OVERVIEW

PURPOSE OF GUIDE

This document highlights key Stanford University business expense guidelines, some of which are not specifically stated in the Admin Guide or Fingate but have been vetted with the University.

WHO SHOULD USE THIS GUIDE?

All administrative and finance personnel within the departments of the School of Medicine.

WHAT’S IN THIS GUIDE?

BUSINESS MEALS

EMPLOYEE MORALE

BUSINESS TRAVEL (AIRFARE, LODGING, TRAVEL MEALS, GROUND TRANSPORTATION)

PURCHASE OF GOODS & SERVICES

SUBMIT AN EXPENSE TRANSACTION

Business purpose must sufficiently address all elements of **WHO-WHAT-WHEN-WHERE-WHY**. The ‘Why’ component is key, as it should define how the event is linked to Stanford and its mission. If all or part of the expense incurred on the Pcard/Tcard is not permissible, someone in the department must write a personal check to the University, fill out the Department Transmittal form, and drop off both documents to the Wells Fargo at Tresidder Union. You must include a copy of the deposit slip as an attachment to the transaction.

Quick tips

All policies listed in this document are subject to change. Please visit the Admin Guide or Fingate for an up-to-date version of policies.

Additional information on reimbursements can be found here.

All transactions greater than $75 require a receipt.

For any questions about the guidelines noted here, please contact your department DFA.

PCards & TCards may only be used for Stanford Business in compliance with the Guidelines. Personal expenditures are not permissible on PCards & Tcards.
BUSINESS MEALS

The Expense Guidance for Business Meals lists the information below as well as further detail over the guidelines.

Meal Guidelines

A business meal is defined as a meal between two or more people discussing Stanford business. All faculty and staff must adhere to the following meal dollar guidelines that have been established on a per person basis. These guidelines include tax and tip (divide total on receipt by number of attendees). Note that these are maximum limits and should not be considered appropriate for every scenario. A majority of the meals should continue to be within the old limits (Breakfast: $20, Lunch: $35, Dinner: $80/person).

**BREAKFAST:** $35  
**LUNCH:** $60  
**DINNER:** $125  
**ALCOHOL, TAX & TIPS:** Included in the above guidelines. Alcohol not allowed on sponsored projects.  
**TIPS:** Will not be reimbursed if greater than 20% (unless restaurant mandates a higher service charge).  
**ROOM RENTAL:** Will not be reimbursed if greater than 25% of the overall bill.

In order to stay within guidelines, the department should consider the following options to ensure meals are compliant with University guidelines:

- Create a pre-set menu  
- Pre-order wine ahead of arrival, No host bar  
- Bring pre-bought wine and pay corkage ($20 max per bottle for pre-bought wine; must reference transaction number for pre-bought wine in meal transaction to ensure the entire meal is within the guidelines)  
- Two course meal

**VENUE:** The University strongly encourages to host business meals on campus or at restaurants. If a meal is hosted at a residence, all costs associated to hosting that event will be included in the $/person limits above. This would include all catering, set-up, rental, service, supplies, etc.
EMPLOYEE MORALE

Managers are encouraged to follow Stanford practices for improving working conditions, employer-employee relations, morale, and employee performance.

TEAM MEALS: Team meals are acceptable when warranted by the business need (i.e. employee morale, strategic off-site, etc.).

TEAM BUILDING ACTIVITIES: Employees may participate in one team building activity per year. The department may spend up to $75/person on the activity. University meal guidelines will apply to meals.

SUMMER PICNICS: Summer picnics are acceptable. It is preferred that events are hosted on campus to promote the Stanford community.

HOLIDAY PARTIES: Holiday parties are acceptable. Depending on the size of your team, you may opt for a lunch or dinner at a local restaurant.

○ Guests: Only employees within the department and their spouses/significant others.
○ Location: It is preferred that events are hosted on campus to promote the Stanford community. If no campus space is available that meets your needs, an outside venue may be necessary. To find a venue that fits within University guidelines, the University suggests to book at least 6 months in advance and hosting the event along the Peninsula or South Bay as San Francisco venue costs are not considered reasonable during the holiday season.
○ Venue room rental: Room rental costs should be minimized and not be considered a significant portion of the event costs. They must be reasonable, up to a maximum of 25% of the overall cost.
○ Venue catering: Food and drink must adhere to University meal guidelines. The costs incurred for appetizers and hors d’oeuvres are included in the University meal guidelines.
○ Incidental: The University will not pay for hotel rooms or transportation to/from the event.

