

**Hello,  
how can we help?**

FAQ's, quick fixes, and official Accounts Payable and Travel info on Hospitality Policy questions and general issues.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1) What CSU Funds are included in state funds?

State University Trust fund (state fund 0948) is continuously appropriated by the legislature (EC §89700-89726) and therefore all CSU funds within state fund 0948 are state [public] funds. This includes, but is not limited to, State University Parking Revenue Fund (EC §89701(b)), State University [Health] Facilities Revenue Fund (Education Code §89702(c)), State University Continuing Education Revenue Fund (Education Code §89704(a)), CSU Dormitory Revenue Fund (Education Code §90036) and Lottery (Government Code 8880.5).

### 2) Can I provide lunch for an all-day meeting?

When a meeting takes place over an extended period and the agenda includes a working meal, there may be justification that the meal is integral to the business function. Considerations include:

- Meals or light refreshments provided to employees on a frequent or routine basis are considered taxable income by the IRS and are therefore not permitted under this policy.
- Meals or light refreshments should be limited to no more than twelve times per year, per group.
- Meals or light refreshments provided to a group should be counted on an event basis (e.g. a two-day meeting should be counted as one event in determining compliance with these guidelines).

Examples where food and beverage may be permitted include:

- A meeting where there is a scheduled speaker during the meal period;
- A meeting where the participants work through the meal period; or
- Circumstances where it would be too time-consuming or disruptive for participants to take a meal break away from the meeting location.

### 3) What is the allowable per-person maximum for hospitality?

Breakfast	\$45.00
Lunch	\$60.00
Dinner	\$110.00
Light Refreshments	\$45.00

### 4) Can state funds be used for a retirement party?

No, parties are not allowed. An employee can be recognized for superior achievements, within specified campus guidelines.

### 5) Is an original receipt required? What if the receipt is unavailable?

Yes, when submitting for reimbursement itemized receipts are required to be submitted with the reimbursement request. When applicable, invoices should also be included. Quotes and statements will not be accepted as an alternative.

If receipts are missing, requestor should also submit a Lost/Missing Receipt Verification Form located on the Accounts Payable and Travel site under "Forms" here [AP and Travel Forms](#)

**6) Do I need a guest list...always? What happens if my guest list is not available or hard to make accurate?**

Yes, a list of attendees and their business relationship should be gathered. In the event of a large-scale university-wide group event, such as commencement, campus-wide conferences, etc. where a sign-in sheet is not available, include a flyer or invitation to further support the justification of the missing attendee listing. Large events are functions with 100 or more participants, it may not be feasible to obtain a guest list so a copy of the flyer or invitation announcement may be provided in lieu of a guest list.

**7) Will CSUF reimburse or pay hospitality expenses for a spouse or significant other?**

Event attendance by a high-level official's spouse, domestic partner, or significant other might be permissible if their present service is a legitimate CSUF business purpose and has a substantial role in the proceedings. State funds may not be used to pay such expenses and should be covered via Auxiliary funds.

**8) Will CSUF pay or reimburse hospitality expenses that include alcohol?**

State funds may not be used to pay for alcoholic beverages. Other funds are allowable provided that it can be demonstrated the expense services a university business purpose and there are no restrictions on the other funding source that would disallow the expense.

**9) What are allowable funding sources under the Hospitality Policy?**

Refer to Appendix A of the hospitality policy for available funding sources.

**10) How can we identify the correct expense code to use when submitting forms for processing?**

Requestors can work with budget managers and approvers to identify correct accounts to use. If additional help should be needed, Accounting Services and Financial Reporting can assist with clarification for appropriate accounts.

