

**The George Washington University  
School of Medicine and Health Sciences  
and Medical Faculty Associates**

**Guidelines for Requesting Approval for Essential  
International Travel**

Updated October 2020



## I. POLICY FOR ESSENTIAL INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

\*Beginning July 1, 2020 and until further notice, and subject to continuing review of global health conditions, George Washington University (GW) will permit only essential international travel. This policy applies only to GW-supported or GW-related travel, not personal travel.\*

The following guidelines outline the process for requesting essential international travel approval for faculty, staff, and students at the GW School of Medicine and Health Sciences (SMHS) and Medical Faculty Associates (MFA) beginning July 1, 2020.

### *Interim Policy for International Travel*

GW's [Interim Policy for International Travel](#) beginning July 1, 2020 defines the situations in which travel is considered essential or non-essential as followed:

**Graduate Students, Travel for Academic Study** – Essential international academic travel for graduate students involves travel for academic credit that the GW school or division deems necessary to meet a requirement for graduation, when the travel cannot be postponed or offered through alternative means, such as online or domestically. When international travel is an optional component of an academic requirement, the international travel is considered non-essential.

**Faculty & Staff Travel, Non-Research** – International travel for faculty and staff members is not essential if it can be postponed or managed by alternative methods, such as electronically. International travel may be considered essential for faculty and staff:

- when accompanying graduate students on approved essential travel;
- when avoiding or delaying travel will cause harm to the operations of the university; or
- when avoiding or delaying travel will cause loss of existing grant funding or failure to meet contractual obligations that cannot be renegotiated or postponed.

**Research-Related Travel** – For faculty, staff, and graduate students, essential travel for research is defined as travel that cannot be postponed or managed by alternative methods and is required to preserve the results of an ongoing research activity.

**Travel for faculty and staff for research purposes is evaluated separately from other travel.**

**Conference-Related Travel** – International travel to attend professional or educational conferences is defined as non-essential.

## II. REQUEST PROCESS

### **Step 1) Contact the Office of International Medicine Programs**

Faculty, staff, and students that would like to request approval for essential international travel should begin the process as soon as they are aware of the intended travel by emailing the Office of International Medicine Programs (“IMP”) at [impinfo@gwu.edu](mailto:impinfo@gwu.edu) with the following information:

- Name(s) of traveler(s)
- Travel destination
- Travel dates
- Purpose of travel

### **Step 2) Complete required request form for essential travel approval**

All faculty, staff, and students are required to fill out and submit the Essential International Travel Request and Approval Form. IMP will provide this form via email and it will also be made available on the [IMP website](#).

The requester must send the completed form to their Department Chair to review and approve prior to submission. If approved, the Department Chair should sign with their initials and the date on the first page.

### **Step 3) Return completed request form to the IMP office**

The request form with the Department Chair’s approval should be submitted via email to IMP at [impinfo@gwu.edu](mailto:impinfo@gwu.edu). IMP will confirm receipt of the form within two (2) business days and will manage the routing for all remaining approvals needed, which are explained in the following section.

## III. REQUIRED APPROVERS

All essential travel requests are subject to approval by each of the following:

### **1) SMHS Dean or Interim Vice Dean for Research and Academic Affairs**

All requests for essential international travel, *excluding travel for research-related purposes*, are subject to final review and approval by the Dean of SMHS. Any SMHS travel that is being conducted for research-related purposes is subject to final review and approval by the Interim Vice Dean for Research and Academic Affairs for SMHS.

### **2) Department Chair**

Department Chairs must review all essential travel requests for any faculty, staff, or students in their department. If approved, the Department Chair should initial the request form before the form is submitted to IMP.

### **3) Office of International Medicine Programs**

Faculty, staff, and students should submit request forms to IMP at [impinfo@gwu.edu](mailto:impinfo@gwu.edu). Each request must be approved by the Dean for International Medicine and if approved, IMP will route the request to the Finance department. IMP will also monitor and ensure all travelers register on the GW Passport online international database if and when approved for travel.

### **4) SMHS Finance Department**

The Finance Department must review and approve any travel request as it relates to the estimated cost of travel, availability of funding sources, as well as impact if the requested travel were to be cancelled or postponed. Finance must approve all requests prior to the final review by the SMHS Dean or Interim Vice Dean for Research and Academic Affairs.

## **IV. POST-APPROVAL REQUIREMENTS**

If and when essential travel is approved, IMP will open a travel record in GW Passport, GW's travel registration database. IMP will email the traveler with instructions on how to access the GW Passport record, and the traveler will be directed to the online travel registration component of the process that will provide the following steps:

- i. Register travel with your consulate of citizenship;
- ii. Enroll or create an account with GW's GeoBlue health insurance;
- iii. Note important GW and GeoBlue emergency contact information;
- iv. Confirm your travel itinerary, including flight arrangements, lodging, and in-country contact information;
- v. Provide personal emergency contact details and passport information;
- vi. Confirm your awareness of travel responsibilities and limitations of support;
- vii. Electronically sign GW's Standard Risk and Release Form (students only).

Students will receive instructions to access GeoBlue via email. Faculty and staff instructions to access GeoBlue is linked [here](#). Additional essential travel resources are available on the [GW Global Resources Page](#).

## **V. TRAVEL AND RETURN TO THE U.S.**

Please consult with IMP two (2) weeks prior to departing from your travel to confirm any required procedures that need to be followed in order to safely return to campus. Travelers are required to update any changes to their approved essential travel plan before and during travel, for further review and approval.

In addition, please note that travel restrictions and guidelines are continuously changing based on the conditions in each country so travelers should regularly monitor the CDC

and U.S. State Department advisories for any updates. In certain cases, travelers may be required to quarantine for a period of 14 days prior to being able to return to campus and may only be permitted to re-enter the United States through a limited number of airports depending on the location from which they are traveling. Travelers may also be subject to special screening, testing, or quarantine requirements. Furthermore, non-U.S. citizens and non-permanent residents may not be allowed admission to the U.S. regardless of immigration status.

Travelers should refer to the following resources for updates on travel, latest news, and more:

- a. [U.S. Department of State Travel Advisories](#)
- b. [CDC Travel and Prevention Guidance](#)

For more information or any questions about the travel approval process, please contact the Dean for International Medicine, Dr. Huda Ayas, at [hayas@gwu.edu](mailto:hayas@gwu.edu) or the IMP office at [impinfo@gwu.edu](mailto:impinfo@gwu.edu).