



Food and Beverage Expenditures

A guide to planning functions where food and beverage will be provided

Contents

Introduction	3
Authorized Functions - Policy Limitations and Requirements	3
Business Functions	4
Training Retreats	4
Per Diem Maximums	5
Events Which Include Alcohol, Flowers, and/or Exceed Per Diem	5
Catering	5
Food and Beverage Authorization and Payment Form	5
Instructions for Completing the Food and Beverage Form	6
List of Attendees	7
Required Approval	7
Purchasing Procedures	8
Process an eVA Order	8
Purchasing Charge Card (VISA/P-Card)	9
Food and Beverage Checklists	9
Procedures for Exempt Purchases	12
Procedures for Using Sodexo Catering	13
Sodexo – Food and Beverage Checklist	14
Procedures for Multiple Food Servings	16
Sales and Use Tax	16
Unallowable Expenditures	16
Events Funded by George Mason University Foundation	17
Resources	17

Appendix A – Policy 2102, Food and Beverage Expenditures

Appendix B – Sales and Use Tax Bulletin

Introduction

This training manual will provide guidance for planning an event or function that includes expenditures for food and/or beverages. [University Policy Number 2102, Food and Beverage Expenditures](#), establishes policies and procedures applicable to all Mason organizations, faculty, staff, students, and individuals that intend to provide food and/or beverages at university expense to Mason faculty, staff, students or their guests.

As an Agency of the Commonwealth of Virginia, George Mason University has a public obligation to ensure that all expenditures are essential and reasonable and that they support the mission of the university. As such, state rules prohibit expenditures for employee personal expenses, including meals, snacks and refreshments.

The following expenditures are prohibited for all events (including functions that are exempt from Policy requirements):

- Alcoholic beverages
- Flowers (except for commencement ceremonies and specific Admissions events)
- Food/beverage for internal planning, regularly scheduled or routine meetings
- Food/beverage as a way to boost morale or promote goodwill

The following functions are exempt from Policy 2102 requirements (except as noted above). Procedures for exempt functions begin on page 12 of this manual:

- Events or functions at which food and beverages expenses are paid solely from participant fees
- Residence hall events that cost less than \$100 per event
- Intercollegiate Athletics (ICA) pre/post game meals within per diem maximums related to home competitions
- Student-focused events that cost less than \$2,000 per event that are within per diem maximums and primarily benefit Mason prospective students, students and student athletes
- Meals within per diem maximums provided to students who are required to be on campus when Mason meal plans are not available
- Meals within per diem maximums provided to performers and other visitors in conjunction with contractual requirements.

Authorized Functions - Policy Limitations and Requirements

The six functions where it is considered appropriate for food and beverage to be served to university personnel are listed below with an explanation for each function. When purchasing food and/or beverage the [Food and Beverages Authorization form](#) is used to document the criteria, limitations and approvals required by the policy. Detailed explanations of the procedures for completing the [Food and Beverages Authorization form](#) and additional required information, based on the type of event, amount of purchase and the vendors' payment methods are provided in this manual. [The Quick Guide Checklists](#) summarize these procedures.

Function	Explanation
Business function	Meetings with outside parties involving business discussion. The non-Mason attendee(s) are the primary beneficiary of these events. Must be appropriate ration of Mason to non-Mason attendees (Example: Meal with an interview candidate)
Student Academic function over \$2,000	Events that contribute to the Mason academic mission (Example: Refreshments at commencement ceremony)
Student Club over \$2,000	Held by student organizations that are funded through the umbrella process (Example: Refreshments at student club induction ceremony)
Student Athlete over \$2,000	Functions for recruits, qualifying traveler(s), current student athletes and athletic staff as approved by Mason’s Compliance and/or Senior Athletic Staff (Example: food for an event hosted by coach for athletes at start of season)
Internal training	Formal training session that lasts all day and continues through a mealtime. Half-day trainings are only eligible for beverages. (Example: Lunch at Faculty/Staff Enrichment Day)
Other internal	University recognized event and events supporting University wide initiatives. (Example: Annual University wide Holiday Party)

Business Functions

Lunch is generally the only approved business meal for an event that meets during normal business hours. Written justification is required when circumstances warrant payment for additional food and beverage service. If attendees are charged a registration fee for a conference, which fully covers the cost of the meal(s), then the event is exempt from certain requirements of this policy – see, Participant Funded Events on page 12 of this manual.

Ratio of Mason to Non-Mason Attendees

For business functions at which outside parties are in attendance, the appropriate ratio of Mason to non-Mason attendees may vary depending on the facts and circumstances of the event. Consideration of the following examples may be useful when making such determinations. Departments may use the [Attendee List template](#) or their own document as long as it provides the name and affiliation of each attendee.

<i>Example: High Ratio Appropriate</i>	<i>Example: Low Ratio Appropriate</i>
Lunch as part of the interview with a candidate for a dean position. <i>5 Mason individuals to 1 non-Mason individual</i>	Dinner with a guest speaker after the speaker has given a presentation <i>2 Mason individuals to 1 non-Mason individuals</i>

Training Retreats

The determination of whether a departmental retreat is an appropriate internal training function at which food and beverages may be provided will require consideration of the factors surrounding the event.

- **Purpose:** Departmental retreats must be conducted primarily as training functions. The type of training provided will depend on the particular department involved. Retreats that are essentially planning meetings, however, regardless of the location or other factors, cannot be considered to be training events, and are not appropriate functions for food and beverage expenditures.

- **Location:** In order to limit expenditures for rental facilities, retreats should be held at properties owned or leased by Mason. Retreats held at other locations require advance written approval by the Chief of Staff, Senior Vice President, or Provost.
- **Duration:** Retreats involving overnight lodging, regardless of any other factors surrounding the event, are not permitted unless approved in advance by the Chief of Staff, Senior Vice President, or Provost.
- **Frequency:** Training retreats may not be held more often than annually.

Per Diem Maximums

Maximum amounts per person are limited to one-and-a-half times the per diem meal allowances for travel. The actual cost per person for food and beverages, including any related service fees, taxes or gratuities, may not exceed the per diem amount allowed for business meals as established under Commonwealth of Virginia. Room rental, linen rental and service ware are not included in the per diem amount.

October 1, 2018 – September 30, 2019 Per Diem Maximums (1.5 of the Basic rate)

Washington Metro (Arlington/Fairfax)	Prince William County	Loudon County
Breakfast - \$27	Breakfast - \$19.50	Breakfast - \$21.00
Lunch - \$28.50	Lunch – \$21.00	Lunch - \$24.00
Dinner - \$51.00	Dinner - \$34.50	Dinner - \$39.00

Events Which Include Alcohol, Flowers, and/or Exceed Per Diem

Departments hosting events that include alcohol or exceed the maximum per diem allowance must make arrangements with the vendor for separate e invoices to be sent to sponsors outside the university to pay for these items. **These items may not be paid by Mason funds.** Flowers are only authorized for commencement ceremonies, Mason’s annual holiday party, bereavement (approved through Human Resources), certain admissions events and student club events. Only authorized departments/student clubs may purchase flowers.

