UG75: Approving Advances

Reviewing and Approving Travel Advance Requests
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CWT SatoTravel

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1   Introduction

This document contains information regarding the travel advance approval process for E2 Solutions users utilizing both Federal Travel Regulations (FTR) and Joint Travel Regulations (JTR). Features and options specific to JTR functionality will be indicated when possible. Additionally, many FTR and JTR features and functionality may be subject to your agency's configurations.

2   Understanding the Approval Process

In E2 Solutions (E2), travel advances are pre-payments for estimated expenses paid to a traveler. This user guide covers the approval process for a stand-alone advance.

2.1   Routing Pools

As an approver, you are assigned to one or more routing pools. Routing pools may include a primary approver, who is automatically assigned to approve all documents within the pool. If a routing pool does not have a primary approver, E2 makes the document available to all approvers in the pool until an approver takes action on the document (i.e., approves or returns for revision).

2.2   Routing Rules

Travel policy managers configure sets of rules that define when an authorization, voucher, or travel advance request (collectively known as a trip) requires approval. These rules are known as routing rules. Routing rules specify approval event triggers, the approval action required, and the pool of approvers (routing pool) authorized to perform the approval process.

Authorizations and other travel documents are dynamically routed through these sets of rules; approvals may occur at multiple levels within the management hierarchy. These rule sets may be simple or complex, static or frequently changed. Routing rules can be applied to all travelers in an office or workgroup, or to individual travelers.

2.3   Approver Actions

When a document enters the approval process, E2 analyzes the routing rules and determines whether a rule triggers an approval event. If an approval event is triggered, E2 assigns the document to the appropriate approver, or pool of approvers, for action. E2 notifies you via email when there is a document assigned to you for approval.

Approvers review travel advance requests, ensuring that:

- The advance is within travel policy.
- The correct accounts have been selected to fund the advance. (You can also make funding changes to the advance request, including altering allocations and selected accounts.)

If the advance request is within guidelines, or properly justified if outside of guidelines, you typically approve the advance. Depending on the individual travel request and the applicable routing rules, the advance may be passed to another approval level. If you are the last approver for a travel advance request, the traveler is notified the advance has been approved.

If there are problems with the advance that prevent your approval and that you cannot change, you can return the advance for revision.

3   Opening a Travel Advance Pending Your Approval

E2 provides access to approver functions through the **My Approvals** option on the task bar. Complete the following steps to get started with the approval process.

1. Click **My Approvals** on the task bar. This displays the Pending Approvals page, which lists all travel documents that are assigned to you for approval (i.e., pending your approval).

Figure 1: My Approvals — Pending Approvals tab

2. If necessary, use the Filter Options section to filter the list or view a list other than the default.
    a. Click the **Filter Options** tab to expand the section and view the filter options available for that page.

Figure 2: Pending Approvals — Filter Options

    b. Select *Documents pending your approval* from the **List to View** drop-down list.
    c. Select *Travel Advances* from the **Document Type** drop-down list.
    d. Enter any additional filtering criteria to limit the number of search results returned.
    e. Click **Apply Filter** to generate a new list matching your search criteria.
3. Locate the advance in the search results.
4. Click the **Show** link. This displays the Advance Summary page, a view that is very similar to what the traveler sees when creating the travel advance request.

Figure 3: Advance Summary — Advance Pending Approval

5. Verify the advance is locked to you.
6. Use the Advance Summary page to review the advance. If you need to see additional information or make changes to a section, click the **View Details** or **Edit Details** link for that section. Be sure to save your changes.
7. Return to the Advance Summary page when you are done making changes to a section.

3.1 Lock the Advance

Locking an advance prevents other approvers from taking action on the document. You cannot approve an advance (or take any other action) unless it is locked.

- If you are the primary approver in your routing pool, the advance is typically assigned to you for approval, and it should already be locked when you open it. The advance is locked to you if the **Unlock** link displays in the Other Actions section, and the **Unlock** button appears at the bottom of the page.
- If the **Lock** link displays in the Other Actions section, and the **Lock** button appears at the bottom of the page, the document is not currently locked to any approver. Click the **Lock** link (or **Lock** button) to continue.
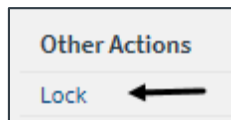

