

# International Travel for VCU Faculty/Staff/Students

## VCU Office of International Education

### Procedures and Guidelines

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#### PURPOSE

Virginia Commonwealth University's International Partnership University Initiative has increased international university business travel and study-affiliated travel of both VCU faculty and students. All faculty/staff/students at Virginia Commonwealth University traveling abroad on University business and study are required to fill out the *Request for Travel Authorization* form and obtain required approvals. The purpose of the International Education Travel Guidelines is to document the procedures and processes relative to international travel for VCU faculty/students/staff to ensure the safety and highest quality experience for all those participating in an international exchange through VCU.

***Note: International travel and international programs not officially sanctioned by Virginia Commonwealth University in advance of the travel will be conducted independently of the University without liability insurance or other coverage from the University.***

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## WHO SHOULD READ THIS DOCUMENT

- All faculty/staff/students at Virginia Commonwealth University traveling abroad on University business and study.
- All faculty interested in organizing a short-term study abroad program.
- VCU students who want to study at one of VCU's International Partnership Universities or at another university outside of the United States.

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## CONTACTS

The VCU Office of International Education, with specific guidance from the VCU Director of Procurement and Payment, will interpret these procedures and will revise or eliminate any or all parts as necessary to meet the changing needs of Virginia Commonwealth University.

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## PROCEDURES

### I. VCU Travel Authorization

Prior to international travel, all VCU faculty/students/staff who travel for approved University related business and/or programs (self-funded and no-cost travel included) must fill out the *Request for Travel Authorization* (see RELATED DOCUMENTS). Policy related to Travel Procedures can be located in the Financial & Budget Administration Policies & Procedures Manual section on Travel Authorizations (see RELATED DOCUMENTS). For faculty traveling abroad for personal reasons or on vacation, a VCU *Request for Travel Authorization* does not need to be completed.

#### A. For Faculty Travel Related to the VCU International Partnerships

Faculty traveling on University business to one of VCU's International Partnership Universities must fill out a VCU *Request for Travel Authorization*. The Executive Director of the Office of VCU International Education will assist faculty in completing the *Request for Travel Authorization* and will work with faculty to ensure that the appropriate Department/School signatures, travel justifications and budget codes are on the document before signing the document and then obtaining signatures for final approval from the Vice-Provost for International Affairs, the Vice President for Health Sciences (if applicable) and the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

## **B. For Faculty Travel Not Related to the VCU International Partnerships**

Faculty traveling on University business for reasons other than collaborations with the International Partnerships or for leading a VCU Education Abroad Program (see below) are to fill out and submit for approval and signatures the *VCU Request for Travel Authorization* through their normal Department/School/Vice-President process.

If the initiating School/Department will forward a copy of the approved international *Request for Travel Authorization* to the Office of the Executive Director of VCU International Education, the Executive Director of International Education will review the travel plan in case there is a possible link with the VCU Partnership Universities or with other existing VCU international collaborations which might enrich the traveler's experience.

## **C. For Faculty Leading VCU Education Abroad Programs**

It is imperative when a study abroad faculty program leader completes the *Request for Travel Authorization* that he/she include the name of each student participant.

All international *Requests for Travel Authorizations* and *Travel Expense Reimbursement Vouchers* (SEE RELATED DOCUMENTS) related to study abroad programs will be prepared by the Fiscal Manager of the VCU Office of International Education and will be approved by the Executive Director of VCU International Education (or designee).

Payments directly to vendors in the summer abroad program country will be processed according to the vendors' requirements by the Fiscal Manager of the VCU Office of International Education. The Program Director will provide the VCU International Education Fiscal Manager with invoices, addresses and bank information for all vendors. A total payment to a single vendor cannot exceed \$50,000. No reimbursement will be made for alcoholic beverages.

All questions concerning program budgets, international *Requests for Travel Authorizations* for study abroad programs, or expense reimbursement will be addressed to the Fiscal Manager of the VCU Office of International Education.

## **II. Health and Safety**

### **A. Travel Immunizations**

#### **Students:**

As stated by the VCU University Student Health Services, a well-informed traveler is a safer traveler. The VCU University Student Health Services offers in-depth pre-travel consultation with a health care provider as well as many of the required vaccinations. Additionally, prescriptions for recommended medications, as well as suggestions for safer travel, are provided. Students are requested to call the University Student Health Services (Tel: 804-828-8828 on the Monroe Park Campus and Tel: 804-828-9220 on the Medical Campus) to set up a thirty-minute travel appointment at least 6-8 weeks prior to the departure date.

Prior to the appointment date, students should stop by the clinic to complete a Travel Information, History and Care Form. It is important that this information be reviewed before the clinic visit so all pertinent issues can be resolved.