Catering

Mason’s dining services provider, Sodexo, is the preferred caterer and offers an online ordering service. It is not mandatory that units use Sodexo for catering, however, an approved caterer must be used for all events. The list of approved off-campus caterers is available online at [Approved Caterers](#). *Note: If food is being picked up from an establishment and brought to campus OR if food is being delivered (already cooked, prepared and packaged) by a vendor, then it is not considered 'catering' and you DO NOT have to utilize an Approved Caterer.*

Before committing to a caterer, verify that they are on the approved list and have registered with eVA. If payment will be billed directly to the university and paid by the Accounts Payable department then the approved caterer must have a Mason G#. Use the [G number look up](#) to verify before proceeding with a purchase order. For Sodexo catered events, units will use the Sodexo online ordering website [Catertrax](#), which includes an online version of the Food and Beverage form. The purchasing procedures vary by authorized event type and payment method. Follow the corresponding procedures to complete food and/or beverage purchases as noted on pg. 7 of this manual.

Food and Beverage Authorization and Payment Form

The Food and Beverage Authorization and Payment Form documents compliance with the Food and Beverage Policy. The criteria, limitations and approvals required by the policy are noted on the form. This multi-purpose document may serve as a pre-event authorization and a supplement to the eVA order, a pre-event authorization and request for a P-Card waiver, or as a post-event reimbursement. For off-campus catering, units will use the standard [Food and Beverage](#)

[form](#). For Sodexo catered events, units will use the Sodexo online ordering website [Catertrax](#), which includes an online version of the Food and Beverage form.

Instructions for Completing the Food and Beverage Form

The Food and Beverage Authorization and Payment Form has a variety of uses. Please follow the guide below to determine when to use the form, how to properly complete the form, and who should receive the form once completed. Do not attach the form to an online Sodexo order.

When to Use the Food and Beverage Form

- **Authorization only and payment will be made through eVA Purchase Order.** Check this box when an eVA requisition will be submitted and a purchase order will be issued to a vendor for the food/beverage purchase. Complete the form, including signatures #2 and #3, and then upload to the eVA purchase requisition.
- **Authorization only and request for P-Card waiver to purchase food and beverage.** Check this box to request a “lift” on a Purchase Card (P-Card) in order to procure food and beverage directly from a vendor. Note: You do not need a “lift” to purchase food items from a general merchandise store (Giant, Target, etc.); however, policy forbids the purchase of raw meat. Complete the form, including signatures #2 and #3, and then send the request, with attached form, to pcardadm@gmu.edu. Total transaction must be under \$2,000. You will receive a response within 2 days.
- **Request for Reimbursement to Payee.** Check this box to request reimbursement to a Mason employee or student for a necessary purchase. Complete the form, including signatures #1, #2 and #3 (if applicable), and then submit the form and receipt(s) to Accounts Payable at MSN 3C1 or email to dking20@gmu.edu. Note: This is the least desirable method of payment. Effort should be made to utilize a Mason P-Card or eVA purchase order to reduce out of pocket expenses incurred by the Mason employee or student.

How to Complete the Form

1. Check the appropriate option for **Authorization and/or Payment**.
2. Under **Requestor Contact Information** – enter your name, department and phone extension.
3. In the Total Amount field, enter the total amount of the purchase. Enter the fund/org to be charged under #1. **To split charges between multiple funds/orgs, use lines #2 - #3 to note the additional fund/org and corresponding amount.* Enter an Optional Tracking FB#, if desired, based on interdepartmental procedures.
4. Under **Vendor/Payee Information** – enter the vendor’s name or payees first and last name and G#. **All vendor/payees must have a G#. Use the [G# lookup](#) to find an existing vendor or obtain a [Substitute W-9](#) from the vendor/payee and attach it to the Food and Beverage Form when submitted.*

Vendor/Payee Information	
Name <input type="text" value="Rachel Dracht"/>	G# <input type="text" value="G00000001"/> (use G# lookup , 1 st time payee attach Substitute W-9)
Student and employee reimbursements will be sent via direct deposit or mailed to the individual’s current address in Patriot Web. Click here for Student Direct Deposit Instructions or Click here for Employee Direct Deposit Instructions. Click here for instructions on updating a current address in Patriot Web . Vendors must submit a new Substitute W-9 for address updates.	

5. **Student and employee reimbursements will be sent via direct deposit or mailed to the individual’s current address in Patriot Web.** Please encourage all reimbursement recipient to enroll in direct deposit – instructions are available here: [Student Direct Deposit](#) or [Employee Direct Deposit](#). Students and employees must [update their address in Patriot Web](#) to ensure proper mail delivery. Vendors must submit a new [Substitute W-9](#) for all address changes.
6. Under **Event Information** – enter the date (m/d/yyyy), location where the event will be held, start time/end time (h:mm am/pm).
7. Enter the number of attendees and maximum per diem/per person. The Estimated Cost will automatically calculate based on your attendee number and per diem entry.

8. Detail the Purpose of the Event. If the event is a Business Function, enter the nature of the discussion and why it was necessary for business. (i.e., "Speaker lunch" is not acceptable; you will need to elaborate on why it was necessary for business).

Event Information			
(Mason will not pay for alcoholic beverages, flowers, or food and beverage at internal planning or other meetings)			
Event Date	5/17/2019	Location	Dewberry hall
Start Time	1:00 pm	# of Attendees	45 X Maximum per diem/per person \$ 22.50 = Estimated Cost \$ 1,012.50
End Time	4:00 pm		*Actual Cost \$ 650.00 (update after event)
Purpose of Event	Small Business lunch and learn series for student entrepreneurs.		

9. AFTER the event, you may update the Actual Cost field to reflect the true cost of the event prior to submitting the form to Accounts Payable for Payee Reimbursement. For P-Card payments, enter the amount charged to the P-Card prior to uploading the form to Bank of America Works.

