

College of Liberal Arts Official Occasion Expense Policy

This document supplements and highlights parts of the university's [entertainment policy](#) and applies to all departments and units in the College of Liberal Arts. [Official Occasion Expense Forms](#) are required for all entertainment and official occasion expenses. Unit heads may implement a more restrictive internal policy. This list is not meant to be exhaustive but to highlight some of the most common issues that generate compliance issues of questions about university policy.

- All entertainment expenditures must serve a business purpose.
- **Per person costs** are limited to \$75 per person (which includes food, alcohol, tax and gratuity). Costs in excess of this amount will not be paid using university funds.
 - Tips/gratuity are reimbursable up to 20% of the pre-tax subtotal
 - Per person costs do not apply to large hosted events where there is a negotiated agreement with a vendor for a total package price that includes food and non-food expenses. The agreement/contract must be included with the payment voucher.
- **Alcohol** expenses at dinner are reimbursable if the meeting or event is for recruitment or a developmental purpose and donors or distinguished guests are in attendance.
- **Alcohol** will only be reimbursed up to 50% of the bill. Alcohol costs in excess of 50% of the bill will not be paid using university funds.
- **Alcohol is not** reimbursable for the following:
 - Business meetings conducted during breakfast or lunch
 - Meetings held at any time when only university employees are in attendance
- **Serving Alcohol at Events in a Non-licensed Venue** – The vice president for legal affairs recommends that a TABC licensed caterer or bartender be used for all events. University employees **should not** be used as servers at an event unless it is in their official job description (even if they are TABC certified). If undergraduate students will be in attendance, a licensed TABC bartender is required. <https://provost.utexas.edu/policies-and-compliance/serving-alcohol-on-campus>).
- **Administrative/Business** meetings involve two or more people, must include a university employee, are agenda driven and directly concern university business. Food may not be served as a matter of personal convenience. Light refreshments must be integral to maintain attendance for meetings conducted during break hours. Meals must encompass a regular meal time and could not otherwise be scheduled during regular working hours. University funds cannot be used for social meals between two or more university employees.
- **Team Building/Group Retreats** – Costs for these events should follow the \$75 per person limit for the total event.
- **Recruitment/Visitors** – The number of reimbursable meals for events associated with the recruitment of prospective employees or receptions for distinguished guests should be limited. Meals should generally involve no more than four people (the prospective employee or guest and three UT affiliates).
- **Companions** – Reimbursements for meals are not permitted for companions of university employees, unless it is for a developmental related event and the donor/distinguished guest also brings a companion.
- **Employee/Staff Celebrations** – Monthly events such as staff birthdays, graduations, etc. may be reimbursed, but should be limited. A reasonable guideline to follow is \$5 per person in attendance. For example, if there are 10 expected attendees for a birthday, no more than \$50 total should be spent. Annual events, such as departmental holiday parties and staff appreciation meals may exceed the \$5 per person, but expenditures should be reasonable.
- **Meals while traveling** – Individual meal expenses may be incurred while traveling on official university business. The traveler may receive either a [travel per diem](#) or a separate, itemized meal reimbursement for the meeting or event incurred on the same day.
- **Professional Training/Professional Development** – Costs for training or professional development events are not considered entertainment expenses. The state defines professional training as instruction, teaching, or other education received by a state employee that is not normally received by other employees and is designed to enhance the ability of the employee to perform the employee's job. These costs should follow the university's standard payment procedures. Should any meal expense be incurred during these events, those expenses must follow the entertainment guidelines outlined above. In general, meals are only reimbursable if overnight travel is required.
- **Food for Organized Courses** – Routine food costs for organized courses (listed in the registrar catalog) are not allowed.