

## Travel Policy

Vanderbilt University is an institution of higher learning with a commitment to education, discovery, patient care, and research. Resources of the University should be thought of first and foremost as invested in this mission.

Expenditures of University funds for travel must occur in furtherance of this mission, and a business purpose must exist for each instance of expenditure. The University, as a charitable organization, also has a fiduciary responsibility to ensure its resources are used prudently and that individuals do not incur inappropriate or excessive expenses, or gain financially on business trips.

To ensure sound business practices and proper reporting, travel expenses must comply with federal regulations and sponsored agreements, particularly federal cost regulations under OMB Circular A-21, tax regulations under the Internal Revenue Code and National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) regulations. Toward that end, the traveler is responsible for understanding this policy before planning and commencing travel for the university. The traveler must complete and submit appropriate forms in a timely and accurate manner, accompanied by sufficient documentary evidence to demonstrate that the expense was incurred, reasonable and business-related.

Vanderbilt appreciates the efforts and sacrifices made by those who travel on University business and is committed to meeting the needs of those travelers by paying for reasonable and necessary travel expenses incurred by the traveler that are not paid for by another party.

This travel policy applies to faculty, staff, visiting scholars, students and non-University personnel traveling on or using funds administered by Vanderbilt. Some schools or divisions of the University may have more restrictive controls on travel. In no instance, however, shall a school or division have less restrictive travel policies than those described herein.

Travel is a privilege and must be approved in advance. Faculty and staff use Form 60-002-523 Authorization for Official Travel to request approval for travel. Students use Form 60-002-658 Student Travel Form to request approval for travel. Travel Authorization forms must be approved prior to any trip, remain within the individual's home department, and should be retained until the filing process of the travel expense report is complete. The approved travel expense report and supporting receipts should be sent to the Disbursement Services Department or the Department of Finance for reimbursement. Detailed instructions on the use of the various travel forms can be found at: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/procurement/disbursement/training.shtml>.

Official travel is defined as movement on official business of the University from one's home or normal place of employment to another destination, and return from there either to one's normal place of employment or to one's home. Commuting between one's home and regular place of employment is not official travel.

The Procurement Office has negotiated contracts and discount pricing for many of the travel-related expenses above. Faculty, staff, and students should utilize these approved suppliers. Full details can be found on the Travel Website - <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/travel>.

### **I. Travel Type Definitions**

#### **A. Domestic Travel**

Domestic travel includes travel within and among any of the fifty states of the United States, the District of Columbia, the commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the United States Virgin Islands. . The traveler should refer

to the grant or contract award documentation and other applicable external regulations when charging a restricted grant or contract (cost center which begins with a "4").

### **B. Local Travel**

Local travel includes business travel within Davidson County. Expenses associated with local travel may be reimbursed by demand check with appropriate supporting documentation. Individuals may be authorized for recurring short-distance travel to neighboring counties or to nearby destinations via a standing travel authorization. The standing authorization should be signed by an appropriate authority and include an explanation of the circumstances necessitating the recurring short-distance travel. In no circumstance shall the term of a standing travel authorization extend beyond one year. All approved standing travel authorizations must be on file in the traveler's home department before associated reimbursements are submitted.

### **C. International Travel**

International travel is defined as any travel other than domestic travel as defined in this policy. International travel supported by University funds should be approved in the same manner as domestic travel. International travel supported by sponsored program contracts and grants may require prior written agency and/or internal approval. Travelers should refer to applicable grant or contract regulations to determine whether prior agency approval is required and if other restrictions apply. Individuals whose travel is supported by federal funds should follow the guidance provided in the Fly America Act, <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/ocga/vupolicies/FLYAMERICAAct.pdf>, in regards to using American flag carrier airlines.

Generally, travel-related insurance coverage on international travel is similar to that described for domestic travel. However, special circumstances such as an extended stay could change the scope of coverage. It is recommended that travelers consult the Office of Risk and Insurance Management to discuss special circumstances and verify insurance coverage, prior to international travel.

