Charging Meals to the University

Business Meals

- **Business Meals** must have at least 1 non-OSU employee in attendance whose presence is necessary for the business discussion.
- Consistent with Internal Revenue Service (IRS) rules, the university requires documentation of the time, date, place, business purpose, and attendees at the meal. The University will not pay or reimburse business meal expenses that lack documentation or a clear business purpose.
- Expenditure amounts for business meals must be reasonable. Under this policy, expenditure amounts for meals (including alcohol and excluding taxes and tip) will be deemed reasonable if they do not exceed three times the current federal per-diem rate for that city, pro-rated 25% for breakfast; 25% for lunch; 50% for dinner.
  - Example: Columbus per diem is $59 per person, (59*.5)*3=88.5
- **Maximum tip** amount for a business meal is 20%. If you tip more, that amount will be deducted from your reimbursement or you will be required to pay the overage back to OSU if the expense is on a pcard.
- Meals charged to a grant:
  - Check with the SPO to see if business meals are allowed to be charged to that grant.
  - Complete the OSP Business Meal form (needs PI signature).
  - If a meeting is interrupted so that participants can travel to a restaurant, the meal is no longer considered to be a business meal and may not be charged to the sponsored project.
- The following items are required per IRS rules. Failure to provide these items may result in loss of reimbursement or require repayment back to OSU if the expense was charged to a pcard.
  - Original, itemized receipt
  - Time, date, and place of meal
  - Business purpose
  - List of attendees and their affiliation

Meals at University Functions

- The policy states that meal expenses on university funds can be incurred for employees only on an occasional basis. Please interpret this as approximately once a semester or twice a year and non-exclusive to employees at your facility. Examples of proper use would be staff appreciation, graduation celebrations, and retirement celebrations. As mentioned previously, they should all be non-exclusive.
- These expenditures must include a description of the business purpose of the gathering, date, time, place of meal, and a list of attendees. An itemized receipt is also required post event.
- Departmental staff appreciation parties held off campus at a personal residence, require prior approval.
- University funds may be used to provide food and beverages at board meetings, meetings with external stakeholders (including alumni, prospective donors, state government, and community groups), activities involving volunteers, and activities in which the majority of the participants are students. While allowable, units must still be fiscally responsible with their funds. Frequent or high dollar meal expenses will be questioned and may be denied.
- Working lunches will not be covered with University funds.
- If you are having a meal at a University Function, please give plenty of notice to ensure time for proper approvals.
Catered events

- Please use OSU approved vendors.
- Contact the caterer’s account representative to discuss needs and availability.
- Receive the final agreed upon quote from the supplier (including the University discounts).
- Create the requisition using the buckeye buy and attach your quote from the vendor, list of attendees or open invitation for the event.
- Sending an order without prior contact with the supplier may result in an undelivered order if the supplier has prior commitments on the same day/time.
- When using these contracted suppliers through buckeye buy you will not need to send their catering contracts to Purchasing for signature and contract review: all these contracted suppliers have agreed to our OSU Master Service Agreement.
- If you are having a catered event paid for by University funds, please give plenty of notice to ensure time for proper approvals.

Additional Resources

Expenditures Policy
Fiscal Stewardship
Purchasing Policy
Pcard Policy