What’s new in Travel2?

This document contains some of the changes you will encounter in the new travel system and, in most cases, why those changes were made. Some are a result of Banner, and some are simply changes in the way we process things or new features added by request.

Application

If you are familiar with old travel, the application process will be very familiar to you. The flow is generally the same, but there are a few important differences.

Auto-save

The application now automatically saves your progress at every page you visit. You can close your browser in the middle of filling out an application and be able to pick up right where you left off. To continue working on a saved, unsubmitted application, from the left menu choose Applications and then from the slide-out menu choose “Load a Partially Completed Application”. There you will see a list of all applications you as the preparer have begun but not submitted. If the list grows long, you have the option of deleting what you don’t need anymore.

Why? This was highly requested.

Travelers and Vendors

All travelers must be set up as vendors in Banner *prior* to submitting an application. The page where you pick the traveler gives you the opportunity to search by name; or if you know the travelers vendor code, you can type it in. If you cannot find the person you’re looking for, there is a link to take you to a New Vendor Request page. After filling out the information on that page, the system will email Purchasing to set up a new vendor code. Once it has been set up, Purchasing will notify you that the new vendor is ready; and since we are reading live Banner data, you can *immediately* fill out an application.

Why? In old travel we were able to infer the new vendor code using the traveler’s SSN and speed up the process. Even though a vendor didn’t exist, we knew the code before it was actually created. However, in Banner the new vendor code is an automatically generated number. We don’t actually know what it’s going to be until it is set up.

Supervisors

We are now assigning supervisors to a *trip* and not necessarily to a person; although typically, the supervisor will be the traveler’s actual supervisor. So every application you fill out will require you to select a supervisor using a name search (similar to the vendor search). In order to speed this process up, the system will automatically show you the traveler’s last trip supervisor. If the person has never traveled before, it will then show you the last supervisor that *you* as the preparer chose on the last application you filled out. It is important to note that this person will be required to either electronically or physically sign the *voucher* when it is submitted.

Why? Many times in old travel an employee or a supervisor would change departments but reports would still link them together until someone actually went into travel and changed the information. (This information isn't maintained well in HR data, so we had to maintain it separately.) This concept of a trip supervisor just links the traveler and supervisor for that one trip. This also makes sense when you have travelers that are not employees. We still want someone in the department in a supervisory role to have some responsibility in knowing that the trip is taking place.

FOPs

One of the biggest changes in Travel is they way you allocate your expenses due to the new finance system. Instead of old TechFIM "accounts", you now have FOPs (Fund – Organization – Program). In Banner the term "account" now refers to the expense category—the TechFIM equivalent of object/sub-object. (Banner "account" codes also take the place of TechFIM revenue/sub-rev and balance sheet accounts as well as object/sub-object.) You may also see the term FOAP, which includes the Banner account: Fund – Organization – Account – Program. When you allocate your expenses across your FOPs on the voucher, the accounts are often derived behind the scenes based the expense type.

Why? This is simply the way that Banner is designed.

Encumbrances and Budgets

Budgeting in Banner occurs at a finer detail level than what existed in TechFIM. For funds that budget at the FOA level (Fund – Org – Account), in-state, out-of-state, foreign, prospective, and participant travel are all **separate budget pools**. This is different from TechFIM where we had one budget line for object 11 for all but participant, so keep in mind your destination and whether or not you have the available budget amount for that type of travel. Furthermore, some expenses that are incurred on a trip such as registration fees or apartment rental do not fall into any of the budget pools mentioned above. In that case, you will be asked to enter separate detail lines for those amounts on the encumbrance: one line for each of these special expenses and one line for the rest of your travel-related expenses. This is to make sure that the travel system will encumber the amount you need in the right budget pools. The account distribution page in the application process will let you know if you have any of these special expenses and how much you need to allocate to them. Funds that budget at the FO level (Fund-Org) do not have to worry about the distinctions between the different types of travel as their budget is just one large pool for all expenses. Nevertheless, the application process will still require you to encumber the special expenses such as registration fees on a separate line item.

Why? The separation of budgets into finer detail is designed primarily to allow better control on grants.

Advances
There are now three types of advances available. There are the usual two, airfare and "other expenses," but we have added an additional type called "advance for prepaid expenses." The prepaid expenses advance is something to use for an expense that needs to be paid prior to the trip—e.g. hotel. Also, the travel office now has the ability to approve each of these advances separately, so you don't have to choose between getting an advance for some prepaid item or an advance for everything else.