**11) What types of hospitality expenses are not allowable? Can we get a chart or a table that clearly defines items/services that are allowable and what items/services are prohibited?**

Hospitality expenditures that are prohibited by applicable laws, regulations or agreements, including the California Budget Act are not allowable under any circumstances. Reimbursements or payments of any expense that will be considered taxable income to an employee and that are not in compliance with IRS regulations which include, but are not limited to:

- Payment or reimbursement of expenses that are not allowed by University policy
- Expenses that are lavish or extravagant under the circumstances
- The entertainment (hospitality) activity is not directly related to the employee's job
- The official host or another University employee is not present when the activity takes place
- The expense is not substantiated with appropriate supporting documentation
- Business meals with faculty, staff, or other colleagues that are frequent (e.g. That occur on a regular or routine basis) and are reciprocal

**12) We need a clear definition of Hospitality. What is Hospitality?**

Hospitality is the provision of meals (e.g. catered restaurant, grocery purchases) or light refreshments (e.g. beverages, hours d'oeuvres, pastries, cookies, etc.) for a bona fide business purpose. Hospitality usually involves a guest-host relationship in which a designated host invites an official guest to attend an event. There should be no personal benefit to the person acting as host or to other employees.

**13) Who can be an Approving Official to sign off on a D-11 form?**

Through the DOA form, division heads may designate an approving authority to approve hospitality expenditures up to \$2,500. Expenditures above that amount should be signed by the division head. Any requests which are exceptions to the policy must be authorized by the Vice President of the division and may not be further delegated down. Approvers approving expenses up to \$2,500 must be an MPP. Under no circumstance can someone approve their own expenses nor the expenses of their superior, with the exception of the CFO approving the expenses of the President.

**14) Who can be considered a Guest? Can you define more clearly what a guest is, and can we pay for guests?**

A person invited by an official host to attend a CSUF meeting, conference, reception, activity, or event. Examples of official guests include employees visiting from another work location, students, donors, recruitment candidates, volunteers (as designated by Risk Management), members of the community (for events open to the public), visitors from other colleges and universities, or media representatives.

**15) What is a team building or employee morale-boosting event?**

Faculty/staff picnics, end of year gatherings, retirements serve the business purpose of team building. The approving authority should evaluate these events in terms of cost, benefit, availability of funds, and alternatives that would be equally effective in accomplishing desired business objectives. These events should be limited to twice per fiscal year and such activities may include staff development retreats and staff appreciation breakfasts or lunches. These events tend to be extended formal training sessions, conferences, extended strategic planning sessions, and meetings of appointed work groups and committees.

**16) What is considered a “working lunch”?**

A “working lunch” is when a meal is an integral part of an administrative meeting, not a matter of personal convenience. These lunches may be held on or off campus and should take place over an extended period, exceeding 3 hours. The agenda for the meeting should indicate no break for lunch and work will continue during the meal.

**17) Please explain why an original receipt is required. Why can't I submit a picture of the invoice from my cell phone?**

When purchasing anything using a campus P-card, a receipt is always required per P-card Policy, please reach out to e-business for more details. For all other submissions an itemized receipt or itemized invoice must be provided, if one of those documents is scanned or a picture taken with a phone, that submission will be acceptable as long as it is legible.

**18) What happens if I must go over the maximum rate per meal? Are there exceptions that I may invoke? Please explain this process.**

Division heads must pre-approve limited exceptions to the maximum per-person rate with the documented justification. This applies to any exceptions to the hospitality policy and must be signed off by the division head.

**19) What should a hospitality statement of justification include?**

A justification for an exception should include the exception needed, why it's needed, and why it fits into the university business purpose as well as any other information your division head may need to approve the exception.

**20) What circumstances can a gift card not be purchased for?**

Gift cards, or gift certificates, should not be purchased to give to employees or students as gifts, whether for holidays or not. They also should not be used, under any circumstance, to pay for services rendered. Particularly, you cannot provide a gift card as a form of payment for work related activities, even for volunteers who are performing the same work as individuals currently employed to do that work. Gift cards may be allowable in the case of survey or research participants to participate. If these include employees, this MUST be reported to payroll as it is taxed via wages.