

POLICY AND PROCEDURES STUDENT TRAVEL, AWARDS, PRIZES AND OTHER EDUCATIONAL FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Introduction

This policy is to address educational financial resources paid for or given to students for various travel, as well as student awards, prizes and other related items.

The Higher Education Act defines **other financial assistance** and basically includes all other assistance known to the institution as reportable to the Scholarships & Financial Aid (SFA) office.

Policy

Financial benefits or resources received in conjunction with student travel to attend and participate in programs (including housing, meals, travel, registration, etc.) must be recorded as a financial aid resource. This form of financial aid must be recorded so that the student is not over-awarded in combination with other forms of financial aid including federal, state or institutional funds. Each of these programs will also have a cost associated with participation. That cost will be included in the student's cost of attendance so that the student is not impacted negatively by the additional resources received on their financial aid package.

Special Note: Students who are traveling with groups not tied to a course or educational program (i.e., alternative spring break, civil rights trip, student organization trips) are not required to submit information to financial aid.

Process

Students who will be attending a program in which travel expenses will be paid by colleges or departments, the following steps must occur:

1. All units must process Student Travel through Aggie Buy and Concur *
2. Financial Management Operations (FMO) will process the travel requests and notify SFA
3. Scholarships & Financial Aid will add the cost associated with student travel to the student's cost of attendance and place the amount the student will receive from your unit as a financial aid resource. No funds will be disbursed through the Compass system.

*If the documentation for the student is not handled through one of these payment forms (Aggie Buy or Concur), SFA has developed a form for you to complete and submit with any documentation needed - *Student Travel Financial Aid Request Form*. In turn, the SFA office will be able to increase the Cost of Attendance for that expense based on appropriate documentation, thus eliminating the Overaward.

The form can be found at this link.

<http://scholarships.tamu.edu/FormsFolder/1314StudentTravelRequestForm.aspx> (Complete one form per student, email form to fellowschol@tamu.edu)

Cost of Attendance Increases

- Travel: A student's cost of attendance can be increased for the amount of the award. Please include all receipts or the Student Travel Request Form. <http://scholarships.tamu.edu/FormsFolder/1314StudentTravelRequestForm.aspx> (Complete one form per student, email form to fellowschol@tamu.edu or attach form to Aggie Buy or Concur expense report)
- Awards/Prizes/Miscellaneous: Cost of attendance cannot be increased.

Examples of Payments

Examples of payments to students that must be reported to SFA are:

- A. **Conference registration fees and travel** when the payment or expense is incurred on behalf of the University, or incurred for furtherance of the student's own education experience such as:
 1. Student merely listens and learns to further his/her education.
 2. Student receives travel award for conducting research associated with their degree.
- B. **Reimbursement of supplies**, course supplies for thesis, course related supplies, or other items purchased by the unit to complete an educational assignment. Examples include, but are not limited to:
 1. Editing
 2. Transcription
 3. Translation
 4. Binding
 5. Datasets
 6. Purchase of computer/IPAD hardware and/or software,

7. Books and Supplies that are research related

C. **Awards and prizes** include, but are not limited to:

1. Third party payment or scholarship to offset educational costs via TWAPMTS or RPAAWRD,
2. Funds awarded/given due to special or unusual circumstances (i.e. personal emergency),
3. Student of the month or other recognition awards (achievement, services, etc.),
4. Scholarship competition,
5. Gift cards

D. **Miscellaneous:**

1. Diploma Fee
2. Dissertation Fee
3. Insurance

Scenarios

Following are examples of possible scenarios:

Example #1:

14 students will attend an event (trip, program, event, conference). The department will buy airline tickets and pay for hotels and train tickets on behalf of these students. The total cost of the program is \$4280. Each student will receive a total of \$2500 in financial resources. Students will be responsible for \$1780 and will pay that directly to the program.

In this scenario, SFA would add a cost of \$4280 to the student's cost of attendance. They would also apply a \$2500 resource to each student's financial aid packet. Since the cost is higher than the amount the student is receiving, there is no negative impact to the student's financial aid eligibility.

Example #2:

The following students will be attending the ABC conference. Our office will pay for registration (\$250) and cover hotel costs (\$300) using our travel card. Each student will also receive reimbursement for food (receipts) up to a per diem of \$25 per day (\$75). The conference is 3 days. Total cost of the program is \$625.

In this scenario, SFA would add a cost of \$625 to the student's cost of attendance. They would also apply a \$625 resource to each student's financial aid packet. Since the cost is the same as the amount they are receiving, there is no negative impact to the student's financial aid eligibility.

Example #3:

The following students will be participating in a research trip. The students are staying at various facilities for different lengths of time. I will be charging the facilities (dorms, housing, and camping sites) to the travel card (all of the prices are different). Since they are not going to be required to eat out (the facilities have kitchens) I am not giving the regular travel per diem. I am paying most of them \$20/day for food, but one group that is going to be gone for 90 days, I am giving them \$23.5/day.

In this scenario, SFA would calculate the cost per student and add to the financial aid package.

Example # 4:

The following student entered an essay contest for \$100 award. The student wins first place. Then the \$100 is counted as a resource to his financial aid package.

In this scenario, SFA would evaluate the actual cost of attendance for tuition and fees to increase for that amount. In the event, there is no room to increase the COA the award could affect other financial aid awards. This will reflect a negative impact to this student.

Example # 5:

A student receives first place and a \$100 gift card in a research paper competition. This \$100 must be counted as a resource and accounted for in his financial aid package.

In this scenario, SFA would evaluate the student's actual cost of attendance for tuition and fees compared to estimated costs. In the event the estimate is lower than the student's actual cost. The Tuition & Fees component of the Cost of Attendance will be revised to reflect actual. In any case, this \$100 must be considered a resource and could impact the student's aid.

Definitions:

Award	Financial support based on achievement, performance, or other criteria.
Prize	Recognition based on competition or other criteria. Example: A competition is held, and prizes for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd places are awarded to students.
Resource	Educational-related expense. Examples: housing, meals, travel, registration, etc.

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The contact information for people best able to assist you with questions regarding this information is listed below:

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