

Research Fund Guidelines
College of Arts and Science
revised December, 2013

Purpose of Research Funds:

Faculty Research Funds (including start-up funds) provided by the Vanderbilt College of Arts and Science are designed to support and facilitate a faculty member's professional activities (research and teaching) for the duration of his/her period of appointment at Vanderbilt University. 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 materials purchased with his/her research 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 the following: research materials (books, media, journal subscriptions), equipment (computers, printers, lab equipment), and services related to research (lab construction/renovation, clerical, technical, research assistance). Also, research-related travel for the faculty member, expenses related to visiting scholars (travel, lodging, food, honoraria), and the recruitment of graduate students (travel, lodging, food). Appropriate personnel procedures must be followed for any salary expenditures.

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

Furniture or furnishings not used for research, home internet service, clothing and/or luggage (including briefcases), travel expenses for family who accompany the faculty member on research related travel. Salary to 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.

Procedures:

Funds are disbursed in several different ways. Travel must follow University policies. Large expenses should be directly billed to Vanderbilt through normal university purchasing methods. For smaller expenses, a faculty member may turn in a receipt and receive reimbursement. Receipts should indicate the purpose of the expenditure. A faculty member must be prepared to justify his/her use of research funds. Purchases made with university funds must be delivered to a faculty member's office, not his/her home.

Purchases made without prior authorization are subject to the same approval process as other purchases.

Expenditure Approval Process:

Department Chairs/Program Directors must approve all research fund requests before they go to the Dean's office. Department Chairs/Program Directors should be prepared to answer questions from the Dean's office about such requests. If a faculty member has any questions about the appropriateness of an expense, s/he should consult with their Department Chair/Program Director prior to incurring the expense. The Department Chair or Program Director will consult with the Dean's office, if necessary. When a faculty member resigns, s/he should consult with his/her Department Chair/Program Director about appropriate uses of his/her research funds during the remainder of his/her contract period. As stated above, all material and equipment purchased with research funds must be returned to Vanderbilt University upon termination of employment.

Failure to abide by these guidelines may result in personal tax consequences.

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