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Travel Portal FAQ

- **Do we have a discount with Southwest Airlines? The prices I found on the web were the same as the portal.**
Southwest is already a discounted airline so it offers no further discounts to corporations. However, when we first opened our SWABIZ (Southwest business account), we were offered double frequent flyer miles, and we hope to get those again by drawing enough volume through the portal.

- **I was told to open an account in this website but could not find where to go to do this task? Could you please help me?**
Opening an account refers to only two places: the SWABIZ site (Southwest's business site) and the Orbitz for Business site. The CorporateAAccess site (American Airline's corporate site) will be discontinued by American Airlines Dec 31, 2008. To sign up for those, just go to the Airlines with VU discounts and click on those links and "register now." You can also set up profiles on Rearden, Caldwell Travel's online booking system.

- **Where can I find the University policy for reimbursement of travel expenses and travel guidelines? Travel regulations? The mileage reimbursement rate?**
Travel information, regulations, and policies links can be found under the internal resources link.

- **How do I know what shots and visas I need to travel?**
There is a link to the international travel clinic under internal resources, and government information under the discounts and freebies links.

- **What can/cannot be purchased on the P-card?**
There is nothing on the travel portal that cannot be purchased on the P-card unless it's for personal travel and/or your department has specifically forbidden travel on the p-card. The Procurement office recommends the P-card use as our first choice for booking travel for its paper trail, speed, reduction in disbursement processing resources and its convenience to you and the suppliers.

- **How do I find multiple rates without an agent involved?**

If you go directly to one airline's site, you will only get that one airline's rates. The rest of the sites, however, show you multiple discounted rates. Our "Orbitz for business" site shows you multiple rates (now including Southwest). The hotel discounts are not loaded due to the added fee this would cause to you (and for the most part this will not be an issue as they are local and you'll usually be booking out of town hotels with flights!). For personal travel, the online links show comparative rates.

Another option is that several of our travel agencies have terrific online systems (such as Rearden at Caldwell Travel) where you can see comparative rates (including our discounts) and still have the back up of the travel agency if you decide to book via their systems.
- **Can my personal travel agent access the site?**

Yes, your agent can access the site. But, unless you use one of the six agencies on our site, your personal travel agent will not have access to our travel discounts unless they actually use the links. In other words, they cannot give you our discounts when booking via phone. Any discount you might find, however, you can call and see if your agent can match it.
- **Is the colleague reciprocity also valid for personal travel?**

Yes. You may sign in as a visitor or a colleague to that university. Keep in mind that a few hotels do not offer visitor rates so use those that do.
- **I was wondering where you get the special discount code for the hotels that are listed. Are these discounts only to be used by employees when they are traveling for Vanderbilt?**

You do not need a special discount code to get our discounts. If you book via the travel portal's direct hotel booking form, OR, you call and tell them you're VU, then you get our discount. If VU is paying for the bill, you get the fac/staff rate, if you are paying personally and not getting reimbursed, you get the VU visitor's rate.
- **Do I use the hotel form for group room reservations?**

No. When booking groups, different rates and negotiations apply depending on whether you are booking room nights only or also using meeting rooms and catering. This form is designed for the transient traveler only. For groups, please call the hotel representative directly. They have people designated to work only on group reservations and these contacts are listed on our site.
- **When should I use an agent and when should I do it myself?**

When the booking is simple, such as purchasing a Southwest ticket, you do not need to use a travel agent. When you have complex itineraries, Fly America Act, time zone changes, and sister cities, use a Travel Agent.
- **Is there any shuttle (free or discounted) from campus to airport?**

Currently, we do not have a shuttle supplier listed. Contact Procurement office for suggested suppliers. Things will constantly be added to the travel portal, so check back soon for this addition.
- **How good is this Portal for personal international travel?**

The travel portal is good for any type of travel both personal and business for many reasons. It is filled with information about international travel (shots, etc), resources to help get you there (cheap, fast passports, etc), and booking options (consolidators, travel agencies).

