Defining “Research Related Purposes”

Under **NSPM-33** (National Security Presidential Memorandum 33) and the **OSTP Research Security Program Standard**, "research-related purposes" in the context of **international travel** refers to travel that is connected—either directly or indirectly—with a researcher’s scientific, technical, or scholarly activities, regardless of funding source.

**Definition of "Research-Related Purposes" in Travel Context:**

**Research-related purposes** include, but are not limited to, the following:

* **Presenting research** at conferences, symposia, or workshops.
* **Collaborating with international research partners** (e.g., visiting a lab, institution, or university).
* **Conducting field work** or collecting data abroad.
* **Participating in research training programs**, workshops, or summer schools related to your field.
* **Visiting foreign research facilities** or laboratories for knowledge exchange.
* **Engaging in peer review, editorial work**, or other scholarly activities tied to your research discipline.
* **Negotiating or participating in international research agreements or MOUs** on behalf of your institution.

**Key Point**: Travel does **not** have to be paid for by a federal grant (or any grant) to be considered "research-related." It’s the **intent and connection to your research activities** that matters.

**Why This Matters Under NSPM-33**

NSPM-33 and the OSTP standards require **disclosure of international engagements** and travel when related to research, in order to:

* Identify and mitigate **foreign influence** or **research security risks**.
* Ensure compliance with **federal research security** expectations.
* Improve transparency regarding **international collaborations**.

Therefore, any **international travel that could reasonably be connected to your research** falls under the scope of what must be disclosed to your institution and potentially to federal sponsors (depending on agency-specific rules).

**Examples:**

| **Travel Activity** | **Is it Research-Related?** | **Notes** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Presenting a paper at an academic conference in Germany | ✅ Yes | Directly connected to scholarly output |
| Attending a field study with an international collaborator | ✅ Yes | Even if not funded by a grant |
| Vacation in Italy | ❌ No | Not research-related unless it includes a visit to a research partner or event |
| Meeting with a foreign university to discuss a potential joint grant | ✅ Yes | Covers prospective collaborations |
| Serving as a visiting scholar at a foreign university | ✅ Yes | Involves scholarly engagement |

If you're at an institution subject to NSPM-33 (like a federally funded university), it’s important to follow your institution’s **travel disclosure policies**, especially for trips involving research engagements abroad.