

University of Northern Colorado Policy for Official Functions

I. Policy Intent and Scope

Official Functions are meetings, meals, or other events, purchased with university funds, hosted by an organizational unit, attended by guests, associates, and/or employees, and held for official university business. Official Functions should achieve program objectives and be limited to reasonable and actual costs. The attendance of university employees should include only individuals directly related to the purpose of the Official Function. Official Functions serving alcohol must have a pre-approved Alcohol Approval Form (“AAF”) in place prior to the event.

II. Official Functions

A. Training, Conferences, and Events

Trainings, conferences, and events may be attended by university employees and/or guests for the primary purpose of conducting institutional business that involves instruction and/or development of students, community, faculty and/or staff; public service; outreach or celebration of significant milestones. Employee attendance is limited to those who are essential to the function's purpose.

Examples of allowable expenditures:

- Receptions or events where university personnel host students or visitors for the benefit of the university.
- Goodwill functions designed to generate alumni, legislative, donor, business, or community support for university programs.
- Annual or semi-annual faculty and/or staff retreats.
- Commencement ceremonies and associated receptions and events.
- Infrequent (no more than quarterly) departmental employee or student recognition/appreciation events.
- Student functions hosted for students and directly related to student/educational development.
- University-wide recognition or celebration events.
- Meals for an employee when they are required to work unexpected overtime or through meal breaks such as athletic events and after hour emergencies.

Examples of expenditures not allowed:

- Events/gifts/flowers recognizing personal occasions not directly benefiting the university, including, but not limited to birthdays, weddings, engagements, illnesses, and births.
- Events or related expenses that do not primarily benefit the university such as a social gathering for a group of employees.

B. Employee Retirement and Farewell Parties

- Employees who have worked for the university and are either retiring or leaving after a minimum of 5 years of employment may merit a retirement or farewell party to enable friends and colleagues to celebrate their time at the university.
- The total amount of the event, including food, gifts, space rental, and decorations should not exceed \$250 without prior approval from the area Vice President and/or Dean.
- If the retiring or leaving employee is being given a gift exceeding \$75 in value, then a Gifts, Prizes, and Awards Form must be completed and submitted to UNC's Tax Accountant for approval.
- As a reminder, cash or cash equivalents (gift cards) may not be gifted.

C. Welcome Events

- Welcome events for a new Dean/AVP or above may be held to introduce students, faculty, and staff to new members of the UNC community.
- The total amount of the event, including food, gifts, space rental, and decorations, should not exceed \$250 without prior approval from the area Vice President and/or Dean.
- University Advancement sponsored events are exempt from the Official Function rules for Welcome, Farewell, and Retirement Events.

D. Business Meals

The main focus of business meals must be to support the business and educational mission of the university; consumption of food is incidental to the meeting's purpose. Business meals may include UNC faculty, students, and/or staff, and participants external to the university. UNC faculty, students, and/or staff at the business meal must be integral to the meeting's purpose. External participants may include official guests of the university such as donors or potential donors, visiting lecturers, visitors from other universities, alumni, business leaders, and community leaders.

Examples of allowable expenditures:

- A meal organized by a department chair to provide an opportunity for faculty to meet a group of visiting professors and their companions.
- Coffee, tea, and snack service on university premises for the hospitality of non-employee guests.
- Lunch for a supervisor and a new employee to welcome them to campus.

Examples of expenditures not allowed:

- Purchases of food and beverages for routine staff meetings.
- Routine purchases of food and beverages for meals and/or coffee meetings solely with other university employees.
- Purchase of beverages (including coffee and tea), snacks, coffee makers, electric tea kettles, paper plates, cups, napkins and flatware for faculty and staff use on university premises, such as departmental break rooms.

E. Recruiting

Recruiting expenses must directly relate to identifying and securing new UNC employees or students. Expenses for UNC faculty, staff, and/or students involved in recruitment must be limited to individuals who are essential to the process. Candidates may be invited to the university for a visit and interview, and costs associated with the meeting, interview, and travel are reimbursable if the expenditures adhere to policies and guidelines established by Human Resources.

Examples of allowable expenditures:

- Employee or student recruitment activities on or off campus where food and beverages are served.
- Meals where university personnel host employee candidates or prospective students for the benefit of the university.
- Off-campus room rental to conduct candidate interviews.

Examples of expenditures not allowed:

- Meals with candidates that are not part of the official itinerary.
- Tip amounts exceeding 20% of the bill.

F. What Official Functions Are Not

Although restrictions and limitations apply to the use of any funds for the following activities, they are **not** Official Functions. Consult with the Purchasing & Contracts Office for more information about the restrictions on these purchases.

