Guidance for Hosting Meal Expenses
(Supplemental to Expense Guidance for Business Meals and Entertainment)

Background

Establishing guidelines for business hosting expenses enables the University to effectively comply with federal and state regulations. These guidelines should be used in conjunction with the Guidelines for Business Meals and Entertainment and applies to reimbursements from all University funding sources. On occasion, due to Sponsored Programs and Contract Management or other administrative purposes, more restrictive business hosting expense policies and procedures may be mandated by specific programs, schools, departments, or offices. Faculty, staff and students whose expenses are funded by a grant or contract must adhere to the terms of that grant or contract for verification of allowable expenditures.

Scope of This Guidance

Hosting is an appropriate expense of University funds if hosting activities contribute to, or result from, legitimate University related business. Local business meals and meal expenses incurred by employees while hosting University guests will be reimbursed at actual cost within the constraints of good taste and reasonableness.

Food purchases can be broken down into the following categories:

- Food for Students
- Food for Volunteers
- Food for Employees
- Food for Contract Hospitality
- Food for Conferences and Workshops held by the University

Food for Students

Activities for students clubs and organizations have separate funding sources and are excluded from these guidelines. Please refer to University Student Affairs for policies and procedures for activities regarding food purchases. University funds may be used to purchase food for students at the budget director’s discretion only if the expense includes the following:

- Campus events open to students designed to further the development and education of the students.
- Potential students and their parents may be provided food at an event designed to encourage the student to attend the University.
- Students who have volunteered their time for an event.
- Annual events held for students currently attending WesternU.
Food for Volunteers

Volunteers include individuals that provide benefits to the University without receiving compensation. This includes employees who are not being compensated as part of their normal job.

Food for Employees

Please refer to the Guidelines for Business Meals and Entertainment. However, if the employee’s participation must be that of a group, it must be required, essential, and in furtherance of an official University program.

Group meals should be held only to facilitate the effective and efficient operation of the department and should only be provided for meetings lasting over four hours long. Purchase of the meal is conducted solely as a convenience to the University and requires the employee may not leave for a normal meal due to time constraints.

Employees may be reimbursed for meals if the primary purpose of the meeting is the recruitment of an individual to attend the University or the recruitment of employee personnel.

Food for Contract Hospitality

The University will honor a contract where food is a requirement as part of a contractual agreement that benefits the University.

Food for Conferences and Workshops held by the University

Colleges or departments hosting and coordinating conferences and workshops must use the collected registration fees to pay for food provided for the event. In most cases, a caterer should be used to provide the necessary meals. If non-catered food is purchased, justification is necessary to substantiate that there has not been personal use of the food purchased.

Documentation Required for Payment

Documentation of business meals must include:

• Original receipts for transactions

• The expense is properly documented (who, what, when, where, why)

• Flyer, email, agenda or other documentation substantiating the event was official

• The expense has been appropriately approved at a department level in accordance with the requirements of the policy.
**Alcoholic Beverages**

The University will allow for alcoholic beverages on campus as outlined under the Alcohol on Campus policy A14.38.0.2 [http://wsprod.westernu.edu/policy/pp_policies_view.jsp?PID=1336](http://wsprod.westernu.edu/policy/pp_policies_view.jsp?PID=1336).

**Dollar Guidelines**

The federal per diem amounts for meals serves as a starting point for guidance as to the suggested maximum amount of expense allowable for a business hosting meal. Example: The maximum current federal per diem amount is $18 per day for lunch. This would be the maximum that should spend per person for a hosting lunch. When the meal is provided in the home of an employee, only actual out-of-pocket costs relating to that specific affair (e.g. catering, set up/take down, floral arrangements, rentals, cleaning) will be paid by the University.

For parties of less than twenty individuals, dining at a local restaurant may be more cost-effective than catering such a meal.

**Questions Regarding These Guidelines**

Questions regarding these guidelines should be directed to the Accounts Payable department.