## **II. Transportation**

### **A. Commercial Air Travel**

Commercial air travel expense is reimbursed on the basis of actual cost incurred by the traveler using normally traveled routes. Travelers should select the type and class of services available to accomplish the travel at the most economical rate. If an airline provides business class or first class seating and the length of an individual flight segment is over four hours, the traveler may petition his/her Vice Chancellor, or delegate per Appendix A, and with this approval purchase a business or first class ticket. First class travel for medical reasons must be approved by Occupational Health prior to obtaining executive approval and is allowable on federal grants. No institutional funds may be used for upgrade coupons, tickets, etc. for any flight of four hours or less. All approvals should be documented and attached to the Travel Expense Report. If approval is not obtained in advance for the use of first-class transportation, reimbursement will be reduced to the estimated coach fare available at the time of ticket booking.

In addition to the cost of the plane ticket, additional reimbursements shall be made for reasonable and prudent baggage fees, premium fly date surcharges, and ticket change fees. Although allowed, travelers should plan accordingly to avoid premium and change fees whenever possible. Changes should be pursued only for the benefit of the University's business, not for personal convenience alone. Original receipts must be submitted with the Travel Expense Report.

Reimbursements will not be approved for airline travel insurance premiums, cost of airfare if a traveler's accumulated frequent flyer miles are used, or for "early bird" check in fees. Travelers may be able to obtain reduced airfares by arriving early to or departing late from the travel destination. In such cases, additional food and lodging costs (or possibly additional time away from work) should be considered in determining the total cost of various alternatives. Guidelines should be established at the departmental level to determine when longer trips are justified by reduced airfare costs. In the event that extended trips are taken to obtain decreased airfares, specific circumstances regarding the duration of the trip should be clearly documented (as an attachment) to the Travel Authorization Form and should also be submitted with the Travel Expense Report.

Airline tickets should be purchased at the lowest published fares available. Vanderbilt University authorizes ticket purchases only in accordance with accepted airline industry practice. Tickets must be used for travel by the person for whom they were purchased. Traveling under another person's name may result in the forfeiture of insurance rights.

**B. Non-Commercial (Private and Corporate/State Owned) Aircraft (Fixed Wing and Rotary including Helicopters)**

Vanderbilt faculty and staff are prohibited from utilizing non-commercial (operating or using private/corporate/state owned, rented, or borrowed) aircraft for University business travel. An exception to this prohibition may possibly be secured upon application to the Office of Risk and Insurance Management. Qualification for such an exception will be based upon the need for this type of travel and the liability insurance covering the aircraft. Written approval should also be obtained in advance from the Chief Financial Officer.

If travel by non-commercial aircraft is properly approved, reimbursement, when appropriate, will be made in accordance with the approved commercial rate in effect at the time. Such rate will be determined in advance of the trip and must be approved by the Deputy Vice Chancellor of Finance/Controller, the Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs or the Associate Vice Chancellor for Health Affairs/Senior VP of Finance-VUMC. No traveler may purport to be an agent of the University in entering into agreements with airports or other authorities without prior approval of the Departments of Risk and Insurance Management and the Office of Financial Affairs or the Department of Finance.

**C. Rail**

The University will reimburse the cost of coach railroad fare plus the lowest-priced available private Pullman facilities not to exceed the cost of coach airfare. The cost of coach airfare should be documented with the Travel Expense Report. Original ticket receipts for expenses greater than \$25 are required and should be attached to the Travel Expense Report.

**D. Bus**

The University will reimburse the cost of commercial bus fare not to exceed the cost of coach airfare. (Comparison to coach air fare is dependent upon the availability of commercial flights to the destination.) If applicable, the cost of coach airfare should be documented with the Travel Expense Report. Original ticket receipts for expenses greater than \$25 are required and should be attached to the Travel Expense Report.

