

**East Carolina University Department of Surgery  
General Surgery Resident Travel Support  
Final - August 29, 2018**

This protocol defines circumstances in which the ECU Department of Surgery will provide travel support for General Surgery Residents.

**Chief Residents**

Chief Residents are invited to attend the American College of Surgeons (ACS) meeting. Travel expenses, including up to three nights of lodging and subject to ECU and departmental travel policies, will be reimbursed for the main conference (no pre/post conference events). The residents are expected to attend educational events during the conference. A national meeting in a related subspecialty may be substituted for the ACS meeting with advance notice and program director approval.

**Scientific Meetings/Research Presentation Travel**

Eligible residents may request travel funding to present their research at professional meetings. Funding will support travel to and from the conference, lodging the night before and the night of the presentation (up to two nights lodging unless multiple presentations with different presentation days are accepted), and per diems as specified by the ECU travel policies.

Travel funds are for presenting research performed at Vidant/ECU. If the research was performed at a different institution by a resident who later returns to our program, funding will only be provided if all presentations and publications for that research will include clear attribution to ECU Department of Surgery. Absent this, travel funding should be sought from the institution at which the work is being attributed.

GME provides funding for one research presentation (podium or poster), national invited presentation, or acceptance of a national award per year, up to \$1500. These funds go through the GME office and should be used for the first presentation each year, if eligible.

Grant funds, if available for the project being presented, must be used to support travel to present results of the grant funded project before departmental funds are used.

Residents will be limited to two additional Department of Surgery funded, non-regional presentations per fiscal year. Conference selection should be done in consultation with the department's faculty advisor for the work, or with the program director. Travel is limited to the continental U.S.

- Podium Presentations: Eligible residents may be reimbursed up to \$1,500 per event for podium presentation of scientific research at professional/scientific meetings.

- Poster Presentations: Eligible residents may be reimbursed up to \$1,200 per event for poster presentation of scientific research at professional/scientific meetings. Funding for travel for the same poster presentation will only be once.

### **Travel Eligibility**

Effective July 1, 2017, departmental travel funding for both poster and podium presentations will be available to residents with active Vidant employment contracts who scored 30<sup>th</sup> percentile or higher on the most recent General Surgery In-Service Exam at the time of submission of the abstract.

### **Residents who have scored below the 30<sup>th</sup> percentile are subject to the following:**

- Abstracts should only be submitted by the resident for podium presentations as only podium acceptances will be funded by the department.
- If the resident is unable to designate submission for podium presentations only, the resident MUST identify a co-author who agrees to present the poster if accepted PRIOR to submission. No departmental funding for travel will be provided for resident poster acceptances and an alternative funding source for travel must be identified prior to submission. The faculty sponsor of this project must be made aware of this arrangement in advance, in writing.
- Residents may elect to use their own vacation time, if available, and non-departmental funding to present a poster at a conference IF the travel can be accommodated by the schedule and is approved by the Program Director. However, no departmental funding will be provided.
- These policies are to ensure that co-authors and the institution are not viewed negatively by outside surgeons due to withdrawal of submissions after acceptance. Failure to follow this policy could subject the resident to consequences for unprofessional behavior.

### **Travel Funding Requirements**

All travel requests must be approved in advance in compliance with ECU, GME, and Department of Surgery guidelines. All travel requests and documents should be submitted to the Program Coordinator as soon as the presentation is accepted, but no later than 60 days before the travel date. Travel reimbursement requests and appropriate documentation must be submitted within 20 days of completion of travel to the appropriate funding source and in accordance with university and department policies to ensure reimbursement. Be sure to save all receipts and recognize that you may be required to provide credit card statements to verify payment. Residents are not eligible to receive a cash advance for travel purposes.

