



UMCES Policies

VIII-3.5 UMCES Policy and Procedures on Food Purchases for Business Meal Purposes Other Than Employee Travel

Approved by the President 11/27/2012

I. POLICY

A. It is the policy of UMCES that local hosting in support of University business is an allowable expense which can be submitted for payment to the vendor or reimbursed to the individual that incurred the expense.

Expenditures for food must be in accordance with State policy, reasonable and necessary, and part of a bona fide business function of the University. Expenditures must not be for events considered to be primarily social in nature, and the purchase of alcohol is NOT allowed. Expenditures must also be in accordance with VIII-3.00-UMCES Procurement Policy.

B. Business meals may be appropriate in the following instances:

1. Interviews of an applicant for employment by official University host(s)
2. Applicant's spouse for positions of Faculty, , Directors, Vice Presidents, and President
3. Meals for visiting scholars and faculty.
4. Meals for distinguished guest speakers/lecturers.
5. Meetings with business leaders outside the University for the purpose of student interaction and/or future contributions to programs.
6. Meetings with colleagues from other universities to discuss university research, instruction, administrative functions, etc.
7. Meals with prospective students.
8. Employee awards/appreciation programs.
9. Meals during unusual hours or at unusual places of work for groups performing University services.
10. Conferences, convocations, symposiums and other special events which are on behalf of or substantially involve non-UMCES personnel.
11. Contract and Grant Accounts: if the purchase of food is in the budget, and it is a reasonable and necessary expense given the restricted purpose of the grant.
12. UMCES-wide meetings that require attendees from various laboratories to travel to the meeting venue (i.e.: Administrative or Executive Council meetings, task force meetings, and search committee meetings)
13. Other instances that satisfy the criteria in the first paragraph above.

C. Business meals are not appropriate in the following circumstances:

1. Personal meals among University employees.
2. Routine meetings among university employees (e.g. faculty and staff meetings).
3. General discussion meals among employees.
4. Any social function (i.e. birthdays and holiday)

D. Dollar Guidelines:



The following guidelines are provided to assist faculty and staff in determining what is reasonable within the broad array of events and situations that occur on campus. University policy does not define specific dollar amounts for what constitutes a reasonable meal expense, because the reasonableness of an expense depends upon many relevant factors, including the business purpose of the event and the location.

The federal per diem amounts for meals serve as a starting point for guidance as to the suggested maximum amount of expense allowable for a business meal. The per diem chart can be found using the following web link:

<http://www.dbs.umd.edu/travel/services/rates/domestic.php>

The rule of thumb is one to two times the per person allowance and should include the tax with a maximum of 20% tip. For example, the standard lunch per diem is \$10, so lunch per person should not exceed \$20, including tax and tip.

Amounts in excess of these guidelines may be permissible based upon circumstances including location. Expenditures that exceed twice the per diem rate must be approved by the Vice President for Administration or Designee.

II. PROCEDURE

A. Documentation Required for Payment

Supporting documentation for business meals must include:

1. List of attendees (preferably a sign-in sheet), including complete names when practical and affiliation to the University. Estimated attendance is acceptable for conferences, convocations, symposiums and other special events.
2. Explanation of the business purpose.
3. Certification stating that no alcohol was included in the purchase or reimbursement request if that is not clear from the receipt.
4. The date of the meeting or event.
5. A legible itemized receipt from the restaurant or vendor along with the credit card or paid receipt if a reimbursement.
6. A reimbursement request should be submitted within the fiscal year of the expense – i.e., prior to “second close” in mid-July.

B. Use of University travel or procurement cards for Business Meals

1. Travel cards are to be used for all business meals supplied by a caterer or restaurant.
2. Procurement cards are to be used when purchasing items at a grocery/retail store.

Note: This policy was adopted in large part from University of Maryland Policies and Procedures, VIII-6.00 (D).