

Guidance for determining essential travel and making exceptions to the travel restrictions in place as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak

First and foremost, keeping students, employees, and the campus community safe are of utmost importance and all exceptions to the travel restrictions must include careful consideration.

- Vice Presidents/deans are responsible for determining if travel plans that were made prior to the implementation of the travel restrictions are essential, and for approval of future essential travel (either travel that is being planned or travel that will occur during the time the travel restrictions are in place.)
- Day trips to Columbia, Charlotte, or other similar locations for the purposes of small group business-related meetings should be considered unless there is reason to believe that particular high risk factors are involved.
- Is the travel essential to the operation of the unit/division? Could it be rescheduled at a later time? Consider the reason for the travel – for the most part, professional development-related travel should be cancelled or postponed. Specific training, without which the operation of the university would be impeded, or the employee may not be able to effectively perform the duties of his/her position, should be given consideration.
- Does the travel include air travel? Traveling through airports may increase exposure.
- Does the travel involve placing an employee in a large group(s) of people? Social distancing is highly recommended – would this be possible given the nature of the requested travel?
- International travel must be approved by the President.

Other relevant information

During the time the travel restrictions are in place, no employee should be required to travel and no employee may be retaliated against for refusing to travel. Actual or perceived retaliation on the part of a supervisor may be cause for disciplinary action.

Employees, who have been approved for travel, may be asked to self-quarantine prior to returning to campus based on factors associated with the risk of exposure.

At any point, the university may determine that ALL travel is prohibited with no exceptions. The university may require the cancellation of previously approved business-related travel arrangements at any time during the time the travel restrictions are in place.

Employees who financially obligate the university by making travel arrangements without proper approval may be disciplined and may be responsible for repayment of any associated financial costs.