

# 6 Tips to Address Air Travel at your Institution

## 1

### Define your Problem

Many different circumstances can contribute to high levels of, or unnecessary air travel in FHEIs. By properly defining the problem, we are pinpointing a cause.

Pinpointing a cause can streamline our efforts in reducing air travel and make solutions more relevant and tailored. For example, Glasgow Caledonian University have begun work to address staff air travel between their Glasgow and London campuses. Although air travel at GCU is used for all sorts of purposes, focusing on reducing air travel caused by staff travel between campuses allows GCU to streamline their efforts by looking into how they can incentivise rail travel through booking agents and look at restructuring timetables to give staff more time to travel by train. These solutions may not work for another cause of air travel at the institution, but are streamlined and relevant to this particular issue.

Defining your problem can also avoid strategic misalignment: identifying a specific problem can allow you to effectively review your institutions policies to avoid any clashes.

## 2

### Map your Stakeholders

Mapping stakeholders allows you to gauge who will be affected by, or have an interest in initiatives to reduce air travel and find relevant and appropriate solutions.

One way you can map your stakeholders is by

1. identifying your stakeholders
2. prioritising your stakeholders (who is interested, who has power) and
3. understanding your key stakeholders (what are they motivated by? Who are they influenced by?)

University of Glasgow is understanding their stakeholders better by running consultations to learn more about their priorities and also resistance to initiatives to address and reduce air travel.

## 3

### Map Points of Intervention

Points of intervention are areas where efforts to address air travel may be most effective. Sometimes, points of intervention are a lot sooner in a procedure or system than we anticipate. For example, Glasgow Caledonian University are looking into how timetabling and scheduling may affect the need for air travel amongst staff travelling between their Glasgow and London campuses. If staff had more time between lecturing, would they be able to take the train instead of flying?

Wageningen University and Research are asking staff to consider whether or not they need to attend an overseas trip, meaning the point of intervention would be when an individual is considering travelling, not when they have already decided to travel and are booking flights.

For students, air travel to institutions may be booked months before classes start. Do we instead encourage students to take trains, or, at least inform them of the impact of air travel when they receive an offer admission?

# 4

## Get Creative

It is important to engage stakeholders and your institution's community to build support for your initiative. The more creative your initiative, the more engaging.

The University of Glasgow ran a "Green Travel Hackathon" in December 2019 to creatively include staff and students from all disciplines in the process of developing a travel guidance. During the Hackathon, participants were given 6 personae and asked to explore their behaviour regarding air travel and how one can address it. Results were fed into developing their travel guidance.

Both Wageningen University and Research and University of Glasgow are looking into how virtual conferences and better IT and AV services can support staff in reducing their air travel to overseas conferences, and also support other institutions in avoiding air travel to the Netherlands and Scotland.

Glasgow Caledonian University is hoping to engage staff and students by potentially running a "No-Fly June" where the institution tries to limit flights in a fun competition-style initiative.

# 5

## Don't Scare or Push, Support and Motivate

Reducing or avoiding air travel can be difficult for many, and for some, just not yet possible. If your initiative relies on spurring individual, bottom-up change, rather than on institutional and material changes enforced structurally, it is important to be considerate of barriers individuals may face in reducing air travel. University of Glasgow is developing a guidance to reducing air travel, rather than a policy. They hope to ease staff into reducing their air travel and to allow them time to get comfortable and plan ahead. They would rather take time to develop more tools and resources (ie. technology) to support and motivate staff properly before implementing a policy.

Wageningen University and Research is looking into developing an online community on their intranet where staff and students can share positive experiences of avoiding and reducing air travel.

Both these examples highlight how we can encourage staff and students to avoid and reduce air travel positively and with adequate support.

# 6

## Hone your Data

Getting good quality data on flights associated with your institution is very important in properly addressing air travel. All three institutions mentioned above are in contact with their respective travel providers to better collect travel data based on flight bookings from their staff.

Glasgow Caledonian University is trying to encourage all staff to book business trips with their travel provider in order to collect more accurate and comprehensive data. They are trying to understand why some individuals choose to book trips independently and map ways to incentivise booking with providers.

Wageningen University and Research has put in place a rule that bookings must go through the official travel provider, although there are still a few individuals who book independently. Also, they have also put in place a rule that staff must travel by train if the journey is under 6 hours (there is an escape clause for special circumstances). Now, they are concerned with making sure they have the expertise to collect data regarding train journeys as it is different from flight data; they emphasis the importance of understanding train data. Like Glasgow Caledonian University, they are also trying to better understand the group who book independently and what drives them to do so.

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