Mission and Study Abroad Guidelines

Comprehensive Guide for PhD Students

Compiled from DICAR / UniCT Administrative Directives

June 6, 2026

Primary Directive: Supervisor Approval

All requests for missions, conferences, or study abroad periods **must always be approved by your primary supervisor (tutor)** prior to initiation and submission to the administrative portal.

1 Official Regulations and Reference Links

The administrative rules governing travel and reimbursements are strictly defined by the department and the university. Ensure you consult the official documentation:

- **DICAR Rules & Helpful Docs:** https://www.dicar.unict.it/it/rules-and-helpful-docs
- **University Mission Regulations (Decree 2614, 04/07/2023):** https://www.unict.it/sites/default/files/files/D_R_%202614%20del%204_7_2023_%20Regolamento%20missioni%20con%20conformita%CC%80_signed.pdf

2 Destinations and Visa Procedures

2.1 Non-EU Destinations

Study abroad periods or missions located outside of Europe (e.g., Japan, Australia) are strictly **permitted**. The primary requirement is that your supervisor explicitly agrees with the choice of destination and its relevance to your research.

2.2 Visa Applications and Associated Costs

Expenses related to acquiring a visa for your destination are **financially supported** by the mission budget, subject to specific procedures:

- **Embassy Travel:** If the host country requires an in-person appointment and you cannot apply online, you must seek authorization from both your tutor and the administration to undertake a separate, preliminary mission specifically to travel to the embassy.

- **Payment Method:** All visa application fees must be paid electronically. Cash payments are not acceptable. You must retain the electronic payment receipt.
- **Reimbursement:** Once the preliminary embassy mission is complete, you must apply for a refund, attaching all incurred expenses (travel to the embassy, food, accommodation if necessary, and the visa application fees).

3 Scheduling: Travel Buffers and Extensions

3.1 Travel Days and Partial Attendance

- **Travel Buffers:** You are permitted to add travel days immediately before and after the official event. For example, if a conference runs from February 12th to 16th, you may request the mission for February 11th to 17th. Expenses for these specific travel days are covered.
- **Approval Scope:** When submitting your request, your supervisor must approve the full timeframe, encompassing both the travel dates and the event dates.
- **Partial Attendance:** It is administratively acceptable to attend only a portion of an event (e.g., registering for a mission from February 13th to 15th for an event that spans February 12th to 16th).

3.2 Personal Extensions

You may choose to stay at your destination longer for personal reasons, but financial coverage is strictly limited:

- **Living Expenses:** Costs incurred during the personal extension days (hotel, meals, local transport) are **not covered**.
- **Flight Reimbursement Rule:** The flight can be reimbursed only if the altered travel dates do not result in a more expensive ticket. **Mandatory Requirement:** At the time of booking, you must print out or save a PDF of the flight cost for the *exact official dates* of your trip. This document serves as proof that your extended stay did not cause the university to spend more money.

4 Financial Procedures and Expenses

4.1 Advance Payments (Anticipo)

If you cannot cover the initial costs of the mission out-of-pocket, you may request an advance payment.

- **Cost Estimates:** To receive an advance, you are required to provide formal cost estimates (flights, accommodation) prior to the trip.
- **Coverage Limits:** The advance payment is usually less than the total projected amount. It is designed to cover major expenses but will never exactly match the final total due to unpredictable incidental costs.

- **Final Settlement:** Any difference between the advance received and the actual money spent will be calculated and settled during the final reimbursement request after you return.

4.2 Special Events and Insurance

- **Conference Dinners and Special Meals:** These are reimbursable **only** up to the maximum daily budget allocated for meals. Please refer directly to the University Mission Regulations to check the meal budget limits for your specific destination (Italy vs. Abroad).

- **Flight Cancellation Insurance:** The reimbursability of optional flight cancellation insurance is currently unconfirmed. It is highly advised to contact the administration before purchasing such add-ons.

5 Accompanying Persons and Shared Expenses

If you choose to travel with partners, family members, or friends, the university requires a strict separation of your professional expenses from their personal expenses.

- **Accommodation:** It is strongly recommended to obtain entirely separate receipts. However, if you must share a hotel room and receive a single invoice, you must explicitly state in your reimbursement request that you are claiming only 50% of the total hotel cost.

- **Meals (Critical Rule): Avoid getting a single shared receipt for meals.** You must always ask the restaurant for a separate receipt that covers only your portion of the food. The remainder of the bill is considered a personal expense and requires no documentation.

6 Modifications, Insurance, and Emergencies

6.1 Changes to Approved Missions

Once a mission has been formally approved on the university portal, it becomes locked and cannot be edited by the user.

- **Unforeseen Changes:** If your schedule changes (e.g., a flight is changed from February 11th to February 12th due to airline issues), you cannot edit the portal.

- **Required Action:** You must immediately email the DICAR Director and administration at dicar.missioni@unict.it to request a formal change of dates.

- **Reasoning:** This is mandatory because the university purchases specific travel insurance for you based on the exact, approved dates of your assignment. If your dates change without notifying the office, you may travel uninsured.

6.2 Accidents and Emergencies

If you encounter accidental expenses or severe emergencies (sickness, natural disasters, urgent early return) while on a mission:

- There is no standard, automated procedure for this on the portal.
- You will need to make a special, documented request directly to the Director of DICAR explaining the emergency and providing proof of the unavoidable extra expenses incurred.