10. Under **Indicate Business Purpose for Event** – select the category of event.

Indicate Business Purpose for Event Below (must meet one of the following criteria)	
Attach list of attendees for all events except – Student Club Function and Exempt Events Under \$2,000	
<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Business Function. A necessary meal where official University business is conducted; the ratio of GMU to non-GMU attendees is appropriate.
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Student Academic Function over \$2,000: Must contribute to the academic mission of the University.
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. Student Club Function over \$2,000. Funding approved through the RSO process.
<input type="checkbox"/>	4. Student Athlete Function over \$2,000. Meals for recruits, qualifying travelers, current student athletes and athletic staff as approved by Mason's Compliance and/or Senior Athletic Staff.
<input type="checkbox"/>	5. Internal Training Function. Participants in a formal training session that lasts all day with business conducted through the time of the meal. Only beverages are allowed at a training session that lasts at least half a day.
<input type="checkbox"/>	6. Other Internal Function. Generally reserved for University recognized events such as the annual University wide holiday party or events supporting University-wide initiatives. Must be approved by the Chief of Staff, Provost or Senior VP or delegate.
<input type="checkbox"/>	7. Exempt Event under \$2,000 and within per diem (Select below). Exempt Event Quick Guide.
	Student Focused Event

11. Print form and obtain signatures.

- 1) Payee Signatures for Reimbursement – is required when a Mason student or employee is being reimbursed for an out-of-pocket purchase. Sign AFTER event.
- 2) Fund/Org Approver – is required to authorize the food and beverage purchase. Sign BEFORE event. *If Payee is the Fund/Org Approver, then the Supervisor must sign.

12. Submit form based on **Authorization and/or Payment Type** as detailed above. Additional requirements below.

List of Attendees

A listing of the names and organizational affiliations of each person in attendance at events at which food and beverages are provided must be submitted as documentation to support payment for authorized events (except Student Club Functions). Departments may use the [Attendee List template](#) or their own document as long as it provides the name and affiliation of each attendee. If a listing is impractical to provide, a written explanation to that effect must be submitted.

Required Approval

All expenditures for food and beverages require the approval of the official for the departmental fund/org to which the expenditure is being charged.

Purchasing Procedures

The purchasing procedures vary by event type and payment method. Follow the corresponding procedures to complete food and/or beverage purchases for an Authorized function. Procedures for functions that are exempt from the Food and Beverage Policy are located on page 12 of this manual.

Required Documentation

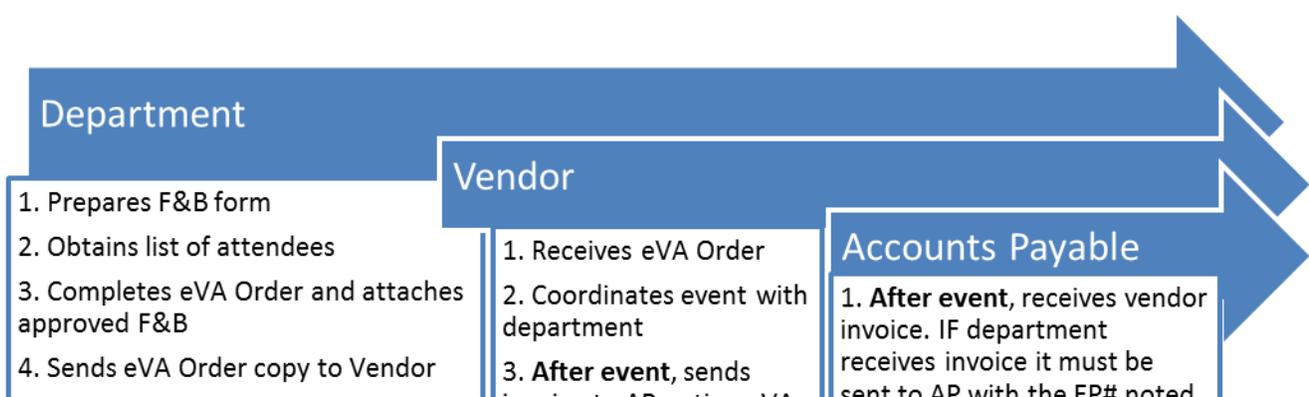
EVENT TYPE	VENDOR WILL INVOICE	REIMBURSEMENT TO INDIVIDUAL	SODEXO CATERING
Business Function Student Academic (over \$2,000) Student Athlete (over \$2,000) Internal Training Other Internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> eVA Purchase Order Completed/Approved Food & Beverage Authorization Form List of Attendees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed/Approved Food & Beverage Authorization Form List of attendees Legitimate itemized receipt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed/Approved Sodexo Event contract Final confirmation at least 3 days before event List of attendees
Student club (over \$2,000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> eVA Purchase Order approved by fund/org approver and approving official for Umbrella org. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed/Approved Food & Beverage Authorization Form <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legitimate itemized receipt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed/Approved Sodexo Event contract Final confirmation at least 3 days before event
All events over \$2,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> eVA Purchase Order Completed/Approved Food & Beverage Authorization Form List of Attendees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Not Allowable* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed/Approved Sodexo Event contract List of attendees Final confirmation at least 3 days before event

For category and payment type checklists please see Food & Beverage Checklists

Process an eVA Order

An eVA purchase order must be processed when the caterer will invoice the university for food, beverage and/or related services. The eVA order should be completed prior to the event date. The completed and approved Food and Beverage authorization form and the list of attendees or tentative list should be attached to the eVA purchase order (not required for Student Clubs). An eVA order is not required for Sodexo catered events. For instructions on processing an eVA order, please see the [Basic eVA Overview](#). Orders that are placed over the phone must be entered into eVA as Confirming Orders. The [Confirming Order Quick Guide](#) may be used to assist with processing an eVA order when the purchase is made over the phone with a P-Card. Orders that are picked up and paid for at the vendor location are considered over the counter purchases and are exempt from the eVA process. No eVA order is required for over the counter purchases.

Planning Example: All Event Types (except Student Club) under \$2,000 when the Vendor will invoice



Purchasing Charge Card (VISA/P-Card)

The standard P-Card may be used to purchase food and beverage items at grocery (Giant, Safeway, etc.) or general merchandise stores that carry food (Wal-Mart, Target, etc.) without a “lift”. Dedicated food establishments (restaurants, take-out, etc.) may still require a lift based on credit card merchant restrictions. The P-Card may be used at on-campus dining facilities when a lift has been granted. To request a P-Card food and beverage “lift,” complete the Food and Beverage Form, obtain required signatures and email the form to pcardadm@gmu.edu. Allow 2 days for the P-Card Office to process the request. If the request is approved, the P-Cardholder must enter comments in Bank of America Works reflecting the type of purchase; attach the Food and Beverage form, and required receipt(s). [Confirming orders](#) are required unless the purchase is made over-the-counter (in person, at the establishment).

Food and Beverage Checklists

ALL EVENT TYPES for Non-Sodexo Orders, except Student Club

Payment Method: Vendor Will Invoice

_____ eVA Order

February 2019

_____ Food and Beverage Authorization form
_____ Vendor information completed
_____ Dept. information completed

Correct fund/org noted
 eVA Order recorded
 Estimated number of attendees
 Estimated amount within Per Diem limit
 Function type noted
 Description/Purpose noted
 Signature of fund/org Approver
 List of Attendees (finalized after event)
 Cost per person within Per Diem limit
 (actual amount updated after event)
Payment Method: Reimbursement (under \$2,000)
 Food and Beverage Authorization form

Payee information completed
 Dept. information completed
 Correct fund/org noted
 Estimated number of attendees
 Estimated amount within Per Diem limit
 Function type noted
 Description/Purpose notes
 Signature of fund/org Approver
 List of attendees (finalized after event)
 Legitimate, itemized receipts and proof of payment
 Cost per person within Per Diem limit
 (actual amount updated after event)

Payment Method: Mason Purchase Card (P-Card) under \$2,000

Cardholders may request a temporary lift to allow food and beverage to be purchased with the P-Card. A Food and Beverage form for "Authorization only and request for P-Card Waiver" may be submitted to the P-Card office, at least 2 days prior to event, for approval.

