Guidance for securing flights

If you wish to return to the UK/your home country, you should seek to book flights now! Options are becoming increasingly limited, but with persistence and flexibility it is still possible to secure a flight in most parts of the world.

Things to note:

1. It is possible that countries may announce that flights are no longer permitted to land/depart at short notice and as such, flights may be cancelled.
2. For long-haul routes, the number of hub airports (for transit) are reducing.
3. You need to consider locations where you would not wish to be stranded en route either short or long-term, when planning your route back.
4. You need to persevere and have patience; you may have to check many routes to find a viable option.
5. You need to be prepared to travel to an airport that is away from your closest airport and be prepared for multiple stops en route.
6. It is possible that by the time you get to the end of the booking, the flight has been filled / cancelled and you will have to start the process again.
7. Check the FCO Travel Advice in relation to your planned route, as there may be relevant guidance around transiting / travel restrictions through particular countries - https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice
8. Check the individual airlines to see what their travel expectations or restrictions are. Eg: Thai Airlines are requiring all passengers to test negative for Covid-19 before passengers can board a flight.
9. Check local Consular/Embassy advice and sign up to their social media channels, quite often they provide updates on availability of flights and in country information https://www.gov.uk/world/embassies
   https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/foreign-commonwealth-office/about/social-media-use#worldwide-foreign-office-social-media-accounts

What is covered under The University of Manchester Insurance with respect to flights?

- You will be able to make a claim through the UoM travel insurance only if you had a pre-booked flight home which you need to bring forward to leave early, the difference in the costs incurred will be assessed and considered by the Insurance. Where a pre-booked flight cannot be changed or has been cancelled by the airline without the provision of a full refund, the cost of a new flight will be assessed and considered by the Insurance. Make sure you keep a record of all correspondence relating to the flight arrangements, specifically evidence that you could not change or obtain a refund for existing flights.
- If you do not have a pre-booked flight home, the cost of purchasing a ticket to leave is not covered under the UoM insurance.
What support we can offer

If you have not managed to find any suitable flights, you can contact AIG Assist directly to see if they can assist you (if you are eligible under the insurance ie. you had a pre-existing flight booked that is no longer viable) but please be aware that they may only have limited access to flights at the current time - **AIG Europe: +44 (0)1273 727 416; corporateassist@aig.com**

The University’s access to flights is likely to be as limited as your own under the circumstances. If you fall within one of the categories listed below, we will do our best to find someone to work with you in helping you to source flights:

- You are a student who has disclosed a pre-existing mental or physical medical condition;
- You are a student who is considered to be in a particularly high-risk location eg; a location where there is a recent history of significant civil unrest/instability and/or poor healthcare provision. Countries where we currently have students that we could consider in this category are: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Columbia, Cuba, The Gambia, Honduras, Jordan (the healthcare provision is good but has been overwhelmed by the refugee crisis), Kenya, Mexico, Morocco, Panama, Peru, Romania, Russia, Thailand, Turkey. (if you believe your host country should be on this list please contact us and we will check)

If you are in one of these categories then email IPOincidentsupport@manchester.ac.uk describing your situation. Please title your email ‘Request Support Securing Flights’.

Please note if AIG or UoM are helping you to source flights, it is extremely important that you continue to search for flight availability yourself as well and keep your assigned contact at AIG/UoM informed as to your progress.