

# Meals (Local or Away)

The University reimburses employees for meals during travel on University business and for meals required as part of their ordinary business.

## Business Meals

Business Meals are reimbursed on an actual basis and include:

- The cost of breakfast, lunch or dinner eaten by an individual traveler while away from the University on approved business travel.
- Reasonable and necessary meal expenses for business meetings involving only University personnel and students during which focused business discussions take place. The frequency of such meetings and the related expenses must be reasonable and appropriate to the purpose of the discussion and the nature of the business conducted. Such meetings include:
  - Breakfast, lunch and dinner meetings which are necessary to conduct of University business.
  - Formally organized meetings which are necessary to carry out the business of official committees appointed by the University, School or Department.
  - Meetings on an organized work group of employees or students that require the work of the group to progress through normal meal time.
  - Reasonable and necessary meal expenses for peer groups for research collaboration or administrative meetings during which focused business discussions take place.

Except under rare circumstances, these meals to be reimbursed or meals to be paid via invoice directly to the vendor should not exceed the following thresholds, excluding tips and tax:

- Up to \$25 for breakfast,
- Up to \$35 for lunch,
- Up to \$50 for dinner

Any meal costs in excess of the per meal threshold (by no more than 50%) require Supplemental Approval. All policy exceptions not listed as eligible for Supplemental Approval, or any requests for exception of amounts that exceed the thresholds allowable for Supplemental Approval, still require a formal written exception request approved by a Senior Departmental Officer for documentation and evaluation by Accounts Payable. In all cases, the amount above the threshold must be segregated to the appropriate ARC account.

These thresholds are not per diems, and should not be charged as such. Travelers must submit individual receipts showing the actual cost of each meal.

## Business meals hosted by CU involving *certain* external parties

The University will pay for approved, necessary and reasonable business meal expenditures that are hosted by and paid for by a CU employee and include guests, business colleagues, donors, and prospective employees which results in a business benefit to the University. Examples are limited to fundraising, recruitment, and recognition of a speaker. These may occur either locally or during out of town travel.

Except under rare circumstances, these meals should not exceed \$100 per person, excluding tips and tax. Any meal costs in excess of the per meal threshold (by no more than 50%) require Supplemental Approval. All policy exceptions not listed as eligible for Supplemental Approval, or any requests for exception of amounts that exceed the thresholds allowable for Supplemental Approval, still require a formal written exception request approved by a Senior Departmental Officer for documentation and evaluation by Accounts Payable. In all cases, the amount above the threshold must be segregated to the appropriate ARC account.

The cost of alcoholic beverages consumed during a meal may be reimbursed. However, the cost may not be charged to a sponsored project and must be charged to a segregated ARC account). In addition, reimbursements for business meals that meet the following criteria require segregation to the appropriate ARC account:

- Reimbursement for business meals that require attendance by an employee's spouse, significant other, and/or dependent require Supplemental Approval.
- Expenses for business meals conducted in private homes will only be paid when Supplemental Approval is provided.

#### **Documentation Required**

The original restaurant or cash register receipts for business meals must be obtained and submitted with the employee's expense report. The receipt must include:

- the date and location
- the type of meal (breakfast, lunch, dinner)
- the meal items purchased (identify alcohol)
- the total amount of the meal
- proof of payment

The cost of alcoholic beverages may not be charged to a sponsored research account and must be segregated to an appropriate ARC account.

A list of attendees (or a number, if there are more than 10 names), the relationship to the University, and the business purpose of the meal must also be clearly documented.

#### **Use of Per Diems for Meals**

The use of a per diem should be rare. Per diems may only be used for instances of international travel to destinations where local custom or culture makes it difficult to obtain receipts. Travelers must request and receive prior approval to use per diems from their Dean, VP, Associate Dean or Senior Financial Officer.

If a per diem is to be claimed, the traveler must select per diems for the duration of the trip (i.e. can not alternate between per diem and actual receipts). The per diem must be claimed in accordance with the government's published per diem rate for M&IE found at: [http://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per\\_diem.asp](http://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per_diem.asp)

If per diems are claimed, the traveler must print out the location and per diem rate from the governments published per diem rates as documentation. If a per diem reimbursement rate exceeds the federal rate, the excess amount over the federal rate is taxable to the traveler.

In cases where per diems are allowable for travel under the terms of a grant, the department or traveler may provide any of the following forms of documentation:

- a copy of the section of the grant award/budget demonstrating that it allows per diems, or written approval from the granting agency
- written approval from the departments' Research Administration project officer authorizing the expenditure