



Republic of the Philippines  
Department of Health  
**OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY**

December 15, 2003

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER**

No. 124 s. 2003

**SUBJECT: Guidelines on International Travels**

**I. RATIONALE**

The Department of Health (DOH) recognizes the vital role of its health human resources and prioritizes them as an important organizational investment. The rational and balanced development of our health human resources is necessary to ensure the efficient and effective delivery of health services to the Filipino people.

Opportunities for travel, including fellowship and scholarship grants, both at the local and international levels, redound to the professional growth and capability building of every employee. To ensure maximum benefit to be derived by the DOH employees as well as by their respective offices from these opportunities, guidelines on foreign fellowships, scholarships and training are hereby institutionalized.

**II. DEFINITION OF TERMS**

1. Fellowship - an award for advanced study abroad, given to individuals on the recommendation of their government/institution to fit them for a specific assignment; thus, assisting in the development of the health programme in their country.

A. Long-Term Fellowship - a training course in pursuit of a formal degree (e.g. masteral, doctoral)

B. Short-Term Fellowship - a special training course, short-term duration which may be in the following forms:

a. Study Tour, exposure/orientation program - this is sometimes referred to as "traveling seminar," a visit by a group of health workers or scientists to one or several countries to study local problems and methods of dealing with them. It is, thus, both a fact-finding mission and an educational experience.

b. Seminar - a meeting at which participants familiarize themselves with the state of knowledge in a particular field with the assistance of an expert discussion leader.

c. Workshop - an educational device intended mainly for those already employed in a particular

field. The emphasis is on a free discussion, exchange of ideas, demonstration of methods and practical application of skills and principles.

d. Symposium - a meeting of specialists representing different disciplines to exchange ideas and experience. It is essentially an exploratory meeting designed to discover what contribution different disciplines can make to the solution of a specific problem or set of problems.

e. Conference/Congress - usually larger than a symposium and is concerned more with broad strategic approaches to problems than with their scientific or technical aspects. The participants in a conference may be designated as government representatives.

2. Scholarship - maintenance or stipend for a student awarded by an educational institution.

3. Grant - maintenance or stipend for a student/participant awarded by a funding agency other than an educational institution.

4. Consultant - an individual whose expertise is utilized to assist in the conceptualization, implementation and evaluation of a particular project or program.

5. Official Time - on the condition that the purpose of the travel is to comply with an international commitment or contractual obligation, or in connection with training/scholarships and post graduate courses or to present a scientific paper or act as a resource person/speaker, thus gaining more knowledge and skills relevant to his/her functions in his/her mother unit and as such will bring prestige/honor to the country. These travels are fully covered or subsidized by grants, sponsors, fellowship programs or such other similar financing schemes utilizing resources other than that of government; all expenses and charges for accommodation, travel, food, per diem allowances are provided for by the inviting and sponsoring entity and no government expenses are claimed/reimbursed except for reasonable pre-departure and clothing allowance. Personnel are entitled to payment of salaries and other monetary benefits as authorized by DBM. However, if the purpose of the travel is to attend a convention, conference, scientific meeting, etc. as a regular participant, the travel shall be classified as restricted official time. As such, personnel are entitled only to payment of salaries and shall not be entitled to any other monetary benefits given to those traveling on official time.

a. "international commitment" shall be understood to mean such obligations arising from bilateral or multilateral agreements, treaties with foreign governments or internationally recognized and duly accredited foreign institutions and their entities, where the Philippines is an active member or recognized observer or has applied membership thereof.

b. "Contractual obligations" shall refer to perfected agreements and contracts with the wholly or partially owned and controlled public corporations or with private companies in connection with the implementation of foreign-assisted project/s where provisions for such travel abroad is included and embodied in the loan, grant, purchase, credit arrangement, and like agreements and in certain cases, in the consultancy contract.

