



Business Related Food Purchases Policy & Procedure

Area: Financial Accounting	Number: FS-AP-1303-01
Subject: Business Related Food Purchases Policy & Procedure	Issued: 4/1/2013
Applies To: Campus Faculty and Staff	Revised:
Sources:	Updated: 12/1/2014
	Reviewed:
Responsible Party: Vice President for Business and Finance	Page(s): 1 of 5

Purpose

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to provide guidance and clarify instances where food may be purchased for consumption by students, potential students, volunteers, participants, guests, and employees not on travel status or otherwise eligible for payment of meals or other food using institutional funds in accordance with the Board of Regents *USG Business Procedures Manual (BPM)*, sections 19.7 and 19.8 which may be accessed via http://www.usg.edu/business_procedures_manual/. Additionally, Section 4 of the *Statewide Travel Regulations* addresses employee and nonemployee group meals. If there is any conflict with the *BPM* or *Statewide Travel Regulations* and this policy and procedure, the *Manual and Regulations* govern.

Nothing in the policy or procedure shall be construed as *requiring* a school or department to provide food to employees for events or to reimburse employees for participation in events.

Definitions

Institutional Funds – all funds held in University accounts, excluding Agency funds. The use of institutional funds, especially for food/meal purchases, is held at a higher level of scrutiny and oversight. Employees responsible for administering institutional funds and employees requesting reimbursement from institutional funds should ensure that funds are spent only for legitimate public purposes and not for the personal benefit of the employee or other individuals. All expenses and supporting documentation are open to public records. Noncompliance with these requirements may result in audit finding, loss of funds, and adverse publicity to the University and individuals. The misuse of institutional funds may result in both employment termination and various civil and criminal penalties.

Agency funds - are funds received and administered for others (i.e.: individual students, faculty, staff members, or other organizations). Disposition of these funds are in accord with designations and instructions of the entity for which the University is serving as agent.

Food Purchases – includes meals, beverages, snacks, etc. unless otherwise stated in policy. The purchase of alcohol is never an allowable purchase with institutional funds including Agency funds.

Refreshment and Snacks – assorted light foods; food eaten between regular meals

Participant – An individual may be subject to different rules depending on the capacity in which they are participating in an event. For example, volunteers might include employees or students if the individual is operating in a capacity separate from their employee or student role. An employee or volunteer attending a student event as a student would be considered a student. A student worker participating in an event while being paid would be considered an employee. Employees working additional hours in their own area, using work time to provide volunteer service, or otherwise participating in activities expected of employees, are considered employees.

Activity matching funding source – The funding source used to purchase food should generally match the supported program and participants. For example, student activity fees would be an appropriate funding source to purchase beverages for a volunteer event sponsored by a student group.

Per Diem Limits – Unless otherwise specified, all meal and food purchases must comply with per diem meal rates as detailed in USG BPM Section 4.4 – Per Diem Allowance for Meals to determine allowable reimbursement amount. The Board of Regents policy specifies that while participants are not necessarily in a travel status, the state travel per diem limits apply to food purchased for consumption by employees, students and volunteers at all events at which a meal is served, unless otherwise specified.

Policy

I. Purchase of Food Using Institutional Funds - [BOR Business Procedure Manual Section 19.8](#)

Food for Students

Students include individuals enrolled to take classes at Georgia Southern, including students enrolled in Continuing Education, and individuals being recruited as potential students. Using the USG BPM Guidelines, institutional funds may be used to purchase food for students for: sanctioned student events, classroom and academic programs, student recruiting events, athletic events and recruiting, and volunteer events (see chart below). Per diem limits apply.

Food for Volunteers

Volunteers include individuals that provide benefits to the institution (serving on an advisory board, student mentors, etc.) without receiving compensation. Institutional funds may be used to purchase food for volunteers in those instances where a quid pro quo relationship exists. For example, an academic unit might form a volunteer advisory board for the purpose of obtaining advice, support, and expertise from members of the community as it relates to an academic program. It would be allowable to provide food to those volunteers as part of the advisory board meeting. However, food purchased solely in connection with volunteer appreciation or volunteer recognition events would not be allowable using institutional funds under this policy. Per Diem Limits apply.