Figure 4: Lock link

4 Reviewing Basic Information

General information about the travel advance displays in the Basic Information section of the Advance Summary page. This information includes the amount already requested, advance amount, and document number.
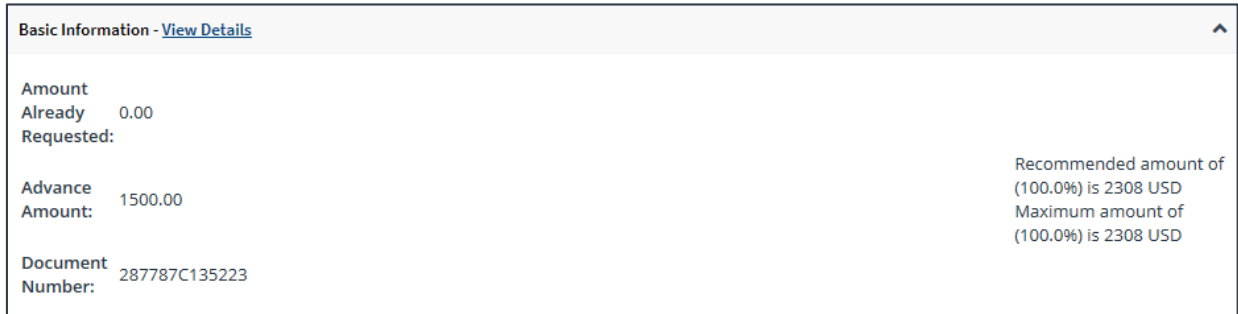

Figure 5: Advance Summary — Basic Information section

4.1 Retained Advances

If the traveler is allowed to retain the amount of an advance that could not be liquidated on a final voucher, the Basic Information section also shows the total amount of all advances retained by the traveler. A retained advance is eligible for liquidation on any voucher for any trip.
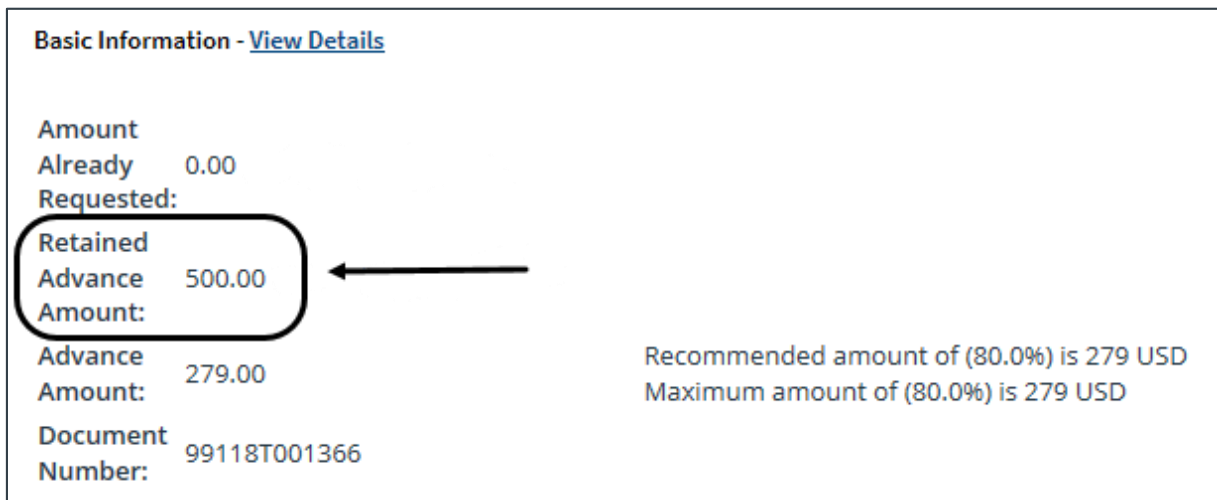
Figure 6: Advance Summary, Basic Information — Retained Advance Amount field

4.2 Document Number

E2 typically generates a unique document number for each advance. Some financial systems, however, are configured to require or allow users to enter a custom document number. If a custom document number is required or allowed, the **Document Number** field is enabled on the Advance Basic Information page. The Basic Information section on the Advance Summary page may show a document number, if one has already been entered or automatically assigned by E2, or the text *(to be entered manually)*.

NOTE: *This is an optional feature that may not be available to you. Even if the **Document Number** field is enabled, you may not need to add the information. Consult your workgroup's travel policies for the appropriate actions.*

4.2.1 Rules

The following rules apply to a custom document number.

- The number can be added at any time, but it must be added to the document by final approval.
- The number can be changed at any time before the document is interfaced with the financial system.
- Characters can be entered in any case; E2 converts all characters to upper case.
- The number must meet the format required by the financial system.

4.2.2 Process Flow

Complete the following steps to add a document number to a travel advance.

1. Click the **View Details** link in the Basic Information section on the Advance Summary page. This displays the Advance Basic Information page.

Figure 7: Advance Basic Information — Document Number field

2. Enter the document number, using the appropriate format, in the **Document Number** field. (Float the pointer over the field to display format information in the hover text.)
3. Click **Save**.

5   Reviewing Accounting

Accounting information for the advance displays in the Accounting section on the Advance Accounting page.

Before a travel advance can receive final approval, one or more accounts must be selected to fund the advance. Travel policies differ; fund selection may be done by the traveler, or selection may be restricted to the approver. Regardless of travel policy, approvers should always review the account code selection, and, if available to you, review the fund balance for the selected accounts.

