FACULTY CONFERENCE TRAVEL

FUNDING GUIDELINES

22nd March 2016
1. Purpose

1.1 To streamline FEIT research related conference travel approval and activity management process

1.2 To support all staff and HDR students for quality research publications and collaborations.

1.3 To address UTS and FEIT Step Change.

2. Introduction

The Faculty Conference Travel Guidelines govern the use of the funds for activities related to attendance at research conferences. Approved conference travel is associated with activities that contribute to the Higher Education Research Data Collection (HERDC) and implementing the Faculty’s research strategic objectives and Step Change.

The high quality research activities supported through the Faculty and Schools include the following: (i) early career researcher (ECR) and HDR student development, (ii) research networking and collaboration, (iii) leveraging for external competitive research grants, (iv) provision of incentives for researchers to seek external research grants, (v) addressing Excellence Research Australia (ERA)’s framework, (vi) increasing the proportion of high quality Journal and conference publications and (vii) contribution to UTS reputation as a leading University of Technology.

The Associate Dean, Research (ADR) is responsible for the allocation of the funds to Schools, and the School (HoS or DHoS Research) is responsible for the allocation of the funds to staff and HDR students. Suggested proportion of funding allocation is 50% - 50% for staff and HDR students.

It is important to appreciate that budgetary restrictions may be introduced in any one-year to enable the Faculty to meet its budget constraints and the Dean may consider and approve strategic travel applications outside these Guidelines.

3. Staff Eligibility

The Faculty/School disperses funds to current full-time and part-time (50% or more fractional) academics as well as research fellows, HDR students and support staff. Applicants must be a member of a school in the Faculty of Engineering and IT. One-year fixed term academics are eligible for the funding only if they are full-time.

The Guidelines are to be read in conjunction with the University Travel Vice-Chancellor’s Directive, including the Professional Experience Program (PEP) Vice-Chancellors Directive. Applications from staff members on approved PEP will be considered on a case-by-case basis, if 1) the applicant is able to demonstrate that the travel cannot be fully funded by the PEP allowance; and 2) the travel meets the requirements of these Guidelines and the Travel Vice-Chancellor’s Directive.
4. Student Eligibility

HDR students must be enrolled in a Higher Degree Research Program in the Faculty of Engineering and IT for the duration of the application conference and process.

5. Procedures

Applicants are to complete and submit the UTS Travel Approval Form and Travel Funding Checklist to their relevant school administrative assistant.

Applicants are encouraged to talk with their supervisor before submitting to the school.

Applicants are also encouraged to submit their travel applications as early as possible, as late applications may not be processed.

6. Guidelines

6.1 Principles for travel application assessment

Travel applications are assessed by HoS, DHoS Research or School Management Team. The two principles to assess the applications for all Schools are 1) Quality of the Conference 2) applicant’s track record of journal publication.

6.2 Each School has its detailed discipline relevant assessments. For detailed guidelines about the quality of conferences or journals please refer to School’s Management Team.

6.3 The Faculty supports conference travel for research networking, funding opportunities and prompting research collaborations between FEIT academics and other institutions or industries.

6.4 The Faculty will only support travel funding once per year for each HDR student or staff member.

6.5 Misleading applications

Applications with misleading information in general, including wrongfully claiming the journal’s ranking and impact factors will be rejected and will not be eligible to apply for travel funding during that particular year.

6.6 For situations where there are multiple FEIT authors for one paper requesting to attend a conference only one will be supported.

6.7 Applicants must list the actual or estimated cost of registration fees and travel, and provide evidence of costs as part of their application.

6.8 Due to limited funding availability applications are considered on a strategic basis using evidence provided in the application. The School (or School travel committee) at its discretion, may favour applications from early career researchers (ECRs) or those seeking support for highest quality publications if facing a fiscal challenge.
6.9 “Registration Only” applications for conferences may be funded, but the author must provide evidence that someone else will be presenting the paper. “Multi-registration” for the same conference may also be considered but only for different paper presentations. A successful application does not confer an automatic right to travel. The applicants must always ensure that their HoS and Supervisors are aware of the application and willing to approve the travel involved. All travel must be approved by the Dean before it is undertaken. One application can cover multiple conferences up to the maximum level of funding per conference. Applicants can attend several conferences on a single application provided the costs do not exceed the maximum level of funding.

7. Staff Funding Availability

The amount of funding provided for each conference travel is strictly limited to $4,000 for a conference in Europe, the Americas, Africa or Middle-East; strictly limited to $3,500 for a conference in South and East Asia; and strictly limited to $1,600 for a conference within Australia, New Zealand or the Pacific Islands.

Staff applicants who have been invited to attend prestigious international conferences and to assume duties beyond those attached to presenting a paper will be considered for a higher level of funding (maximum additional funding of $500). Examples of such duties include chairperson of a significant international conference. Other important roles at conferences such as co-Program Chair and Invited Speaker will be supported in principle and applications will be assessed case-by-case on the basis of strategic contribution to the Faculty Research Profile.

Funding priority will be given to staff who have an existing ARC DP/LP/DECRA and NHMRC project whose budget for travel was outlined in their successful grant application(s).

8. HDR Student Funding Availability

The amount of funding provided for each conference travel is strictly limited to $1,600 for international conferences and $800 for conferences within Australia and New Zealand.

If a HDR student has not been supported financially for travel by the Faculty at any stage of his/her candidature, he/she may be eligible for travel to one overseas/domestic exceptional quality conference during the final year at a higher level of funding support ($3,200 to present a paper at a conference in Europe, the Americas, Africa or Middle East; $3,200 for a conference in South and East Asia; and $1,600 for a conference within Australia, New Zealand or the Pacific Islands).

Evidence is required to support the applicant’s claim for the first and only trip of his/her candidature, and the conference paper must demonstrate exceptional quality.

HDR Students should note that Faculty Conference Travel funding is competitive. The HDR Student Faculty Conference Travel budget is limited. In order to apply for Faculty Conference Travel Funds HDR students are expected to have applied to the Vice Chancellor’s Postgraduate Conference Fund or an equivalent fund.
9. **Obligations Following Travel**

Travel expense claims should be lodged within one month of return. Staff should do this through NEO and HDR. Students should complete a Financial Acquittal Report and provide it to the Financial Officer in the Dean’s Unit.

Staff members and HDR students who receive support from the Faculty Conference Travel Fund are under an obligation to submit a [Travel Funding Report](#) Conference Travel Report to the Head of School within one month of returning to UTS.

The information in the report may be used by the Marketing and Communication Unit for news items.