

**Food Purchase Policy
UW Tacoma
(Revised 12/18/2017)**

The Washington State Office of Financial Management State Administrative and Accounting Manual, sections 70.10.10-40, outlines the rules and oversight for the use of University funds to purchase meals and light refreshments. Based on these rules, the University of Washington has created a policy for the purchase of meals and light refreshments for employees, students, and official guests. In turn, UW Tacoma administration has provided clarifications that, together with the UW rules, comprise the UW Tacoma Food Purchase Policy. This policy is provided to ensure that all food expenses charged to University budgets are allowable and appropriate for the funding source.

To assure appropriate time for approval this form must be submitted at least seven days prior to the event. Forms submitted after the event will not be approved and expenses will be the responsibility of the purchaser.

The following rules pertain to allowances for meals and light refreshments on non-discretionary budgets:

The Food Approval Form (FAF) must be approved by the Chancellor, or with written delegated authority, by Vice Chancellors, Departmental Directors, Chairpersons or Department Administrators, and then submitted to the AVC Finance, based on the following:

- The meal or light refreshments must be an integral part of an official University meeting, event, or formal training session, including commencement ceremonies (for those working at the event) and student orientations.
- Attendance by the individuals must be advantageous to the UW.
- The cost of meals or light refreshments must be expensed in the appropriate approved and funded budget.
- The meeting or formal training must be conducted at a location away from the place where the employee normally performs his/her work (such as the employee's desk or cubicle). Acceptable locations include meeting and conference rooms.
- Employee meetings or training must be 2.5 hours or more in length for light refreshments to be provided. Light refreshments are limited to \$5 per person. (UWT clarification).
- Departments are limited to one annual planning retreat per year (UWT)
- Meals are justified only when a meeting (or special event work or interview) exceeds 3.5 hours and extends over a meal period. Breakfast is only provided if the meeting/event begins at 7 a.m. or earlier. Dinner is only provided for a meeting that ends at 7 p.m. or later (UWT clarifications). Meals with employee candidates are limited to 4 faculty/staff interview participants and 4 student interview participants (if applicable).
- Light refreshment service for one-hour or longer meetings are allowed for high-level meetings (signified by director and above attendance) with external participants at the discretion of the vice chancellors and where such service might be expected in the conduct of official UW business (UWT clarification).
- Spousal/partner meals are not allowed.

Cost per Meal

The meal expenditure or reimbursement may not exceed the travel per diem limit for the meal (including taxes, gratuity, utensils, catering fees, etc.). Amounts over per diem may be reimbursed using a discretionary funding source only when approved by a Dean or Vice Chancellor (or by a Director, Chairperson or Administrator with written delegated authority) as department policy.

Recognition Events

If a meal is a recognition award, the amount of the meal per individual(s) being recognized is not limited to the per diem rate. However, only the meal expense for the individual(s) being recognized may be paid using University funds; the cost of meals for other attendees not being recognized must be charged to a discretionary funding source. For recognition of employees, the total amount expended per recognition award, including light refreshments, is limited to the monetary level authorized in RCW 41.60.150 (\$200 per individual or group receiving recognition). For example, if members of a team are being recognized, the amount expended for the light refreshments is limited to \$200. Food served at a recognition event is restricted to light refreshments unless the actual recognition award is a meal.

The following food purchases may only be made using a discretionary budget (no FAF required):

- Food to support normal daily business of university employees, regularly scheduled meetings, open houses, or receptions for new employees can be purchased using discretionary funds (64-XXXX budgets). Purchases of alcoholic beverages or over per diem amounts for food may only be purchased with discretionary funds.
- Food for hosted events may be purchased with discretionary budgets or on gift budgets with food flags.
- Food for graduation events other than commencement (such as hooding ceremonies) must be paid using discretionary funds, or gift budgets with food flags if allowed by school or college policy.

Food purchases for a legislator or governmental official or for elections or election celebrations are never permitted on any University funding source, including discretionary funds.