

VANDERBILT  UNIVERSITY  
MEDICAL CENTER

**Policy:** Faculty & Staff Travel-Revision 2

Chapter	Operations
Policy Number	SSS-TR0914
Approval Date	1/27/16
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Supersedes	12/1/15

Applicable to					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Clinical</b>	<b>Research</b>	<b>Instructors</b>	<b>Residents &amp; Fellows</b>	<b>Advanced Practitioners (APRN &amp; PA)</b>	<b>Staff</b>
Faculty – Assist and Above	Faculty – Assist and Above				
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:					
Lead Author & Content Experts					
Lead Authors: Naji Abumrad, Dan Beauchamp, Dai Chung, David Penson, Reid Thompson, Bess Wildman					
<b>Specific Education:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO					

**I. Purpose:**

This Section of Surgical Sciences *Faculty & Staff Travel Policy* is provided in accordance with Vanderbilt University travel policy. This policy provides additional clarifications and restrictions. This policy governs travel for:

- Faculty – MD and PhD
- Residents and Fellows
- Research Staff as required/funded by grants/contracts
- Administrative Staff

It is the responsibility of the faculty or staff traveler to communicate to the Department Chair or designee to obtain timely review and approval for time away or travel. Local travel within the region of the VHAN Network for activities (outreach, marketing, program development, educational conferences) that are planned by the department or by Vanderbilt University are considered Vanderbilt work activities. Absence from clinical activities such as clinic sessions or the faculty member’s procedural day must also be requested through the Provider Time Away portal/tool and must be approved in advance.

***Participatory travel*** is defined as travel in conjunction with an event in which the physician, resident or staff member is presenting, presiding, being honored or is involved in an official capacity with the organization or representing Vanderbilt in an official capacity such as performing a development or recruiting efforts. Participatory travel will be reimbursed by the home Department per Institutional guidelines. Number of approved days for participatory travel will be set by Chair for each Department but are not to exceed total days away allowed under Section of Surgical

Sciences and Vanderbilt policies on External Activities and additional Vacation time as set by the Department and Sick leave as defined in the Faculty Manual.

*Non-participatory travel* is defined as travel for meetings etc. in which the physician, resident or staff member are attendees. Approved non-participatory travel will be reimbursed by the home Department per Institutional guidelines up to the following limits:

- Assistant Professor-Professor \$2,000 per year maximum reimbursable expense, 10 days absence from on campus faculty duties
- Non Physician Practitioner - \$ 1,650 per year, 5 days

The Departments in Section of Surgical Sciences will reimburse expenses incurred during official business, if the expenses are properly authorized, reasonable, appropriately documented and submitted for reimbursement within the institutions travel policies and processes.

## II. Policy:

Regardless of purpose of travel, it must be communicated and approved by your chair or designee. Approval for travel is contingent upon availability of funds, clinical coverage, fulfillment or expected fulfillment of financial and productivity expectations of the individual, as well as assessment of the value of the trip together with other priorities. See additional clarification under the Section policy for *Faculty Vacation and Time Away*.

Professional Travel for attending physicians will be approved according to the above guidelines and if the following additional criteria are met:

- a. Sufficient departmental funds are available for travel that is requested and approved at least 6 weeks in advance of the travel. Exceptions may be made for extraordinary circumstances by the Department Chair.
- b. There are sufficient faculty physicians available for coverage of clinical service responsibilities. There should be a faculty member at the assistant professor or greater rank available for Metropolitan Nashville practice locations, but if coverage exceeds the geographic limits of Metro Nashville, then availability of another attending surgeon for coverage is required. If multiple requests are received for the same meeting, priority will be given to those participating in the meeting.
- c. If multiple requests are received for non-participatory travel, priority will be determined by the Department Chair.
- d. Total external activities, professional travel, sick time and vacation days will be considered when approving requests.
- e. All time away impacting clinics or other clinical time such as allocated OR time must be recorded in the Provider Time Away system and appropriate clinics closed or alternately covered in accordance with established policy. Requests for Provider Time Away made less than 42 days prior to the absence are not approved unless there is a personal or family illness, emergency, or other compelling reason for such

absence. **Requests to cancel clinics with less than 42 days of notice must be approved by the Department Chair at time of request or by the Division Chief in the absence of the Chair.** Faculty providers are expected to make up missed clinics and surgical procedures that are cancelled by the provider with less than a 42 day notice.

Travel for Advanced Practitioners, residents and staff should be discussed with the Chair or immediate supervisor to determine coverage needs prior to submitting a travel authorization to the Chair. Similar coverage and time away expectations exist for Advanced Practitioners and Residents and Fellows. For Residents and Fellows travel will be approved according to programmatic specialty guidelines given by ACGME and departmental recommendations. First priority will be given to those who submit, and have accepted, their administrative, clinical and basic science research efforts.