If a waiver is granted the following information must be uploaded to Bank of America Works

Completed Food and Beverage Authorization form
 List of attendees (except for Student Clubs)
 Legitimate, itemized receipts
 Comment identifying event details

- ✓ No Alcohol
- ✓ No Flowers (except for commencement ceremonies/limited, specific Admissions events)
- ✓ Maximum amounts per person (1.5% of basic rate) effective October 1, 2018:
- ✓ **Washington Metro Area (Arlington, Fairfax)** – Breakfast \$27, Lunch \$28.50, Dinner \$51.00
- ✓ **Prince William County (SciTech)** – Breakfast \$19.50, Lunch \$21.00, Dinner \$34.50
- ✓ **Loudoun County** – Breakfast \$21.00, Lunch \$24.00, Dinner \$39.00

Event Type: Student Club Functions Non-Sodexo (under \$2,000)

Payment Method: Vendor Will Invoice

eVA Order
 Signature of fund/org Approver
 Cost per person within Per Diem limits

Not Required

*Food and Beverage Authorization form
 *List of Attendees

Payment Method: Reimbursement (under \$2,000)

Not Required

- _____ Food and Beverage Form
- _____ Signature of fund/org Approver
- _____ Completed Payee Information
- _____ Description/Purpose of Event
- _____ Function Type noted
- _____ Legitimate receipt and proof of payment
- _____ Cost per person within Per Diem limits

- * eVA Order
- * List of Attendees

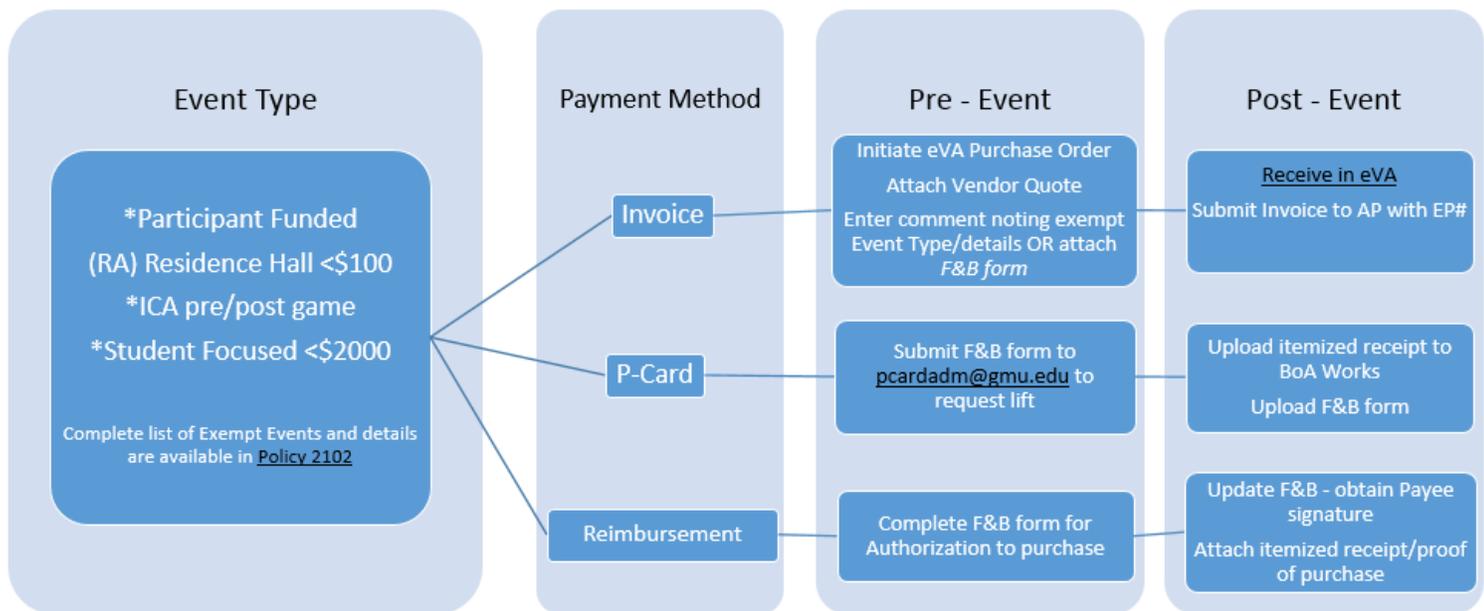
- ✓ No Alcohol
- ✓ No Flowers (except for commencement ceremonies/limited, specific Admissions events)
- ✓ Maximum amounts per person (1.5% of basic rate) effective October 1, 2018:
- ✓ **Washington Metro Area (Arlington, Fairfax)** – Breakfast \$27, Lunch \$28.50, Dinner \$51.00
- ✓ **Prince William County (SciTech)** – Breakfast \$19.50, Lunch \$21.00, Dinner \$34.50
- ✓ **Loudoun County** – Breakfast \$21.00, Lunch \$24.00, Dinner \$39.00

Procedures for Exempt Purchases

The provisions of the Food and Beverage Policy 2101 do not apply to the following events. Procedures specific to these exemptions are listed below. When using Sodexo Catering for an exempt event, please refer to the Sodexo section of the manual on page 13.

- Events or functions at which food and beverages expenses are paid solely from participant fees
- Residence hall events that cost less than \$100 per event
- Intercollegiate Athletics (ICA) pre/post game meals within per diem maximums related to home competitions
- Student-focused events that cost less than \$2,000 per event that are within per diem maximums and primarily benefit Mason prospective students, students and student athletes
- Meals within per diem maximums provided to students who are required to be on campus when Mason meal plans are not available
- Meals within per diem maximums provided to performers and other visitors in conjunction with contractual requirements.

All events must be within per diem maximums (excluding Participant Funded events) and may not include alcohol or flowers. A Confirming Order in eVA is required to document P-Card purchases unless the purchase is made over-the-counter (in person, at the establishment).



*For Sodexo Orders please utilize the Catertrax online ordering system and enter a comment stating the Exempt Event type and details. In the event that online ordering is not available, complete the F&B form and submit the form to Sodexo for processing. Sodexo will submit an invoice to Accounts Payable for payment.