Accounting - Edit Details

Description	Account Code	Obligated Balance	Amount Allocated	Percent Allocated	Balance Available
DOED Account Code	0202M2017.A.2017.EPYEE000.6N1.21010.0.YEE.000.N.00...	$2308.50	$1500.00	100.00%	42691.50
		Total:	$1500.00	100.00%	
		Remaining amount to be allocated:	$0.00		
		Total claim amount:	$1500.00		

Figure 8: Advance Summary — Accounting section

Complete the following steps.

1. Review the accounts selected to fund the advance.
2. If you need to make funding selections, or change existing funding selections or allocations, click the **Edit Details** link in the Accounting section header. This displays the Advance Accounting page.

Step 2 : Advance Accounting ⓘ

Traveler Name: IRIS LINCOLN   Trip ID: 287787   Advance ID: 135223   Advance Status: Pending Approval

Accounting

Description	Account Code	Obligated Balance	Amount Allocated	Percent Allocated	Balance Available	Add to Favorites	Delete
DOED Account Code	0202M2017.A.2017.EPYEE000.6N1.21010.0.YEE.000.N.00...	$2308.50	$ 1500.00	100.00 %	42691.50	Add	Delete
		Total:	$1500.00	100.00%			
		Remaining amount to be allocated:	$0.00				
		Total claim amount:	$1500.00				

Select Account Codes ⧉

Save and Next Step   Save   Back to Step 1: Basic Information

Figure 9: Advance Accounting — Advance Pending Approval

3. Make changes or select accounts.
   - Click the **Account Code** link to view segment details for the selected account code. (Click **Exit Window** to close the segment details window.)
   - If you need to adjust allocations between multiple accounts, enter the appropriate amounts in the **Amount Allocated** or **Percent Allocated** field for each account.
   - Click the **Add** link to save the account code as a favorite.
   - Click the **Delete** link to remove the account from the advance.

- If you need to select accounts to fund your trip, click the **Select Account Codes** link to find new accounts or select accounts from favorites.

4. Click **Save** to save your changes.

5.1   Select Account Codes from a Favorites List

Complete the following steps to select account codes for the advance that have been saved to a favorites list.

1. Click the **Select Account Codes** link. This displays the Account Code Selection window.

   *NOTE: If favorites are available to you, the window defaults to the **Select Account Codes** tab. This tab displays any time favorite accounts are available, even if you do not have a personal favorites list within your profile.*
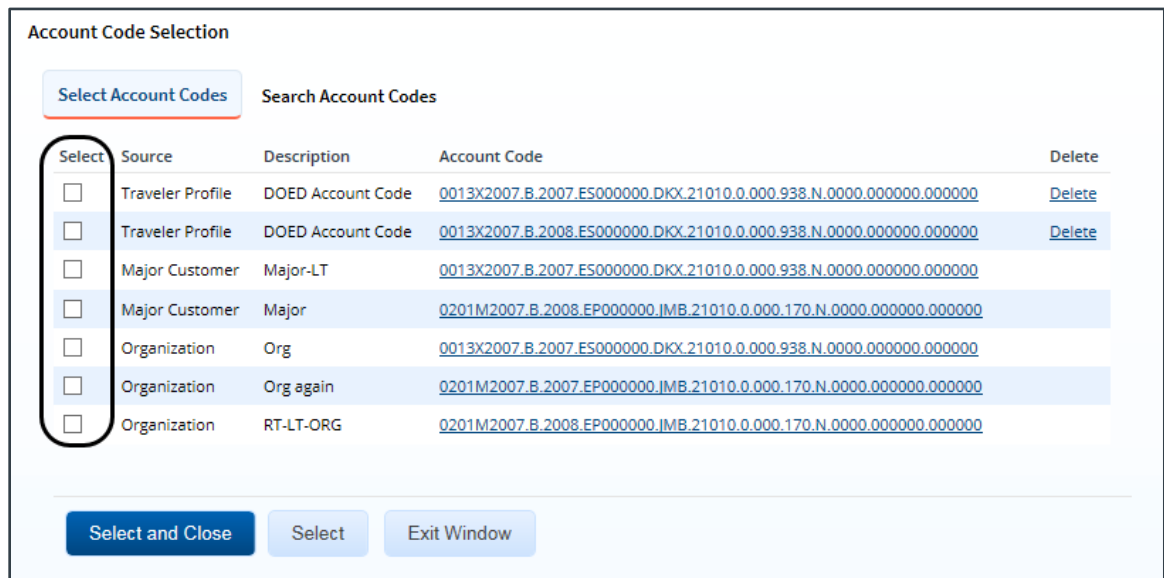

Figure 10: Account Code Selection — Select Account Codes tab

2. Click the **Select** check box to the left of each code you want to use to fund the advance.
3. Click **Select and Close** to save your selection(s), close the Account Code Selection window, and return to the Advance Accounting page.

5.2   Search for Account Codes

Complete the following steps to search for specific account codes.

1. Click the **Select Account Codes** link. This displays the Account Code Selection window.
2. Click the **Search Account Codes** tab.