Food for Employees

Generally, institutional funds may be used to provide food for employees when in travel status. However, there are a few exceptions where employees in non-travel status may participate in meals or be reimbursed for meal costs that have been defined in USG Policy 8.2, USG BPM 19.7 or 19.8, and Section 4 of the Statewide Travel Regulations.

Employees include temporary, part-time, and full-time faculty/staff, administrators, resident assistants (RAs), graduate assistants, and other student employees. The employee's participation must be required, essential, and in furtherance of an official institutional program.

Sponsored Account Food Purchases

The University must comply with federal cost accounting standards and these standards require consistency in the treatment of costs. The University does not use sponsored funds for business related entertainment since University state accounts do not allow the purchase of business related entertainment.

In some instances, an external organization may award funds to the institution with the specific provision that those funds be used for employee or participant food expenses as it relates to grant activities or meetings. An example of a special situation is an all-day seminar or meeting when a food, beverage, refreshment or meal cost meets the three criteria of allowable, allocable and reasonable to the specified sponsored project. In these types of instances, food may be purchased within the grant guidelines.

The grant/contract award with associated budget and narrative that include food purchases for meetings or conferences will serve as written authorization from granting agencies for appropriate food purchases in furtherance of the objectives of the grant award. Food purchases for sponsored projects may include actual meals and/or snacks.

For grant or contractual related food purchases, the Grant Principal Investigator/Project Director and Research Accounting are responsible for assuring that all costs are allowable under the terms and approved budget of the grant. It will be the responsibility of the Principal Investigator/Project Director to obtain personal or other funding for any difference between the allowable per diem and the actual invoice amount for cases in which the invoice exceeds the allowable rate.

II. Employee Group Meals [BOR Business Procedure Manual Section 19.7](#)

GSU Employee Group Meals within the University

On occasion, the institution may purchase meals for a group of employees when such employees are not on travel status or otherwise eligible for payment of meals. Under certain infrequent circumstances, employees may be required to remain at the worksite during mealtime. Those circumstances include emergency situations, such as natural disasters and crisis operations. Other circumstances may include intra-departmental meetings or training sessions where the meeting or training session continues during the meal and the employees are not permitted to leave the premises of the meeting site. Under these circumstances, institutions may purchase meals for the affected employees using the standards set forth in the BOR Business Procedures Manual Section 19.7.1.

All requests for approval of employee group meals should utilize the [Business Related Food Purchase Request Form](#) and the expense should be charged to account 727700. It is the responsibility of the requestor to obtain personal or foundation funding should the requested exception be denied.

The following standards are to be followed when making food purchases for meetings involving only University employees:

1. Group meals will only be provided in those instances where the meeting lasts for at least four hours.
2. Group meals held at the start and/or finish of a meeting are *not* eligible for payment under this policy.
3. Group meals must be approved *in advance* by the appropriate dean/vice president or the President of the University.
4. Group meal expenditures are limited to meals only and do not include the purchase of snacks.
5. Per Diem limits outlined in *USG BPM Section 4.4* must be followed, however, the meal limits apply to the actual food and drink purchased for the meal. Set-up and delivery costs associated with the group meal shall not be included in the meal limit calculation.
6. Group meals for a “lunch meeting” where the meal and the meeting are one and the same are prohibited for payment under this policy.

Food Purchased for Conferences and Workshops Involving Multiple Institutions and Other Stakeholders

Units hosting and coordinating conferences and workshops collect registration fees that may be used for food for meals and breaks which are an official and integral component of the conference or workshop. These funds are recorded in an Agency account in the financial records of the University. Meal per diem limits are not imposed on purchases made from these Agency funds. The source of funds must be primarily external to the University. This section does not apply to campus level training for Georgia Southern employees.

Campus units may not set up departmental Agency accounts for the purpose of paying for employee meals under this section of the policy.

III. Documentation Requirements and Enforcement of Per Diem Limits

Payment requests must include the following:

- 1) Original receipts
- 2) Flyer, email, agenda or other documentation to show that the event was an official event. This documentation should also include the start and end time of the event.
- 3) Food purchased on a per person basis must include a list of participants.
- 4) Food purchased for a group must include the group provided for (students, volunteers, etc.) and the number for which food was provided.
- 5) The [Business Related Food Purchase Request Form](#) (employee group meals only).

