Faculty Travel Information/FAQ’s

FUNDING/NO FUNDING:

If no funding from the School or College is involved (i.e. if the trip is entirely self-funded, but is professionally related during the school year), what do I need to do?

Complete the Travel Requisition form and indicated “self-funded.” This is, in effect, a “permission to travel” form, regardless of how the professional travel is funded, and is needed for a variety of institutional reasons, including liability protection for those traveling on behalf of the institution and our ability to make the case for future additional travel funding. Be aware that listing expenses on a Travel Requisition form does not guarantee approval of funding for those expenses. Funding must be requested and approved as a separate matter by the person(s) with authority to approve funding from particular accounts.

The Travel Requisition Form is available from Heidi Walker in the Dean’s Office or online at: http://www.potsdam.edu/offices/purchasing/upload/trreq.pdf

If the trip is entirely or partially funded by any source/office at the School or College, what is the first step?

The first step is still the Travel Requisition Form (above).

Is the funding from a State account or a Foundation account?

If you don’t know, ask whoever approved the funding.

Typical sources/uses of State funds: Department budgets
(usually) NYSSMA travel funding
LTEC grant funding
UUP grant funding

STATE ACCOUNT FUNDING:

If I have State funding, what steps do I take?

Consult the Purchasing Department’s travel website:
http://www.potsdam.edu/offices/purchasing/travel.cfm. Many questions can be answered there. Call the Purchasing & Payables office if needed (ext. 2139) for additional information.

State funding policies:

Airfare must be booked through a state-contracted travel agency and must be paid for with a state travel card in the traveling individual’s name.
For airfare booking information:
http://www.potsdam.edu/offices/purchasing/travel5.cfm
For information about the state travel card program:
http://www.potsdam.edu/offices/purchasing/cititravelnews.cfm
Auto transportation can be handled through use of a state vehicle, a rental vehicle, or by reimbursement of mileage in a personal vehicle. (In some cases where funds are
limited, authorized funding may be limited to reimbursement of gas receipts for personal vehicle travel.

Mileage reimbursement is most expensive option, and should be avoided unless circumstances leave no other possibilities.

Rental vehicles (through the state-approved vendor, Enterprise) come with an unlimited mileage flat rate and are often least expensive to our budget, especially for long trips. However, for state-funded travel, Enterprise cars must be booked with a state travel card in the name of the individual traveler.

To reserve a state vehicle, contact Heidi Walker; this requires prior driver approval, a process with which she can also provide information and assist. Note that students can drive state vehicles only if accompanied by faculty members (although students on the College payroll can sometimes be approved as drivers).

If requesting personal vehicle mileage, trip information must be complete, including departure and arrival times/dates and specific street addresses between which travel occurred. Be aware that mileage may be checked by audit against commonly available mapping programs.

Complete information about all these options is available on the Purchasing Department’s Travel website linked above.

Hotel expenses cannot exceed the state-allowed maximum rate, which varies by region, and tax-exempt status must be requested. Taxes on hotel rooms will not be reimbursed for in-state travel, and tax-exempt status should be requested even for out-of-state travel. If extraordinary circumstances require, an over-the-maximum form can be submitted but this must be done and approved at least two weeks in advance of the hotel stay.


The over-the-maximum request form is at:
http://www.potsdam.edu/offices/purchasing/upload/Justification-for-OTM-Lodging-11-10-11-1.pdf

Meals are most easily (and preferably) covered by the state per diem allowances, which are given in the same table as the hotel maximums above. Note that the number of meals for which a traveler is entitled to per diem coverage is determined by time/date of departure and return. Direct reimbursement of meal costs from state funds can be requested, but costs must be within the allowable per diem limits, may not include tax, must include a receipt with an itemized list for meal items ordered, and cannot include alcohol.

Other reasonable travel expenses, including tolls, cab fare, bus fare, and/or train fare can be reimbursed, with appropriate receipts and with approval. For questions about any such expenses, consult the Purchasing & Payables Office in advance.

What do I do after travel is complete?

Complete a Travel Expense Form (Travel Voucher)
(http://www.potsdam.edu/offices/purchasing/upload/ReportofTravelExpenses.pdf)
and submit it along with clearly organized, dated and labeled receipts and, if applicable, mileage statements, for all expenses where reimbursement is expected. Submit this material to Heidi Walker and she will check for completeness, then forward it for approval and submission to the Purchasing & Payables Office. Reimbursements are made by the state comptroller’s office approximately 3 weeks later.

PLEASE NOTE: If you currently are paid via direct deposit, you will also be reimbursed via direct deposit to the same account as your paycheck. If you receive a paper paycheck, you will also be reimburse via a paper check, mailed directly from Albany to your home address.
Note that any travel made using the state travel card must be documented within five days of the completion of travel. Otherwise, documentation must be submitted no more than thirty days after the completion of travel. Later submissions will not be honored.

FOUNDATION ACCOUNT FUNDING:
In general, funding from Foundation sources offers greater flexibility in terms of options, although many of the state spending principles still apply, and these principles should always inform decisions about travel. Receipts and full documentation are required for reimbursement from Foundation sources, just as with State sources. Your assistance is essential in making appropriate and efficient use of funds available, which have been generously donated by alumni and supporters with the expectation that we use them respectfully and for their intended purposes.

Foundation checks are requested by the Crane Dean’s office on a weekly basis, and, if information and documentation is complete and submitted early in the week, are normally available on Tuesday of the following week.

As with state funding, Foundation funding must be authorized in advance of travel and the traveler should be certain to understand fully the amount of funding approved and what it is approved to cover. Foundation funds are spent according to the purposes designated by their donors, and our use of those funds must be consistent with the established guidelines for each fund in question.

Airfare should be booked by the individual traveler on a personal card. Reimbursement for approved travel can be issued based on an e-mailed receipt, and may be requested and provided as soon as the receipt is available (in advance of travel).

Auto travel can be made in any of the same ways described above under state-budget travel. Rental vehicles do not require booking with a state card, however, and can be reimbursed to the individual making the reservation on a personal card. As with state funding, for mileage reimbursement, specific dates/times and addresses for each leg of travel must be submitted.

Hotels should be booked by the individual traveler for reimbursement, as airfare. Travelers should seek the best rate possible; if traveling in-state, request the allowable state rate and use the tax exempt form, as if traveling on state funds; most hotels should honor both.

Meals authorized for reimbursement from Foundation funding require receipt documentation as with state funds. Cash advance per diem payments are not possible.

Other reasonable expenses, including tolls, cab fare, bus fare, and train fare, can also be reimbursed with appropriate authorization, documentation and receipts.

What do I do after travel is complete?
Complete a Crane Foundation Funded Travel Reimbursement Claim Form (available on the “Information for Crane Faculty” portion of the Crane website) and submit clearly organized, dated and labeled receipts, and, if applicable, mileage statements, for all expenses where reimbursement is expected. Submit this material to Heidi Walker and she will forward it for approval and submission to the Foundation. Checks will be available for pick up in the Dean’s office.

As with state-funded travel, in order to receive reimbursement, submit travel receipts and documentation within thirty days of the completion of travel.