Figure 11: Account Code Selection — Search Account Codes tab

3. Locate the account code.
   - **Drill-down method** (default) – This option allows you to search for account codes by drilling down through the segments of each code.
     i. Select a value from the drop-down list.
     ii. Click the **Refine search** link. A list displays for the next segment.
     iii. Repeat steps i–ii until you have selected the necessary search criteria.
     iv. Click **Search** to display the list of account codes matching your search criteria.
   - **Segment method** – This option allows you to search for a segment with specific information, such as a department, program, or funding year.
     i. Click the **Search by Segment** link.
     ii. Enter the segment information to use as search criteria in the appropriate field(s).
     iii. Click **Search** to display the list of account codes matching your search criteria.
4. Click the **Select** check box to the left of each code you want to use to fund the advance.
5. Click **Select and Close** to save your selection(s), close the Account Code Selection window, and return to the Advance Accounting page.

5.3   Add a Dimensional Account Code

Complete the following steps to add a dimensional account code to the advance.

*NOTE: Dimensional account codes are not supported by all financial systems. If the **Add Account Codes** tab is not available, your agency financial system does not support this feature.*

1. Click the **Select Account Codes** link. This displays the Account Code Selection window.
2. Click the **Add Account Codes** tab.
3. Enter segment values in each field, or click the **Search** button next to a field to select from a list of values in the Dimensional Accounting Code Search window. You can also enter one or more characters of the segment value or description in a field, and then click **Search** to limit the list to segment values and descriptions that start with the entered data.

   TIP: To see information about a segment, including the maximum length, float the pointer over the segment field to view the associated hover text.
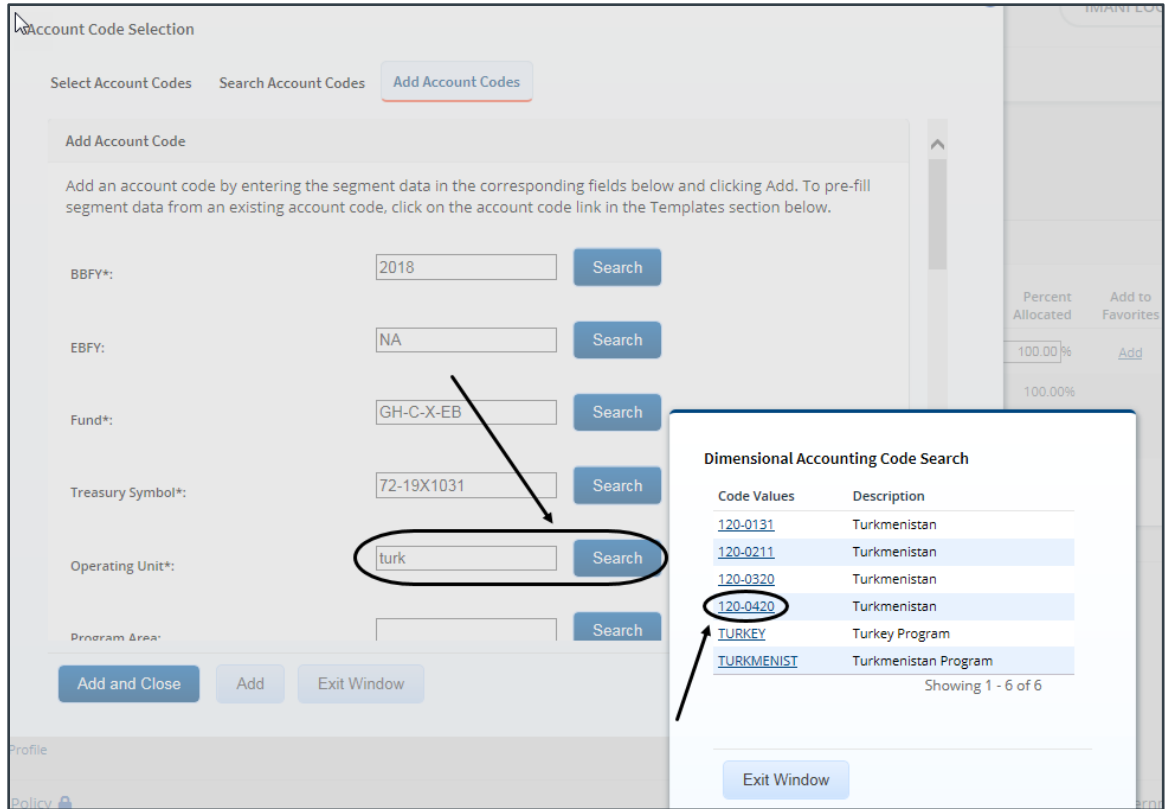
Figure 12: Dimensional Accounting Code Search

4. Click **Add and Close** to add the newly created dimensional account code to the advance, close the Account Code Selection window, and return to the Advance Accounting page.

5.3.1   Accounting Code Templates

Account code templates allow you to prepopulate all or part of a dimensional account code, and then alter or add segment values as needed. Any account code already associated with the advance appears in the Trip Accounting Code Templates section on the **Add Account Codes** tab of the Account Code Selection window. Favorite account codes are listed in the Favorite Accounting Code Templates section.

