

COLLEGE OF MICRONESIA-FSM

INTERIM POLICY: Travel & Leave

Travel and Leave during COVID-19 Pandemic

Date Adopted: 6 April 2022

Date Ending: 5 April 2023

Date Reviewed:

References:

Definitions:

Interim Policy: Temporary policy not subject to the normal policy development and approval process to address a limited term emergency situation.

Eligible dependent: spouse and children 18 years old or under at the time of contract signing.

Family: eligible dependents and anyone else residing in the household.

A. Comply with Health Mandates and Requirements

As college employees travel for business or other reasons, COVID-19-related travel guidance from the FSM Government, state governments and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) must be followed to reduce the spread of the virus and infection. The college expects all employees to adhere to this policy when traveling on college business and approved college travel.

B. Travel to FSM to Fill Vacancies

Successful job applicants will travel when they confirm understanding of the associated risks and health concerns requirements they will observe and comply with on the way to the job site. New employees who travel to the FSM will comply with any mandatory COM-FSM regulation and policies or procedures required on the job and for employment.

C. Travel Benefits during a Pandemic

COM-FSM will cover the cost of recruitment and repatriation for eligible new employees and departing employees who are determined to have met requirements established in Board Policy No. 6028 and as provided below. Other travels for college business will also follow the existing travel policy.

1. Recruitment of New Employees

Employee will sign the [Travel Waiver Form-1](#) prior to travel and complete application requirements for travel to FSM as maybe required per state government, FSM Government and other applicable travel ports requirements.

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- a. Transportation of employee and eligible dependent(s). Per diem for required layover for time spent on land due to interrupted flight and while waiting for quarantine in Guam and other FSM approved ports.
- b. Employee and family members will travel together and exception requires approval by president.
 - c. Mandatory travel insurance for employee and eligible dependent(s) for the duration of the trip using college approved travel insurance plan. The type of plan purchased will be at the discretion of the college.
 - d. COM-FSM payment of hospital cost at 50% if such costs are not included in the travel insurance or employee's own personal travel insurance and after all other applicable insurance plans have been exhausted.
 - e. At the discretion of the college, it may allow for payment of a return home travel if employee is not able to get on the flight and waiting period in Guam or other FSM approved quarantine port will take more than two weeks at minimum and payment of the second flight to quarantine port when they are confirmed for the next flight.
 - f. If employee or eligible dependent(s) meets death caused by COVID-19 or accidental death that is certified not the fault of the employee's own negligence or his/her eligible dependent(s) and that is not covered in the travel insurance or the traveler's own travel insurance, the college will shoulder the cost of repatriation of the remains following existing policy and practice.

Limitation:

1. Per diem will not include days provided for by other means including government paid quarantine, other individual owned travel policy, or when employee changes travel plan for own convenience. Per diem is limited to one per employee and eligible dependents not individual traveler.
2. If employee chooses not to travel the second time to the quarantine port, they will reimburse the college for the cost of the recruitment from the first trip, associated costs and the return trip home within one year from date of the last travel.
3. If the flight to FSM from the quarantine port is delayed then the college may either fly the employee back to their place of recruitment or provide per diem for the required delay.

2. Repatriation of Employees with Vested Travel Benefits

- a. Transportation of employee and eligible dependent(s) at the time of contract signing. Per diem for required layover for time spent on land due to interrupted flight and while waiting for quarantine ports.
- b. Mandatory travel insurance for employee and eligible dependent(s) for the duration of the trip using college approved travel insurance plan. The type of plan purchased will be at the discretion of the college.
- c. Employee and family members will travel together and exception requires approval by president.

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- d. COM-FSM payment of necessary hospital cost at 50% if such costs are not included in the travel insurance or employee's own personal travel insurance and after all other applicable insurance plans have been exhausted.
- e. If employee or eligible dependent(s) meets death caused by COVID-19 or accidental death that is certified not the fault of the employee's own negligence or his/her eligible dependent(s) and that is not covered in the travel insurance or the traveler's own travel insurance, the college will shoulder the cost of repatriation of the remains following existing policy and practice.

*Employee will sign the [Travel Waiver Form-2](#) prior to travel and complete application requirements for travel out of the FSM as maybe required per state government, FSM Government and other applicable travel ports requirements.

Limitation:

1. Per diem will not include days provided for by other means including government paid quarantine, other individual owned travel policy, or when employee changes travel plan for own convenience. Per diem is limited to one per employee and eligible dependent(s) not individual traveler.
2. Travel must be taken within 90 days from last date of employment. Travel taken outside of the timeline will be waived.

D. Travel to Conduct College Business

Due to Covid19 or pandemic restrictions, business travel is solely to the business destination and direct return. Personal leave cannot be taken during a business trip.

