

 NORTHEAST OHIO MEDICAL UNIVERSITY	Policy No: 3349-OP-210
POLICY TITLE: Business Meals and Hospitality Policy	EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2022 REVISED: September 1, 2026
RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENTS: Accounting and Purchasing	All Employees

(A) PURPOSE

To establish a policy through which the University will pay for reasonable and necessary expenses for Business Meals and Hospitality. As a public institution funded by state allocations and student tuition, Northeast Ohio Medical University (NEOMED) is held to a high level of accountability for its business practices. Numerous constituencies have an interest in how the University spends its funds. Accordingly, the University must ensure that funds are used judiciously and appropriately in support of its activities.

(B) SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees seeking reimbursement for, departments seeking payment of, or use of a University-issued Purchasing Card (P-card) for such expenses. University-sponsored events approved by the President and open to campus-wide participation are outside the scope of this policy. In the absence of more restrictive grant provision or sponsored program guidelines, this policy will apply.

(C) DEFINITIONS

- (1) "Business Meal" refers to a properly documented meal, food and non-alcoholic beverages, where the primary purpose is to conduct University business, promote, or advance the mission of the University with at least one non-employee participant whose presence is necessary for those business discussions. Spouses, dependents, and personal acquaintances are not normally considered necessary participants except where such persons are inseparably intermingled with official guests at Business Meals or events that qualify as Hospitality as defined in (C)(2).
- (2) "Hospitality" refers to a properly documented activity/event where the primary purpose is for reception and entertainment of visitors or guests of the University.
- (3) "University Business Functions," for the purpose of this policy, refers to an approved event for employees only, which occurs no more than quarterly and lasts at least four (4) hours during regular working hours. University Business Functions include, but are not limited to, retreats, seminars, forums, cross-departmental or college meetings, or similar events for which there is a stated business purpose documented by a written agenda, expected outcome, structured activity, or the like.
- (4) "ChowIt" cards refer to pre-paid gift cards purchased from Conference Services.
- (5) "Conference Services," for purposes of this policy, refers to the vendor the University has contracted with to provide catering services.

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(D) REIMBURSEMENT AND PAYMENT FOR BUSINESS MEALS AND HOSPITALITY EXPENSES

- (1) Expenses for Business Meals, Hospitality, and University Business Functions are eligible for University payment or reimbursement if they are reasonable and are properly documented in accordance with requirements established by the Internal Revenue Service. The following is required for payment or reimbursement of such expenses:
 - (a) Original, itemized receipt;
 - (b) Time, date, place of meal;
 - (c) Business purpose; and
 - (d) List of attendees.
- (2) If a P-card is not used, then requests for reimbursement should be made utilizing a NEOMED Expense Reimbursement Form including any supporting documentation and requisite signatures. This documentation should also be included with the applicable P-card reconciliations. The form must be submitted to the Accounting Department within sixty (60) days of incurring the expense.
 - (a) Business Meal and Hospitality expenses that lack an itemized receipt and the required documentation will not be paid or reimbursed.
 - (b) Tips exceeding twenty percent (20%) added to any Business Meal or Hospitality expense will not be reimbursed and, if charged to a University P-card, may be subject to repayment to the University.
 - (c) All non-P-card expenses incurred during May and June must be submitted for reimbursement or payment no later than mid-July. An exact date will be provided by the Accounting office in June.
- (3) It is permissible to use University funds for water coolers and refills (including delivery) in a department for students, faculty, staff, and visitor use.
- (4) University funds are not permitted on food and/or refreshments for the following activities/scenarios:
 - (a) Departmental gatherings or meetings on a recurring basis (i.e., daily, weekly, monthly, etc.);

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- (b) Events that are of a personal nature (e.g., birthdays, wedding or baby showers, holiday parties, graduations, employee service or other recognition awards, or celebrations including recognition of service when an employee departs the University by resignation or retirement regardless of length of service, unless sponsored by Human Resources as a sanctioned University-wide recognition);
 - (c) Food or beverage provided in the workplace for employees, except as specifically allowed under this policy; or
 - (d) The purchase of alcohol. The NEOMED Foundation, however, is not subject to this restriction and may permit such purchases to approved Foundation indices.
- (5) Use of ChowIt cards for the purpose of hospitality must comply with this policy.
 - (a) ChowIt cards may be issued to purchase meals for:
 - (i) Non-employees who are visiting campus as a speaker or guest;
 - (ii) Students who are required to attend a meeting during lunchtime; and
 - (iii) Visitors who are on campus for a purpose that meets the definition of a Business Meal.
 - (b) ChowIt cards may not be issued to employees who are required to attend a meeting during lunchtime unless the meeting is an approved University Business Function or a Business Meal under this policy, nor can they be issued as an award, thank you, or form of recognition to an employee.
- (6) On-Campus Meals and Hospitality
 - (a) For all events, meetings, conferences, or other functions held on University property, Conference Services shall have the first right of refusal to provide or coordinate Business Meals, Hospitality, and other related catering services. Departments should consult with Conference Services before engaging an outside food service provider for the provision of any Business Meals, Hospitality, or catering on University property.
 - (b) If Conference Services declines or is unable to provide the requested services, the department may make alternative arrangements in accordance with University procurement policies and applicable food service, health, safety, and payment requirements.