Support for Travel/Professional Development

Options & Guidelines

EEFE graduate students have multiple resources available to them to support professional development and travel. These are some of the most commonly used resources.

# Funding external to AESE

**College of Ag Sciences Travel Support**: one-time support, up to $500 for professional travel: (<https://agsci.psu.edu/graduatestudents/funding-opportunities/copy_of_travel-awards>)

**International Travel Support**: Students planning to travel for international conferences and events should consider applying to Global Programs: <https://global.psu.edu/article/global-programs-graduate-student-travel-grants>

**Grant-supported travel:** If as student’s assistantship is funded via an external grant, if that grant has travel money already allocated, and if student travel is related to that grant, then the grant might cover some of a student’s travel expenses. Students should check with their advisor about this possibility.

**Other resources:** Students should consider discussing support options with advisors and/or RA supervisors. Dual-title programs may offer support for student travel as well. Some funded research projects may include support for conferences and related professional travel. In addition, organizations that sponsor conferences and other events (including the AAEA, AERE, NAREA, etc.) often provide scholarships and opportunities to defray costs for students.

# AESE Funding

There are several funding mechanisms within the department.

* Each student has an allocation during the duration of their degree program. It is preferred that students use this funding prior to requesting additional funding from other departmental sources. Allowable expenses include professional travel (e.g., attending conferences and workshops), trainings (e.g., data analysis workshops) and research expenses (e.g., transcription, databases, travel). The amounts allocated to each student are:
  + $750 for MS students
  + $1000 for PhD students
* There are two endowments that support student professional development and travel. They are both competitive awards, targeted toward supporting students as active professionals, not only sharing their research but also contributing to their professional societies and seeking professional development opportunities.
  + M.E. John Applied Research Endowment Award, to support professional development and training opportunities
  + Dennis and Jimmie Findley Endowment, to support presentations and participation in professional conferences for students conducting research in food and agriculture
* The Ag and Resource Econ Cluster imay also have funds for graduate student professional development annually, pending availability. **Check with your advisor for these funds.**
* Additional support will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

***To be considered for AESE endowments funds, forms must be completed and submitted to the Graduate Coordinator at least 6 weeks prior to travel.***

# Guidelines

1. Sketch out your plans for the duration of your program, to ensure you have funds when you most need them (e.g., presenting thesis and dissertation research, on the job market).
2. Identify conferences and events that best fit your interests and professional goals. Be strategic in your choices of organizations, conferences, and training opportunities. Discuss these opportunities with your advisors and/or committee members.
3. Watch for calls and announcements from the Department, College, and University. Follow their guidelines and rules about what they will pay for, information required, and application procedures.
4. We encourage you to be strategic and entrepreneurial to support your professional development. Look for ways to mix and match funding sources. Seek to use external funds, then your AESE allocation, prior to turning to the Ag and Resource Econ Cluster and other sources of funds.
5. Plan your travel in advance. We ask that you seek ways to maximize the number of students who can receive support for their professional development given limited annual funds.
   1. Look for student rates, opportunities to share expenses (hotel, travel, etc.). Connect with other graduate student members of the organization.
   2. Develop an estimated budget.
   3. Learn what the rules are for documenting expenses. What can be reimbursed? What receipts do you need?

# Applications & Reimbursement

1. **The attached form should be completed to request use of any AESE funds outside of your regular allocation ($750/$1000). This includes endowments or any additional funding requests.** *The form should be completed at least 6 weeks prior to expected travel.*
2. Complete reimbursement forms within 1 week of your return. Forms can be found in the Armsby mail room or from the Graduate Coordinator. Air travel should be booked via the Penn State Travel System (<https://travel.psu.edu/airline-travel-options>). Be sure to provide all required receipts (typically registration, airfare, hotel, parking/transportation). Completed forms can be given to Graduate Coordinator.

**Request for AESE Funds to Support Graduate Student Professional Development**

*Use this space to explain the merit of the activity for your professional development goals and indicate requested and allocated (or pending) sources of support. Complete the form, add any attachments you may need, collect the signature of your advisor, and give to the Graduate Coordinator (Michelle Barnyak) at least 6 weeks prior to travel. Emailed documents are preferred.*

1. **General information**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Graduate Student Name |  |
| Name of event |  |
| Location of event |  |
| Dates |  |

1. **Budget**

Include a detailed budget in a table or spreadsheet like the one below. Be sure to highlight the total needed.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Expense type | Estimated cost |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
| Total |  |

1. **Sources of Funds**

Indicate here the sources of funds you have secured and/or are requesting to support the event. If there are specific requirements or stipulations associated with the funding source, please describe those below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Sources of funds: | Amount | Requested or already secured? |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| Total |  |  |

1. **Budget Justification: Explain how you estimated these costs and why they are necessary.**
2. **Significance and expected outcomes of event. How does this contribute to your professional development?**
3. **Previous Use of AESE Funds. Please consult with the Graduate Coordinator to complete the table below, which indicates the funds you have received from AESE for previous professional development. This ensures that you have funds available to you prior to beginning travel.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| AESE fund type | Year used | Amount used |
| AESE graduate student allocation |  |  |
| MS |  |  |
| PhD |  |  |
| AESE Endowments |  |  |
| Ag and Resource Econ Cluster funds |  |  |
| Other AESE funds |  |  |

# Advisor Signature:

I have reviewed the request and verify that the event will contribute to the student’s goals as outlined above. (Add comments as appropriate.)

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Advisor

I have reviewed the request and verify that the student qualifies for funds as indicated and the request conforms with appropriate use of AESE funds. (Add comments as appropriate.)

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Director of Graduate Studies