In the event that an employee expends funds in excess of the authorized state travel policy per diem, the excess amount should be covered by the employee making that expenditure from personal or University Foundation funds. Catered meal costs may not exceed the per diem limits set forth in the statewide travel regulations. Where possible, the caterer should be asked to show the food cost separately from other costs of the event.

Employee group meals purchased outside of a catered arrangement must be accompanied by a written justification as to why the food was purchased outside of a catering arrangement. For example, food purchased from a grocery store, such as sub sandwiches, to provide a meal at a lower cost than what was estimated by a caterer must be justified as such. This justification is necessary to ensure that the food was not purchased for personal use.

Reference Chart of normal, allowable expenses and limits:

Activity	Allowable Participants	Potential Funding Source(s)	Notes
Sanctioned Student Events (excluding athletic events)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students • Volunteers • Employees whose participation is required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Activity Fees • Sponsored Grants or Contract Funds as authorized by fund provider • Agency Funds • Auxiliary Funds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See BPM Sections 19.8.1, 19.8.2, and 19.8.3 • Per diem limits apply
Athletic Events & Recruiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students • Potential students & parents/guardians • Volunteers • Employees whose participation is required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency Funds • Athletic Auxiliary Funds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See BPM Sections 19.8.1, 19.8.2, and 19.8.3 • Per diem limits apply • Applicable athletic conference rules shall also be followed
Classroom & Academic Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students • Employees whose participation is required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sales & Service Revenue • State appropriated funds for use only in for credit courses, Tuition & Fee Revenue, and Misc. E&G Revenue • Sponsored Grants or Contract Funds as authorized by fund provider 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See BPM Sections 19.8.1 and 19.8.2
Student Recruiting Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students • Potential students & parents/guardians • Volunteers • Employees whose participation is required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Activity Fees • Auxiliary Funds • Agency Funds • Sponsored Grants or Contract Funds as authorized by fund provider 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See BPM Sections 19.8.1, 19.8.2, and 19.8.3 • Per diem limits apply

Volunteer Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students • Volunteers • Employees whose participation is required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All funds except state appropriated funds, tuition revenue, and misc. E&G revenue • Recognized “executive” program tuition revenue may be used to purchase food for volunteer events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See BPM Sections 19.8.2 and 19.8.3 • Per diem limits apply • Volunteer events with sole purpose of recognition or appreciation for past services may not be paid using any fund source except for Foundation funds
Safety Products (i.e.: water)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students • Volunteers • Employees at risk due to environmental or workplace conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Auxiliary funds • Sales and service revenue • State appropriated funds • Student Activity Fees • Tuition & Fee Revenue • Misc. E&G Revenue • Sponsored Grants or Contract Funds as authorized by fund provider 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See BPM Section 19.8.3 • Expenses should be paid using the departmental budget of the assigned employees
Educational or Business Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students • Volunteers • Employees whose participation is required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Auxiliary funds • Sales and service revenue • State appropriated funds • Tuition & Fee Revenue • Misc. E&G Revenue • Sponsored Grants or Contract Funds as authorized by fund provider 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See BPM Section 19.8.3 • Meeting must consist of predominantly non-employees • Per diem limits apply
Employee Group Meals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees whose participation is required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sales and service revenue • Auxiliary funds • State appropriated funds • Tuition & Fee Revenue • Misc. E&G Revenue • Sponsored Grants or Contract Funds as authorized by fund provider 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See BPM Section 19.7.1 • Meeting must consist of employees • Per diem limits apply • Business Related Food Purchase Request Form

Procedure

Allowable food purchases referenced in this policy may be purchased and paid using one of the following methods:

- [Check Request](#) to pay the vendor providing the food or meal
- [Petty Cash Reimbursement Request](#) when the vendor is paid by an employee or student and they are requesting reimbursement
- ePro Special Request for food purchases related to instructional and research programs
- P-card if the cardholder has been preapproved to use their card for food purchases

All purchase or payment requests must include the supporting documentation listed in Section III of the policy.

Group events (generally student and volunteer groups) where food is purchased for the group (pizza, subs, etc.), requires that the budget manager provide the number of participants for which food was planned.

Note: The [Business Related Food Purchase Request Form](#) is only required for employee group meals.