Select a template from either section, and then scroll to the top of the tab to enter or search for the remaining segment values.

Figure 13: Account Code Selection — Accounting Code Templates

6   Reviewing Remarks

General remarks about the advance display in the Remarks section on the Advance Summary page. The traveler or arranger, or even a previous approver, may have added additional information to the advance request. You should always review any remarks attached to the advance.

NOTE: Remarks may include system-generated events or information.

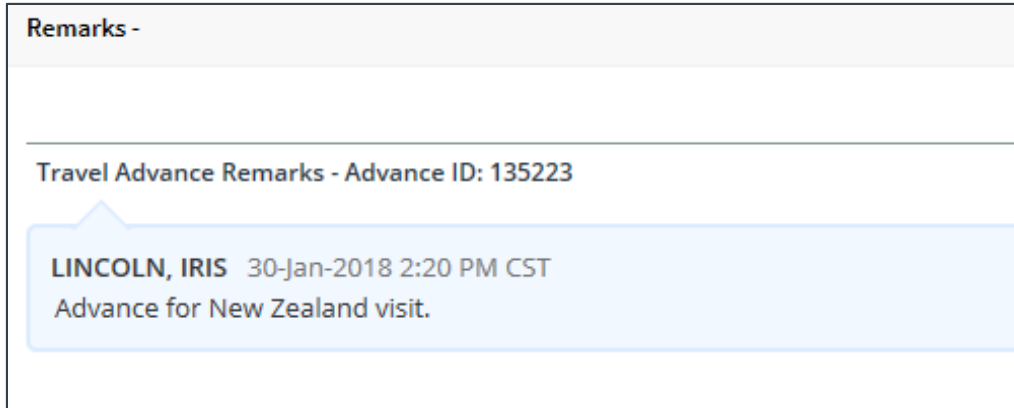*Figure 14: Advance Summary — Remarks section*

6.1   Expand Remarks

Remarks automatically display in a scrolling box. If you prefer to view the remarks as part of the page, click the **Expand Remarks** link.

6.2   Add Remarks

Complete the following steps to add remarks to the advance.

1.   Click **Edit Details** to open the Remarks window.
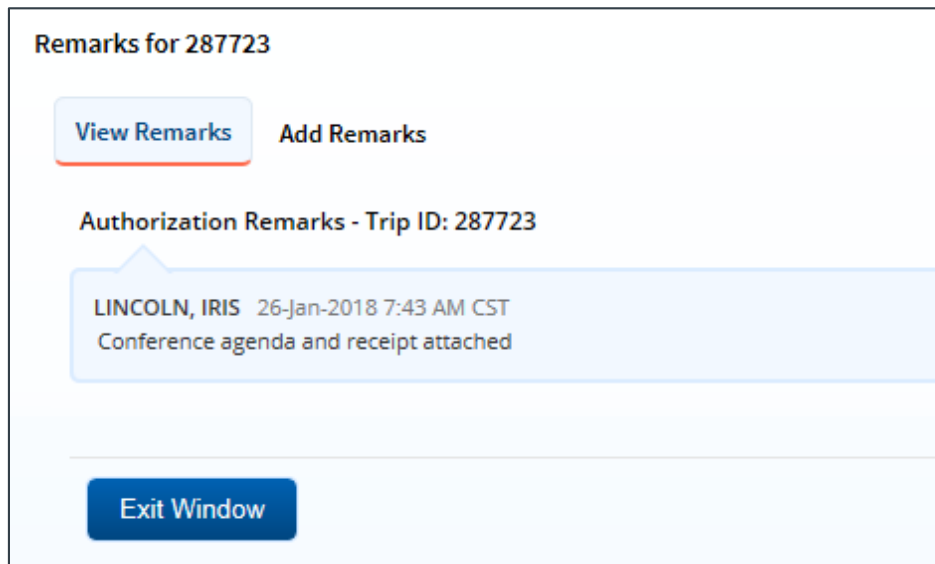
Figure 15: Remarks — Existing remarks

2. Click the **Add Remarks** tab to add remarks to the advance.

Figure 16: Remarks — Add Remarks tab

3. Enter your remarks and review them. Remarks cannot be edited or deleted after you save them make any changes before saving.

   TIP: *Avoid copying and pasting text from other applications. Doing so may result in invalid character errors.*

4. Click **Save and Close** to save your remarks and close the Remarks window.

7   Using the Trip Dashboard to View Trip-Related Documents

The Trip Dashboard displays a summary of other trip-related documents associated with your trip, including authorizations, vouchers, advances, and reservations. It also displays the status of each document (e.g., *In Progress*, *Revised*, *Pending Approval*, *Completed*, or *Canceled*).

