University Vehicle Usage Policy and Procedure

Section 1 - Preamble

(1) Charles Darwin University ('the University', 'CDU') owns, leases, hires and otherwise has access to vehicles to support operational requirements. These vehicles must be used safely, efficiently and responsibly, in compliance with the University's governance documents and relevant legislation.

(2) The directives outlined in this document are designed to keep drivers, passengers, and members of the community safe and to ensure that University vehicles are readily available to all authorised drivers for legitimate business or study purposes.

Section 2 - Purpose

(3) This document outlines the framework for the use of University vehicles for University business. It applies to all vehicles leased or owned by the University.

(4) This document should be read in conjunction with the Work, Health and Safety Policy, the Travel Policy, the Delegations Policy, and the delegations in the Delegations Register.

Section 3 - Scope

(5) This document applies to authorised drivers of University vehicles, as defined in this policy and procedure, from the following cohorts:

a. employees on University business or teaching and learning activities, including the delivery of approved CDU TAFE vehicle training courses;
b. Higher degree by research (HDR) and Honours students where vehicle usage directly relates to a fieldwork or research project;
c. approved CDU contractors in specific authorised circumstances; and
d. approved others, including for limited personal use in exceptional authorised circumstances.

(6) This document also applies to the employees responsible for approving University vehicle usage and employees responsible for the management of University vehicles, including maintenance and daily operational requirements.

(7) No other groups within the University community are eligible to become authorised drivers of University vehicles.

(8) The University recognises that from time to time, authorised drivers may need to hire vehicles externally from commercial or third-party providers. The approvals, driver certification, licence and safety requirements, and adherence to applicable laws outlined in this policy and procedure and associated University policies and procedures remain applicable to externally sourced vehicles.

This policy document may be varied, withdrawn or replaced at any time. Printed copies, or parts thereof, are regarded as uncontrolled and should not be relied upon as the current version. It is the responsibility of staff printing this document to always refer to the Governance Document Library for the latest version.

Section 4 - Policy

(9) All drivers of University vehicles need to hold a valid driver's licence or tickets appropriate to the vehicle class being used. It is the driver's responsibility to notify the University of any changes to their licence or ticket. Licences and tickets should always be carried by all individuals and must be produced upon request by University staff and/or authorities. University officials have the right to validate any licences and tickets using relevant state/federal government validation tools.

(10) Drivers of University vehicles must comply with the directives of this policy and procedure. Failure to do so will be investigated and may result in disciplinary action.

(11) Drivers must be authorised to drive a University vehicle, and each booking must be done timeously and approved by an appropriately delegated employee. HDR and Honours students' usage must be approved by their Faculty Pro Vice-Chancellor (PVC).

(12) The University requires drivers to operate University vehicles safely and responsibly. Vehicles are highly visible and often display University branding, and must be used in a manner that reflects the Code of Conduct - Employees or Code of Conduct - Students, as applicable. All reports of unsafe or irresponsible driving behaviours will be investigated.

(13) The cost of repair for any damage to University vehicles, other than normal wear and tear, including but not limited to insurance claim excess, cosmetic damage repair and malicious damage, will be charged back to relevant faculties and departments. Property and Facilities (PF) will cover all normal operational and routine maintenance costs.

(14) Drivers must be aware of the effects of fatigue and take breaks every two hours. Drivers should consider staying overnight if the driving time exceeds normal working hours. All solo drivers driving long distances or for more than 4 hours require a fatigue management plan approved by their supervisors. Refer to Fatigue Management on the Waterhole for more information.

(15) The University is not responsible for the loss or damage to any personal property left in University vehicles.

(16) Drivers must ensure they satisfy training and certification requirements specific to the vehicle type, class and the nature of the usage.

(17) Where possible, users are expected to carpool to maximise the availability of University vehicles, and to support sustainable practices within the University.

(18) All University vehicles must be used only for conducting CDU-related activities. Personal use of vehicles for activities other than authorised University travel is strictly prohibited unless specifically authorised in writing. Drivers must not transport passengers who are not engaged in University business (such as family and friends) in University vehicles, unless in an emergency or where written approval has been obtained from the Director Property and Facilities.

(19) Point-to-point transportation, such as commercial flights, should be used for interstate travel and remote destinations, unless there are specific approved business or research requirements which necessitate the use of a University vehicle.