c. "Pro-departure expense" shall cover miscellaneous/incidental expenses such as tax, (local) fare, official (red) passport, photographs, immunization, visa fees, portage and airport terminal fees

d. "Clothing allowance" in such amount and rate already provided for by applicable executive issuances shall be permitted only when the scheduled trip abroad is in tropical countries with a duration of more than 1 month or in temperate countries for periods coinciding with the autumn or winter seasons regardless of the duration; this shall not be granted oftener than once in every twenty-four (24) months and a certification shall be submitted to the effect that no clothing allowance had been received during the preceding twenty-four (24) months

6. Official Business - on the condition that the travel is initiated by the Department or in conjunction with other government entities or in relation to plans and policy thrusts of the Office of the President for the purpose of fostering better relations, business or trade ties, technological transfer, medical or humanitarian missions or any such avowed declaration of the President of the Philippines, or in compliance with an international commitment as defined previously, of which government funds are to be disbursed for the payment of expenses, wholly or in part, relative to such trip; personnel are entitled to payment of salaries and other benefits as authorized by DBM.

7. Leave of Absence - all other applications for authority to travel abroad when not falling under travels on "official business" or "official time" shall be based on a duly approved application for leave of absence.

8. BIHC- refers to the Bureau of International Health Cooperation

9. HHRDB - refers to the Health Human Resource Development Bureau

10. HPDPB - refers to the Health Policy Development and Planning Bureau

11. CHD - refers to the Center For Health Development

12. DOH - refers to the Department of Health

13. AS - refers to the Administrative Service

14. SEC-FT - refers to the Screening and Evaluation Committee for Foreign Travels, chaired by the BIHC and composed of designated representatives from HHRDB, AS, Health Operations Office and Health Regulations Office.

15. NEDA-SCS - refers to the National Economic Development Authority Special Committee on Scholarships

### III. GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. The awarding of scholarships and training grants shall at all times conform to a policy of transparency, accountability, equitable distribution and eligibility.
2. All foreign travels per received subject shall be coursed through the Bureau of International Health Cooperation (BIHC).
3. All employees with permanent appointments shall be given preference in the selection and nomination for training grants per Section 15 of Executive Order No. 292.
4. Non-permanent employees may be allowed to attend international training programs or scholarship grants provided that:
  - a. Employees are directly involved in the undertaking and implementation of foreign assisted projects in which the agreement entered into by and between the DOH and the foreign entity, includes training/scholarship grants for project staff members under the auspices of the lending or assisting foreign institutions.
  - b. Employees have been invited by a sponsoring agency; or proposed for nomination by agencies, which have been invited by, or acting on behalf of a sponsoring interested party.
  - c. Employees are engaged in highly scientific fields critical to national development as certified by the Department of Science and Technology.
  - d. Employees whose availment of scholarship/training grant shall satisfy any deficiency for permanent appointment upon completion of the training/scholarship grants, or those who lack a specified residency requirement, whose residency requirements shall have been complied with within 3 years after availment.
5. The training/scholarship shall conform to the assessed training needs in the Offices and units of the DOH in coordination with HHRDB.
6. It shall be a precondition and indispensable requirement that all Heads of Bureau/Center/CHD submit an Agency Human Resource Development Plan to HHRDB, which, among others, outlines and defines how many and who among the staff should avail themselves of the scholarship/fellowship for the current year and the course/program to be taken.
7. The allocation of the fellowship/type of grant to be awarded shall be based primarily on the agency needs in relation to its operations and secondarily, to reward individual performance and to prepare the health worker for future promotion.
8. The awarding of fellowships, scholarships and training grants shall be subject to the approval of the Secretary of Health.
9. A database on foreign travels/scholarship grants shall be maintained by the BIHC for reporting

and monitoring purposes.

10. The following shall apply to travels funded directly or indirectly, fully or partially, by private contractors or suppliers of goods/medical equipment/services/medicines, pharmaceutical/drug companies and the like for the purpose of attending conferences/meetings:

a. The travel shall be considered on official time if in compliance with contractual obligations as defined above.

b. When meeting/conference/seminar is paid for, partially or fully, by private companies, and is not part of contractual obligation but the same is deemed necessary for humanitarian considerations or if the DOH employee is merely a participant and does not fall under any of the provisions for official business and official time, the same shall always be on approved leave of absence.

c. When the same is paid, partially or fully, by private companies and does not fall under any of the above, the same shall be on leave of absence without pay.