### **Non-Research Travel, including Training and Testing**

Each categorical resident should anticipate same day travel to take the FES and FLS exams at a regional test center as a senior or chief resident. Alternatively, these exams can be taken at SAGES or the ACS for those already attending for other purposes. Only the cost of the exam is paid by the residency. Should the resident fail one portion of the exam, the program will pay the re-take fee one time, provided the resident completes a remediation

training program with a faculty member who, in conjunction with the program director, verifies the resident is ready to re-take the exam. Should the resident not pass a second time, the re-take fee must be paid by the resident directly.

Categorical residents may also be offered the opportunity to attend training classes to enhance their professional development, such as the ASSET course or SAGES Advanced Laparoscopy courses. If so, with the approval of the Program Director, travel expenses will be reimbursed by the department. Industry sponsorship may be used to underwrite these costs subject to Vidant and GME policies.

### **Leave for Travel**

Currently, the ACGME and ABS have separate policies concerning leave for ANY non-clinical activity. Under ACGME policy, any conference the residency requires the resident to attend is considered part of the training. *The hours the resident spends at the conference in educational activity* should be listed as work hours in New Innovations and do not count towards vacation time. On the basis of this, travel of Chief Residents to the ACS, travel of residents to FLS or FES testing, travel to training at the request of the residency, up to 2 days of travel to accepted podium or poster presentations (for eligible residents) will be considered required travel.

However, the ABS requires completion of 48 weeks of clinical activity to count as a year for credit towards eligibility for board certification. All time not in clinical activity, including vacation time, sick time, fellowship or job interviews, conference attendance, and all other time not related to clinical patient care as part of the remaining 4 weeks of time. However, residents are still permitted the one day off in 7 within the 48 weeks, and it may be necessary to use these days for travel to a conference. Please consult the ABS website for further details. Residents should carefully consider their vacation time and all other leave time in determining whether or not they will attend a conference.

The research year is NOT subject to either the ACGME or ABS policies on hours. However, residents must still enter hours for the educational portions of the conference attended into New Innovations for GME salary purposes.

### **Coverage for Travel**

Residents will not be permitted to travel for conferences during the following times:

- The week of Thanksgiving
- The two-week period around Christmas and New Years
- The last two weeks of June (An exception will be made for the SVS meeting for an eligible resident giving a presentation.)
- The first two weeks of July
- The day prior to through the weekend of the ABSITE examination

When submitting for a conference, please send the possible dates of attendance to the Program Director and the Administrative Chief Resident for early planning. Within 10 days of acceptance of an abstract, please inform the Program Director and Administrative Chief

Resident of the intended dates of absence (max 2 nights). The resident must ensure coverage is in place for their absence and inform the faculty of that service of the coverage plan before leaving. To the fullest extent possible possible, residents should perform as much clinical coverage as travel times permit, including utilization of post call days and 1 day off in 7 for travel (if no educational activity at the conference is occurring that day).

### **Deliverables**

All podium and poster presentations should be finalized and approved by a faculty member OR the program director 1 week prior to the resident traveling to the conference. This is to ensure a quality presentation representing our program is put forth.

All podium and poster presentations should have a written manuscript created, complete with references and figures and submitted to the sponsoring faculty member AND the program director prior to travel to the conference. There is no requirement to submit this to a journal and we recognize that some presented works are incomplete. However, creation of a manuscript for submission ensures the resident is familiar with the related data before the presentation is given and is prepared for submission, even if further information will be added first. Residents can request an extension for up to the 20 days by written request and providing a rationale (approved by the faculty mentor) for not preparing a manuscript in advance. The manuscript must be turned in prior to submitting receipts (20-day limit). Residents who do not submit the manuscript to the program director will not be reimbursed for travel.

All residents who travel to a conference or a course utilizing department funding OR done outside of vacation time will be expected to present 2 slides about what they learned at the meeting at a special Grand Rounds held each spring. The slides will be combined for a single presentation by all involved residents.

All abstracts resulting in funded travel to a meeting will be submitted to the first Surgery Resident Research Day and Graduate Medical Education Research Day following the travel.

**Any exceptions to this travel policy should be rare and require written approval of both the Program Director and Department Chair.**