub’ where people in the UK travel by train to meet in person and all other international content is live streamed and recorded.



## 2. REDUCE YOUR TRAVEL

If some travel is necessary, it is still possible to reduce your emissions and save time and money by reducing the number of trips. For example, consider:

- Avoid multiple separate trips to the same destination or region by combining into a single, longer trip
- Minimise the size of your group if you are travelling with colleagues to the same event
- Combine business trips with family and leisure trips
- Ask people who invite you to a conference to speak or for PhD examinations to provide virtual options or allow increased expenses to cover rail and accommodation costs.

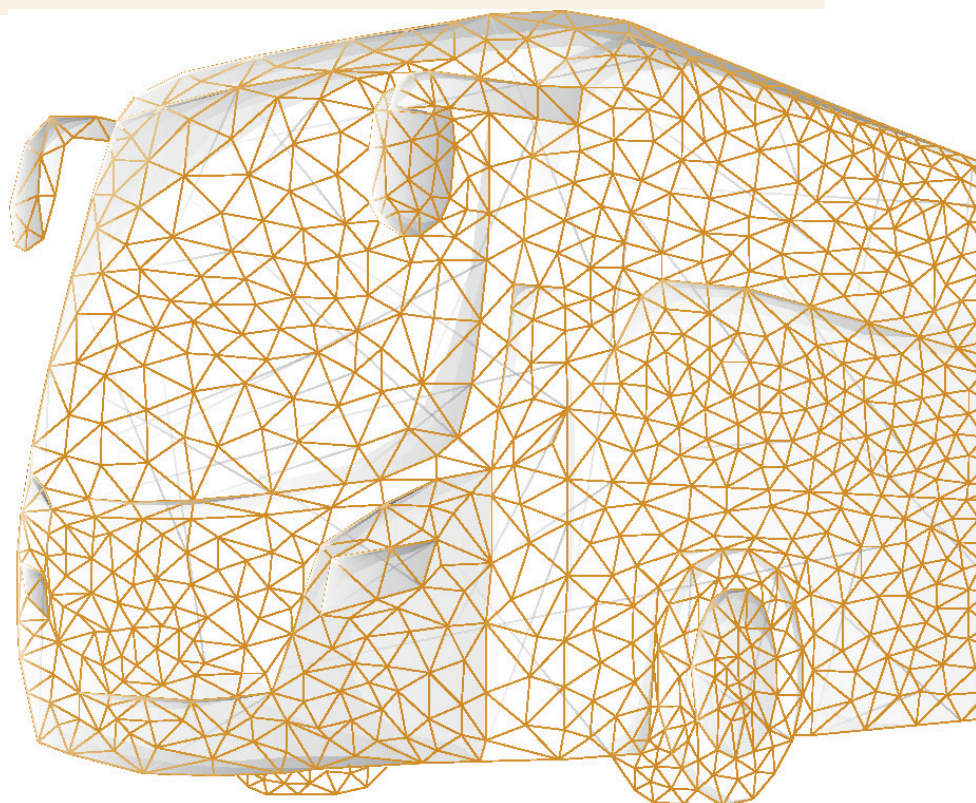
Around 52% of the UK population do not fly at all; 70% of all flights by British citizens were taken by just 15% of the UK population. A growing number of staff and students are choosing their travel carefully,

including some opting not to fly at all. Over 2,100 academics in Germany, Austria and Switzerland have pledged not to fly when their journey is less than 100km.

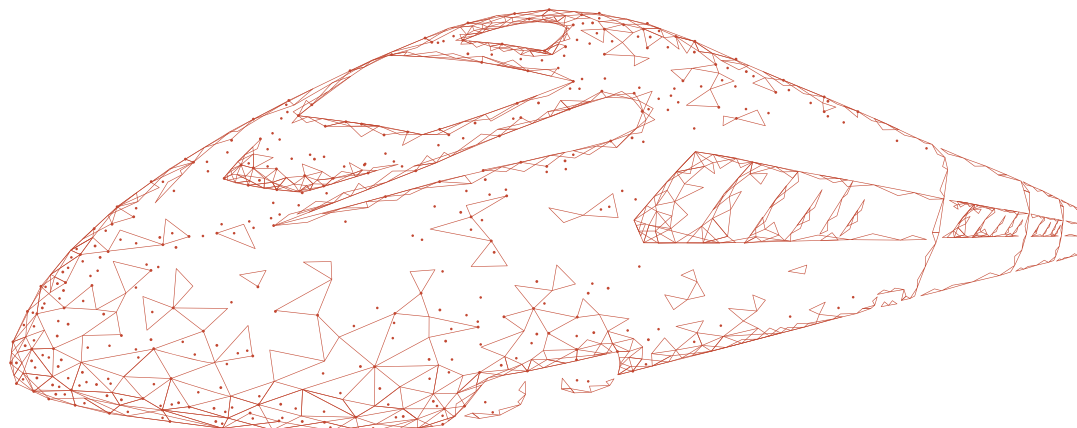
Martin Gallauer, Titchmarsh Fellow at the Mathematical Institute, shares with us how he approaches attendance at conferences:

*"One of the things I typically do is to combine as many events (be it a conference, a seminar talk, or visiting collaborators) as possible into such a trip. For example, a recent Stockholm talk was only the last leg in a 6-week trip around Europe which also included a research visit, two meetings with collaborators, and a conference."*

Professor of Cognitive Neuroscience, Chris Summerfield, has stopped flying for personal or professional reasons. Chris said "I manage this by offering to give talks remotely and taking the train to keynote conferences in Europe aimed at large audiences. Since September 2019 I have received fewer invitations to speak but manage this by recording and publishing talks online and proactively disseminating via twitter rather than waiting for opportunities to present themselves."



# 3. TRAVEL WITHOUT FLYING



If travel is unavoidable, first consider alternatives to flying:

## RAIL

For domestic journeys rail should be your first choice, booked through the University's contracted travel supplier, **Key Travel**. For European journeys, high speed rail should be considered for all **Eurostar destinations**. Sleeper trains are also an option. **The Man in Seat 61** illustrates all international rail options and **Key Travel** can handle your booking requirements. Whilst reducing carbon emissions, rail travel also frees up productive time during the journey. For example taking the train to Paris from Oxford emits 185kg less carbon than flying, with a similar door to door journey time.

## CAR HIRE

Even if your destination is not on a high speed rail network, take the train most of the way and book a hire car for the final leg of the journey.

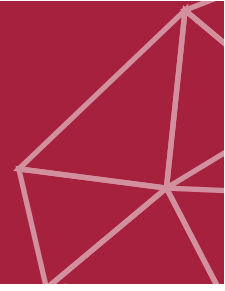
## COACH

An alternative option for many domestic and European journeys, coach travel can also be a viable option.

Illustrated journey from London - Paris - London		
London - Paris	Eurostar	Air France
From	London St Pancras Intl	London Heathrow
To	Paris Gare Du Nord	Charles de Gaulle
Departure time	10:24	11:30
Travel time	2h 33m	1h 20m
Arrival time	13:57	13:50
Travel time	2h 36m	1h 05m
Cost	£101.00	£162.81
Estimated journey time door-to-door from Science Area, Oxford University - Universite Paris Sciences et Lettres Research University, Paris	7h 20m	7h 30m
Estimated total carbon	4.2kg CO <sub>2</sub> e	189.95kg CO <sub>2</sub> e (with Radiative Forcing)

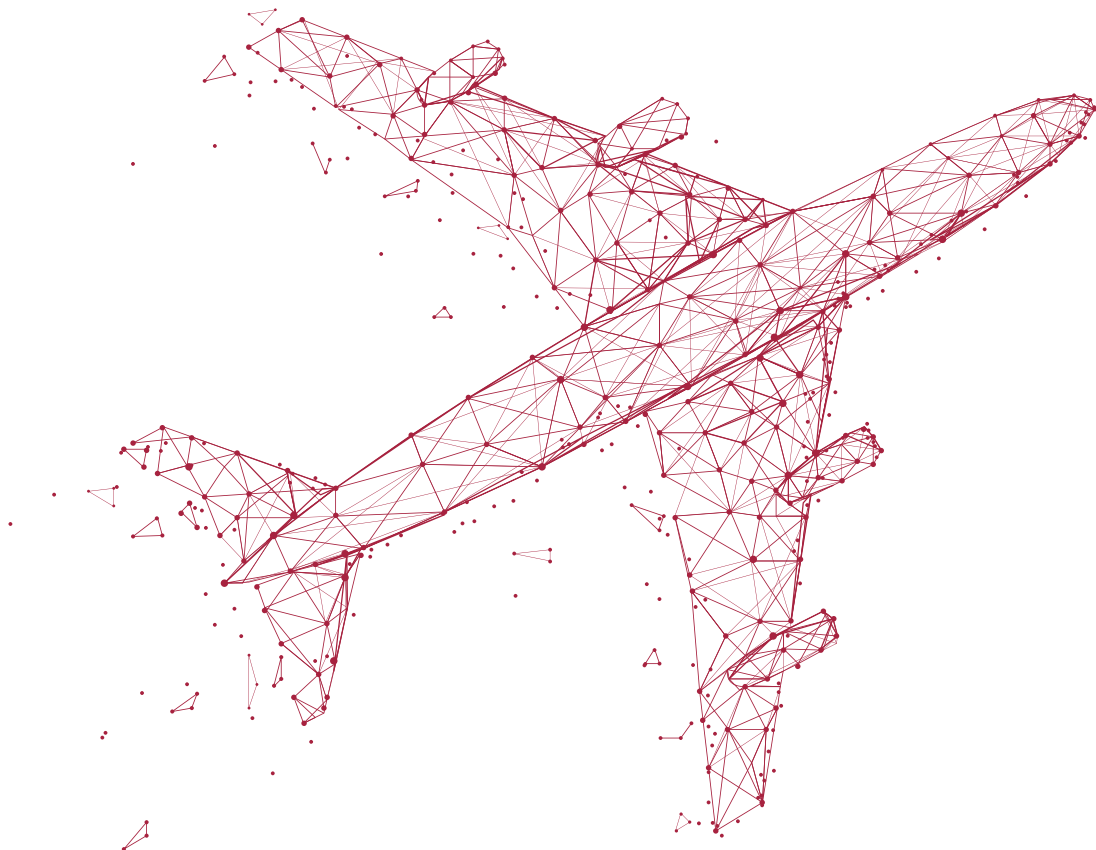
\* Provided by Key Travel, prices correct at January 2020