**E. Personal Automobile Travel**

Travel by personal automobile is an allowable expense when deemed the most economical and reasonable mode of travel under the circumstances. Factors which should be considered include distance to be traveled (and thus, additional meal and lodging expense if travel time is increased),

total costs to be incurred in operating an automobile as compared to other modes of travel, and potential cost savings if a car rental fee will be avoided. The current rate at which Vanderbilt reimburses mileage expenses is intended to cover all transportation and vehicle operating costs, including auto insurance.

Reimbursement will not exceed the total cost of round-trip coach airfare to and from the nearest commercial airport serving the destination, plus the reasonable costs of other appropriate local transportation at the destination. If mileage to the destination exceeds 300 miles, documentation of the cost of round-trip coach airfare must be attached to the Travel Expense Report. For travel less than 300 miles to the destination, travel by automobile is deemed to be the least expensive option and no further cost justification documentation is needed.

Tolls and reasonable parking charges will be reimbursed in addition to the mileage allowance. Original cash register or credit card receipts should be submitted with the Travel Expense Report for any expenses greater than \$25. No reimbursement is made for the cost of repairs to the vehicle or other such costs whether they result from the traveler's acts or the actions of others.

If a faculty/staff member's vehicle is used on official travel and causes bodily injury or property damage to another party, the faculty/staff member's insurance will provide coverage to the limit of the employee's policy. If named in a lawsuit, Vanderbilt will provide coverage after the limit of the employee's policy has been reached. Faculty/staff that use their own automobiles or other vehicles on Vanderbilt business are responsible for insuring themselves against personal liability because Vanderbilt has no insurable interest in a faculty/staff member's personal automobile. Departments should be aware of the potential liability in case of an accident involving any uninsured motorist traveling on behalf of Vanderbilt University. Departmental travel administrators are advised to take measures to identify and minimize such liability.

Vanderbilt insures legal liability and property damage arising out of use of University vehicles on Vanderbilt business.

When reimbursement for local mileage is requested, a list of all trips should be attached to the request for reimbursement. Origin, destination, date, business purpose, and number of miles traveled should be included on the listing, regardless of the length of the trip.

#### **F. Automobile Rental**

Travelers may rent automobiles when other transportation is not available or when such use is considered the most reasonable and economical mode of travel under the circumstances. Travelers should use rental companies which provide the lowest rates for the applicable service. Travelers should utilize University-preferred vendors at all times. In order to minimize costs, travelers are encouraged to choose standard class cars or lower whenever possible. The cost of a GPS may be reimbursed if deemed necessary for safety reasons; however, this cost is not allowable for travel supported by federal funds. The cost of other upgrades or accessories, such as a satellite radio, will not be reimbursed by the university. Original cash register or credit card receipts for the car rental and associated gasoline purchases that are greater than \$25 should be submitted with the Travel Expense Report.

No travel allowance will be approved for rental car insurance premiums. Automatic liability coverage for bodily injury, property damage and physical damage to a rental automobile is provided by the University. Therefore faculty/staff who rent cars while on University business should decline any optional insurance offered by the rental agency. The University also pays the

premium for a group travel accident policy for which the maximum principal recovery amount is \$100,000.

#### **G. Local Transportation**

Costs of public transportation, airport shuttles, taxis, limos and car services are acceptable for service to and from airports and railroad stations, between appointments, and between hotels and meeting locations. Travelers should select the most cost effective mode of transportation which will generally be a taxi. Original receipts for any local transportation expenses greater than \$25 must accompany the Travel Expense Report.

#### **H. Parking**

Reasonable parking charges will be reimbursed. Short-term parking reimbursement will be allowed. Taking safety into consideration, travelers are encouraged to select the most economical parking option available. Original receipts for expenses greater than \$25 are required to be submitted with the Travel Expense Report.

### **III. Food and Lodging**

Before making travel arrangements, travelers should check with their department or school to determine whether budgetary limits have been imposed. Travelers should request educational discounts at all hotels and motels. Many establishments offer reduced rates to those who identify themselves as University faculty or staff members. Travelers should also contact the Disbursement Services Department or the Department of Finance to see if Vanderbilt is exempt from sales tax in the state to which he or she is traveling. If so, the traveler is encouraged to obtain a sales tax exemption certificate from the applicable office to avoid unnecessary sales tax expense while traveling.

