FAQ’s

What forms are required when I want to travel on Official School Business?

A TA (Travel Authorization Form) and TE (Travel Expense Form) must be turned in when traveling for CSM business. Please note that a TA must be turned in even if there is no cost to CSM. All travel forms can be found on the travel website:

http://inside.mines.edu/Accounts_Payable-Travel

When is a TA required for CSM related travel?

A TA is required to be completed and turned into the Travel Desk for any travel that takes place for CSM business. Travel is defined as needing an overnight stay and/or airfare.

How can I avoid having my travel reimbursement be added to my taxable wages on my W2?

An otherwise non-taxable travel reimbursement will not be added to an employees’ W-2 if the TE is properly completed, approved, and submitted to the Travel Desk within 60 days of completing the travel.

What happens if I submit my TE more than 6 months past the completion of my travel?

Per the CSM travel policy, a traveler may not be reimbursed for any out of pocket travel related expenses if the TE is submitted more than 6 months past the completion date of the travel. In order to be reimbursed, the traveler must submit with the TE an explanation as to why the TE was not completed, approved, and submitted in accordance with the School policy. If the TE is processed, any reimbursement will be added to the employee’s W-2 for tax purposes.

Can I claim actual costs for meals instead of using per diem rates?

No. Per the CSM Travel Policy, for IRS purposes, the School has elected to use a standard cost method, per diems, as the basis for reimbursing travelers for meals and incidentals rather than the actual cost method. Daily or individual meal Per Diem amounts are the maximum a traveler may request. A traveler can elect to claim less than the approved daily rates as long as that amount is a variation of a per meal rate.

Do I have to use the preferred travel agencies for booking airfare?

No, the School’s travel agencies are not required at this time, but there are a few benefits when booking through them. Travelers are able to charge that airfare to the Ghost Card (must provide the TE# and Index when booking), which means they are not out of pocket for the expense and if the trip is cancelled, the ticket can usually be held for up to a year. Travelers automatically receive $500,000 death and dismemberment insurance when booking through the travel agencies. The travel agent ensures that the airfare is in compliance with the Fly America Act, which is required for international travel funded by federal programs. If a traveler is going to use a travel agent, then one of the School’s approved travel agents must be used.

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My cash advance covered all my expenses, do I keep the rest?

No, a cash advance is a loan from the school. If a cash advance was more than the actual expenses incurred on the trip, then the unused portion of the advance must be returned to the school in the form of check, written to CSM, or cash. Please return the unused portion of the advance with your completed and approved TE.

If I requested a cash advance when will I get it?

Cash advances are issued up to seven days in advance of departure. The traveler will receive a check that can be picked up from the Controller’s Office or direct deposit if the traveler is setup to receive funds that way. The traveler will get a phone call when the check is ready for pickup. In order to ensure the Controller’s Office has sufficient time to issue the check, please submit a TA at least 10 business days prior to your planned departure. Ten business days does not guarantee that a check can be issued because of the possibility for additional signatures. The sooner the TA comes in, the more likely the cash advance can be completed.

Can I be reimbursed for travel costs incurred prior to the completion of the travel?

No. Per CSM Travel Policy, a traveler will be reimbursed for approved out of pocket travel costs only when the travel is completed and the traveler has submitted an approved TE. Exceptions may be granted by the Controller.

What do I do if my destination city is not listed in the per diem rates on the website?

For domestic travel:
If the destination city is not listed, look up the county and see if it is listed. If neither the city nor the county is listed, then the per diem amount automatically defaults to $46 per day.

For international travel:
If the destination city is not listed, then it automatically defaults to the “other” amount listed at the end of every country’s per diems.

What should I put in the “title” section on the TA and TE?

This section is meant to describe how a traveler is affiliated with CSM i.e. Grad Student, Dept Head, Interviewee etc. Please do not put Mr. or Mrs. In this field on the TA/TE.

If I paid for airfare out of pocket, where do I put it on the TE?

The expense should be added to the blank lines under the “Other Expenses” section. Do not put the expense in the “Prepaid Airfare” section because it will subtract it out of you reimbursement at the end.

What is the difference between a prepaid expense, and an out of pocket expense?

Prepaid expenses are those paid directly by the school. For example, if a traveler books through one of the Preferred Travel Agencies, and the airfare was charged to the school’s Ghost Card, then that is a prepaid airfare. If the traveler books airfare on their own, and pays for it directly with their own money, than that is an out of pocket expense. This needs to be documented correctly on the TE in order to process an accurate reimbursement.
If I plan on renting a vehicle at my destination, am I \textbf{required} to use a CSM Travel Card?

Yes. Per the CSM Travel Policy, the employee must use a CSM Travel Card to pay for the car rental. CSM travelers must also decline the LDW, CDW and extra insurance at the counter because these expenses are NOT reimbursable. An exception to this rule exists for international car rentals only. While that rental still needs to be paid for with a CSM Travel Card, because of international liability issues, the traveler is encouraged to accept the LDW or CDW insurance on international car rentals and it will be reimbursed.

What dates should I use when printing my currency conversion?

Currency conversion needs to be printed and attached to the TE as of the Monday of the week of the expense. For example: If a traveler stayed at a hotel abroad for a two week period, and paid for the room on the last day there, currency conversion needs to be done as of the Monday of that week. On the other hand, if a traveler had to put down a deposit on one day, and pay for the room on another, currency conversion needs to be printed for the respective Mondays because the transactions were done on different occasions.