- a. Transportation of employee from duty station and return per existing college travel policy. Per diem for required layover for employee for time spent on land due to interrupted flight and while waiting for quarantine in Guam and other FSM approved ports.
- b. Mandatory travel insurance for employee for the duration of the trip using college approved travel insurance plan. The type of plan purchased will be at the discretion of the college.
- c. Employee must be currently enrolled in MiCare Plan or an individual health care plan prior to travel.
- d. Employee must be currently enrolled in the college's group life insurance plan or other individual life insurance plan prior to travel.
- e. COM-FSM payment of necessary COVID-19 associated hospital cost at 50% after all other applicable insurance plans have been exhausted.
- f. If employee meets death caused by COVID-19 or accidental death that is certified not the fault of the employee's own negligence and that is not covered in the travel insurance or the traveler's own travel insurance, the college will shoulder the cost of repatriation of the remains following existing college policy and practice.

*Employee is required to complete the application process for repatriation within their state of residence prior to travel. Employee will also sign the [Travel Waiver Form-1](#) prior to travel and complete application requirements for travel out of the FSM as maybe required per state government, FSM Government and other applicable travel ports requirements.

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1. Per diem will not include days provided for by other means including government paid quarantine, other individual owned travel policy, or when employee changes travel plan for own convenience.
2. Travel must be completed per approved Travel Authorization (TA) and any extension or delay caused by the employee for personal accommodation will be requested in advance and approved by relevant vice president. However, such extensions are at the risk and expense of the employee including delays, layover, cancellation fees, etc. and medical expenses not covered in the travel insurance and including extension of the travel insurance coverage.

E. Sick and Associated Leave to Travel During Pandemic

If employee takes leave for medical services off island or partial annual leave to travel off island, these conditions and requirements apply.

- a. Employee will sign the [Travel Waiver Form-2](#) prior to travel and complete application requirements for travel out of the FSM as may be required per state government, FSM Government and other applicable travel ports requirements.
- b. Gain written approved leave of absence using existing leave application form
- c. Leave form must have a date of returning to work station
- d. Extension of leave request must be obtained two weeks prior to expiration of current approved leave and in writing.
- e. Employee will stay in contact with supervisor during absence and update on status regularly and if he/she is not confirmed on a flight back may be allowed to perform some duties while waiting. In this case, employee may not apply for leave during that period until they are unable to perform duties.

*All employees are encouraged to purchase travel insurance at their own expense.

F. COVID-19 Pandemic Leave

The president will grant COVID-19 pandemic leave for employees who meet the following criteria.

1. Employee exhausted all leaves (sick and annual) while off-island taking an approved leave and completed the repatriation process but is not placed on a flight back home and such arrangement is outside the control of the employee or the college. The waiting period when such an employee runs out of accrued leaves and does not have the means to perform duties remotely renders the employee eligible for COVID-19 pandemic leave and must take the next available flight home.
2. Employee is required to quarantine due to contact with individuals who are afflicted with the virus as determined and defined by FSM Public Health Services and/or CDC to be a threat to others.
3. Employee is on college business travel when a pandemic happens and has exhausted all accrued leaves and does not have the means to perform job duties remotely. The president may consider placing the employee on administrative leave for a limited period and may grant partial benefits when such leave is extended beyond two (2) months and such situation where it creates an undue hardship on the college's operation.

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1. The employee who is off-island and approved for COVID-19 pandemic leave must provide documentation that shows, he/she completed the repatriation process, is not on the scheduled flight, has exhausted all sick and annual leaves and has purchased a return ticket. Employee will furnish all the documentation to the immediate supervisor immediately to apply for this leave and avoid being placed on leave without pay or other relevant disciplinary actions.
2. The employee who is approved for leave under this section is required to provide to supervisor documentation that show he/she was identified by an official of the FSM or state public health services or a practicing physician to undergo quarantine. The documentation must show effective date of the quarantine and ending date, name and signature of the official, and name and location (full residential address) of the office or health care facility. The employee upon completion of the required quarantine period, must provide to supervisor documentation of clearance to return to duty station showing expected date to report to work, clear employee from any infectious threat to others, advice on any necessary public health measures applicable, and advice on any limited job duties, if any. The documentation is due to the supervisor within two (2) days of release from quarantine and two (2) days prior to return to job station.
3. Employee on approved college business who is stranded overseas due to a pandemic will notify supervisor immediately when the situation happens and stay in contact to provide update on travel, submit applicable leave forms and supporting documents required by the college. Employee will provide trip report to account for the part of the trip that is completed up to the point he/she is stranded and will complete the repatriation process and get on the next available flight.

G. Returning to FSM after Leave

This policy applies to both medical leave and annual leave.

- A. The employee is obligated to schedule a return to the FSM prior to the expiration of his/her approved leave.
- B. In the event delays beyond the control of the employee due to the Covid-19 pandemic occurs and the employee is not able to return to the FSM by the expiration of their leave, the employee may apply for additional leave in writing until they are cleared to return. The employee is required to take the next available flight to the FSM and if they fail to do so, all benefits described herein may be revoked.
- C. In the event the employee can carry out full duties remotely, and they choose to work remotely instead of using accrued leave, they may work remotely with proper approval.
- D. In the event the employee can carry out full duties remotely, then upon the exhaustion of accrued leaves the employee must elect to work remotely with proper approval in order to remain on pay status.
- E. Nothing herein will entitle the employee to per diem.

See Associated Interim Administrative Procedure