Expenses for food and lodging are reimbursable on the basis of actual, reasonable expenses incurred. Meal prices may vary in different geographic areas. Original itemized, detailed receipts for all meals and lodging expenses greater than \$25 must accompany the Travel Expense Report. Charges for meals or services on hotel bills should be entered separately from the room charge on the Travel Expense Report. Some schools or divisions of the University may have more stringent requirements for receipt documentation.

Approved meal expenses exceeding a reasonable amount should be recorded as entertainment expenses. All entertainment expenses must be coded to account number 62110, thereby isolating those costs from direct or indirect charges to Government funds. Entertainment, as well as alumni and development expenses, cannot be charged to Government restricted centers under any circumstances. Alcoholic beverage costs are generally considered personal expenses; however, if reimbursement is approved, the charges must always be classified separately as entertainment expenses, regardless of the funding source for the trip. A significant volume of University travel is funded by Government contracts and grants, and it is imperative that travelers maintain good judgment and reasonableness in travel expenditures. Travel policies administered at the departmental level should be consistent between restricted and unrestricted funds.

### **IV. Telephone, Fax, and Internet Expenses**

Travelers may be reimbursed for the cost of one personal long-distance phone call per day for a reasonable length of time unless more restrictive policies have been established at the departmental level. Reasonable expenses incurred for business-related long-distance calls and internet connection fees necessary while traveling (e.g., calls to Vanderbilt, fax transmittals, hotel/airport-based internet fees, etc.) are normally reimbursable. Travelers are encouraged to use calling cards to reduce long-distance calling costs. Because receipts for such calls will normally not be available within the time period required for

expense reporting, special arrangements may need to be made at the departmental level for subsequent reimbursement.

#### **V. Spouse, Domestic Partner, or Other Dependent Expense**

Since the IRS does not consider expenditures of this type a qualified business expense, no travel expenses, transportation, lodging, meals, or registration fees, etc., for spouses or other persons accompanying employees on University travel will be reimbursed/paid.

#### **VI. Other Incidental Expenses**

Vanderbilt will reimburse ordinary and necessary incidental expenses related to travel including but not limited to shipping fees, laundry, and tips. Travelers should use good judgment when tipping but no reimbursement will be allowed for amounts over 20%.

Expenses of a personal entertainment nature including but not limited to movies, recreational fees, health club fees, airline clubs, hotel clubs, country clubs, massages and toiletries will not be reimbursed/paid.

#### **VII. Special Travel**

Travel for such purposes as employment interviews at Vanderbilt and relocation to Vanderbilt of newly recruited faculty and staff is considered special travel. Funds to support special travel are commonly limited by departmental budgets and/or the terms of contracts and grants. No commitment to reimburse such expenses should be made without first ascertaining that such reimbursement is appropriate and that funds are available.

The following special travel policies are standard within the University. More specific policies for individual programs with special needs may be approved by the responsible head of the department, Executive Director, Dean, Vice Chancellor, or Provost.

#### **A. Situations Relating to New Faculty or Staff**

##### **1. Employment Interview**

Departments may authorize reimbursement to prospective faculty or staff members for travel expenses incurred in connection with an employment interview at Vanderbilt or elsewhere in accordance with the policy in effect for official travel. Reimbursement may be requested on a Travel Expense Report or a demand check request.

##### **2. Relocation**

Each school, college, or administrative division has its own policy for determining eligibility of new faculty and staff for moving expenses. The letter of appointment will state whether the individual is or is not eligible and, when eligible, the amount that will be provided.

