

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCE RESEARCH FUNDING GUIDELINES

Faculty members, before committing funds or finalizing reimbursement, are to review the College of Arts and Science Travel and Expense Reimbursement Policy and the [Vanderbilt University Reimbursement Policy](#). In cases where college guidelines differ from university policy, it is expected that the more restrictive policy take precedence.

PURPOSE

Faculty Research Funding (including start-up funds) provided by the Vanderbilt College of Arts and Science is made available to support and facilitate faculty professional activities (research and teaching).

GUIDELINES

Funds may not be used for personal, non-professional purposes. Any expense for which research funds are used must qualify as a business related expense under IRS guidelines. Research funds are Vanderbilt University funds, and materials purchased with these funds are the property of Vanderbilt University. Upon leaving the University, a faculty member will be required to return all equipment purchased with his/her research funds and may be required to return any and all materials purchased with such funds. Unexpended funds at the time of a faculty member's departure from the University will revert to the College.

Examples of Potential uses (this list is not exhaustive):

Reasonable expenses for research materials (books, media, journal subscriptions) and for equipment (computers, printers, lab equipment) or services related to research (lab construction/renovation, clerical, technical, research assistance). Other common categories of research expenses include research-related travel for the faculty member, expenses related to visiting scholars (travel, lodging, food, honoraria), and expenses incurred in connection with the recruitment of graduate students (travel, lodging, food). Appropriate personnel procedures must be followed for any salary expenditures. Purchases of equipment made with university funds must be delivered to a faculty member's office, not his/her home.

Examples of uses that are not allowed (this list is not exhaustive):

Furniture or furnishings not used for research, gifts of any type, home internet service, personal websites hosted externally, clothing and/or luggage (including briefcases), travel expenses for family who accompany the faculty member on research related travel, and salary for the faculty member or to a family member. Research funds may not be used for personal vehicle equipment or fuel, but mileage allowance for research usage or travel to professional meetings is permissible. Research funds may not be used for cell phones or personal electronics.

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Research Funding Sources:

Research funding is made available to faculty through startup packages and through other centrally provided sources. Faculty may request information at any time about remaining balances of research funds available to them by contacting their department or program administrators.

Research funding is made available on an annual basis to some faculty through their departments or programs. Full-status tenured and tenure-track faculty who are research active¹ and who do not have access to sufficient research funds are eligible to receive reimbursements for research expenses up to \$4,000 annually. Unspent funds are not carried over from year to year. A faculty member whose available research funds fall below \$4,000 in a given fiscal year will be provided with “top up” funds to bring the amount of available funds to \$4,000 at the beginning of the next fiscal year.

Procedural Guidelines:

Funds are disbursed in several different ways. Large expenses should be directly billed to Vanderbilt through normal university purchasing methods. For smaller expenses, a faculty member normally turns in receipts to receive reimbursement, and faculty should indicate the purpose of the expenditure when submitting each receipt. Requests for research expense reimbursements will be approved by departments and programs before being sent to the Dean’s office.

CAS adheres to [Vanderbilt University Reimbursement Policy](#) with regard to allowable reimbursement expenses. It is the responsibility of the individual to determine if expenses are allowed in accordance with applicable funding source, agency, sponsor, or other external group paying for reimbursement. If a faculty member has any questions about the appropriateness of an expense, s/he should consult with their department or program administrator prior to incurring the expense. The department or program administrator should consult with their SAO, when necessary.

When a faculty member resigns, s/he should consult with his/her Department Chair/Program Director about appropriate uses of research funds during the remainder of the contract period and to arrange return of equipment and material purchased with research funds at the end of the employment period.

¹ A faculty member is automatically considered research active unless he/she has received an annual rating of 5 for two consecutive years. If that occurs, the faculty member will need to gain approval to receive research funds from the department chair/program director and the dean.

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Research-Related Travel

CAS faculty must follow guidelines and use procedures outlined in the [Vanderbilt University Reimbursement Policy](#) for research-related travel. University policy requires that reimbursement expense reports be submitted using Oracle within 60 days from the purchase date. Vanderbilt offers two methods of travel expense reimbursement: actual expenses or a per diem rate. When filing the expense report, the traveler must choose either to file with actual expenses or to request reimbursement based on per diem, for each trip. Using both forms of reimbursement for the same trip is not allowed. When utilizing federally sponsored funds, the individual must submit receipts for actual, incurred expenses. When utilizing non-federal or unrestricted funds, the individual can choose either to submit receipts for actual, incurred expenses or use the per diem rate. The per diem rate is \$51 per day. The threshold for required receipts is any expense that is greater than or equal to \$75.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Effective: July 1, 2016

Last Revised: June 2020