



MAKING YOUR OWN WAY HOME: 2013/14

General:

Your Gateway from Antarctica will normally be Falkland Islands or Punta Arenas.

At the end of your work in Antarctica, BAS will move you from Antarctica to your Gateway and will also normally make arrangements from your Gateway directly to UK. However, you do have the option of making your own way home from your Gateway.

The following gives some practical advice and guidance for staff on making your own travel arrangements when you have finished working in Antarctica.

Q1. I am thinking of making my own way home. Will BAS give me any financial help?

BAS has a responsibility to provide you with the means to return home from your Gateway. Check whether the ticket we issued to you for the outward journey also covers your return journey.

If the ticket DOES cover return travel, then you will be able to arrange with the travel agent to change the dates of travel to suit your plans. Please note that you will be responsible for funding any difference between the cost of the ticket provided by BAS and the actual cost of your return; you will not be entitled to further financial assistance from BAS. If in doubt, consult Operations & Logistics (OPAL) Travel Team.

If you were NOT given a return ticket and wish to make your own arrangements for your return journey, you will be entitled to reimbursement from your outbound Gateway. Rates for 2013/14 season are:

Falkland Islands to UK	£846
Punta Arenas to UK	£846
Ascension Island to UK	£492
Cape Town to UK	£715
Christchurch to UK	£715

If you leave Antarctica by a different Gateway, you can also make your own arrangements. Rates for other routes will be confirmed on application to the OPAL Travel Team.

Q2. When do I have to decide if I want to make my own way home and who do I inform?

A minimum of **FOUR WEEKS** notice to OPAL Travel Team is required.

Check that you have sufficient funds to cover costs of travel, accommodation, etc. You are advised that you should carry travellers' cheques or credit/debit cards rather than cash when making your way through South America/South Africa.

Investigate the route you intend to take and confirm rates, insurance and flexibility of travel. Once you are satisfied that the deal suits you, book it and inform the OPAL Travel Team that you are making your own way home.

If you were issued with a return ticket, you should contact the travel agent to amend it. You will be responsible for any costs associated with those amendments.

If you were not issued with a return ticket, you will be entitled to a re-imbusement, so please remember to request this when you contact the OPAL Travel Team. The reimbursement will be made into your BAS Personal Account (or your bank account if you request it) normally after your journey has begun. Please be aware that because the reimbursement is normally retrospective, the money will not be available when you pay for your travel arrangements.

Q3a. What travel agencies are there in the Falkland Islands to help me make my bookings from Falkland Islands/Ascension Island/South America?

You may use a travel agent of your choosing. BAS uses the following:

International Tours and Travel (IT&T)
PO Box 408
Stanley, Falkland Islands
FIQQ 1ZZ

Tel: +500-22041
Fax: +500-22042
E-mail: lm.itt@horizon.co.fk
Web address: www.falklandstravel.com

Please ensure that you have any relevant visas, health & travel insurance, etc prior to departing to your countries of choice (including Ascension Island). The travel agent can assist.

Q3b. What travel agencies are there in Cape Town to help me make my bookings through South Africa?

BAS does not use a travel agent in Cape Town. Use the Internet to identify a reputable agent in South Africa, offering the travel in which you are interested.

You will need to ensure that you have any relevant visas, health insurance, etc prior to travelling to your countries of choice. Remember to take out travel insurance. The travel agent can assist.

Q4. On completion of my contract in Antarctica, I want to travel independently before I go home, but I'm worried about arriving at the Gateway with no accommodation. What should I do and can you help?

You will be accommodated by BAS from arrival at your Gateway until the date on which BAS would have flown you home. This is a minimum of one night (sometimes longer) and will give you sufficient time to find alternative accommodation.

The accommodation provided is at BAS' discretion and may be on board a BAS ship. If you choose not to use the BAS arranged accommodation for this period then you will become responsible for your own costs from the time that you arrive at your Gateway.

When you confirm you are making your own way home, the OPAL Travel Team will confirm how long BAS will accommodate you at your Gateway.

Q5. Who can help/advise me on accommodation after BAS has stopped providing it for me?

You can either decide to find your own accommodation after arrival in Stanley/Punta Arenas/Cape Town or you can request the travel agent to do it for you or you can book on-line directly with hotels, etc.

If you are visiting Ascension Island, it is a condition of your Visitor's Permit that you **MUST** arrange your accommodation before arriving on the Island.

Q6. I'm travelling independently from the Gateway. How do I get to the airport?