The Procurement Department has negotiated a relocation contract for moving the household effects of new faculty and staff. Departments are encouraged to use this contract to take advantage of negotiated discounts and value-added services. Moving services should be processed on a purchase order if arrangements are made prior to the move. If an invoice for authorized expenses from a moving company is presented after the move has taken place, departments may authorize reimbursement to newly hired faculty or staff members via demand check request. Travel Expense Reports should be used to substantiate travel-related moving expenses to be reimbursed, such as travel from the former residence to the new residence. Generally, the term "relocation" may include the following:

- a) Moving household goods and personal effects from the former residence to the new residence;
- b) Travel for the faculty or staff member and family from the former residence to the new place of residence.

Individual department or school policies should be referenced regarding moving institutionally related equipment and supplies.

The University is required to report certain moving expense reimbursements to the Internal Revenue Service as income to the individual being reimbursed. The faculty or staff member's social security number or employee id must be indicated on the travel report or check request for processing. Click the following for IRS tax law: <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p521.pdf>.

### **B. Official Visitors**

Departments may authorize reimbursement to official visitors for expenses incurred in connection with their travel to the University. Reimbursement should be requested by a demand check request. The reimbursement policies in effect for normal travel as authorized in this document must be followed rather than those of the visitor's home institution. Expenses should be supported by appropriate documentation. Entertainment and alumni and development expenses must be coded separately, as explained in section III.

### **C. Group Travel**

When injury to a group of travelers would seriously impair the operation of a University activity, the University strongly discourages travel by groups of more than two or three faculty or staff on the same plane or on extended automobile trips. This restriction should be evaluated by the heads of the departments and/or deans according to the circumstances of the travel.

Students traveling as groups or teams are to be sponsored by a faculty or staff person(s) who will be responsible for complying with the policies stated in this manual. For these trips, one Authorization for Official Travel form should be completed and a list of travelers attached.

If a group of persons traveling together on official travel incurs joint expenses to be reimbursed from the same source, such expenses may be paid and reported by one traveler for convenience; however, an Authorization for Official Travel should be completed and approved for each traveler, except for student groups or teams as noted above. The circumstances should be explained and the names of all persons should be listed on the Travel Expense Report or an attachment.

If a person on official travel is accompanied by a person not on official travel, and the expenses for travel, accommodations, or other services are incurred jointly by such persons, then reimbursement by the University to the person on official travel is limited to the actual expense attributable to the traveler or to the amount that the traveler would have incurred if traveling alone.

## **VIII. Travel Insurance**

When traveling on University business, faculty and staff are covered by the University's accident insurance policies. Students are not covered. Coverage applies both within and outside Davidson County, Tennessee. Commuting to work is not covered. The University's travel accident policy provides \$100,000 for accidental loss of life and up to \$100,000 for accidental dismemberment. However, to protect faculty

and staff and his or her estate, it is essential that evidence be presented that the travel in question was University business, and that evidence must exist on the University's records. A Travel Authorization Form is used to confirm travel status outside of Davidson County. This form should be filed with the traveler's appropriate home department prior to travel, and should be retained until the filing process of the Travel Expense Report is complete.

The University's travel accident insurance applies to travel by aircraft unless the faculty/staff member is acting as pilot, operator, or member of the aircraft crew. Vanderbilt faculty and staff must obtain prior approval to operate or use privately-owned, rented or borrowed aircraft for University business travel. (See Section II.B.) Travel accident coverage for travel by private plane should be confirmed through the Office of Risk and Insurance Management.

The University currently has a procurement card program that may be utilized for travel. The University's Procurement Card, when authorized to be activated for travel expenses, provides business travel accident and lost luggage insurance, in addition to a number of other travel related services.

## **IX. Travel Payment**

### **A. Credit Cards**

In addition to a traveler's own personal credit card, Vanderbilt University has a procurement card alternative available for the payment of transportation, lodging, meals and incidental expenses while traveling on authorized business on behalf of the University.

#### **University Procurement Card**

The University's Procurement Card is capable of functioning as a travel card when approved by departmental management and activated by the Procurement Card Office. This card has the added advantage of a single card for both purchasing and travel functionality for business purposes. All charges for purchased services and those charges utilizing the procurement card for travel accrue to Vanderbilt and must be reviewed and approved for payment by the cardholder and his/her manager in a manner documented in procurement card policies. No personal purchases are allowed utilizing the procurement card. All travel expense documentation requirements as outlined above still apply.

