

Policy governing business travels by air within the UNIGE

Inform - Reduce/Replace - Compensate

Introduction :

UNIGE is a comprehensive university, internationally recognized and pursuing its missions integratively. Research, one of its three core missions, is, by nature, international. Exchanges, the dissemination of the work done and fieldworks are an integral part of the researchers' lives and require regular travels. Human interaction and unscheduled exchanges of informations, during conferences or network meetings, play an important role, particularly in the development of young researchers' careers. Similarly, the promotion of new research and discoveries in conferences is crucial in a world where it becomes increasingly difficult to follow all the literature. Exchanges, partnerships and institutional agreements between universities from different continents also play an increasingly important role in a globalized society where student mobility is regularly increasing.

Climate change and biodiversity loss are two major challenges for the coming decades in which the academic world is called upon to play a crucial role. They require actions. The creation and transmission of knowledge on the subject, the expertise provided to decision-makers as well as coherent operational actions are the three facets of the same strategy.

The public credibility of academic institutions, which is strong and essential in times of fake news, is backed by a duty of coherence.

Similarly, pressure from the student community, public authorities and the population is leading more and more institutions to take restrictive measures.

The University of Geneva wishes to implement an ambitious policy that takes into account the three above-mentioned, issues with the objective of maximizing its impact in order to significantly decarbonize its activities.

Objective :

The UNIGE pursues an emission reduction policy compatible with keeping global warming below 2° (objective 1.5°), as recommended by the international scientific community, It adopts the following objective:

- To cap its CO₂e emissions from air transport at the 2019 volume level
- To reduce by 50% its CO₂e emissions from air transport by 2030, with compensation accounting for only a fraction of that reduction.

In 2030, the effective reduction effort will be at least of 1/3 of the CO₂e emissions actually emitted on the 2019 basis. The delta allowing for a 50% reduction will be achieved by offsetting.

UNIGE will, as far as possible, offset all emissions from its flights. In order to take into account problems related to reliability, temporality and negative incentives for compensation, it will be affected by a factor of 0.25 in the calculus of the overall reduction.

Example :

- 2019: 10,000 tonnes emitted

- 2030: 6,700 tonnes actually emitted, 6,700 tonnes compensated, with a factor of 0.25 = 1,700 tonnes equivalent -> target of 5,000 tonnes achieved, a 50% reduction compared to 2019

Measures :

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Inform:

Informing requires precise knowledge of the overall volume of emissions from air transport within the UNIGE but also more precisely by department, research team, faculty, type of staff, etc...

To this end, the UNIGE will acquire the necessary tools in 2019 to monitor its consumption and, once it is known, communicate regularly.

Inform and raise awareness among the entire academic community on the environmental impact of air travels , global aviation emissions (3% of CO₂ emitted in Europe according to the European Commission) and aviation emissions in Switzerland (10% of CO₂ emitted in Switzerland according to the FOEN).

Inform on the means available to reduce or replace air travels with cleaner alternatives.

Relay relevant scientific studies on the subject to UNIGE collaborators as well as international initiatives taken by academic institutions in order to initiate a virtuous circle, particularly in the research community, encouraging a cultural change towards low-carbon research practices.

Promote tools to evaluate anyone's movements, such as carbon footprint calculators or transport comparators.

Inform annually each group leader of his/her team's CO₂ consumption and progress.

Reduce / Replace:

Incentive actions :

Develop and raise awareness among all employees of video-conferencing and group communication tools.

Modernize and expand our videoconference room offering with various capacities and with technologies supported by with our partners (LERU for example).

Allow video conferencing during any advisory, expertise or decision-making process. Video conferencing is considered a valid presence at management meetings, such as thesis juries or nomination committees.

Encourage employees to choose direct flights (which are less polluting) and not to travel long distances for a short stay.

Reduce the size of delegations to a minimum for representational travel.

Authorize 1st class for all staff members for train travel lasting more than 4 hours.

Highlight the efforts of entities, labs or services that have significantly reduced their emissions.

Limiting actions :

Without justification, the use of airplanes is not allowed to attend conferences without active participation (board, presentation, session chairing, invitation, poster, etc...).

Without justification, the use of airplanes is not allowed for destinations reachable in 4 hours or less by train from Geneva.

The use of economy class is mandatory for flights in:

Europe (including UK, Scandinavian, Baltic and Balkan countries, Moscow, St Petersburg);

Turkey and the Middle East ;

North Africa ;

Eastern and Central Countries: Armenia, Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan.

Compensate:

Compensation for any flight is the rule at UNIGE.

Professors or group leaders offset their flights and those of their team on their university funds. On request, the Rectorate can finance the compensation for doctoral students. Department and division heads compensate their flights and those of their team from their budgets.

The money intended for compensation is collected and managed by the Rectorate.

Scope of application :

This policy governs business travels by air at UNIGE. This concerns all the flights carried out within the accounting framework of our institution. Persons invited by the UNIGE are subject to the same incentives, restrictions and compensation measures. They also benefit from the same possibilities to derogate from the measures for due

reasons, for example if their application would adversely affect the attractiveness of the institution.

University staff benefiting from an invitation with a free ticket are subject to the rules of the inviting institution.

Calendar:

As soon as this policy comes into effect, steps will be taken to amend the existing directives concerned:

- Ref. 0083, Pay or reimburse travel, hospitality, meals and small expenses.
- Ref. 0043, Remuneration for courses, public conferences and expert opinions.

From 2019, a detailed monitoring of our CO2 emissions will be carried out in order to evaluate our progress towards our objectives. In parallel, awareness-raising, information, incentive actions, as well as a first compensation process will be launched. The actions in the "reduce/replace" area as well as the final compensation process will be evaluated and their implementation scheduled for the start of the academic year in September 2020.

Therefore, someone wishing to justify a derogation from the restrictive measures will be requested to make this demand before the flight.

A monitoring will be organised to assess the evolution of emissions per kilometre from the aviation sector, as well as the evolution of compensation techniques and projects. This monitoring will make it possible to determine each year:

- The calculation of UNIGE emissions for all its flights
- The modification of the compensation factor taken into account in the target (set at 0.25 for 2020)

The measures defined in this policy will be analysed and, if necessary, revised annually in line with the evolution of the institution's air travel emissions.