Click the **Trip Dashboard** tab in the top left corner of E2 to display the Trip Dashboard. (The **Trip Dashboard** tab is always available to you from the Advance workflow.) Click the **Show** link next to a document to view that document.
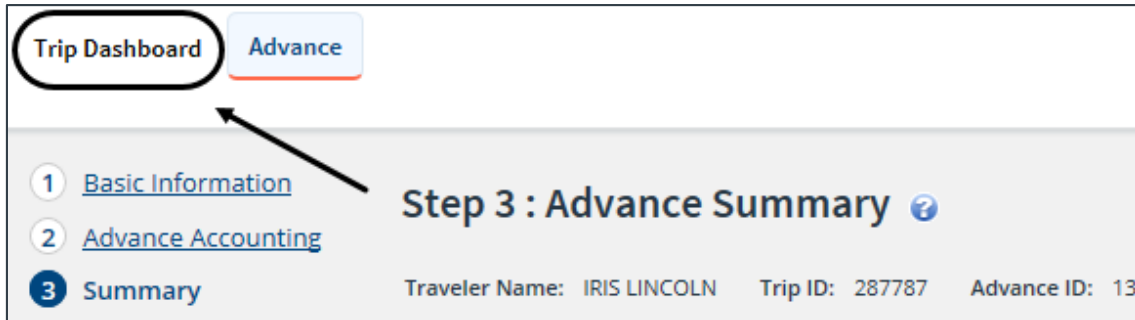

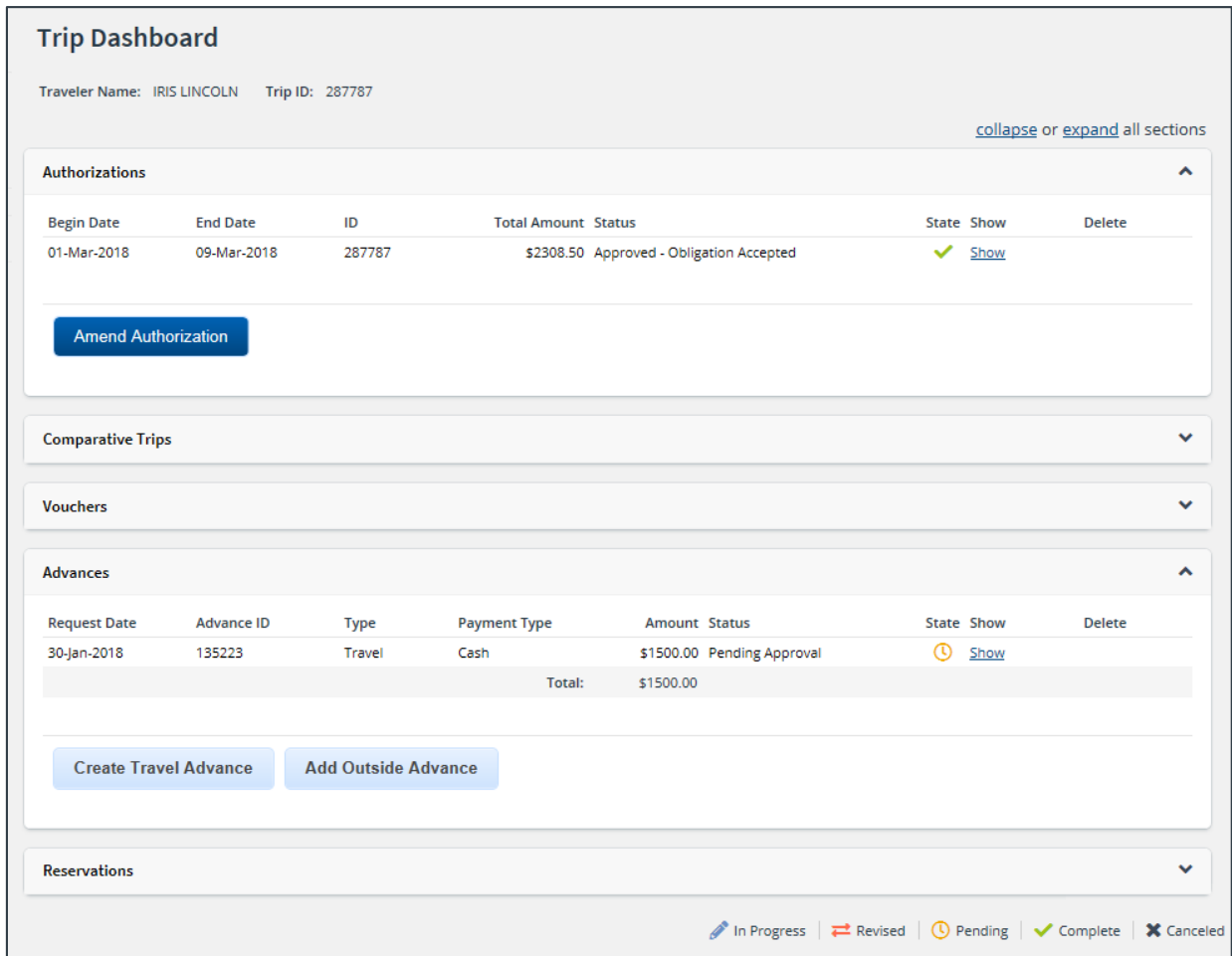*Figure 17: Advance Summary — Trip Dashboard tab*

Figure 18: Trip Dashboard — Advance Pending Approval

8   Completing the Approval Process

When you have finished reviewing the advance, you have three options:

- Approve the advance
- Return the advance for revision
- Unlock the advance, so another approver within the routing pool can access the document and take action on it

8.1   Approving the Advance

Complete the following steps.