### **B. Prepayment of Travel Expenses**

Generally, travel expenses are paid by the traveler and are reimbursed to him/her after submission of an approved travel expense report upon completion of a trip. However, faculty and staff may request Vanderbilt to prepay a vendor directly for travel expenses prior to the beginning of a trip in order to obtain discounted pricing or to secure a reservation. Faculty and staff are to use form number 60-002-524 to request prepayments which include registration fees, hotel deposits, and airfare. Faculty and staff may also use this form to request reimbursement, prior to the trip, of travel expenses they prepaid with personal funds more than 30 days in advance of the trip. All travel prepayments and prepayment reimbursements must have a corresponding Authorization for Official Travel form on file and must also be properly accounted for on the Travel Expense Report promptly after returning from a trip on official business.

Vanderbilt University students may request prepayments for travel. The student's Dean's office must approve all requests. Vanderbilt University students are to use form number 60-002-658, Student Travel, for all prepayment requests.

Faculty, staff, and students should expense prepayments (registration fees, hotel deposits, and airfare), paid directly to an external vendor, to the appropriate cost center. Prepayments paid to the traveler should be charged to the travel receivable account and center as follows:

University Central: Acct 14010 Center 1-97-060-0000 Individual Travel Acct #  
Medical School: Account 13025 Center 1-04-000-0000 Social Security #  
Medical Center Administration: Account 13025 Center 1-08-000-0000 Social Security #  
School of Nursing: Account 13025 Center 1-06-000-0000 Social Security #  
Hospital: Account 13025 Center 2-01-000-1111 Social Security #

For University Central faculty, staff and students, individual travel account numbers may be obtained by completing the General Accounts Receivable Account Number Request Form:

<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/stop/forms/uploads/GARNewAcctRequestv6.pdf>.

Please email the Office of Financial Affairs at [GAR@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:GAR@vanderbilt.edu) with specific questions related to the GAR Account Number Request Form. All faculty, staff and students must acquire a unique travel account number and may not use an account number assigned to another individual.

### **1. Registration Fees**

Registration fees for non-local events should be requested using the Request for Registration Fee form.

If paid directly to an external vendor, the amount will be charged directly to the appropriate cost center (departmental budget). Registration fees which are direct-expensed may be reported in the expenditure section but should not be included in the amount to be charged to the center or the amount to be reimbursed when the Travel Expense Report is filed.

If paid to the traveler, the amount will be charged to the travel receivable account. Upon trip completion the registration fees should be reported in the expenditure section, included in the amount to be charged to the center, and listed under "Cash Advance and Prepayments Paid to Traveler" on the Travel Expense Report. Thus, the registration fee is charged to the departmental budget and deducted from the receivable account at the time the Travel Expense Report is processed.

Registration fee prepayments may not be obtained from Vanderbilt when the traveler is being reimbursed for travel expenses by a source external to Vanderbilt University.

### **2. Hotel Deposits**

Hotel deposits for non-local events should be requested using the Request for Hotel Deposit form.

If paid directly to an external vendor, the amount will be charged directly to the appropriate cost center (departmental budget). Hotel deposits which are direct-expensed may be reported in the expenditure section but should not be included in the amount to be charged to the center or the amount to be reimbursed when the Travel Expense Report is filed.

If paid to the traveler, the amount will be charged to the travel receivable account. Upon trip completion the hotel deposit should be reported in the expenditure section, included in the amount to be charged to the center, and listed under "Cash Advance and Prepayments Paid to Traveler" on the Travel Expense Report. Thus, the hotel deposit is

charged to the departmental budget and deducted from the receivable account at the time the Travel Expense Report is processed.

Hotel deposits may not be obtained from Vanderbilt when the traveler is being reimbursed for travel expenses by a source external to Vanderbilt University.