11. In instances involving more than one employee/staff for attendance in one and the same event/conference, the office concerned shall see to it that the number of participants is kept to the barest minimum without sacrificing effective representation and responsibility of each member of the delegation specifically mentioned and justified in the travel proposal. When 2 or more DOH personnel shall perform an act in the same capacity during the same event/activity, only one shall be permitted to attend. Conversely, when one person can effectively handle 2 or more tasks, only the most suitable shall be permitted to go.

12. Under no circumstance shall spouses, family members, friends or other hangers-on be allowed to accompany DOH personnel that would burden government in any manner whatsoever unless they do so purely at their own expense without any contribution, part or any amount disbursed and paid for by government.

#### IV. SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

A. Process in the Distribution of Invitation/Course Announcements, Acceptance and Issuance of Travel Authority and Department Order

1. Invitations for foreign fellowship/scholarship/training received by the Office of the Secretary of Health and by other DOH offices shall be forwarded to the Bureau of International Health Cooperation (BIHC) for processing and monitoring.

2. BIHC shall endorse said invitation within 1 working day to the Health Human Resource Development Bureau (HHRDB) for distribution to concerned offices.

3. HHRDB shall distribute the invitation to concerned Center/Bureau/Center for Health Development /Hospital/attached agency within 1 working day. Concerned unit shall prescreen

nominees on the basis of the criteria stated in IV.C.

4. Concerned Office/CHD/Hospital/attached agency shall submit the name/s of the nominee/s together with the detailed curriculum vitae with statement of actual duties, list of local and foreign training attended for the past five (5) years and service record to BIHC for evaluation by the SEC-FT. The proposed nominee of each office/CHD/hospital/attached agency shall compete with other nominees at SEC-FT level and shall likewise compete with other government agencies at NEDA-Special Committee on Scholarships level.

5. The SEC-FT shall recommend approval of all names of nominees to the Secretary of Health.

6. a. All travels of Department Secretary, Undersecretaries and Assistant Secretaries and other officials with equivalent ranks shall be transmitted by BIHC to the Office of the President for clearance.

6. b. For study and non-study trips of all officials below Assistant Secretaries, all travels on official time, official time (restricted) or official business that will last for more than one (1) calendar month and those involving two (2) or more persons regardless of rank and expenses shall be transmitted by BIHC to the Office of the President for clearance; exceptions are study trips processed by the National Economic Development Authority Special Committee on Scholarship (NEDA-SCS).

7. Authority emanating from the Office of the President serves as travel authority, which can be used to process documents at the Department of Foreign Affairs. This will also be used in the drafting of the Department Order by BIHC.

8. Other than the cases cited in IV-A (6), Department Order and Travel Authority can be processed by the BIHC once the Office of the Secretary approves the travel.

9. Travel authority for those on leave of absence can be issued by the BIHC once approved by the respective heads of office and the SEC-FT.

#### B. Nomination of Candidates

1. To qualify for nomination, the nominee shall meet the following minimum requirements:

a. The nominee has been a full-time employee of the DOH for at least six (6) months.

b. The nominee has not availed of any foreign or local scholarship for the last six (6) months unless otherwise decided upon by the Office of the Secretary.

c. The nominee has no pending administrative/criminal charges.

d. The nominee meets the academic requirements of the host institution.

e. The nominee has no pending application for a scholarship/training under another program.

f. The nominee has at least satisfactory performance rating prior to the application for training/scholarship

g. The nominee is physically and mentally fit to undergo the training/scholarship.

2. The SEC-FT shall likewise designate an alternate nominee in the event that the official nominee is unable to pursue his/her fellowship

### C. Criteria on the Selection of Nominees

The candidates shall be screened based on the following criteria:

a. Performance - 20%

b. Human resource development needs - 25%

c. Relevance of fellowship/training to present duties and responsibilities - 35%

d. With no previous/pending scholarship - 10%

e. Geographic assignment - 10%

### D. Lead Time for Issuance of Travel Authority

1. Request for travel authority involving one (1) employee on official time or official time (restricted) shall be submitted to BIHC at least three (3) weeks before the scheduled travel and the same will be submitted to the Screening and Evaluation Committee on Foreign Travels (SEC-FT) for discussion and deliberation.

