



Budget Advisory: Restrictions Concerning Meal Purchases with University Funds

Restrictions regarding the Purchase of Food, Meals and Beverages with University Funds

The University is undertaking an effort to significantly reduce meal expenses. The following restrictions govern the use of University funds for the purchase of food, meals and beverages (collectively referred to herein as “meals”). These restrictions do not apply to meal purchases made by employees while traveling on official University business. All meal purchases must be directly related to an activity in which the University derives a benefit. University employees authorized to approve the purchase of meals should exercise prudent judgment when determining if a meal expenditure is appropriate. The following principles should be used as a guide when determining the appropriateness of the meal expenditure:

- The expenditure must support the mission and purpose of the University
- If for an event, the event must be an authorized official University event
- The expenditure should not be personal in nature
- It should be apparent to the IRS that the expenditure is not additional compensation to the recipient
- The amount expended should be reasonable

University employees may not use University funds to purchase a meal for themselves alone. The use of University funds to purchase meals for a group consisting solely of University personnel conducting University business is not legitimate, unless the conduct of such business could not be satisfactorily accomplished in any other way.

The use of University funds to purchase meals when a University employee is hosting a guest (i.e., speaker, recruit, donor, board member, etc.) of the University may be justified, but should be limited. Similarly, meals purchased for the benefit of students, as a reward or in connection with a University-sponsored activity, may be appropriate, but should be limited. Meals should generally not be purchased for outside individuals, such as current or possible future vendors. In each of these cases, justification for the use of University funds rests upon the conduct of official University business and must generally be approved by a third-party who is authorized to sign for the budget being charged.

All approved meal related expenses must include a description of the “purpose” of the meal, the date of the event, the names of participants, and an original receipt.

This restriction does not extend to student funds associated with campus-wide student activities or grant funds (if the grant specifically provides for the purchase of meals).

Any exceptions to this budget advisory restriction must be obtained in advance from the President or a Divisional Vice President.