When meals are provided to performers and other visitors in conjunction with contractual requirements the following documentation is required based on payment type. **Meals must be within per diem limits.**

P-Card	AP/Invoice/Sodexo	Reimbursement
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Confirming Order (unless purchased 'over the counter'). 2. Submit F&B form to pcardadm@gmu.edu to request a lift for dedicated food establishments ONLY. 3. Itemized receipt and F&B form uploaded to Works. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. eVA Purchase Order (or Sodexo online order) with 2. Comment noting Event Type/details OR completed F&B form. 3. Vendor Invoice submitted to Accounts Payable. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. F&B form 2. Itemized Receipt 3. Proof of purchase (credit/debit card slip)

When meals are provided to students, who are required to be on campus when Mason meal plans are not available, the following documentation is required based on payment type. **Meals must be within per diem maximums.**

P-Card	AP/Invoice/Sodexo	Reimbursement
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Confirming Order (unless purchased 'over the counter') 2. Submit F&B form to pcardadm@gmu.edu to request a lift for dedicated food establishments ONLY. 3. Itemized receipt and F&B form uploaded to Works 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. eVA Purchase Order (or Sodexo online order) 2. Comment noting Event Type/details OR completed F&B form 3. Vendor Invoice submitted to Accounts Payable 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. F&B form 2. Itemized Receipt 3. Proof of purchase (credit/debit card slip)

Procedures for Using Sodexo Catering

This section addresses the procedures for Sodexo Catering Services. All faculty, staff and student organizations at George Mason University must adhere to the Food and Beverage Policy. Checklists to help verify that correct procedures are completed may be used as an additional resource. The Sodexo Checklists and instructions are also available online at the Fiscal Services Web site at [Use Sodexo](#).

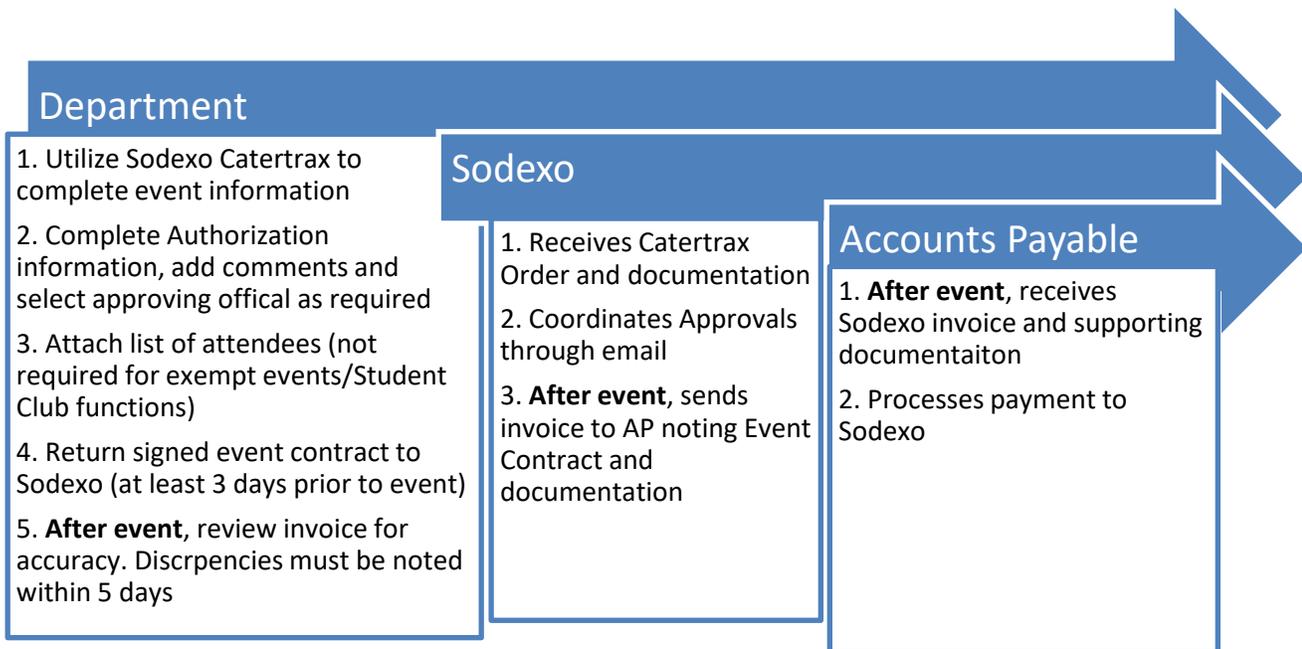
The contractual relationship between Mason and Sodexo allows for catering events to be treated as internal functions rather than purchases of services from an external source. A version of the Food and Beverages Authorization form is built into the Sodexo online catering event contract, which lists the specific criteria, limitations, and approvals required, by the policy, and pre-event invoice approval for Sodexo services. All orders for Sodexo Catering must be placed utilizing the online ordering system [Catertrax](#).

For all events, except Student Club functions, the department should access [Catertrax](#), complete the event requirements, order details and built in Food and Beverage Authorization information. Sodexo will email/fax an *Event Contract* to departments requesting a catered event. The department must also prepare a list of attendees (except for exempt events), or attach a statement that such a list is impractical to provide. The required officials must provide authorization by email. The signed Event Contract and list of attendees are then emailed/faxed to Sodexo by the department. The catering office must receive these required documents three days prior to the event to confirm the contract. After the event, Sodexo will send all documents to Accounts Payable with the Legitimate invoice. The department will receive a courtesy copy of the invoice by fax or email from Accounts Payable. The department has five days to review the invoice and notify Accounts Payable by fax or email of any discrepancies. If no discrepancies are noted within five days, Accounts Payable will pay the invoice.

For Student Club functions, the request for Sodexo catering should be completed using [Catertrax](#). A version of the Food and Beverages Authorization form is built into the Sodexo online catering event contract, which lists the specific criteria, limitations, and approvals required, by the policy, and pre-event invoice approval for Sodexo services. The signed *Event Contract*, with built in Food and Beverage form, serves as the only form of authorization by the department for this expenditure. Student clubs are not required to prepare a list of attendees. After the event, Sodexo will send the *Event Contract* and invoice to Accounts Payable.

For Food and Beverage Policy Exceptions, the department should access [Catertrax](#), complete the event requirements, order details and built in Food and Beverage Authorization information. A comment must be entered that identifies the event as exempt for the Food and Beverage Policy (e.g. “Student focused event under \$2K within per diem”). Sodexo will email/fax an *Event Contract* to departments requesting a catered event. The department must provide the email address of the fund/org approver for the event. The required officials must provide authorization by email. The signed *Event Contract* is then emailed/faxed to Sodexo by the department. The catering office must receive the required documents three days prior to the event to confirm the contract. After the event, Sodexo will send all documents to Accounts Payable with the Legitimate invoice. The department will receive a courtesy copy of the invoice by fax or email from Accounts Payable. The department has *five days* to review the invoice and notify Accounts Payable by fax or email of any discrepancies. If no discrepancies are noted within five days, Accounts Payable will pay the invoice.