- **How do I capture frequent flyer miles on the website?**
Frequent flyer miles can be procured the same way you currently procure them. In other words, when you sign up for a flight, you add your special number. When you set up a traveler profile, you add the number.
- **What does this portal have to do with travel reports?**
The Travel portal is a tool for researching and booking of travel and for finding discounts in all areas of travel. It is not part of the travel reporting mechanism of the university accounting system.
- **Will this ever be tied to the massive amounts of administrative paperwork we have to complete?**
Hopefully in the future, we'll be able to tie the two together. There are several excellent online systems tied to corporate credit cards, for ex. We'll be working toward more paperless, efficient ways to handle travel paperwork but that is a way off from now.
- **Are there hotels outside of Nashville that offer discounts?**
Yes, the college reciprocity page and the hotel pages list discounted options for hotels and hostels. The Choice hotels link offers greatly discounted hotel rates – you will find them cheaper than the AAA rates.
- **How can we tell what's a discounted service vs. just a link for convenience? For instance, the hotels and the B&B site for New York don't appear to be discounted. Are they? Or is this just a convenient place to find the link?**
That's a great question and it's a bit confusing. Yes, the NY hotels and B&Bs are discounted. Almost everything on the site is discounted (exceptions are clicking on an airline's ".com" site), but not necessarily a specific VU negotiated discount. The idea, however, is to eventually have VU discounts with suppliers on the portal that currently are not discounted (such as other airlines), but that will take years of negotiating and data collection to get there.
- **How do I not get taxed for car rentals?**
Unfortunately, rental car companies were not able to remove the tax feature from their booking systems just for us. So, there is a reminder at the end of the booking process that will remind you to tell the agent when you get the car and they will take the tax off before charging your card. If for some reason you do get charged tax, they will reimburse your Pcard for it.
- **Do each of the travel agencies charge the same rate and is it per person/travel or does the charge pertain to group travel?**
Each of the agencies charge a different rate for VU travelers; for specifics, see the Travel Agency page of the Portal.
- **Are there any "tricks" or tips to finding the best deals through the portal?**
Start by looking through the negotiated deals and exploring sites which show comparison prices such as Orbitz, Rearden, CorporateAAccess; check out international consolidator prices. For tips about deals, contact a travel agent.
- **What are the best ways to get the information quickly?**
- **Are there guidelines for when to book international flights? i.e., 1 year, 3 or 6 months in advance of travel?**
- **What is the best way to break down the information?**
These are all questions that should best be directed to a Travel Agent.

- **The link for the travel portal takes me to business travel. I understood you to say there are three levels of travel: business, staff personal, and visitor. I see the button for visitors. What about the distinction between business and personal?**

The visitor's portal is meant for non-staff, non-faculty, non-students who visit Vanderbilt such as alumni, patients, and parents. The fac/staff page can be used by all fac/staff/students to book both business and personal travel. There are corporate accounts that are for VU business travel only such as the SWABIZ account for Southwest Airlines, Lufthansa, and the CorporateAAccess account for American Airlines – and these are clearly marked "for business use only." However, AA offers a vacation package for personal use, as well which we have placed next to the Corporate link for your convenience.

Almost everything on the site is discounted, but not necessarily a specific VU negotiated discount.

The places I have negotiated VU discounts are:

- *On the flight page under the negotiated deal*
- *all the local hotels*
- *all the car rental companies*
- *all the car service companies*
- *the travel agencies on the site which administer our discounts*
- *the Fly-Away Parking and Executive Travel Parking*

We also have discounts that CTM or the consortium of universities negotiated such as:

- *Items on the free/discounted page link*
- *the college reciprocity page which shows the hotels on the other sites using CTM who have a visitor's site. We can use the hotel discounts available to visitors at any other university that uses Campus Travel Management by identifying ourselves as colleagues or visitors*
- *The Boston/NY/Washington shuttle at 30% off (found under flights/negotiated deals)*

And then there are money saving discounted sites for convenience and research such as:

- *the links to book hostels*
- *international flight consolidators*
- *the online systems which search and show you comparative prices such as Expedia, etc. Those are the same discounts you'd get by going to the site on your own and they are there for your convenience: however, we might opt to have corporate accounts on those at some point as we have done with Orbitz.*

- **What do travel agents know that we don't?** *A lot . . .*

Top 12 Things Your Travel Agency Knows... That you Don't ...

1. Airline Discounts and Double Frequent Flyer Points
 - a. airline discounts: under negotiated fares; usually requires travel agency or customized website (example: AA, CO)
 - b. when double frequent flyer points are available
2. Upgrades on Air Tran
 - a. included in negotiated deals
 - b. recommended that travel agency be used
3. Double frequent flyer on Southwest
 - a. the conventional program involving Southwest was cancelled.
 - b. However, getting a Southwest visa card will accomplish almost the same thing
4. Five different levels of pricing
 - a. travel agency GDS
 - b. airline direct
 - c. online
 - d. consolidator with net rates (sometimes overlaps with online- example: Priceline)
 - e. regional airlines not in GDS
5. Getting the best price, understanding the price you're getting
 - a. base fare is the price
 - b. taxes are extra, and can be hundreds of dollars
 - c. fuel surcharges are extra
 - d. tour conductor passes not always included
 - e. deposit should be deducted from balance- sometimes it's added
6. Why the playing field isn't level
 - a. travel is the ultimate perishable commodity
 - b. products or services that are unsold can't be discounted, they are gone
 - c. creates a paranoid mentality, where manufacturers (airlines, hotels, etc) are always second guessing distributors
 - d. manufacturers often undercut distributors
 - e. it's not a level playing field because the manufacturer controls everything
7. Beating the Internet on international flights
 - a. consolidator tickets
 - b. regional airlines like Air Berlin, Ryan Air
8. New Orleans for \$25 per night
 - a. Hostelworld

9. Tips when negotiating for a group
 - a. not just a group, individuals as well
 - b. name lists with names as they are written on passport and/or drivers license
 - c. specificity: dates (hotel & flight dates are different), itinerary, full cost - including fees, fuel, taxes
 - d. flexibility: is their wiggle room for the agent with dates or sister cities?

