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V-11.25 Food, Beverage, Flowers, Gifts, and Similar Incidental Expenses

(Amended 6/04; 7/1/06; 12/13/06; 7/15/22; 2/14/24; 10/9/24; 6/20/25)

Effective February 14 and October 9, 2024, and June 20, 2025, this policy has been revised. For the most current version without redlining, return to [V-11.25](#).

- a. Food and beverage expense (paid from any source of funds) and alcohol (if paid from a fiduciary fund ~~959-997~~ [952, 960, 975, 980, 989], fund 990, or from a gift fund 520) may be approved for reimbursement if the following conditions have been met:
- (1) Justification — a written justification documenting a clear university purpose for incurring the expense. The justification should include an explanation of why food or beverage was required at the meeting if it is not evident by the nature of the event. Examples of university purposes include but are not limited to the following:
 - (a) Business meetings,
 - (b) Recognition events,
 - (c) Recruitment,
 - (d) Training,
 - (e) Guests performing a service,
 - (f) New employee orientation,
 - (g) Lectures, symposia, presentations,
 - (h) Student orientation and support events, and
 - (i) Wellness events..
 - (2) Allowable maximum amounts for business meals. Allowance for food and beverage expense is limited to an average of \$70 per person for food; ~~and an average of \$30 per person for alcohol; or an average of \$100 per person per meal for food and alcohol combined.~~
- Note: All rates are exclusive of taxes and tips.
- (3) Process for exceptions to exceed allowable business meal maximum amounts. Occasionally, the cost of providing meals or refreshments exceeds the maximum allowable meal amounts listed above. In these cases, the request for payment or reimbursement must be approved by the dean, department head, or budget officer, and will be routed by Accounts Payable for approval by the Executive Vice President and Provost, or the Senior Vice President for Finance and Operations, or their designees.
- (4) Business meals while in travel status. When an employee is on travel status and the primary purpose of a meal is to conduct university business with individuals not employed by the university, the names and business affiliations of the participants, as well as the business purpose of the meeting, must be provided. The meal charges are subject to the limitations listed in this policy, and an itemized receipt of the charges must be submitted with the travel reimbursement form. The per diem allowance for the traveler must be reduced by the appropriate meal allowance in lieu of the business meal provided. Travel reimbursement is subject to the guidelines in [V-22](#) Travel Regulations.
- (5) Recognition events. Reimbursement for recognition events is contingent upon the department having an approved "Rewards and Recognition" plan on file in the department.
- (6) ~~No food or beverage that contains the product tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) is allowed to be purchased with university funds. See V-11.22 above.~~
- b. Flowers, gifts, and other similar incidental expenses may be approved for reimbursement from any fund if a clear university purpose for incurring the expense is documented in writing. Examples of university purposes include but are not limited to the following:
- (1) Death, birth, or other significant event in the lives of employees, family members, important dignitaries,
 - (2) Recognition events,
 - (3) Special events sponsored by a vice president or dean, and
 - (4) Special university-wide events.
- c. Event guiding principles:
- (1) Encourage use of UI services, events, and venues.
 - (2) Be inclusive of all team members.
 - (3) Ensure minimal risk of physical/mental injuries to the employees.
 - (4) Cost should be fiscally responsible and justifiable from a cost.
 - (5) Events that focus on education (academic, cultural, etc.) and learning are favorable; activities that spur conversation, reflection, and analysis are encouraged.
 - (6) Extreme/considerable risk activities are discouraged. Seek additional guidance from Risk Management as needed.
 - (7) Hosts/planners should be aware that the university will likely be responsible for any liability, injury, or damage that occurs during these events; therefore, the events should be structured to not increase liability to the university.
- d. Requests for payment or reimbursement require two approval signatures. The person coordinating the event should sign. For purchases containing alcohol, one of the following must approve reimbursement: the DEO, business officer of the college or division, or dean or vice president of the employing division. Delegation of signatures for the purchase of alcohol is not permitted.
- e. Any use of funding from a fund 500 or 510 account for university events or wellness activities would need to be specifically permitted by the sponsor in the contract or would not be allowed. Other university funding sources may be used for wellness activities such as organized activity funds (funds 240-245 and funds 950, 951, 990, 991, 993) and other funds (997).
- f. For further guidance on interpretation of this policy, please refer to the question and answer document at https://uiowa.edu/ap-purchasing/sites/uiowa.edu.ap-purchasing/files/faqs_food_and_beverage_revised.pdf.