1. Click **Approve** on the Advance Summary page. This displays a Confirm Action window.
2. Click **Confirm**.
   - When the advance is approved, your Pending Approvals list displays a message that the advance was successfully approved, and the trip is removed from the list.
   - If this is a final approval and your agency's financial system is appropriately interfaced with E2, the advance is submitted for real-time validation. Success or error messages from this validation process may display. In the case of warnings or errors that result in advance approval failure, contact your agency's financial system help desk for assistance.

8.2   Returning the Advance for Revision

An advance can be returned for revision to the traveler or a prior approver, based on the setting of the **Approver Can Return Document To** field in the Minor Customer Settings (i.e., Step 8: Minor Customer Approval Settings, DOCUMENT ROUTING). Refer to *AG50 – Hierarchy and Settings* for more information on this field.

8.2.1   Traveler Only

When the **Approver Can Return Document To** field is set to *Traveler Only*, an advance may be returned only to the traveler for revision. Complete the following steps.

1. Click the **Return** button at the bottom of the Advance Summary page. This displays a Confirm Action window.

Figure 19: Confirm Action — Return Advance to Traveler

2. The **Return To** field defaults to *Traveler* and cannot be modified.
3. Enter any necessary remarks in the **Remarks** field.

    *TIP: Review your remarks before clicking **Confirm**. Remarks cannot be edited or deleted after you send them.*

4. Click **Confirm** to return the advance.

8.2.2 Traveler or Approver

When the **Approver Can Return Document To** field is set to *Traveler or Any Prior Approval Level*, an advance may be returned to the traveler or a prior approver for revision (provided the approver returning the document is the second or higher approver for the advance). The document will be returned to either the primary approver, if one exists, or the entire routing pool with instructions.

*NOTE: If you are the first level approver on the advance, your only option is to return the document to the traveler. When you click **Return**, the Confirm Action window appears similar to that in the previous figure — the **Return To** field defaults to* Traveler *and is disabled.*

Complete the following steps.

1. Click the **Return** button at the bottom of the Advance Summary page. This displays a Confirm Action window.
2. Select the person or group to whom you are returning the advance from the **Return To** drop-down list.
    - The drop-down list displays the *Traveler* option as well as all previous approval pools.

- If an approval pool has a primary approver, that person's name appears in parentheses to the right of the name of the approval pool (e.g., Routing Pool 1 (Doe, John C.)).

Figure 20: Confirm Action — Return to Traveler or Approval Pool

3. Enter any necessary remarks in the **Remarks** field.

   *TIP: Review your remarks before clicking **Confirm**. Remarks cannot be edited or deleted after you send them.*

4. Click **Confirm** to return the advance.

8.3 Making the Advance Available to Another Approver

There may be times when you need to allow another approver in the routing pool access to the advance. If this situation occurs and the advance is locked to you, you must unlock it. Unlocking the advance makes it available to other approvers in the routing pool.

Click the **Unlock** link in the Other Actions section, or scroll to the bottom of the Advance Summary page and click the **Unlock** button.

9   Other Actions Available

The Other Actions section contains links to actions you may want to perform while approving a travel advance request, including:

- Adding remarks
- Printing the advance
- Viewing the routing path
- Viewing routing history
- Viewing advance details
- Viewing history

9.1   Add Remarks

Complete the following steps to view or add remarks for the advance.

1. Click the **Remarks** link in the Other Actions section. This displays the Remarks window. The **View Remarks** tab lists all remarks that currently exist for the advance.
2. Click the **Add Remarks** tab.
3. Enter your remarks and review them. Remarks cannot be edited or deleted after you save them; make any changes before saving.

   TIP: Avoid copying and pasting text from other applications. Doing so may result in invalid character errors.

4. Click **Save and Close** to save your remarks and close the Remarks window.

9.2   Print the Advance

Complete the following steps to review a printable version of the advance.

1. Click the **Printable Advance** link in the Other Actions section. The advance appears as a PDF file in a new browser window.
2. Click the **Print** icon to print the document.

9.3   View the Routing Path

When an advance has been submitted for approval, it is sent on a specific path that may include multiple approval steps, which are triggered by a set of rules applied to the advance. Click the **View Routing Path** link to display the View Routing Path page, which allows you to view the approval path for the advance and, if allowed, make minor changes.