(20) The availability of University vehicles is limited. Bookings should be made as far in advance as possible. Where demand exceeds supply, Property and Facilities may need to reallocate bookings in coordination with the end user. When reallocating vehicles, the following will be considered:

a. the ability for approved University events (such as open days) to be serviced;
b. the ability for core CDU teaching and learning activities to be delivered (such as CDU TAFE four-wheel drive

(4WD) driving courses and regional and remote training programs);

c. the availability of suitable alternatives;
d. safety implications, such as ensuring 4WD vehicles are allocated for travel on unsealed roads and vehicles with suitable Gross Vehicle Mass (GVM) and Gross Combined Mass (GCM) allowance are allocated for towing; and
e. other impacts on University operations.

(21) Property and Facilities are not responsible for the cost of commercial or third-party vehicle hire when University vehicles are unavailable. Commercial or third-party vehicle hire remains the responsibility of the relevant department or faculty.

(22) Long-term University vehicle hire of more than two weeks must be agreed to in writing by the Director Property and Facilities.

(23) All University vehicles are tracked, and driver behaviour is monitored. Misuse and improper operation of the vehicles will result in disciplinary action in accordance with the Charles Darwin University and Union Enterprise Agreement 2025 and the Code of Conduct - Students. Records from the vehicles' telematics systems or dashcams will be presented as evidence in any internal or external disciplinary proceedings.

(24) All University-owned vehicles are subject to the following replacement cycles:

a. All small general vehicles – 5 years or 100,000 km, whichever comes first;
b. All 4WDs - 5 years or 300,000 km, whichever comes first;
c. All vans – 5 years or 300,000 km, whichever comes first;
d. All trucks and buses – 15 years or 700,000 km, whichever comes first;
e. All machinery type vehicles (including forklifts, mobile cranes, excavators, skid steers, backhoes, bulldozers and any other civil – 10 years or 10,000 hours, whichever comes first;
f. All trailers – 10 years; and
g. All boats – 10 years or 5000 hours.

(25) If a vehicle is deemed beyond economical use, it can be disposed of by Property and Facilities in accordance with the Fixed Assets Policy and Procedure.

Standard versus Non-standard University Vehicle Bookings

Standard University Vehicle Bookings

(26) Standard University vehicle usage refers to bookings of a duration of less than four (4) hours that do not meet the definition of travel in the Travel Policy. Travel is defined as a destination more than 50km from the traveller's normal place of work or residence, or where an overnight stay is necessary away from the traveller's normal place of residence.

(27) Standard University vehicle bookings are for travel on sealed roads only.

(28) Where possible, University vehicles should be collected and returned within regular campus hours. Where necessary, drivers may collect vehicles from 7:00 AM each day and return them to the University vehicle compound before 6:00 PM each day.

Non-standard Vehicle Bookings

(29) Non-standard University vehicle usage is subject to further approvals. Non-standard usage includes, but is not limited to:

a. usage where the trip is defined as travel in the Travel Policy. i.e., where the trip is more than 50km away from the traveller's usual place of work or residence or where an overnight stay is necessary;
b. usage on unsealed roads;
c. usage by Higher Degree by Research (HDR) candidates or Honours students for approved field work or research;
d. usage for field work;
e. usage for regional and remote travel;
f. usage by CDU Student Accommodation Resident Leaders; and
g. usage of vehicles by CDU TAFE for delivery of approved training programs.

(30) 4WD University vehicles, vessels, all-terrain and utility terrain vehicle usage is considered non-standard usage. These vehicles are available on a restricted basis. Vessel usage will be subject to the additional requirements outlined in the CDU Vessels section of this document.

(31) Drivers may home garage University vehicles for certain non-standard vehicle bookings. This includes before or after a fieldwork trip, or a trip designated as travel per the Travel Policy, where:

a. the departure time is before 7:00am or the arrival time is after 6:00pm; and
b. the vehicle can be secured off the street.

(32) University vehicles home garaged after hours must be returned to the location agreed to at the time of booking by 8:00am the next business day. Home garaging may attract Fringe Benefits Tax.

(33) University vehicle bookings spanning multiple days must only be made where consecutive days of vehicle use are required.

(34) Speciality equipment such as satellite phones, required for remote travel and field work must be sourced separately through Digital Technology Solutions (DTS).

Section 5 - Procedure

Roles and Responsibilities

Driver Responsibilities – Standard and Non-standard Bookings

(35) University vehicles must only be operated by drivers authorised in accordance with this policy and procedure, except in an emergency where other persons with a valid and current driver's licence may drive the vehicle.