For further information on this service, students may review the website of the University Student Health Services at [http://www.students.vcu.edu/health/immunizations/travel\\_clinic.php](http://www.students.vcu.edu/health/immunizations/travel_clinic.php)

#### **Faculty:**

In addition to viewing the above weblink on immunizations made available by University Student Health Services, VCU faculty who are traveling abroad on VCU-related business should contact either their physician or the VCU Faculty Travel Clinic on the MCV Campus (for more information: Dr. Clarence Childress, Infectious Disease, VCU Internal Medicine, Tel: 804-828-9711)

### **B. Health Insurance**

#### **Students - Health insurance during study abroad programs and for other VCU-related international travel**

VCU students involved in study abroad programs and other VCU-related international travel must have medical health insurance which covers them abroad. All students will contact the VCU Office of Education Abroad to receive the International Student Identification Card (ISIC), which carries basic insurance coverage, including medical evacuation and repatriation of remains.

Students are advised to review the ISIC insurance benefits and to obtain additional coverage from another insurance carrier if they prefer to have a higher level of benefits.

Students must carry their health insurance card(s) with them at all times while participating in the study abroad program. A copy of the card(s) should also be kept in a safe place in the student's lodging.

### **Faculty - Health insurance during study abroad programs and for other international travel for VCU purposes**

Program Directors of VCU study abroad programs and other faculty traveling internationally for VCU purposes must have medical health insurance which covers them abroad. Faculty members are advised to contact the VCU Office of Education Abroad in order to receive the International Teacher Identification Card (ITIC) which carries basic insurance coverage, including medical evacuation and repatriation of remains.

Study Abroad Program Directors and other Faculty traveling internationally for VCU purposes and who have medical benefits through VCU should check with their CovaCare provider before leaving the U.S. because health benefits may be different outside the U.S.

With CovaCare, if emergency care is needed, the Program Director/Faculty member will go to the nearest hospital but must call 1-800 810-2583 or 1-804-673-1177 (collect) as soon as possible if admitted. CovaCare must be called in advance of any non-emergency inpatient medical care.

Study Abroad Program Directors and Faculty members traveling internationally for VCU purposes and who are not covered by VCU medical health insurance will provide their own insurance coverage, in addition to what is offered through the ITIC.

## **III. Insurance and Risk Management**

### **A. International Vehicle Rental:**

The VCU Office of Risk Management advises that Program Directors/faculty traveling internationally on VCU business purchase local auto-vehicle rental insurance through an in-country agency so that insurance will be compatible with local laws and customs. If needed VCU vehicle insurance coverage will exceed the limit provided by the rental agency in most instances.

### **B. Foreign Travel Liability:**

All employees and students while acting on behalf of and under the direction of the University are insured. Additional information is available from VCU Insurance and Risk Management's website:

<http://www.vcu.edu/realestateandinsurance/IRForeignTravel.html>

## **IV. VCU Travel Reimbursements**

The Study Abroad Program Directors and faculty traveling internationally for VCU business will be responsible for following all Virginia and United States regulations related to program expenses and reimbursable expenses. Study Abroad Program Directors having questions about these regulations will discuss their questions with the Fiscal Manager of the VCU Office of International Education. Policy related to Travel Procedures can be located in the Financial & Budget Administration Policies & Procedures Manual section on Travel Authorizations [http://www.vcu.edu/procurement/Chap\\_7a.pdf](http://www.vcu.edu/procurement/Chap_7a.pdf)

Program Directors for Study Abroad will remit receipts for program expenses to the Fiscal Manager in the VCU Office of International Education within one week of the end of the program.

## **V. Useful International Travel Information**

### **A. Travel Warnings and Alerts**

U.S. Department of State maintains travel warnings, travel alerts and country specific information. This can be found on their website:

[http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis\\_pa\\_tw\\_1168.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis_pa_tw_1168.html)

### **B. International Identification Cards**

#### **Students:**

Through the VCU Office of Education Abroad, VCU students must acquire an international student identification card (ISIC) before going abroad.

#### **Faculty:**

It is advised that VCU faculty acquire the International Teacher Identification Card (ITIC) before traveling abroad as many agencies/museums only accept this card as proof of faculty status at a U.S. institution. The card also carries supplementary travel and insurance benefits. The VCU Office of Education Abroad has applications and is approved to issue the card to faculty.

## VI. Questions

All questions concerning program budgets, travel authorizations for study abroad programs, or expense reimbursement are directed to the Fiscal Manager of the VCU Office of International Education.

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### RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Policy related to Travel Procedures located in the Financial & Budget Administration Policies & Procedures Manual section on Travel Authorizations ([http://www.vcu.edu/procurement/Chap\\_7a.pdf](http://www.vcu.edu/procurement/Chap_7a.pdf))
- Request for Travel Authorization form (available on the VCU Administrative Toolkit <http://www.toolkit.vcu.edu/forms.htm#T>)
- Request for Travel Reimbursement form (available on the VCU Administrative Toolkit <http://www.toolkit.vcu.edu/forms.htm#T>)
- Student Health Services  
[http://www.students.vcu.edu/health/immunizations/travel\\_clinic.php](http://www.students.vcu.edu/health/immunizations/travel_clinic.php)