

## **Guidelines for Funding Graduate Student Travel College of Communications**

Enabling graduate students in the College of Communications to travel to academic conferences contributes both to their professional development and to the visibility of the College. Therefore, to the extent possible, within financial constraints, the College should support graduate student travel.

With budget constraints and a relatively small travel fund, it is imperative that the College allocate its travel resources carefully; this is made all the more important by the size of our graduate program. However, we acknowledge that there are circumstances that may alter the need for travel funds. Generally, it is assumed that students will cover many of their expenses. The College's graduate program travel fund does not support graduate student travel to conduct research; the funds are meant to support the presentation of (refereed) research.

These travel guidelines are designed to add a measure of transparency to the disbursement of travel funds, provide information for students that will be useful for planning their conference participation, and allow flexibility for both the student and the College in the case of exceptional circumstances.

Disbursement of general College funds, for the fiscal year that begins July 1 and ends June 30, will be guided by the following:

- Priority for funding will go to:
  - Students on assistantship;
  - Advanced Ph.D. students (students who have reached candidacy in the program).
- Students can generally expect the following maximum disbursements; these totals, of course, are subject to budgetary changes/constraints in the College and are re-evaluated annually:
  - Post-Candidacy (2<sup>nd</sup>-year) Ph.D. students: \$800
  - 3<sup>rd</sup>-year Ph.D. students: \$900
  - 4<sup>th</sup>-year Ph.D. students: \$1000
- Since the College offers limited funding to each graduate student, it is important to consult closely with your academic adviser on what conferences are best suited for you.
- M.A. students, students who are not on assistantship, and first-year Ph.D. students may apply for funding for specific conference travel. Decisions will be based on the availability of funds.
- Any student can apply for additional travel funding (international conferences, for example); however, such requests will be granted on a case-by-case basis in light of the availability of funds and the nature of the conference.
- Graduate students will be notified (based on the second bullet point) by mid-July of the amount they will be allocated for the fiscal year. (Travel request forms will no longer be required before the conference.)

### **Reimbursement procedures:**

To receive the total amount of funding requested, all receipts need to be submitted within five days of the end of the conference. If this is not possible, please contact the Coordinator of

Graduate Education. Reimbursements will be processed within seven-ten days of receiving the request for reimbursement if submitted within the five business days of the end of the conference. (Receipts that are submitted after that may be processed with reimbursements for the next conference for which receipts are submitted.)

Receipt submission should comprise:

- Airfare confirmation (Expedia, Travelocity, etc.). The confirmation should include:
  - Total amount including taxes
  - Airline (Delta, US Airways, United, etc.)
  - Itinerary (time and date of departure and arrival)(If traveling by car, keep track of mileage. University will reimburse for mileage, not gas. Current rate is 56 cents per mile). For those who carpool, the graduate student whose vehicle is being used will be reimbursed (the amount will be divided among those who are carpooling).
- Conference registration with amount paid (original email from the conference or receipt handed to you at the conference). The University cannot accept a credit card statement or the signed credit card receipt.
- Hotel (lodging and taxes only). Internet connection, phone calls or room service – even if on the receipt -- will not be covered. If sharing a room, it is recommended that individual receipts are secured for each person. If this is not possible, list the names of the people sharing the room on the receipt and the amount each person paid. If one person paid the entire bill, confirmation will be needed from the other students.
- Meals will be paid based on per diem (the University lists the amount per day for all the towns and cities in the US and other counties.).

All reimbursements will be processed through ERS (Employee Reimbursement System). After the receipts are input by staff in the Graduate Office, the student will receive an email from “ConcurSolutions,” sent through ERS, indicating that the request is ready for submission. The chain for the reimbursement is:

- 1) Entered by Grad Office staff
- 2) Graduate Student submits the request through ERS ([www.ers.psu.edu](http://www.ers.psu.edu)). Penn State user ID and password will be needed to log into the system.
- 3) Dean Hardin approves the request
- 4) Annette Jones, assistant to the financial officer, approves
- 5) Jane Agnelly, financial officer, approves
- 6) Accounting office approves

Note: It may take several days after the student submits the report for the reimbursement to be deposited into the student’s bank account.

Reimbursements during the **summer months** run through the same process. The main difference for reimbursement during the summer is any student not receiving wages will need to fill out a Non-Employee Information Form” (<https://guru.psu.edu/forms/public/nonempinfoform.pdf>).

**Poster Costs:** The College will pay for the printing of the posters for conference presentations. Students who will be making poster presentations must contact the Graduate Office on how to proceed with the printing of the poster. Since the College will be covering the costs of the posters, it is expected that the posters will be returned to the College for display on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of James Bldg. If a student does not return the poster for display, the cost of the poster will be deducted from the travel reimbursement requested by the student.

Upon return from the conference, the poster should be returned to the Graduate Office at the same time handing in receipts for reimbursement. The College will cover the cost for the poster to be mounted on foam core for display in James Building. **Do NOT laminate your poster.** The required dimensions for the poster to be mounted are as follows:

24x36 inches

32x40 inches

40x60 inches

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