Planning Example: All Event Types for Sodexo Catering



Sodexo – Food and Beverage Checklist

ALL EVENT TYPES for Sodexo Orders ([Catertrax](#) online ordering)

All Event Types (except Student Club)

- _____ Sodexo Online Order
- _____ Authorization information
 - _____ Dept. information completed
 - _____ Correct fund/org noted
 - _____ Estimated number of attendees
 - _____ Estimated amount within Per Diem limit
 - _____ Function type noted
 - _____ Description/Purpose noted
 - _____ Signature of fund/org Approver
(except for Exempt Events)
- _____ List of Attendees (finalized after event)
- _____ Cost per person within Per Diem limit (actual amount updated after event)

Student Club Functions

- _____ Sodexo Online Order
- _____ Authorization information
 - _____ Dept. information completed
 - _____ Correct fund/org noted
 - _____ Estimated number of attendees
 - _____ Estimated amount within Per Diem limit
 - _____ Function type noted
 - _____ Description/Purpose notes
- _____ Cost per person within Per Diem limit
(actual amount updated after event)

- ✓ No Alcohol
- ✓ No Flowers (except for commencement ceremonies/limited, specific Admissions events)
- ✓ Maximum amounts per person (1.5% of basic rate) effective October 1, 2018:
- ✓ **Washington Metro Area (Arlington, Fairfax)** – Breakfast \$27, Lunch \$28.50, Dinner \$51.00
- ✓ **Prince William County (SciTech)** – Breakfast \$19.50, Lunch \$21.00, Dinner \$34.50
- ✓ **Loudoun County** – Breakfast \$21.00, Lunch \$24.00, Dinner \$39.00

Procedures for Multiple Food Servings

Departments sometimes make arrangements with Sodexo to cater a function that includes multiple food servings (e.g., an all-day workshop that includes breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack.) Departments may prepare one *Food and Beverages Authorization* form for the entire function by following the procedures described below.

1. Sodexo creates a separate event contract each time food is served. Sodexo will email/fax the event contracts with the contract numbers and cost for each event associated with the function.
2. The department must contact Sodexo to assure that all events will be included on one invoice.
3. Enter the date(s), time(s) and location(s) for the entire function on the online form.
4. Verify that the dollar amount does not exceed the total per person amount authorized by the Food and Beverages policy (see applicable checklist for allowable amounts). This information may be obtained from the event contracts.
5. Submit the signed *Event Contract(s)* to Sodexo with the list of attendees (if required) at least three days prior to the events.

Sales and Use Tax

All catered events payable directly to the vendor using by P-Card or eVA Order, including those catered by Sodexo, are exempt from sales and use taxes as long as the event: (a) supports the mission of the university and (b) is considered essential to the operation of the university. Catered events of this type may be paid using Mason funds. Events supported by participant funds are also tax exempt provided they meet the criteria listed above.

University-sponsored event expenses that do not support the university mission include: retirement parties, employee going away parties, office holiday parties and birthday celebrations. Catered events of this type cannot be paid for using Mason funds and are not tax exempt.

Example: Mason holds a banquet to recognize outstanding students and purchases catering services through Sodexo. The invoice includes charges for the catered food, charges for servers and charges for event set up and take down. Mason pays the invoice through Accounts Payable. The entire invoice is exempt from the sales and use tax.

For additional guidance related to sales and use tax please see Appendix B of this manual.

Unallowable Expenditures

Commonwealth of Virginia regulations impose certain restrictions on the use of university funds. Per person, amounts for food and beverages expenditures are limited to no more than one-and-a-half times the individual meal components in the travel per diem allowances. The university is prohibited from paying for alcohol and flowers (except for commencement ceremonies and limited specific Admissions events).

Events that include alcohol, flowers, or amounts exceeding state limitations must be paid using non-university funding. Departments hosting events that include alcohol, flowers (except for commencement ceremonies and limited specific Admissions events), or per person expenditures in excess of the per diem allowance must make arrangements with Sodexo (or other vendor) for separate invoices to be sent to sponsors outside the university to pay for these items.

Events Funded by George Mason University Foundation

Departments are responsible for obtaining alternative sources of payment for all unallowable expenditures. Often a department will charge these expenditures to their Mason Foundation account. Payment arrangements should be made with Sodexo (or other vendor) prior to the event to allow generation of separate invoices for each portion of the bill. The department must also contact the Foundation prior to the event to receive an FO number. This number is used as authorization from the Foundation that funds are available.

Sodexo will send the Foundation invoice directly to the department. The department should prepare a Foundation voucher, attach the Sodexo invoice, and submit the documents to the Foundation for payment. In the event Accounts Payable receives an invoice with unallowable expenditures, the allowable portion of the invoice will be paid, and the department will be notified of the unpaid items balance and directed to arrange an alternative method of payment. The department must then notify the Foundation to receive an FO number, and request Sodexo to amend the invoice to include billing for taxes. The department prepares a Foundation voucher to submit with the amended invoice to the Foundation for payment.

Resources

Department	Assistance Provided	Contact Information
Accounts Payable	Food and Beverage Form Reimbursements	PH: 3-2580 Email: dking20@gmu.edu
P-Card Office	Food and Beverage "lifts" and general questions	PH: 3-2580 Email: pcardadm@gmu.edu
Fiscal Policy	Understanding of Fiscal Policy and Procedures	PH: 3-5966 Email: jadams15@gmu.edu
Use Off-Campus Caterers	Web resources for off-campus catering	http://fiscal.gmu.edu/use-off-campus-caterers/
Sodexo Catering, Louise Svahnqvist, Catering Director	Sodexo online ordering and catering	PH: 3-3020 Email: catering@gmu.edu
Use Sodexo Catering	Web resources for Sodexo catering	http://fiscal.gmu.edu/accountspayable/use-sodexo/
Training Materials & Checklists	Web resources for training materials and checklists	http://fiscal.gmu.edu/training/obtain-training-materials/

Food and Beverage Expenditures

University Policy Number 2102

Categorized: [Financial](#)

Responsible Office: [Fiscal Services](#)

Policy Procedure:

- [Food and Beverage Expenditures Guide](#)
- [Food and Beverages Checklist](#)

Related Law & Policy:

- [Policy 2101: Travel Authorization and Reimbursement](#)
- [Policy 6: Student Organizations and Activities Financial Policies and Purchasing Procedures](#)

I. Scope

The policies and procedures provided herein apply to all George Mason University organizations, faculty, staff, students and all organizations and individuals that intend to provide food and/or beverages and any related services to Mason faculty, staff, students or their guests at university expense.

