

Food & Beverage Procedures

As an Agency of the Commonwealth of Virginia, George Mason University has a public obligation to ensure that all expenditures are necessary and reasonable and that they support the mission of the university. As such, state rules prohibit expenditures for employee personal expenses, including meals, snacks, entertainment, 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. Food/Beverage may not be provided at regularly scheduled or routine 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. Participant Funded events, where the food/beverage costs are paid solely from participant fees (i.e., registration fee) are not subject to the policy.

All food and beverage purchases are limited to the per meal dollar maximum for the location (which includes applicable tax and tips - up to 20% - or service fee). Maximum amounts per person are limited to one-and-a-half times the per diem meal allowances for travel. All rates are available on the [GSA Per Diem](#) webpage. Local area rates are listed below.

October 1st, 2021 – September 30th, 2022

Washington Metro (Arlington/Fairfax)	Prince William County (SciTech)	Loudoun County
Breakfast - \$27.00	Breakfast - \$19.50	Breakfast - \$24.00
Lunch - \$30.00	Lunch - \$22.50	Lunch - \$25.50
Dinner - \$54.00	Dinner - \$39.00	Dinner - \$46.50

Types of Food and Beverage Expenditures

There are three basic types of food purchases that occur at Mason: catering, business meals, and supplies/food and drink. The preferred payment method for food and beverage expenditures is the P-Card. Non-Travel meals must adhere to the procedures noted below.

Catering

Catering is the activity of providing food and drink for a group of people, with services such as setup, staffing, and cleanup included. All catering must be paid with a [P-Card](#) and/or [eVA](#) purchase order. Use of personal funds for catering is not a reimbursable expense. Food that is delivery only, such as pizza, sandwich boxes, etc. and food that is picked up at a restaurant and brought to campus for consumption is not considered catering (see Business meal below). Please utilize an Approved Caterer for all on-campus activities. Units are prohibited from cooking/preparing raw food for events (i.e., cookouts, grilling foods). Please note that in accordance with Executive Order #77, departments are not allowed to purchase or supply any single-use plastics including straws, bottles, utensils, and others. Additional information can be found on the [Sustainability Council website](#).

Catering Examples

- Hiring a food establishment or catering company to serve and staff an event on or off-campus.

- Hosting an event where a food establishment or catering company prepares food off-site, delivers to campus, and sets up a “buffet” style luncheon with no staffing.

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 the itemized receipt, list of attendees/affiliations must be attached to the transaction. A comment, explaining the business purpose must be entered. If a list of attendees/affiliations is not practical a statement of impracticality must be noted in the comments as well. Please also note if the event is Participant Funded and not subject to the policy. Catering may also be procured through [eVA](#). Catering is tax exempt and units must ensure that tax is not charged. Click here for the [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 and the tentative list of attendees/affiliations or statement of impracticality must be attached to the purchase requisition (PR). The vendor or Mason contact must submit the invoice to acctpay@gmu.edu in order to receive payment.

Internal - Sodexo Catering (any dollar amount), should be procured through [CaterTrax](#) and billed directly to the department fund/org. The list of attendees/affiliations or a statement of impracticality must be attached to the request in [CaterTrax](#). Note in [CaterTrax](#) if event is the event Participant Funded and not subject to the policy. Additional information is available on the [Use Sodexo](#) webpage.

Business Meals

Business meals (include Business Functions, Internal Trainings, Other Internal events, Student Academic events, Student Club events, Student Athletic events, 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 and other attendees.
- 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.*

P-Card for Business Meals (in restaurants, pick up or deliver). 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 the itemized receipt and list of attendees/affiliations must be attached to the transaction. A comment, explaining the business purpose must be entered. If a list of attendees/affiliations is not practical a statement of impracticality must be noted in the comments as well. Please also note if the event is Participant Funded 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 the Mason Finance Gateway. The business purpose must be entered to explain the purchase. The itemized receipt/proof of purchase, and list of attendees/affiliations

must be attached to the request. 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. Please see the [Food & Beverage Reimbursement](#) guide for further instruction.

Supplies Food/Drink

Supplies Food/Drink is the purchase of pre-packaged food, drink and meal supplies, such as plates, cups, napkins for an on-campus event. These purchases do not include any vendor-provided services or food delivery. Most supplies food/drink purchases will be made at grocery or general merchandise stores.

Examples:

- Packaged 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.*

P-Card for Supplies food/drink (i.e., grocery or general merchandise store). A [P-Card](#) 'lift' is not required for grocery or general merchandise stores. In Bank of America Works the itemized receipt must be attached to the transaction. A comment, explaining the business purpose must be entered. Please also note if the event is Participant Funded and not subject to the policy. No tax should be charged when using a P-Card. Click here for [Tax Exemption](#) form.

Reimbursement: Supplies food/drink reimbursements must be processed through the Mason Finance Gateway. The business purpose must be entered to explain the purchase. 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. Please see the [Food & Beverage Reimbursement](#) guide for further instruction.

Additional information and resources are available on the [Food and Beverage Overview](#) webpage. For P-Card questions or assistance please contact pcardadm@gmu.edu. For questions about reimbursable items please contact acctpay@gmu.edu