- Purchases of gifts.
- Donations, charitable contributions, and table sponsorships.
- Private, social, athletic, or country club memberships and dues.
- Meals included in conference registration fees or included in per diem when traveling to/from a conference.
- Holiday decorations.

III. Alcoholic Beverages at Official Functions and Prior Approval

Purchase of alcoholic beverages for Official Functions (not a cash bar) requires written approval of the area Vice President or their designee *before* the event occurs via the AFF regardless of funding source. The following limitations apply:

- Purchase and service of alcoholic beverages must comply with UNC's Board Policy Manual and applicable state and federal laws.
- Alcoholic beverages must be served in conjunction with a meal or reception, as guided by UNC Conference & Event Services.
- When served at Official Functions on university property, alcoholic beverages must be served by UNC Catering/Sodexo.
- Alcoholic beverages may not be served at:
 - Staff or committee meetings;

- Training or professional development sessions;
- Gatherings held on or off campus during customary working hours and attended only by university personnel;
- Official Functions sponsored by student clubs and organizations (cash bars are permitted); and
- Informal gatherings in departments, such as a Friday afternoon happy hour.
- The Alcohol Approval Form (AAF) must be submitted and approved prior to the event.
- The annual University Holiday Party is exempt from the Alcoholic Beverages at Official Functions rule.

IV. Processing Expenses for Official Functions

A. Approval

Official Functions with alcohol

- All Alcohol Approval Forms (AAF) must be submitted via OnBase. A link to the AAF itself can be found at: <https://www.unco.edu/purchasing/pcard/offical-functions.aspx>
- The form must be approved by both the FOAP approver and AAF approver and attached to the payment method.
- Blanket AAF – Annual plans for recurring Official Function activities with alcohol and are scheduled on a recurring basis may be approved in total under a Blanket AAF. Examples of such activities include donor cultivation, alumni events, etc. In addition to the information required for a standard AAF, any Blanket AAF must also include:
 - Reason for the Blanket AAF Request
 - Time period for the Blanket AAF Request (cannot exceed current fiscal year)
 - Number of allowable events
 - Maximum allowable expense per event
 - Maximum allowable expense for the entire blanket AAF
 - Who is authorized to make purchases under the blanket AAF

B. Purchases

University employees must adhere to all applicable UNC Procurement and Fiscal Rules when making purchases for Official Functions. Depending on the expenditure type, the following payment methods are available: EIOs (electronic internal orders), PCards, reimbursements via check/ACH Requests, and/or purchase orders. Regardless of the payment method, an AAF must be approved by a designated approver for Official Functions serving alcohol.

Expenses for business meals must be deemed reasonable and necessary. As a guide, refer to the United States General Services Administration (GSA) website to identify the meal rate for the city in which the meal was purchased. GSA meal rates may be found at:

<https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>.

Alcoholic beverages may not be purchased without prior approval in accordance with Section III of this policy.

C. Documentation

Detailed receipts are required for all PCard expenditures or reimbursement requests. An Official Function Documentation form must be completed and attached along with receipts to the PCard transaction or reimbursement request: https://www.unco.edu/purchasing/forms/off_documentation_form.pdf

Any required procurement or payment documents for the purchase of alcohol must be submitted with the AAF that was authorized prior to the event and, at a minimum, include:

1. Host of the event
2. Names of attendees/group name
3. Date(s) of event
4. Location of event
5. Specific purpose of event
6. Description of how the event will benefit the university

All documents submitted for reimbursement must be approved by both the FOAP approver and the designated approver for Official Functions for the functional area on the pre-approved AAF.

D. Account Codes

All Official Functions expenses must be charged to the appropriate account code.

For internal charges, such as catering, dining halls, and renting space on campus, the expenditure must be charged to account 72958-Internal Purchases Dining Catering. The Official Function Documentation form is not required for internal charges if a detailed invoice from Conference & Event Services is attached to the payment. Please note that internal charges would be paid with an EIO.

For external charges, such as restaurants, grocery stores, and other off campus vendors, the expenditure must be charged to account 72390-Official Functions/Training. These charges would require an Official Function Documentation form:

https://www.unco.edu/purchasing/forms/off_documentation_form.pdf

V. Compliance Procedures

University employees are not permitted to authorize or incur Official Function expenditures that do not adhere to this policy. Employees who fail to follow this policy may be denied reimbursement or required to reimburse the university if expenditures already occurred using a university form of payment.

Date Issued: 04/08/2021 Updated: 6/2024, effective 7/1/24

Contact for Questions:

Morgan Gray, Procurement Card Manager, morgan.gray@unco.edu, 970-351-1836