### **3. Airfare**

The Request for Super Saver Advance form should be submitted to request payment to a travel agency for airfare prior to the beginning of a trip. Also use this form to request reimbursement for airfare that was purchased more than 30 days in advance of a trip to take advantage of reduced rates. A copy of the traveler's monthly credit card statement and a copy of the traveler's itinerary, an airline ticket receipt, or the travel agency's invoice for the tickets, showing that the trip has not occurred, should be attached to the Request for Super Saver form.

If paid directly to an external vendor, the amount will be charged directly to the appropriate cost center (departmental budget). Airfare prepayments (super savers) which are direct-expensed may be reported in the expenditure section but should not be included in the amount to be charged to the center or the amount to be reimbursed when the Travel Expense Report is filed.

If paid to the traveler, the amount will be charged to the travel receivable account. Upon trip completion the airfare (super saver) should be reported in the expenditure section, included in the amount to be charged to the center, and listed under "Cash Advance and Prepayments Paid to Traveler" on the Travel Expense Report. Thus, the airfare is charged to the departmental budget and deducted from the receivable account at the time the Travel Expense Report is processed.

Airfare prepayments (super savers) may not be obtained from Vanderbilt when the traveler is being reimbursed for travel expenses by a source external to Vanderbilt University.

### **C. Cash Travel Advances**

Typically, all meals and allowable incidental charges are paid by the traveler and then reimbursed to him/her after submission of an approved Travel Expense Report upon trip completion. However, when absolutely necessary, cash travel advances for faculty, staff and students are permitted up to \$200 per trip, with a minimum three night trip duration. In rare exceptions (e.g., long-duration trip that directly supports teaching and/or research needs), and with the approval of the CFO, or delegate, travel advances in excess of \$200 will be permitted. Documentation explaining the circumstances for the exception and the documented approval should accompany the Request for Cash Advance. Faculty and staff are to use form number 60-002-715 to request cash advances. Vanderbilt University students are to use form number 60-002-658, Student Travel, for all advances requested. Cash travel advances may be obtained no more than two weeks prior to departure. Cash travel advances may not be obtained from Vanderbilt when the traveler is being reimbursed for travel expenses by a source external to Vanderbilt University.

IRS regulations require Vanderbilt to report cash travel advances as additional income and to withhold appropriate income taxes on these advances unless the expenses are accounted for within a reasonable period of time. Therefore, if an advance has not been accounted for via submission of an expense report within 60 days after trip completion, and any resulting excess returned within 120 days after trip completion, the University will deduct the outstanding balance

of any travel advance from the traveler's payroll check to avoid reporting it as additional income (the traveler agrees to this condition by signing the form requesting a travel advance.) Payroll deduction will take effect on the first payroll cycle after the 120-day limit is exceeded. No additional advances or reimbursements for an employee will be processed if any travel advance documentation is past due (beyond 60 days after trip completion).

For students, any outstanding advances after 120 days will be considered debt owed by the student and will be charged to the Student Account for repayment.

Faculty, staff, and students should charge cash advances to the travel receivable account and center as follows:

University Central: Acct 14010 Center 1-97-060-0000 Individual Travel Acct #

Medical School: Account 13025 Center 1-04-000-0000 Social Security #

Medical Center Administration: Account 13025 Center 1-08-000-0000 Social Security #

School of Nursing: Account 13025 Center 1-06-000-0000 Social Security #

Hospital: Account 13025 Center 2-01-000-1111 Social Security #

## **X. Travel Expense Reimbursement**

### **A. Travel Expense Report**

Faculty and staff submit travel expenses for reimbursement on Form 60-002-523 and students submit expenses on Form 60-002-658. The University must follow a number of legal requirements imposed by the Internal Revenue Service and external sponsors of research in reimbursing travel expenses. Therefore, Travel Expense Reports that are not properly approved or that do not include appropriate documentation will be returned to the traveler's departmental administration for correction.

Travelers are reimbursed for expenses properly approved and documented. Time, effort, and confusion are minimized when travelers complete their Travel Expense Reports fully and accurately and submit them as soon as possible upon trip completion. IRS rules require business travel to be documented in a timely manner. Travel expense reports submitted longer than 60 days after trip completion will result in Vanderbilt reporting the reimbursements as taxable wages.

