

**Guidelines on Purchases of Food and Meals for University Business**  
**UIC Department of Pediatrics**  
*V. 11/30/2022*

**Goal:** In the course of conducting university business, business meal expenses such as food and refreshments are sometimes incurred. The goal of these guidelines is to clarify the departmental rules and recommendations surrounding such costs.

**Principles:**

- Business meal expenses such as food and refreshments should be reasonable and necessary to accomplish the mission of the University of Illinois System and must have a bona fide business purpose. Business meal expenses for employees and non-employees are allowed under certain conditions. *Each attendee* must have a purpose for attending business meal. Please contact DAO or director of finance to clarify attendance requirements.
- Meeting of just a few department employees is not a qualifying occasion. Purchase of food for larger division/ department meetings may be allowed if it has a legitimate business purpose.
- To take into account costs of food/catering, while simultaneously ensuring responsible stewardship of funds, we discourage purchase of alcohol. We recommend that total cost not exceed \$15 for breakfast, \$25 for lunch, and \$35 for dinner per person (excluding tip) *unless* specifically authorized by Department head or DAO.
- For guests/invited speakers, department will support costs limited to the timeframe necessary for performance of the business purpose. For example, an invited speaker will classically arrive in Chicago the evening before their talk, have dinner with faculty if desired that day (supported by DOP), then present and fly home the next day. If a speaker is scheduled for more than one activity or is expected to conduct business with the DOP for more than one day, please discuss with DAO prior to event.

**Logistics:**

- **Grants/ externally sponsored source:** Food/meals and refreshments may be purchased using grant funds only if they are specifically included in sponsor-approved budget and justification.
- **Alcohol:** Purchase of alcohol is discouraged by the Department and, if it occurs, must be in strict compliance with University policies. Alcohol purchases are never allowed from State funds, some self-supporting funds; and Grant funds.
- **How to Purchase.** Business meals and refreshments may be purchased using:
  - T-Card
  - Purchase Order
  - Reimbursed personal fundsDo not purchase business meals with a P-Card.

- **Supporting Documentation:** Include the following information when processing payments:
  - The business purpose of the meeting/activity (how it benefited the System) as required by the Internal Revenue Service.
  - Itemized receipt or invoice detailing all food and beverage purchases.
  - The number of attendees.
  - Affiliation of attendees. Do not list by name but indicate whether they were employees or non-employees.
  - Whether alcohol was served.

**Notes:** Guidelines may be revised at the discretion of the Department Head or Director of Administrative Operations. Institutional and college policies take precedence over these guidelines and, in case of conflict, institutional / college policies must be followed.