In FI, ask IT&T (the travel agent) to arrange transport to the airport, which will be invoiced to BAS. Alternatively, you can arrange to use a local taxi at your own expense (these can be expensive so check prices before travelling).

If you are travelling from Punta Arenas/Cape Town, you will need to arrange your own travel to the airport. You may retrospectively claim reasonable costs on production of receipts.

Q7. I thought I was going to travel independently, but now I've changed my mind and want to go straight back to the UK. What can you do to help?

Have you previously contacted the OPAL Travel Team to confirm that you are making your own way home and/or does SOUTH show you as "own arrangements"? Check on this link: <http://basweb.nerc-bas.ac.uk/south/>

- If the answer is "No" you need do nothing. You had not declared your intention, so BAS will continue to book your flight.
- If the answer is "Yes", then tell the OPAL Travel Team immediately of your change of plan.
 - As long as you do this before the date on which BAS responsibility has ended (ie: the day on which BAS would have flown you home), then we will book your travel to UK. ***Please note that the date of your onward travel will be dependent on the availability of suitable economy seats on the aircraft.***
 - If you had already paid for your independent travel before changing your arrangements, you will be responsible for meeting the costs of cancelling that ticket. You will also cease to be eligible for a cash alternative payment.
 - BAS will not normally compensate you if you change your mind about travelling independently, so you should take out travel insurance against cancellation.

Q8. My passage from Antarctica was delayed, which means I can't meet my intended independent travel plans. What is the position?

When booking your ticket (or changing the return portion of a ticket issued by BAS) you are strongly advised to ensure that all travel is *fully flexible* and that you take out insurance to cover cancellation. BAS has no responsibility for compensating you if a delay in your passage from Antarctica affects your independent travel plans.

If, as a result of delays in return from Antarctica, you have to cancel your independent travel, you can ask the OPAL Travel Team to book you a flight to the UK on the most direct route. BAS will cover the cost of the direct flight to UK but has no responsibility for compensating you for cancellation of your independent travel plans.

Q9. I have a piece of equipment to transport home from Antarctica and wish to take it on my flight. Will you pay for it? Is there an alternative?

You will normally be expected to consign it to a BAS ship. It must be accompanied by the appropriate documentation for transportation by sea to UK.

BAS will not pay for personal equipment to be transported from Antarctica by air.

If your equipment is work-related, then contact your line manager who may agree to pay airfreight charges. You or your line manager will be required to contact OPAL for details on how to consign the cargo. If your line manager does not agree to fund the airfreight, then it must be consigned to the ship.

Please note that you will be required to collect sea freight from BAS Cambridge normally in mid to late May. If you will not be back in UK to collect it, you must make arrangements for someone else to do so for you. You will be required to inform OPAL of that person's details so that he/she can be contacted on your behalf.

Q10. Why does the amount of cash reimbursed to those making their own way home vary depending on where you travel from?

As far as possible, flexible return tickets are issued, so only those who were issued with a single ticket will be entitled to a reimbursement for the return journey.

Reimbursement amounts are published in September each year in advance of the season to which they apply. This allows you to assess well in advance whether you can afford to travel independently.

The MoD rates for seats on flights from the Falklands to the UK are normally set at the beginning of the financial year. This is the amount used as the reimbursement figure if you choose to make your own way home from the Falklands or Punta Arenas.

The cash equivalents from other Gateways (eg: Cape Town, New Zealand, etc) are calculated by averaging the costs from at least 3 x different sources.

Q11. My passport runs out shortly after completion of my visit to Antarctica. Does this prevent me from travelling? Can BAS help me get it renewed?

If your passport runs out shortly after completion of your visit to Antarctica you will not be able to go travelling.

You will need to have a passport with validity of at least 6 months from the date you are due to **ARRIVE BACK** in UK, including any independent travel time (so if you are leaving Station on 1 April and going travelling until 1 June, then your passport must be valid until at least 1 December).

It is not possible to renew a full passport outside the country of origin of the passport (eg: a UK full passport can only be renewed in UK). It is sometimes possible to obtain a temporary passport in FI for UK citizens but this will only be valid on a flight directly to UK on MOD flight. It will not be valid for travel elsewhere.

Do not send your passport from Antarctica to BAS or to your home for renewal; it is illegal to attempt to renew a passport whilst you are out of the country.

To cover any possible contract extensions that may happen once you are in the Antarctic and avoid problems with Immigration in other countries, you should ensure that when you travel to Antarctica your passport is at least:

- **Winterers:** Valid for 3 years before its expiry date.
- **Summer Staff:** Valid for 12 months from the date you are due to start your return journey.

Caroline Lewis
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