10. Travel Organizer: All of the responsibility, none of the control
 - a. often blamed for delays, computer breakdowns, weather, etc., yet no control
 - b. if cancelling, be sure to get cancellation #, plus date and name of agent you spoke to
 - c. benefit of using reservation request form on local hotel page: paper trail
 - d. benefit of using Travel Profile for each traveler

11. When to use an agency; when to bypass
 - a. when to use: complex itineraries, Fly America Act, time zone changes, sister cities
 - b. when not to use: simple Southwest ticket

12. Isn't there one place I can go that has everything?
 - a. travel agency
 - b. we have six

Finding the Travel Portals

Vanderbilt **Business** <<http://www.campustravel.com/university/vanderbilt/>>

Vanderbilt **Visitors** <<http://www.campustravel.com/vanderbiltvisitors/>>

Vanderbilt **Medical Business** <http://www.campustravel.com/university/vumc_business/>

Vanderbilt **Medical Visitors** <http://www.campustravel.com/university/vumc_visitor/>

These directions are the easiest ways to direct folks to find the sites instead of remembering the URLs:

1) **Faculty/Staff Portal** <<http://www.campustravel.com/university/vanderbilt/>>

The best way to find it is via the NEW Procurement & Disbursement Services (PDS) website (@ home page, click "site index," "procurement..") or go directly to <<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/procurement/>> click "Travel"

2) **VUMC Faculty/Staff Portal** <http://www.campustravel.com/university/vumc_business/>

You can get to it via the Medical Center Home Page: <<http://www.mc.vanderbilt.edu>> On home page, click "Resources for Employees," click "Travel"

3) **Visitor's portal:** <<http://www.campustravel.com/vanderbiltvisitors/index.htm>> You can get to it via the Vanderbilt Home page, click "Visitors & Neighbors," click "Travel Information."

4) **VUMC visitor's (patient) portal:** <http://www.campustravel.com/university/vumc_visitor/>

You can get to it via the Vanderbilt Consumer Health site <<http://www.vanderbilthealth.com>> In the Visitors section (green), click "Travel"

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OUR MANAGED TRAVEL PROGRAM GOALS

Service Goals:

1. Offer convenient one-stop shopping for discounted travel services
2. Facilitate compliance with travel policies
3. Educate our community on travel related industries, offers, procedures, and discounts
4. Expand VU discounts nation-wide for personal and business use
5. Offer negotiating assistance to meeting/travel planners

Business Goals:

1. Collect data to negotiate volume discounts
2. Lower travel related costs through VU specific contracts
3. Raise awareness and use of contracted discounts (with embedded discount codes and website)
4. Establish direct competition for VU business among airlines, hotels, agencies, rental cars, etc
5. Present a united front; reduce duplicate work in departments such as re-listing hotels on dept sites
6. Centralize spending behavior with contracted suppliers
7. Develop monitored relationships with travel suppliers

BEFORE YOU TRAVEL

Be sure

- you are getting the best rate available to you
- that Vanderbilt is getting credit for your purchase (you're using the portal or one of our agencies)
- that you have filled out the travel authorization form before you travel so you are covered under Vanderbilt's insurance
- you attend a Travel Website Training session
- you are familiar with the online **Travel Expense Manual** and **online interactive training** at:
<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/procurement/disbursement/training.shtml>

BENEFITS OF THE MANAGED TRAVEL PROGRAM

1. Site and resources are for business & personal use
2. Travel Marketplace filled with resources: ex. discounts on visas and expedited passports
3. Price benchmarking by department is possible
4. Net, travel agency buying rates on 50 international carriers
5. Designated Travel Agents at preferred Travel Agencies which distribute our discounts
6. Membership in consortium of 65 sister institutions with access to their visitor discounts (see colleague reciprocity page.)
7. Money back guarantees on Fly America Act tickets

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Note: Please feel free to contact us if you have questions or comments about the travel webpage, suppliers, or contracts.

We are not travel agents and cannot answer specific questions regarding your travel arrangements. If you need assistance with rates or travel details, please contact one of the travel agencies listed on the site. Thank you!