



**Department of  
Education**

Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

*The Division of Financial Operations (DFO) is committed to providing supports and services to schools, Field Support Centers, clusters, central and field offices, and all DOE employees.*

*As part of this commitment, The Central Business & Finance Office (CBFO) within DFO has created the following list of Frequently Asked Questions regarding the Travel Reimbursement and Approval Certification (TRAC) process.*

## TRAC: Frequently Asked Questions

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### Travel Requests

**Q. I won't be requesting any reimbursement of expenses for my out-of-town travel. Do I still need to file a TRAC application?**

A. Yes. A TRAC application (which replaces the old OP-221 form) must be submitted in order to obtain permission for out-of-town travel. Even if expenses will not be incurred, permission to travel must still be obtained prior to traveling. All requests to travel must be submitted via the [TRAC system](#).

**Q. What is a PE number?**

A. A PE number is a number assigned to your request to travel application, as submitted via the TRAC system (PE stands for "projected expenses"). In completing your TRAC application, you will be required to include your projected expenses, if any. Once your TRAC application is submitted, a PE document number will be generated. The PE number is used to identify and locate your application as it moves through the approval process. Note that once you submit your actual expenses, the PE number is converted to a TR number.

**Q. What is a TR number?**

A. A TR number is a number assigned to your request for reimbursement of travel expenses, as submitted via the TRAC system (TR stands for "travel reimbursement"). A TR number is used to identify and locate your reimbursement application as it moves through the approval process.

**Q. What is a Car number?**

A. A Car number is a number assigned to your Request to Use Personal Vehicle application, as submitted via the TRAC system. If you meet the criteria for local travel and wish to use your own personal vehicle, this application must be submitted. Once submitted, a Car number is generated. When applying for reimbursement of your local travel expenses, you will select the Car number associated with this particular trip, found on the TRAC Expense Details screen (your Car number will be found in a drop-down menu). Once selected, you may then add in the mileage used during your trip so that you may be reimbursed for this expense.

### Lodging

**Q. I will be traveling out-of-town on official DOE business. What is the General Services Administration (GSA) per diem rate for meals and lodging, and where do I find these rates for my destination?**

A. The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) is an independent agency of the United States government that supports the basic functioning of federal agencies.

Among other things, the GSA establishes maximum per diem meal and lodging rates to guide government employee spending while traveling for business. The DOE has adopted these per diem guidelines to help it manage its own spending on employee travel. Per diem rates for each county and state can be found on the [GSA's Web site](#). DOE employees should not exceed these rates when traveling for business. If expenditures exceed the per diem rates for a particular location, the traveler must provide adequate explanation as to why an exception should be granted.

**Q. I cannot find a hotel whose cost does not exceed the GSA maximum per diem rate. What should I do?**

**A.** The first step is to go to [Fedrooms.com](#) accessible via the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) Web site. This site maintains a listing of Federal Travel Regulation (FTR)-compliant hotels for federal government employees who must travel for work. Because the DOE's maximum daily allowances for travel mirror those of the federal government, you may be able to find a GSA-approved room at an FTR-compliant hotel at your destination. If you have any questions regarding lodging or GSA per diem rates, please email [TRACExceptions@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:TRACExceptions@schools.nyc.gov).

**Q. I checked Fedrooms.com and cannot find a hotel whose cost does not exceed the GSA rate. How should I proceed?**

**A.** If the daily rate of your hotel exceeds the GSA rate for the city in which you will be traveling to, you will be directed to the GSA Exempt Form screen within the TRAC application. Here, you must provide an explanation as to why the additional expense of staying at a particular establishment is necessary or unavoidable. Once submitted, the exception request is automatically routed to the person named as the approver in the TRAC Approver Detail screen, and then on to DFO for final approval or rejection. If you have any questions regarding lodging or GSA per diem rates, please contact your procurement liaison at your Field Support Center (FSC).

### **Travel Reimbursement**

**Q. When entering my mileage for local travel, I cannot locate my Car number. Where are my approved requests to use a personal vehicle?**

**A.** There are two possible answers:

- The person you named as the approver in the TRAC Personal Car Details screen did not approve your request to use your personal vehicle for local travel.
- The original dates that you entered in the TRAC – Personal Car Details screen are not the same as the dates that you are attempting to enter into the TRAC system now. The two sets of dates must be the same.

**Q. I submitted a request for out-of-town travel and received a PE number. I have returned from my trip. When will I receive my reimbursement check?**

**A.** There are several steps that must be completed prior to reimbursement by you and either your school's FAMIS administrator, or if you work centrally, your division's financial officer. The steps are as follows:

- Upon return from your trip, you must access your record in the TRAC system, select Out of Town Travel Reimbursement, and enter your actual expenses even if they are exactly the same as the estimated expenses you provided when you initiated your request to travel. Entering the actual expenses will generate a TR document number which is necessary for reimbursement.
- The person that you named as the approver in the TRAC Approvers Detail screen must approve your travel either via the email that was sent to him or her when the request was initiated, or by clicking the Pending Approval link found on the TRAC User Options screen within the TRAC system.
- Your school's FAMIS administrator or your division's financial officer must post the TR document in the TRAC Admin section of the TRAC system.
- Your school's FAMIS administrator or your division's financial officer must approve your TR document for payment processing.

- Within seven to ten business days from the receipt of supporting documentation (for example hotel invoice, receipts for tolls, parking, taxis, etc.) you should expect to receive your reimbursement check in the mail. The check will be mailed to the address you provided in the TRAC system when you initiated your travel request.

**Q. When I completed my out-of-town travel, I attempted to submit my request for reimbursement in the TRAC system. When I entered my PE number, a message displayed stating that the record could not be found. Why did I get this message?**

**A.** This document was not posted (budgeted) in TRAC Admin (note that only certain titles have access to the TRAC Admin screens). This means that your school's FAMIS administrator or your division's financial officer failed to apply budgeting codes to your projected expenses in order to cover the cost of your travel. Once the budgeting codes have been properly applied, you will be able to return to TRAC and try again. Contact either your FAMIS administrator, if you work at a school, or your division's financial officer, if you work centrally, to request that this situation be corrected.

**Q. I cannot find the TRAC email I received after my TR document was approved. Where can I view or print a copy?**

**A.** Log into the [TRAC system](#) and click the Show Chart link at the top of the page. Enter your TR document on the next pop-up screen, then click search. The next screen that appears is the TRAC Case Flow screen. Click the bubble furthest to the right on the TRAC Case Flow screen to view and print your approved TRAC request.

Web links referenced in this document:

- TRAC system: <http://dfiforms.nycenet.edu/TRAC/>
- U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) Per Diem Rates: <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21287>
- Fedrooms.com: <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104419>

Please note that the DOE's Division of Financial Operations maintains a Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) manual posted on the DOE Web site. Section 2.2 of the Travel & Conferences chapter provides additional details about the TRAC process: <http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/CE4213B5-4627-4603-B584-0E7A539463A3/0/SOPTravelandConferences.pdf>. You may wish to bookmark this section as answers to many of your TRAC questions may be found here.

Additional support for school-based staff can also be obtained at your Field Support Center (FSC).