(36) Drivers must drive safely and comply with all applicable laws and the directives contained within this policy and procedure. Drivers found in breach of applicable laws are personally responsible for all penalties imposed by the Northern Territory Traffic Act 1987 (or interstate equivalent). Failure to comply with this policy and procedure will constitute a breach and may lead to disciplinary action.

(37) Drivers must hold a valid Australian driver's licence or recognised international licence appropriate to the vehicle class. A copy of the licence must be provided on request. Interstate drivers who have relocated to the Northern Territory permanently must obtain a Northern Territory issued licence within three (3) months of relocating, in accordance with the Northern Territory Traffic Act 1987. Limited exceptions to licence requirements apply to University vehicle usage by students during the delivery of approved CDU TAFE training courses.

(38) Drivers must operate University vehicles in a safe, responsible and efficient manner which is in keeping with vehicle manufacturer specifications.

(39) Drivers must comply with the Work Health and Safety Policy.

(40) Drivers must collect and return University vehicles in the time slot and location agreed at the time of booking, unless agreed otherwise with the Director Property and Facilities. Repeated late collections and returns will constitute a breach of policy.

(41) Drivers must check the operation of all features at the time of University vehicle collection and advise Property and Facilities of potential defects immediately.

(42) Drivers must complete the logbook supplied at least once per day of University vehicle usage.

(43) Drivers must not operate a University vehicle if they are under the influence of drugs or alcohol (blood alcohol reading must be zero (0.00)) or are medically unfit to do so.

(44) Drivers are not permitted to fit booster seats, car seats or other child restraints in University vehicles, unless written permission to transport children and appropriate child restraints has been provided by the Director Property and Facilities.

(45) Drivers are not permitted to transport pets or other animals in University vehicles except assistance/support animals and animals required for research or University business. All animals transported must be appropriately and safely restrained.

(46) Drivers must accept and pay any infringement notices or fines incurred and report these to Property and Facilities.

(47) Drivers and passengers are prohibited from smoking inside University vehicles.

(48) Drivers and passengers must not remove any component of a University vehicle (such as spare tyres or jacks).

(49) Drivers must not home garage University vehicles, unless they meet the circumstances outlined in the non-standard bookings section of this policy and procedure and approval is obtained for insurance purposes.

(50) Drivers must refuel vehicles in accordance with the manufacturer’s specifications and information contained in the driving pack supplied in the vehicle.

(51) University vehicles must be returned clean and tidy, and with a full fuel tank. Cleaning costs are the responsibility of the driver’s organisational unit or faculty.

(52) Failure to comply with the directives outlined above constitutes a breach of policy and may lead to disciplinary action.

Driver Responsibilities – Additional Requirements for Non-standard Bookings

(53) Drivers travelling in University vehicles to remote locations or for fieldwork must ensure they seek the necessary approvals specific to their trip, which include obtaining pre-approval and approval for travel in accordance with the Travel Policy, an approved Field Work Travel Plan which includes rationale for the vehicle selection, and a completed risk assessment.

(54) Eligible students (HDR candidates and Honours students) must obtain prior approval from the PVC of their faculty prior to booking a University vehicle.

(55) Drivers travelling on unsealed roads (or where driving a 2WD vehicle would pose a risk or damage the vehicle) must use a 4WD University vehicle.

(56) Drivers must complete approved training courses prior to operating certain University vehicles, including:

a. 4WD vehicles where usage occurs on an unsealed road;
b. marine vessels, the use of which is in accordance with the requirements of the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA); and
c. All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) and Utility Terrain Vehicles (UTVs), including side-by-sides, quad bikes and motorbikes.

(57) Drivers must complete a Vehicle Inspection Checklist prior to vehicle usage.

(58) Drivers must not operate University vehicles before sunrise or after sunset in regional areas unless documented in the driver's approved risk assessment or prior written supervisor approval has been obtained.

(59) Drivers required to use the towing functionality on University vehicles must ensure:

a. the University vehicle manufacturer's towing limits are adhered to, including GVM and GCM;
b. all indicators, brake lights and brake systems are tested before use;
c. the vehicle being towed is in good condition, and the towing vehicle is suitable for the vehicle/equipment being towed; and
d. loads are restrained as required.

(60) Drivers must not tow non-CDU vehicles or equipment, or use non-CDU vehicles to tow, unless written approval has been obtained from the Director Property and Facilities. The driver must also ensure that the above-mentioned conditions are met.