### III. Guidelines

Travel approval is required prior to the booking of any travel expenses. Travel expenses made prior to approval are the financial responsibility of the traveler and may not be reimbursed. This includes, but is not limited to registration, hotel, rental car and air reservations. All airfare, rental car and hotel reservations are to be made through the Concur online booking tool, or directly with World Travel Services (WTS) and purchased with a personal credit card. Registration fees for conferences are paid by the traveler with a personal credit card after receiving travel approval. If lower rates for hotel accommodations are available through a conference room block rate, these may be booked directly by the traveler with the hotel or through the conference housing bureaus. Due to safety and security reasons, private rentals (e.g., Airbnb or VRBO) are prohibited for business travel. (Reference *Vanderbilt Medical Center Travel Policy* <https://vanderbilt.policytech.com/dotNet/documents/?docid=5267>)

All travelers are expected to exercise good judgment on behalf of Vanderbilt and should to avoid unnecessary expenses. The following guidelines apply to all approved Section/department travel, regardless of funding source. Expenses in excess of the limits set forth below are the responsibility of the traveler and are not reimbursable using departmental funds.

- a. Meal reimbursement is based on actual expense and should not exceed \$100 per day per approved attendee. Itemized receipts should accompany any request for reimbursement for meals. Any meal expenses over these limits are the responsibility of the traveler. Original itemized receipts and proof of payment, i.e. credit card receipt should be uploaded into the Concur system.
- b. Unless expressly for approved recruitment, research collaboration or other legitimate business purposes, payment for group meals for non-VU personnel is

- not reimbursed. Such requests and justifications will be automatically referred to the department chair for review and also to the chair of the Section of Surgical Sciences for approval.
- i. If a group meal of Vanderbilt University approved attendees is included for full reimbursement, a list of those VU attendees must be uploaded or otherwise documented into the Concur system.
  - ii. Other VU attendees included in the group meal may not submit an expense for the same meal if already covered by the person paying for the group.
- c. Every effort should be made to take advantage of lower conference rates for registration and hotel accommodations. Many hotels offer discounted rates for education institutions or are set at a meeting rate. Such rates should be requested upon registration. If hotel block rates are not available and a higher rate is anticipated, prior approval must be obtained or reimbursement will be at the block rate.
  - d. Tips for maids, bell hops etc. are considered unallowable and thus, will not be reimbursed.
  - e. Expenses for travel to attend conferences of workshops with the sole purpose of earning CME credits are generally considered a personal expense and are not reimbursable. At their discretion, Chairs/Chiefs may authorize up to \$2,000 per year per faculty member at the Assistant Professor – Professor level. Any exceptions to this are to be determined by the Departmental Chair and recommended by that Chairperson for approval by the Section Chair.
  - f. Alcohol is considered a personal expense and is not reimbursable.
  - g. Foreign Travel requests without grant funding must have strong justification and approved by both the Departmental Chair/Division Chief and the Chair of the Section
  - h. Airline travel upgrades are not reimbursable expenses.
  - i. Most of the time, it is more economical to use taxi cabs and/or public transportation rather than a rental car for professional travel. Automobile rental will not be reimbursed without clear justification of the need for a rental instead of another mode of transportation.
  - j. Valet parking will not be reimbursed. Airport parking will be reimbursed at the current short-term rates posted on BNA website, currently \$21/day.
  - k. Additional absence days beyond arrival the day before a meeting that begins in the morning and departure more than one day after completion of the meeting are considered personal expense and should also be counted as vacation days. These are not eligible expenses for reimbursement.
  - l. Other than meals, social activities and travel outside the meeting and hotel venues, even if associated with the meeting, are considered personal expense and are not reimbursable.
  - m. Requests for reimbursement for travel must be submitted in a timely manner within 21 days of return from travel. Detailed receipts are expected to support any reimbursement requested. Review of travel documents for completeness and accuracy is expected by traveler.

- n. Any travel that exceeds prior approval by  $\geq 10\%$  will require a more detailed justification for cost over-runs and may be disapproved.

Departments and Divisions may have further guidelines and restrictions, please check with your Administrator. All individuals who travel on behalf of the Department or approve expenses incurred by those who travel are responsible for knowledge of these policies.

#### **IV. References:**

1. The Medical Center travel policy  
<https://vanderbilt.policytech.com/dotNet/documents/?docid=5267>
2. Conflict of Interest and Commitment Policy  
[https://medschool.vanderbilt.edu/faculty/files/faculty/public\\_files/FINAL\\_COIPolicyEffective8.24.12%20.pdf](https://medschool.vanderbilt.edu/faculty/files/faculty/public_files/FINAL_COIPolicyEffective8.24.12%20.pdf)
3. Section Faculty Vacation and Time-Away Policy
4. The Medical Center Concur Travel System:  
[https://sso.vanderbilt.edu/idp/startSSO.ping?PartnerSpId=concur\\_vumc](https://sso.vanderbilt.edu/idp/startSSO.ping?PartnerSpId=concur_vumc)
5. Provider Time Away System:  
<https://timeaway.mc.vanderbilt.edu/timeaway-web/>

#### **V. Approval:**

Dr. R. Daniel Beauchamp, Chairman  
Section of Surgical Sciences  
Vanderbilt University Medical School

Date: 1/27/16