



## SEC Faculty Travel Program Frequently Asked Questions & Answers

(Revised: January 15, 2021)

The SEC Presidents and Chancellors approved the SEC Faculty Travel Program (#SECFacultyTravel), as recommended by the SEC Provosts, in June 2012. The program consists of up to \$10,000 in travel funds being provided by the SEC to each of its member universities each year. The most frequently asked administrative questions are answered in this document. For other matters not included here, contact Dr. Torie A. Johnson, SEC Associate Commissioner for Academic Relations, at [tjohnson@sec.org](mailto:tjohnson@sec.org).

*NOTE: Due to the public health crisis resulting from the COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) pandemic that has led to faculty travel and campus visitor restrictions across the SEC, any faculty member who was unable to complete a visit in 2019-2020 will have until July 31, 2021, to do so. Further, universities may select, at any point during the academic year, new participants for 2020-2021 who must also travel by the July 31 deadline. [Any unused funds from 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 must still be returned to the SEC office.] Finally, the SEC Provosts have granted temporary flexibility in how program funds may be used, as determined by the home university. As such, the questions and answers below should be read in light of these temporary modifications.*

- 1. *How should faculty be selected for the program?*** The SEC does not mandate how faculty should be selected. Each university must determine its own process and timelines, noting only full-time faculty (as defined by the home university) are eligible. Additionally, all faculty participants must be identified to the SEC by August 1 each year and all travel must be completed by July 31 each year.
- 2. *How many faculty members may access the program?*** The SEC does not mandate how many faculty may participate. Each university must determine how its travel funds will be divided amongst interested faculty, and the number of university awards may change. For example, in one academic year a university might give ten \$1,000 awards, and the next year it might select two \$2,500 awards and one \$5,000 award.
- 3. *Is it permissible for faculty to receive an award in more than one year?*** Each university must determine how it will allocate its travel funds each year. Universities may choose to award a portion of their funds to a faculty member more than once.
- 4. *Must faculty members be identified to the SEC by a specific date?*** All faculty members participating in the travel program must be identified to the SEC office by August 1 each year, and travel should not occur before this notice.
- 5. *What information should be sent to the SEC?*** The SEC must receive the identification information described on page 2 of the SEC Faculty Travel Program guidelines from the home university contact or other designee, and information from the host unit or faculty participant will not be accepted.

6. *When will universities receive travel funds from the SEC?* Travel program checks will be written from the SEC in late October or early November to the home institution and will be applicable to all faculty participants for the academic year. The SEC will not issue checks until all participants are identified by the home institution, as described in the program guidelines document.
7. *When are faculty expected to use the travel funds?* The travel window for participants will begin each year on August 1 and will conclude on July 31. There are no restricted travel periods.
8. *When must the travel funds be expended?* Universities are not permitted to carry over unused funds. So, any unused funds must be returned to the SEC office by July 31 each year.
9. *Is it permissible to re-award funds if a faculty member's visit is cancelled?* If a faculty member must cancel his or her travel, the unused funds may be allocated to other faculty who applied to the program. Universities are not expected to conduct a second selection process and are not required to re-award the funds.
10. *Is it permissible to use travel funds to support staff working with the faculty member?* The program is intended only for faculty members and may not be used for other individuals working with the faculty member.
11. *Is it permissible to use travel funds for non travel-related expenses like books or supplies?* Travel funds may not be used for non travel-related expenses. The program is intended to lessen the financial burden associated with travel, lodging and meals.
12. *Is it permissible for a travel award to be used for collaboration at someplace other than an SEC university campus?* The intent of the program is to engage faculty from SEC universities on other SEC university campuses. Visiting off-campus locales like research sites, centers, extension offices, etc. is permissible, provided the sites are affiliated with the host unit or university and relate directly to the collaborative endeavor.  
  
*Exception:* At the home institution's discretion, it is permissible for a travel award to be used for activities that do not occur on an SEC campus if those activities are the direct result of the on-campus collaboration. For example, after two faculty members collaborate on a research paper at an SEC university, they are invited to present their work at an academic conference. In this instance, it would be permissible to use any remaining funds to cover the expenses of presenting at the conference.
13. *Is it permissible for a faculty member to visit more than one SEC university?* Travel funds may be used to visit more than one SEC university in an academic year, provided each SEC university accepts the faculty member and all travel concludes by July 31.
14. *Is it permissible for a university to use travel funds to host rather than send faculty?* Each SEC university receives funding for its own faculty and the funds are not intended for individuals the university might host, including circumstances in which faculty members seek to collaborate on their campuses on the same project. For example, if John Doe from University A visits Jane Smith at University B, John Doe is considered a traveler of University A and uses a portion of University A's travel funds. If Jane Smith then

travels to University A to work with John Doe, she is considered a traveler of University B, thus using a portion of University B's funds.

***15. Does the SEC require a report of travel program activity?*** By September 1 of each year, each university's contact (or designee) must supply a summary to the SEC office describing how the previous year's travel funds were used, including a description of the collaborations. A report PDF is available from the SEC office. (Faculty members are also required to provide a brief summary to their home university Provost.)