(61) Drivers must forward-plan for refueling in remote locations where the supplied CDU fuel cards are not accepted.

CDU Vessels

(62) CDU vessels are available for use by employees and HDR students from the Research Institute Environment and Livelihoods (RIEL) for approved fieldwork and research, and by CDU TAFE for the delivery of approved training courses.

(63) Vessel operation must be strictly in accordance with Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) certification requirements which includes:

a. successful completion of accredited Maritime Operations and Coxswain training specific to vessel usage requirements;
b. adherence to area specific Safety Management System (SMS) procedures; and
c. inclusion on the vessel specific Skippers List.

Driver Responsibilities – Breakdowns, Accidents and Damage

(64) All University vehicles are registered for roadside assistance with AANT in the event of a breakdown. Contact details for AANT can be found on the windscreen sticker and in the driving pack. Drivers using University vehicles in remote areas not serviced by AANT should become familiar with local emergency work instructions and ensure their approved travel plan or risk assessment includes provisions for breakdowns.

(65) All repairs and maintenance of University vehicles are arranged by Property and Facilities. Only in emergencies may University vehicles undergo repairs or maintenance without facilitation by Property and Facilities, where repairs may be carried out by an authorised provider (such as AANT in the event of a breakdown). Drivers must immediately report urgent repairs or maintenance to Property and Facilities.

(66) Drivers must refer to the driving pack for instructions to follow in an emergency.

(67) Drivers should notify Property and Facilities and their supervisor if they are involved in an accident or a breakdown by contacting (08) 8946 6500.

(68) Drivers must complete an Accident, Incident, Illness, and Injury Report following an accident or breakdown.

(69) Drivers must report University vehicle damage to Property and Facilities. Damage to University vehicles will be investigated.

(70) Drivers must ensure University vehicles are locked and parked in a safe and secure location when not in use.

(71) Drivers must ensure University vehicles are returned in a clean state with all personal items removed.

(72) Failure to comply with the directives outlined above constitutes a breach of policy and may lead to disciplinary action.

Delegated Approver Responsibilities

(73) All standard and non-standard University vehicle usage must be approved by an appropriately delegated employee, in accordance with the Delegations Register.

(74) Additional approval will be required for University vehicle usage as follows:

a. Faculty Pro Vice-Chancellor for eligible HDR and Honours student usage;
b. the Vice-Chancellor for personal use in exceptional circumstances; and
c. the Vice-Chancellor, the Vice-President Corporate, or the Director Property and Facilities for CDU Student Accommodation Resident Leaders.

(75) Delegated approvers are responsible for:

a. reviewing eCentre requests to become an authorised driver through the Application to Drive a CDU Vehicle eform;
b. reviewing requests from drivers for standard University vehicle hire;
c. reviewing requests from drivers for non-standard University vehicle hire and ensuring all pre-travel approvals, field work plans and risk assessments are in place prior to the commencement of the booking; and
d. retaining evidence of the above.

(76) Delegated approvers must also sight the valid and current licence of the authorised driver prior to the booking.

Property and Facilities Responsibilities

(77) All University vehicles are managed by Property and Facilities. The management of University vehicles includes, but is not limited to:

a. daily operational requirements relating to bookings;
b. registration;
c. servicing;
d. insurance;
e. maintenance;
f. safety checks;
g. purchasing new or replacing existing University vehicles; and
h. updating contact and billing details for University vehicles.

(78) Property and Facilities will ensure that every campus has an appropriately authorised and trained person available to approve bookings in the Fleet Management System and to manage the drop off and collection of University vehicles for servicing and maintenance, repairs and cleaning.

(79) The management of University vehicles (including but not limited to the functions listed above) without involvement of Property and Facilities is prohibited unless prior written approval is obtained from the Director Property and Facilities, or in an emergency scenario as defined in this policy and procedure.

(80) Property and Facilities are not responsible for ensuring University vehicle usage has been approved and that the appropriate documentation is in place. This responsibility lies with the driver and their delegated approver (and any additional approvers outlined in clause 74).

Becoming an Authorised Driver and Booking a University Vehicle

(81) Employees on University business, HDR students, Honours students where the University vehicle use directly relates to their fieldwork or research, and the other pre-defined groups articulated in this policy may apply to become authorised drivers and book a University vehicle.

(82) Drivers must ensure pre-travel approval and risk assessments are in place for non-standard University vehicle usage. In most cases, approval should be obtained prior to booking a University vehicle, but in certain limited circumstances, this may need to occur before the booking commences.

