Overview of Changes

- Remove F&B authorization and payment form (units may choose to implement an internal pre-approval process).
- Remove Senior Approving Officials
- Unit/central, fund/org approvers will approve reimbursements in Mason Travel & Expense (Mason T&E) powered by Chrome River.
- Catering will be submitted and approved in eVA – a purchase requisition should be submitted prior to incurring the expense. This should provide the unit with advanced knowledge and the ability to approve/deny catering.
- P-Card purchases (in most cases) require a ‘lift.’ A one-time or permanent ‘lift’ may be requested by submitting the Purchase Card Maintenance Form which includes the P-Cardholders supervisor/approver signature.
- Reimbursements will be submitted and approved in Mason Travel & Expense (Mason T&E), powered by Chrome River. Units should strongly advise staff to complete all purchases with a Mason P-Card, eVA purchase order, or Sodexo CaterTrax.
- Authorized categories have been simplified. There are no ‘exempt categories’ since the process has been streamlined.

Policy Update

Remove F&B Policy (2102) and rename Policy 2101: Travel Authorization and Reimbursement to – Travel and Meal Expenditures (Example UVA – Travel, Meals, and Entertainment Expenses incurred on Behalf of the University).

Meal Expenditures

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. Participant Funded events, where the food/beverage costs are paid solely from participant fees (i.e., registration fee) are not subject to the policy.

Food/Beverage may not be provided at regularly scheduled or routing meetings (i.e., monthly staff meeting, quarterly unit meeting) or as a way to boost morale or promote goodwill among employees. Alcohol and Flowers are prohibited.

There are three basic types of food purchases that occur at Mason:

1. **Catering** is the activity of providing food and drink for a group of people, typically with services such as setup, staffing, and cleanup included.
2. **Business meals** are defined as a meal provided at a commercial dining establishment open to the general public, or at a university location as long as no service other than delivery/pickup is provided. A business meal may occur in travel or non-travel status.
3. **Supplies/Food and Drink** is the purchase of food, drink and supplies that does not include any vendor-provided services.

Per Diem rates

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 component meal rates may be increased up to 50% (excluding individual per diem while in travel status).

**Procedure Update**

**Food and Beverage Purchase Guide** (to be added as a “Related Document” of the Policy)

There are three basic types of food purchases that occur at Mason: catering, business meals, and supplies/food and drink. Catering must be paid for with a purchase order or on the Mason P-Card. Use of personal funds for catering is not a reimbursable expense. Non-Travel meals must adhere to the Food and Beverage Procedures noted below.

**Types of Food Purchases** *(Previously Authorized Function/Exempt Function)*

1. **Catering:** Catering is the activity of providing food and drink for a group of people, typically with services such as setup, staffing, and cleanup included.

   Examples:
   - You host a training retreat for your staff and provide a buffet lunch on site as a part of the event.
   - You hold a University sponsored event at a hotel which includes meals for attendees.

   **Procedures:** Catering under $5,000 may be paid with a P-Card. A P-Card lift may be requested through the P-Card Maintenance Form (add a space for business purpose). In Bank of America Works a comment, explaining the business purpose must be entered, and the itemized receipt, list of attendees/affiliations must be attached to the transaction or a statement of impracticality must be noted. Please note if a Participant Funded event and not subject to the policy. Catering may also be procured through eVA. Catering is tax exempt. Click here for **Tax Exemption** form.

   **External Catering over $5,000** must be submitted through eVA and may not be paid with a P-Card or reimbursed. A comment, explaining the business purpose must be entered. The invoice and list of attendees/affiliations or a statement of impracticality must be submitted with the invoice after the event.

   **Internal - Sodexo Catering (any dollar amount),** should be procured through CaterTrax and billed directly to the department fund/org. Please note in CaterTrax if event is Participant Funded and not subject to the policy.

2. **Business meals** *(includes Business Function, Internal Training, Other Internal, Student Academic, Student Club, Student Athlete, ICA team functions, RA/RD required activities):* Business meals are defined as a meal provided at a commercial dining establishment open to the general public, or at a university location as long as no service other than delivery/pickup is provided. A business meal may occur in travel or non-travel status.

   Examples:
   - You and a group of colleagues take a job applicant out to lunch as part of their interview itinerary.
   - You take a colleague to dinner while at a conference to discuss business related topics. If expensing a business meal while traveling, the meal must be claimed instead of a per diem or actual travel meal.
   - Meals with a guest speaker.
   - Department Training or Retreat that lasts longer than 4 hours.
   - Committee Meetings and/or Working Groups when employees are required to work during their meal period. (Food is generally brought into the workplace and should be economical).
   - Student function hosted by the university and focused on students. **Cannot be an employee function where students are present.**
**Procedures: Business Meals** (in restaurants, pick up or deliver) – the preferred payment method is the P-Card. A P-Card lift may be requested through the P-Card Maintenance Form (*Fiscal will add a space for business purpose, estimated attendees, and expected cost*). In Bank of America Works a comment, explaining the business purpose must be entered, the itemized receipt, and list of attendees/affiliations must be attached to the transaction or a statement of impracticality must be noted. Please note if a Participant Funded event and not subject to the policy. No tax should be charged when using a P-Card. Click here for [Tax Exemption](#) form.

**Reimbursements** – Business Meal reimbursements must be processed through Mason T&E (Chrome River). Individuals should always seek approval from their department prior to incurring a business meal expense. Every effort should be made to purchase with a P-Card. Tax may be reimbursable when paying with personal funds at an off campus business meal. In Bank of America Works a comment, explaining the business purpose must be entered, the itemized receipt, and list of attendees/affiliations must be attached to the transaction or a statement of impracticality must be noted.

3. **Supplies/food and drink:** Supplies/Food and Drink is the purchase of food, drink and supplies that does not include any vendor-provided services.

   Examples:
   - Snack and drink selection for student consumption as part of a Mason hosted event.
   - Purchasing bottled water, paper products, and coffee for public consumption. *May not be located in a private office or suite accessible by staff only.*

**Procedures: Supplies/food and drink** (i.e., grocery or general merchandise store) – the preferred payment method is the P-Card. A P-Card ‘lift’ is not required for grocery or general merchandise stores. In Bank of America Works a comment, explaining the business purpose, must be entered and the itemized receipt must be attached to the transaction. No tax should be charged when using a P-Card. Click here for [Tax Exemption](#) form.

**Reimbursement:** Supplies/food and drink reimbursements must be processed through Mason T&E (Chrome River). The business purpose and itemized receipt, and proof of purchase must be attached to the request. Tax may be charged and will not be reimbursed. (Every effort should be made to purchase with a P-Card).