Offsetting carbon emissions from your Wellcome Trust funded research travel – information and guidance

The Wellcome Trust's statement on carbon offsetting (first published Feb 2020)

"Wellcome is committed to reducing the environmental impact of the travel we fund. We recognise that some travel is necessary to carry out research. But we want the people we fund to look for every opportunity to do things differently, so that travel only happens when it's essential and it has a carbon neutral impact".

- **From 1st October 2021, The Wellcome Trust requires all grant applicants to offset all research related travel carbon emissions** as part of their grant funding conditions. **The trust will cover the cost** of this requirement as part of their research grant funding.
- Please see the Wellcome Trust offsetting requirements for more information.
- Offsetting can be a controversial area, and as such can attract significant reputational damage if approached incorrectly. Leading academics from the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge have developed the Oxford Principles for offsetting and EAUC Carbon Coalition scheme for Universities.

> ***Carbon Offsetting:*** *the process of compensating for carbon dioxide emissions arising from an organisation's activity, by participating in schemes designed to make equivalent reductions of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere e.g., sequestering carbon dioxide through growing new forest.*

- To meet the minimum standards that avoid risk to reputation and ensure authentic carbon sequestration in line with the Oxford Principles, the University of Bath has created an offset mechanism through the EAUC Carbon Coalition scheme using a mix of 93% UK Woodland Carbon Code accredited offsets and 7% of Climework's direct air carbon capture and storage accredited offsets.

Guidance for including the costs in new grant applications

The 4 steps Wellcome Trust grant funding applicants need to follow:

1. Reduce carbon from travel as far as possible by:
    a. Replacing travel with video conferencing
    b. Reducing the number of people travelling
    c. Consolidating the number of meetings to reduce travel
    d. Combining multiple meetings in one trip
    e. Agreeing a meeting place that allows the largest number of attendees to avoid flying
    f. Choose lower carbon forms of transport e.g., trains

2. Calculate the carbon of both the avoided and remaining necessary travel once travel related carbon has been reduced as far as possible using carbonfootprint.com. You must use this calculator, as it has been verified by the University of Bath Climate Action Team.
    a. If replacing flights by rail, you'll need to subtract the flight related carbon, and add the rail related carbon for the journey.
    b. Carbon Offsetting for conference related travel should be calculated and added separately to the offsetting figure for all other types of travel.

3. Apply a price of £70 per tonne of carbon dioxide emitted from the residual travel. This will need to be added to your PAM costing under the 'Travel' heading, with conference-related travel added separately (as in point 2b).

4. Apply for this level of funding within your grant application. You can use the following pre-prepared text to demonstrate that you're meeting the funding conditions (replacing all the sections highlighted in yellow with the information relevant to your project):

"The University of Bath follows the Oxford Principles on offsetting, using the EUAC Carbon Coalition carbon offset scheme, delivered through "MyCarbon". Through this scheme we purchase accredited offset certificates with a portfolio balance of 93% UK Woodland Carbon Code, and 7% Climework's direct air carbon capture and storage. The University uses the carbon calculator carbonfootprint.com to calculate the carbon emissions of its Wellcome Trust funded research travel. This has 2 significant advantages over the ICAO carbon calculator. It includes the radiative forcing factor widely acknowledged to significantly increase the climate change impacts of the carbon emissions from flying and it includes all modes of travel. As such the University of Bath's offsetting scheme exceeds the requirements of the Wellcome Trust.

This project has sought to first reduce its planned flights replacing 8 return flights from London to Dhaka and 7 international flights to various locations with virtual meetings or national rail travel instead. This has reduced the carbon footprint by 71.6 tCO2e (47% reduction).

The remaining footprint total is 81.4 tCO2e made up of 10 return flights from London to Dhaka and 7 return international flights to various locations.

To offset 81.4 tCO2e, in line with the approach recommended by the University of Bath Climate Action Team, the cost will be £5,698 @£70/ tCO2e."

Once awarded your grant, the post award team will request your carbon emissions from travel completed every 6 months (October, and March) for the previous six months. The team will provide an excel template to help you record your travel during each period. This will include your transport mode, destination, and number of trips. We will then share this breakdown with the Carbon Offset company "MyCarbon" who will send an invoice to the University centrally detailing how much to take from each project code.

For projects which finish during the 6-month window, the post-awards team will follow the exact same process as above but, on an ad-hoc basis.

If you have any questions about the University of Bath carbon offsetting position and process, please contact the Climate Action Team on climateaction@bath.ac.uk

If you have any queries about where to include these costs in your proposal, please contact the Pre-Award team pre-award@bath.ac.uk

If you have any queries about how to ensure your offsetting costs are charged correctly to an existing project, please contact the Post-Award team post-award@lists.bath.ac.uk