Why? In the old system, many people were forced to choose only one advance type because they would all cut on the same check.

Voucher

The voucher is significantly different from the old system both in terms of how you enter your expenses and what happens after you submit it.

Expenses
After selecting a traveler and choosing a trip for that traveler you are taken to a page where you can overlook or change the basic trip information—dates, destination, times, etc. This first part is generally the same as the old system. After the general trip info page, you are taken to the main "hub" of the voucher. From this hub page, you can see links that will take you to all the different expenses you can enter for the voucher. Feel free to go to these pages in any order. Each expense page is designed for you to input detailed information regarding that expense. Once you enter the detail, you are taken to the FOP allocation for that expense. All expenses, including airfare, hotel, and meals, now allow you complete flexibility as to how you wish to allocate them to your FOPs. After entering the FOP allocation, you wind up back at the voucher hub where you can choose to enter another expense. Expenses that you have entered will show a green checkmark beside them to let you know those are done; however, you can still go back into that expense and change it. Sometimes you may see a yellow checkmark beside an expense. This means that the sum of your detail does not match the sum of your allocation. The voucher will not let you submit with expenses that are out of balance.

Why? This way provides much more flexibility to allow you to enter expenses in any order and allocate any way you want.

Auto-save
Every time you submit something on an expense page, your progress is automatically saved—even if you haven't done the allocation for that expense.

For example, you can pull up a new voucher, enter one or two days of meals, and close your browser while on the meal expense page. When you go back in and pull that voucher up, you'll see a yellow checkmark next to meals indicating you have entered some data but haven't allocated to your FOPs yet.

Why? Although we were saving the voucher in the old system, it wasn't quite this flexible.

<u>Electronic Signature</u>
The state now accepts a traveler's electronic signature in place of a physical signature for travel vouchers. This option is only available for employees (*and is, in fact, required by employees*) as only employees are allowed to log into the travel system. Once the preparer submits a voucher, if the traveler is an employee he/she will receive an email to log on and electronically sign or approve that voucher. Until the voucher is approved by the traveler, it is not officially "submitted" and can still be edited by the preparer. If the voucher is for a non-employee, the voucher becomes officially "submitted" as soon as the preparer submits it. For non-employees a physical signature must be obtained before sending the required documentation to the travel office.

Why? This is more convenient especially for employees who travel quite a bit but still have internet access.

<u>Supervisor Approval</u>
The supervisor approval can now be done electronically. The supervisor will receive an email once the voucher is submitted with a link to approve that voucher. Unlike travelers, *supervisors have the option* of either approving electronically or putting their physical signature on the voucher documentation, but at least one of these must be in place for the travel office to accept the voucher documentation.

Why? This is for both convenience and flexibility for the supervisors.

<u>Additional Approvals</u>
Once the voucher is officially submitted, it *may* require a number of additional electronic approvals before reaching the travel office. For example, any vouchers using TTU SPAR funds will require an electronic approval by SPAR before the travel office will be able to review and/or approve your documentation. We also have created the ability for departments to opt-in on electronic approvals for vouchers submitted within their department. It is important to note that these approvals (including the supervisor approval) can be done in any order. Once all approvals are in place, only then can the travel office "work" your voucher.

Why? This was requested by some departments.

<u>Adding a FOP to the voucher</u>

You now have the ability to add additional FOPs on the voucher. There is a link on the main expense page of the voucher that will take you to a page to add a new FOP. Note that there will not be an encumbrance with any FOPs you add, so it is important that you check your available balance before submitting the voucher. The travel system will do some basic budget checks at the time you add the new FOP, but we don't know what amounts are going to be put on that FOP yet *at that time*. Once you add the FOP to the voucher, it will automatically show up on any of the expense allocation screens.

Why? This was highly requested.

Worksheet and Coversheet Reports
There are now always two separate reports associated with the voucher: the worksheet with all of the expense detail and the coversheet that contains the overview. Once your voucher is submitted, both of these reports must be printed and attached to your supporting documentation. Furthermore, we now save a snapshot of these reports when you submit the voucher and when the travel office approves the voucher.

Why? Saving snapshots of the voucher after submission and after travel office approval provides a good comparison in case the travel office has to modify any expenses.