(83) Drivers will be required to hold a license appropriate to the class of vehicle they will be booking.

Becoming an Authorised Driver

(84) Drivers must complete an Application to Drive a CDU Vehicle eform to become an authorised driver.

(85) The application to drive a CDU vehicle will workflow to the driver's supervisor for approval.

Booking a University Vehicle

(86) Once a driver is authorised via the Application to Drive a CDU Vehicle eform, they may book a University vehicle using the Fleet Management System online booking system. An instructional email will be sent to drivers to guide them in accessing and using the Fleet Management System.

(87) Drivers must have written approval for their trip in accordance with this policy and procedure. In most cases, approval should be sought prior to booking a University vehicle, but in certain limited circumstances, this may be required before the booking date.

(88) The main driver is required to input details of their trip into Auto-Central. The main driver may nominate an alternate driver to operate the University vehicle. The main and alternate drivers are the only persons permitted to operate the University vehicle.

(89) For non-standard bookings, the main driver is responsible for ensuring they have the necessary documentation in place, such as pre-travel approval, approved fieldwork plans and approved risk assessments.

(90) Drivers may only book one University vehicle at a time.

Fringe Benefits Tax

(91) The provision of a University vehicle to an employee may attract Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT). Typically, FBT is imposed when a vehicle is:

a. considered a 'car' under FBT legislation definition;

b. available for private use by an employee; and
c. not used in a minor, infrequent and irregular manner.

(92) The FBT legislation clarifies that when a car is 'home garaged' by the employee, it is 'available for private use' regardless of circumstances.

(93) The FBT is not payable by the employee, however, a reportable fringe benefit amount to the ATO may be declared for that employee when a car is solely available for private use by that employee for a significant duration of the FBT year (1 April - 31 March). Please contact Finance for advice.

Breach of Policy and Procedure

(94) A written warning will be issued to drivers and their supervisor who repeatedly breach this policy and procedure.

(95) Drivers may be prohibited from booking University vehicles at the discretion of the Director Property and Facilities.

(96) Significant breaches will be subject to a further investigation and disciplinary action in accordance with CDU policies and procedures.

Section 6 - Non-Compliance

(97) Non-compliance with governance documents is considered a breach of the Code of Conduct - Employees or the Code of Conduct – Students, as applicable, and is treated seriously by the University. Reports of concerns about non-compliance will be managed in accordance with the applicable disciplinary procedures outlined in the Charles Darwin University and Union Enterprise Agreement 2025 and the Code of Conduct – Students.

(98) Complaints may be raised in accordance with the Complaints and Grievance Policy and Procedure - Employees and Complaints Policy - Students.

(99) All staff members have an individual responsibility to raise any suspicion, allegation or report of fraud or corruption in accordance with the Fraud and Corruption Control Policy and Whistleblower Reporting (Improper Conduct) Procedure.

Status and Details

Status	Not Yet Approved
Effective Date	To Be Advised
Review Date	To Be Advised
Approval Authority	Vice-Chancellor
Approval Date	4th November 2026
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Penny Szybiak Vice-President Corporate
Implementation Officer	Anthony Hornby Director Property and Facilities
Enquiries Contact	Anthony Hornby Director Property and Facilities Property and Facilities

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Risk assessment" - A systematic process of evaluating potential risks that may be involved in an activity. It is made up of three separate parts: risk identification, risk analysis, and risk evaluation.

"Faculty" - An organisational and academic unit in the University that delivers courses and conducts research.

"Organisational unit" - A faculty, centre or other academic unit; a department, or other administrative unit within the University.

"University" - Charles Darwin University, a body corporate established under section 4 of the Charles Darwin University Act 2003. The University is comprised of the various faculties, CDU TAFE, organisational units, and formal committees, including the governing University Council and Academic Board.

"University vehicle" - All registered passenger and commercial vehicles owned, leased, or otherwise held by the University and used for University business or study. This includes but is not limited to 2WD and 4WD cars, all terrain and utility terrain vehicles, buses, trucks, trailers, plant vehicles and equipment, utilities, vessels, boats, and watercraft.

"Student Accommodation" - Student Accommodation refers to CDU owned accommodation and formally affiliated third party accommodation only.

"Governance document" - means policy or procedure published in the Governance Document Library. Policies and procedures are collectively called ‘governance documents’ and are often referred to as ‘policy’ or ‘University policy’.