2. Request for travel authority involving two or more employees, travels that will last for more than one calendar month, and travels on official business shall be submitted to BIHC at least one (1) month before the scheduled travel. BIHC shall transmit the request once approved by the SEC-FT and the Secretary of Health to the Office of the President for issuance of travel authority.

3. Request for travel authority on a leave of absence shall be submitted to BIHC, with leave approved by the Head of Office at least two (2) weeks before the scheduled travel. In case the travel is more than one calendar month, clearance as to accountabilities should also be attached.

### E. Post-Training Requirements

1. All Department of Health (DOH) employees who attended meetings/conferences/fellowships/training/study tours/seminar-workshops on official time, official time (restricted) and official business are required to submit post travel report or re-entry plan to Health Human Resource Development Bureau copy furnished the BIHC within ten (10) working days after the travel. NON SUBMISSION OF THE REPORT would mean NON-APPROVAL of the succeeding nomination/travel.

2. All Department of Health (DOH) employees who attended fellowships or training are required to submit a Service Contract or Scholarship Contract to BIHC, copy furnished the Personnel Division of the Administrative Service for issuance of Department Order.

#### F. MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

The scholar shall be required to submit a report to HHRDB through his/her Director on the progress of the implementation of his/her reentry plan within a year after completion of his/her training.

The Director concerned shall likewise monitor the progress of the implementation of said re-entry plan.

#### G. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

1. The following documents/forms are hereby made integral parts of this Order.

- a. International Travel Sponsorship Declaration Form - Annex A
- b. NEDA Documentary Requirements for Nomination - Annex B
- c. Documentary Requirements for issuance of red passport, tax exemption certificate - Annex C
- d. Documentary Requirements for request for travel authority - Annex D
- e. Scholarship Contract Form for NEDA scholars - Annex E
- f. Service Contract for Non-NEDA scholars - Annex F
- g. Official Business/Official Time Post-Travel Report - Annex G

2. The provision of this Administrative Order and all its amendments shall be deemed incorporated in any agreement or Memorandum of Agreement for foreign fellowships, scholarships or training, regardless whether or not specific reference is made thereto.

#### V. SEPARABILITY CLAUSE

Should any of the provisions herein is/are declared invalid or unconstitutional by the appropriate authority or courts of law, respectively, the same shall not affect the other provisions' validity unless otherwise so specified.

#### VI. EFFECTIVITY

This Order takes effect immediately. All other orders and issuances inconsistent with this Order are hereby rescinded, repealed and modified accordingly.

**MANUEL M. DAYRIT, MD, MSc**  
Secretary of Health





**INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL SPONSORSHIP DECLARATION**

**SCHOLARSHIP SERVICE CONTRACT**



made only upon the accumulation of the CD AMPER's average level and

d. Pre-departure expenses \_\_\_\_\_

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
\_\_\_\_\_, METRO MANILA ) S. S.

Before me, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 19\_\_\_\_ in the  
City/Municipality of \_\_\_\_\_, Philippines, personally appeared  
\_\_\_\_\_, with Residence Certificate  
Nos. \_\_\_\_\_, issued at  
\_\_\_\_\_, respectively, known to me to be the same  
persons who executed the foregoing instrument and they acknowledged to me that the  
same is their free act and deed.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this \_\_\_\_\_ day of  
\_\_\_\_\_ 19\_\_\_\_\_.

ANNEX F

CONFIDENTIAL

7. That the GRANTEE accepts the following per approved travel authority:

Pre-departure expenses \_\_\_\_\_ P

Clothing Allowance \_\_\_\_\_

Salaries, and other remunerations \_\_\_\_\_

Air fare (US \$ x P \_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Per diems (food and accommodation)  
(US \$ x P \_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Total \_\_\_\_\_