The View Routing Path page lists all of the steps in the approval path for the advance, and includes the following information:

- **Step** – The number of the step in the path.
- **Approver Pool** – The name of the approver group assigned to the step. The person who approves the advance is a member of this approver group.
- **Approval Reason** – The rule that triggered the approval step.
- **Action** – The action to be taken. Some steps are informational only, while others require an approval.
- **Reserved By** – The name of the approver who is currently responsible for completing this step.
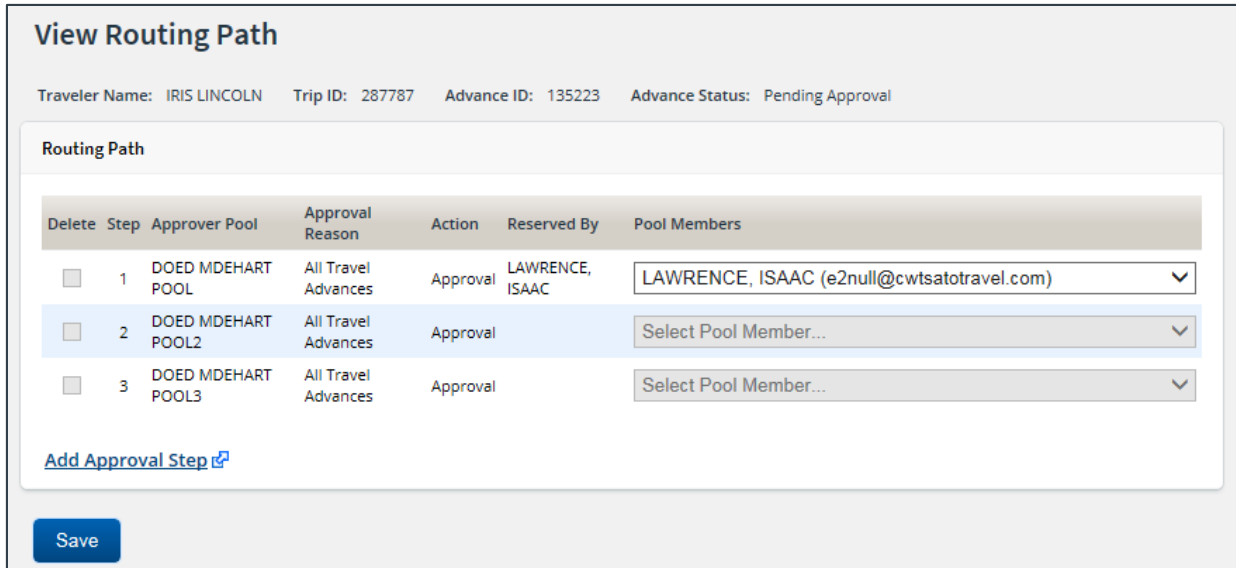
Figure 21: View Routing Path — Advance

9.3.1 Change the Approver

If the advance has a status of *Pending Approval*, you can change the approver responsible for the current step. The **Pool Members** drop-down list displays all members of the approver group associated with the approval step. For example, if the current approver is unavailable, you can select another approver from the same group to handle the advance.

Complete the following steps to change the approver.

1. Click the **View Routing Path** link in the Other Actions section. This displays the View Routing Path page.
2. Select the new approver from the **Pool Members** drop-down list.
3. Click **Save** to save your changes.

9.4 View Routing History

Click the **View Routing History** link in the Other Actions section to display the View Routing History page, which allows you to view an audit trail of routing events for the advance, including the date and time of the event, action that triggered the event, and the event description.

9.5 View Advance Details

Click the **View Advance Details** link in the Other Actions section to display the View Advance Details page. Details include total advance amount, total liquidated amount, and amount remaining to be liquidated.

9.5.1 Retained Advances

If retained advances are enabled, a View Retained Advance Details section displays at the bottom of the page. This section details all advances currently retained by the traveler and available for liquidation.

9.6   View History

Click the **View History** link in the Other Actions section to display the View History page. This page allows you to view a summary of actions taken on the advance.

10 Revision History

Date	Description	Release
04/2021	Added section 1 (Introduction)	21.1
07/2020	Updated screen shots	20.2
10/2019	Updated title page graphic and copyright information	19.3
03/2019	Copyright and logo updates	19.1
03/2018	• Updated images throughout the document • Updated section 2 (Opening a Travel Advance Pending Your Approval) for the **Filter Options** tab now available	18.1
01/2018	• Document formatting and layout changes • Updated images and steps in sections 7.2.1 (Traveler Only) and 7.2.2 (Traveler or Approver) to remove indication that a reason must be given when returning an advance	17.4
06/2017	Updated section 7.2 (Returning the Advance for Revision) for the new feature that allows you to return the advance for revision to the traveler or any prior approver	17.2
07/2015	Updated section 8, Other Actions Available for "View Routing History" details	15.3
07/2014	• Updated dimensional account code search information in section 4.3, Adding a Dimensional Account Code • Clarification for View Routing Path information in section 8, Other Actions Available	ETS2/14.3
01/2013	Copyright updates	ETS2
10/2012	General availability	ETS2

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