The provisions of this policy do not apply to:

- Events or functions at which food and beverages expenses are paid solely from participant fees
- Residence hall events that cost less than \$100 per event
- Intercollegiate Athletics (ICA) pre/post game meals within per diem maximums related to home competitions
- Student-focused events that cost less than \$2,000 per event that are within per diem maximums and primarily benefit Mason prospective students, students and student athletes
- Meals within per diem maximums provided to students who are required to be on campus when Mason meal plans are not available
- Meals within per diem maximums provided to performers and other visitors in conjunction with contractual requirements.

II. Policy Statement

Appendix A

As an Agency of the Commonwealth of Virginia, George Mason University has a public obligation to ensure that all expenditures are essential and reasonable and that they support the mission of the university. As such, state rules prohibit expenditures for employee personal expenses, including meals, snacks and refreshments. There are limited circumstances in which it is considered appropriate to provide food and beverages to personnel who are not in travel status. (See [University Policy Number 2101, Travel Authorization and Reimbursement](#), for rules regarding meals and other expenses while on overnight travel.)

III. Responsibilities

Approving Officials for departmental funds and organizations to which food and beverage expenditures are charged have the responsibility to determine that such expenditures constitute a proper use of state funds and that they meet the provisions of this policy.

The Associate Vice President and Controller has the responsibility to administer and oversee the provisions of this policy as they pertain to the proper use of university funds.

Food and beverage expenditures must be approved in advance of the event and/or purchase.

IV. Guidelines for Appropriate Food and Beverages Expenditures

The functions or events at which it is considered appropriate for food and beverages to be served to university personnel are limited to the following:

1. Business Function.

Food and beverages may be provided at business meetings that involve substantive and bona fide business discussions with an outside party or parties in attendance. The primary beneficiaries of such functions are the non-Mason attendees. As such, the ratio of Mason to non-Mason attendees must be appropriate to the circumstances of the event. Meals at which interview candidates are hosted are included in this category. (See section IX of this policy.) Business meals are not an allowable charge on federally sponsored funds.

2. Student Academic Function.

Food and beverages may be provided at student functions that contribute to the academic mission of the university. Current and prospective students are the primary beneficiaries at such events. Food and beverages provided at the commencement ceremony are included in this category.

3. Student Club Function.

Food and beverages may be provided at functions that are approved in accordance with the University's Administrative Policy No. 6, Student Organizations and Activities Financial Policies and Purchasing Procedures.

Appendix A

4. Student Athlete Function.

Food and beverages may be provided to recruits, qualifying traveler(s), current student athletes and athletic staff as approved by Mason's Compliance and/or Senior Athletic staff.

5. Internal Training Function.

Food and beverages may be provided to participants of a formal training session that lasts all day when business is conducted through the time of the meal. Beverages only may be provided at a training session that lasts at least half a day. Departmental retreats may be included in this category provided they are conducted primarily as training functions, are held at a Mason-owned facility, do not require overnight lodging, and do not occur more frequently than annually. (See section IX of this policy.) University employees are the primary beneficiaries at such functions.

6. Other Internal Function.

This category is generally reserved for university recognized events, such as the annual university-wide holiday party or events supporting university-wide initiatives. Approving officials for these events are limited to the Chief of Staff, Senior Vice President and Provost.

V. Requirements and Limitations

This policy establishes the following requirements and limitations regarding appropriate expenditures for food and beverages:

- (1) Food and beverages may be provided only at functions or events that meet the criteria listed in section III of this policy.
- (2) The actual cost per person for food and beverages, including any related service fees or gratuities, may not exceed the per diem amount allowed for business meals as established under Commonwealth of Virginia regulations. These meal rates are available at the Fiscal Services website. The per diem rates are listed by locality and include individual components for breakfast, lunch and dinner. These individual component meal rates may be increased up to 50% for all functions allowed under this policy.
- (3) A listing of the names and organizational affiliations of each person in attendance at events at which food and beverages are provided must be submitted as documentation to support payment. If a listing is impractical to provide, a written explanation to that effect must be submitted.
- (4) Food and beverages may not be provided to promote goodwill or boost morale. This restriction is based on current tax laws and is intended to avoid the necessity of including the value of such meals in an employee's taxable income. This restriction, however, does not prohibit the university from providing food

Appendix A

and beverages of minimal value to employees at occasional events such as the annual university wide holiday party.

(5) Food and beverages may not be provided at planning meetings, regularly scheduled or routine meetings, or as a perquisite.

(6) Documentation to support food and beverage expenditures at functions that are training retreats must include a description of the type of training provided.

(7) Reimbursement requests for business meals must be supported by an Legitimate itemized receipt.

(8) Alcoholic beverages and flowers may not be provided at university expense.

VI. Required Approvals

The fact that the reconciliation was performed must be documented by certifications that are signed and dated by the individual who performed the initial reconciliation as well as by the approver or PI responsible for review of the reconciliation. Electronic certification, including email certification, is preferred.

VIII. Ratio of GMU to Non-GMU Attendees

For business functions at which outside parties are in attendance, the appropriate ratio of Mason to non-Mason attendees may vary depending on the facts and circumstances of the event. Consideration of the following examples may be useful when making such determinations.

Example 1 – High Ratio Appropriate

The interview process for a high level position, such as dean or director, frequently includes a meal at which the candidate is hosted. An appropriate ratio of Mason to non-Mason attendees at such a meeting might be five-to-one or higher, depending on the organizational level of the position and other factors. Mason representatives at these events typically include other deans, directors, vice presidents, or other officials. This ratio would be considered appropriate and consistent with current recruitment practices at other public universities.

Example 2 – Low Ratio Appropriate

Outside speakers are sometimes guests at a meal at the university's expense following their lecture or presentation. The appropriate ratio of Mason to non-Mason attendees at such events would typically be no higher than two-to-one. In these circumstances, a higher ratio would be difficult to support in a public scrutiny test.

IX. Training Retreats

The determination of whether a departmental retreat is an appropriate internal training function at which food and beverages may be provided will require consideration of the factors surrounding the event.

Purpose

Departmental retreats must be conducted primarily as training functions. The type of training provided will depend on the particular department involved. Retreats that are essentially planning meetings, however, regardless of the location or other factors, cannot be considered to be training events, and are not appropriate functions for food and beverage expenditures.

Location

In order to limit expenditures for rental facilities, retreats should be held at properties owned or leased by Mason. Retreats held at other locations require advance written approval by the Chief of Staff, Senior Vice President, or Provost.

Duration

Retreats involving overnight lodging, regardless of any other factors surrounding the event, are not permitted unless approved in advance by the Chief of Staff, Senior Vice President, or Provost.

Frequency

Training retreats may not be held more often than annually.

X. Dates:

A. Effective Date:

This policy will become effective upon the date of approval by the Senior Vice President for Administration and Finance and the Provost and Executive Vice President.