# 4. FLY WHEN THERE ARE NO ALTERNATIVES



If you still need to fly, you must book through **Key Travel** as this saves the University money and accurately records our business travel carbon emissions. Other things you can do to minimise your flight emissions include:

- **Flying economy**  
This has the lowest emissions per passenger of all classes as each passenger uses less space on the aircraft
- **Choose non-stop, direct flights**  
Multiple take-off and landing manoeuvres and longer distances increase emissions
- **Where possible, select the most fuel efficient carrier**  
The **Atmosfair Airline Index** contains some useful information in this respect
- **Offsetting**  
This is the measure of last resort and should only consider offsetting schemes compliant with the **Gold Standard** offered by providers such as **Atmosfair, Climatecare, Gold Standard, Native Energy and Cool Effect**. Offsetting does not replace the need to reduce flying and still means your trip is generating climate destabilising carbon emissions. The University is considering in-house alternatives to offsetting - look out for further guidance in 2021





## **DR MICHELE VELDSMAN, POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH SCIENTIST IN COGNITIVE NEUROLOGY:**

*"I have become increasingly conscious of my contribution to the climate crisis and decided to drastically curb my flying. To compensate for a potential reduction in collaboration opportunities I built a strong online presence, reaching a much wider audience and resulting in many invitations to collaborate. For example, a public lecture I gave online has been viewed over 33,000 times. I would never be able to reach that many people in person. I am an early career researcher with a young family and have always struggled to leave them to fly across the world, this usually meant bringing my family along at my own personal expense. By limiting my flying, I am now saving money and spending more time with my family, which has been a huge benefit."*

## **CHARMIAN LOVE, SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR IN RESIDENCE AT THE SKOLL CENTRE FOR SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP:**

*"I gave up flying for business in the spring of 2019. At first I found it really bracing to say it out loud because I knew it would then be 'real' and I couldn't go back on it. But I also felt deeply that we can't keep on flying as regularly as so many of us do...and that by making my decision public I would hopefully be encouraging others to think about their flying habits. This is the time when we need to lead by example. I've been struck by the question 'what side of history do you want to be on?' I still have awkward conversations with people who feel they need to be defensive about their decisions to fly when I mention my decision not to. I hate making people uncomfortable so this kind of reaction has been hard to adjust to and I'm still working on how to make this an expression of my decision, rather than a judgement on others."*





**Key Travel** is the University's only preferred supplier for travel handling all bookings including:

Rail, coach and flights

Accommodation

Visas

Car Hire

**Benefits of using Key Travel:**

- Carbon emissions automatically recorded
  - Dedicated team of consultants
  - Full protection of ABTA, IATA, ATOL
    - 24 Hour emergency support
    - Option to hold air and rail fares
- One point contact for changes and refunds
  - Price match promise for airfares
- Saving an average of 60% on booking fee of previously used travel agents
- Saving on average 30% using Academic fares compared to published airline fares (flexibility and baggage allowance included)

For more information on travelling for work see [staff.admin.ox.ac.uk/travelling-for-work](http://staff.admin.ox.ac.uk/travelling-for-work)