

The Graduate School offers a number of grants and fellowships that allow for University travel. Funds are transferred through NUFinancials to departmental chart strings, and expenses are then administered at the departmental level. Because it can sometimes be challenging for graduate students to front their own funds out-of-pocket and wait for reimbursement after travel is complete, Weinberg College recommends utilizing the methods described below and communicating with students receiving funding prior to their incurring any expenses in order to help off-set the financial burden while remaining compliant with Northwestern's travel policies:

Conference Registrations: Registration fees for a meeting or conference at which attendance has been approved should be billed directly to a department through NUFinancials (direct payment request) or paid for with a procurement card. Registration fees paid directly by an individual will not be reimbursed until the conference is completed and proof of attendance is submitted.

Airfare: Primary mode of transportation (typically this is airfare) should be purchased upfront directly from NU Travel Agencies using a chart string. Use of these travel agencies provides a means of not having to pay upfront and wait for reimbursement, and also enables the university to assist in the event of a travel disruption or emergency. There are occasionally instances where airfare might be cheaper through a non-NU travel agency. If a student authorized to travel wishes to purchase airfare on their own outside of the NU travel agency, they may do so, but they cannot be reimbursed until after the trip is complete. There are many external reasons why airfare prices may fluctuate across vendors and/or over the course of time. Please contact the Dean's Office with specific instances of cost disparity so that we can provide feedback in cases where our preferred vendors do not have competitive pricing.

Cash Advances: Travel advances are issued to University employees for out-of-pocket expenses that are incurred during travel on University business (excluding primary transportation). University travel policy currently restricts travel cash advance eligibility to faculty & staff for a travel period that must be 14 days or longer. WCAS has received permission from Financial Operations to authorize cash advances to graduate students on an exceptional basis in cases where it is financially challenging for a student to wait for reimbursement. In order to obtain a graduate student advance, please complete a policy exception form and submit along with the travel authorization document that is routed to the Dean's Office for approval and signature. Note that cash advance funding may not be used for primary transportation for anyone (faculty, staff, or graduate students); no exceptions will be authorized for this type of expense. Advances must be reconciled with an expense report within 5 days of return.

Additional Resources for University Travel:

<http://www.northwestern.edu/financial-operations/policies-procedures/policies/travel.pdf>
<http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/financial-aid/fello-schola-grants/university-fello/index.html>
<http://www.northwestern.edu/userservices/travel/international.html>
http://www.northwestern.edu/userservices/travel/make_reservation/approved/index.html
http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/registration/registration_4789.html

Dean's Office Contacts:

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