B. Date of Most Recent Review:

1/17/2017

XI. Timetable for Review

This policy, and any related procedures, shall be reviewed and revised, if necessary, annually to become effective at the beginning of the university's fiscal year, unless otherwise noted.

XII. Signatures

Approved:

/S

Maurice W. Scherrens

Senior Vice President



Purchasing & Accounts Payable

4400 University Drive, MS 3C1, Fairfax, Virginia 22030

Phone: 703-993-2580; Fax: 703-993-2589

Sale and Use Tax Update (Tax Bulletin 16-3)

The Department of Taxation changed its policy regarding the application of the Retail Sales and Use Tax to catering and other services related to purchases of food and meals by State & Local governmental entities effective April 22, 2016.

According to the new tax policy, state and local governmental entities may now use their respective exemption certificate ([Form ST-12](#)) to purchase prepared foods, catering and related services provided in connections with the sale of food **exempt of the sales and use tax if the university meets the following criteria.**

- 1) The applicable prepared food, catering and/or related services must further a function, mission, service or purpose of George Mason University.
- 2) The charge for the food, meals or catering must be for a group (not an individual) and be billed to and paid for by George Mason University Accounts Payable or paid for with Mason p-card. Prepared food and catering charges that are paid for with personal funds and subsequently reimbursed by Mason are not tax exempt.
- 3) George Mason University determines to whom, when and how the meals or food is served and consumed.

Catered Events:

All catered events, including those catered by Sodexo, are exempt from sales and use taxes as long as the event: (a) supports the mission of the university and (b) is considered essential to the operation of the university. Catered events of this type may be paid using Mason funds. Events supported by participant funds are also tax exempt provided they meet the criteria listed above.

University-sponsored event expenses that do not support the university mission include: retirement parties, employee going away parties, office holiday parties and birthday celebrations. Catered events of this type cannot be paid for using Mason funds and are not tax exempt.

Example: Mason holds a banquet to recognize outstanding students and purchases catering services through Sodexo. The invoice includes charges for the catered food, charges for servers and charges for event set up and take down. Mason pays the invoice through Accounts Payable. The entire invoice is exempt from the sales and use tax.

Individual Meals Purchased while in Travel Status

Restaurant or catered meals consumed by individuals while traveling for university business are not included in the tax exemption. Employees traveling to in-state conferences or purchasing and personally paying for a business meal at a restaurant typically seek reimbursement of the cost of the meal at a later time. Because the meal is not billed directly to the university and the university does not determine to whom, when, and how the meal will be served and consumed,

the employee will be subject to sales and use tax on the meal purchase.

Example: Dr. Ko is leading a panel presentation at a conference in Richmond, VA. He has arranged a business meal to discuss the presentation with the panel before the conference begins and will pay for the meal with his personal credit card. The meal is not exempt from tax.

Business Meals Purchased at Restaurants by Groups

Business meals serve the university's mission and therefore qualify for the tax exemption. The exemption will only apply if the meal is direct billed to Accounts Payable or paid with a Mason P-Card. If the meal is paid with personal funds, the meal is not exempt from sales and use tax.

Example 1: Mrs. Parker is taking a candidate and two faculty members to lunch as part of the interview process. She has submitted an eVA order to Panera Bread. The meal is being direct billed to Accounts Payable and is therefore exempt from sales and use tax.

Example 2: Mr. Jones is taking a candidate to lunch as part of the interview process. Mr. Jones pays for the meal using his personal credit card. The meal is not being direct billed to Accounts Payable and therefore tax will be charged.

Prepared Meals Purchased at Grocery Stores:

Prepared meals purchased for later consumption **qualify** for the tax exemption. Prepared food items purchased from a grocery store are tax exempt if the items are: (a) to be consumed at the university and (b) charged to the P-Card or direct billed to Accounts Payable. Prepared food items purchased from a grocery store using personal funds are not exempt from sales and use tax. A p-card or eVA order (direct bill) is recommended for these grocery store purchases.

Example 1: Jack is hosting a late night social for his student club. He goes to the grocery store and purchases fried chicken and other prepared food. He pays for the items using an eVA purchase order. The grocery store will directly bill the university. Jack will not be charged tax on the transaction.

Example 2: Diane is holding a student committee meeting on campus. She purchases sandwiches and salads from the grocery store for the committee. She pays for the items using her personal credit card. Diane will be charged tax on the transaction.

Conference Services Activities:

Auxiliary Enterprises and The Office of Events Management will work with individual customers to determine if they qualify for this tax exemption. The client hosting the catered event must qualify for the exemption based on its own legal entity status. The customer must be a state or local governmental entity, a nonprofit organization or a nonprofit church to qualify under this exemption. If the customer is not a qualifying entity, the catered event is subject to sales and use tax in all cases including when the event is held at George Mason University.

How do I ensure my prepared food purchase is exempt from sales and use taxes?

For a purchase to be exempt from sales and use taxes, departments and other business units are encouraged to use their P-Card or eVA order (direct bill) for the purchase. The purchase is not exempt from sales and use taxes when payment is made using personal funds (cash, credit/debit).

What do I provide the Vendor?

Once you have determined that your group meal activity is exempt from sales and use taxes, you must provide the

Appendix B

vendor with the Commonwealth of Virginia Sales and Use Tax Certificate of Exemption ([Form ST-12](#)). You may obtain the form from the Fiscal Services website and sign the form on behalf of the Director of Purchasing and Accounts Payable.

The bulletin references an April 22 effective date. Should we apply it retroactively?

No. Accounts Payable notified our current vendors about the new tax policy in May and started removing the sale tax and use tax from invoices beginning on June 1, 2016.

Please contact Alvaro Saldias at extension 3-2670 (asaldias@gmu.edu) with questions or concerns. For more information about the new tax policy, please see [Tax Bulletin 16-3 "Important Information Regarding Meals and Catering Purchased by Nonprofit Organizations, Churches, and Governmental Entities](#)

F&B Sales Tax Guidance – Virginia ONLY (Sales tax applies outside of VA)				
		Tax Exempt?		
Category	General Notes	Personal Funds Used	P-Card	Direct Bill or eVA Order
Catered event on Campus – Including Sodexo	Must support the mission of the university and be essential to the operation of the university. Must be purchased for a group from an approved caterer	NO	YES	YES
Meals purchased when traveling (in Travel Status)	Restaurant or catered meals consumed by <u>individuals</u> while traveling for university business	NO	NO	NO
Business Meals purchased at restaurants when not traveling (not on Travel Status)	Business meals for a group that serve the university’s mission	NO	YES	YES
Prepared Meals purchased at Grocery Stores	Prepared meals (pre-made sandwiches, fried chicken, prepacked meals or side items from the Deli counter) purchased for later consumption by a group	NO	YES	YES
Non-Prepared food items purchased at Grocery Stores	Non-prepared food items (granola bars, bottled water, crackers, candy, etc.)	YES	YES	YES