If receipts for transportation (other than personal vehicle), hotel charges, meals, or other expenses greater than \$25 are lost, the traveler should obtain a replacement receipt to accompany the Travel Expense Report. Some schools or divisions of the University may have more stringent requirements for receipt documentation. Travelers are encouraged to charge meals, lodging, and other significant travel expenses to their Procurement Card or personal credit card whenever possible. If the original receipt is misplaced, the duplicate charge copy, included in your credit card statement, will be sufficient for reimbursement if accompanied by a memo explaining the extenuating circumstances.

## **B. Approval of Travel Expenses**

### **1. Routine Expenses**

Individuals traveling and entertaining on behalf of the University should exercise good judgment with respect to incurring travel expenses and are expected to spend the University's funds prudently. The individual requesting reimbursement is responsible for ensuring that his/her incurrence of the expense and related reimbursement request complies with all applicable policies, is properly authorized, and is supported with required receipts and other documentation. The signature on the reimbursement form of the individual requesting reimbursement affirms that these responsibilities have been met. When a traveler's signature is not available, the document should be signed by the head of the department, Executive Director, or Dean along with an explanation detailing why the traveler's signature is not available. Faculty and staff should have their Travel Expense Reports approved and signed by someone in the same division (or the department supporting the expense) that is authorized to sign Travel Expense Reports and at a level more senior than the traveler.

### **2. Exceptions**

Since each school is responsible for management and stewardship of its own finances, it is important that administrative officers be aware of any unusual expenses incurred against their funds. When exceptions to general reimbursement policies are requested, the reason for the exception should be explained and the Travel Expense Report must be signed and annotated as an exception by the traveler's Executive Director, Dean, Vice Chancellor, Provost, or designee.

### **3. Reporting Requirements**

Travel Expense Reports should be approved and should arrive in the Disbursement Services Department or the Department of Finance within 60 days of the completion of a trip. The necessary approval-routing process should be taken into consideration so that required approvals can be obtained in a timely manner and the Travel Expense Report can be delivered to the appropriate office within the required timeframe.

## **C. Documentation**

Travelers should be aware of the importance of fully documenting and submitting their expenses within 60 days of trip completion, and supervisors and administrative officers should recognize their responsibility to critically review travel expense reports prior to approving the expenses for reimbursement. Specific documentation may be unique in special circumstances, such as long-term travel supported by a research grant. Examples include situations in which the traveler may have rent and utility bills instead of hotel bills or grocery bills instead of restaurant receipts. In such instances, original receipts are still required to document all expenses, and the reasonableness of the expenses should be approved at the level of the Executive Director, Dean, Vice Chancellor, Provost, or designee.

If original receipts greater than \$25 are lost, the traveler should obtain a replacement receipt to accompany the Travel Expense Report. To facilitate review of travel expense documentation, travelers are encouraged to submit original receipts attached to the Travel Expense Report in date order. Some schools or divisions of the University may have more stringent documentation requirements.

**D. Accountability**

All persons traveling on behalf of Vanderbilt and those who approve expense reimbursement are responsible for knowledge of Vanderbilt travel policies and procedures and compliance with sponsoring agency regulations governing travel expenditures. All travel expenses are subject to audit by Vanderbilt's Internal Audit Department and external auditors, as well as by agencies such as the Internal Revenue Service, the Department of Health and Human Service (for Government-sponsored programs), and the internal and external auditors of non-Government sponsors. The purpose of these audits is to ascertain that the expenses are proper and fully documented.

A proper accounting should be made of travel reimbursements made by the University to faculty and staff members. The University may receive requests from sponsoring agencies or other groups who have reimbursed University faculty or staff members to verify that expenses submitted directly to them were not also reimbursed by the University. The University may also request from sponsoring agencies or other groups, verification that expenses submitted to the University were not also reimbursed by external parties.