RESIDENT/FELLOW EVENTS: Graduation: Graduates may bring an appropriate number of guests. Faculty/staff guests will be a personal expense. Gifts should be nominal and Stanford-related. Any other gift would be considered a personal expense.
EMPLOYEE MORALE

GIFTS
- Gifts are generally considered personal expenses. Only under exceptional circumstances are they considered business expenses where the occasion warrants a gift.
- The gift must be a tangible personal property with a preference for Stanford merchandise.
- The Admin Guide lists current dollar limits for nominal gifts ($50 per individual). If value of gift exceeds the limit, the entire gift will be taxable to the recipient.

RETIREMENT/LENGTH OF SERVICE: Gifts, awards, and celebrations are acceptable. The gift/award must be presented as part of a special event that marks the occasion, such as a departmental meeting, party, or luncheon. It is preferred that the celebration be held on campus to promote the Stanford community. The Admin Guide lists current dollar limits for these gifts which if exceeded, the incremental overage will be taxable to the recipient.

WELCOME/DEPARTURE (NON-RETIREMENT): Allowable expenses are team meals.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONALS DAY: Allowable expenses are team meals or flowers. Gifts for Boss’ Day considered a personal expense.

BEREAVEMENT, HOSPITALIZATION (BIRTH OF CHILD, SURGERY), FAMILY CRISSES: Allowable expenses are flowers and meal delivery vouchers.

BIRTHDAYS: Monthly or quarterly group birthday celebrations are allowable (frequency based on size of department). Allowable expenses would be cake only (no gifts or flowers).

BRIDAL/BABY SHOWERS: Allowable expenses would be cake only (no gifts or flowers).

HOLIDAY GIFTS: Holiday gifts to employees are generally considered personal expenses. In rare occasions where the occasion warrants a gift, nominal gifts may be purchased (Stanford merchandise preferred).

PERFORMANCE-BASED RECOGNITION: Should be recognized using annual or spot bonuses only.
BUSINESS TRAVEL

EGENCIA

Employees are expected to use Stanford Travel, which has negotiated rates through Egencia, Casto Travel & United Corporate Direct. Egencia saves historical information at the time of booking. If this site is not used to book travel, you must save screenshots (and upload as an attachment) of comparative rates at the time of booking to provide support that the lowest fare was selected. If this step is not completed, the traveler may be at risk for paying out-of-pocket expenses. Travelers should book the lowest fare available for flights and hotels.

FLIGHTS

FARE CLASS: Economy class for domestic and international flights; business class permissible for international flights greater than 8 hours (2/3 of airfare cost must be recorded to an unallowable expenditure type).

Below are a list of common airlines and the economy fare classes allowed.

- **UNITED AIRLINES:** “Economy” and “Economy Plus” (Economy Plus allowed if flight is > 2 hours)
- **SOUTHWEST AIRLINES:** “Wanna Get Away”
- **AMERICAN AIRLINES:** “Main Cabin”
- **DELTA AIRLINES:** “Main Cabin” and “Delta Comfort +” (Delta Comfort + allowed if flight is > 2 hours)

ANCILLARY FEES: The University pays for certain ancillary airline fees, including early boarding, pre-assigned seats, extended legroom, preferred seat location, checked and carry-on baggage fees, in-flight meals, and in-flight Wi-Fi service.

SAVE COMPARISON INFO: If you book outside of the guidelines, the University requires that you save comparison documentation at the time of booking to support that you booked the lowest available airfare. Examples include (but are not limited to): economy fare class not available within 1 hour before/after desired flight, indirect route selected, arrive to conference early/stay later for personal time, etc. If no support is provided, the traveler is subjected to an ‘after the fact’ comparison that cannot factor in seasonality which could leave them out of pocket.
BUSINESS TRAVEL

TRAVEL MEALS

Travelers have two options to claim meals while travelling for Stanford business. One option must be selected for the entire duration of the trip. Non-SU guests may only submit actual receipts and follow the Daily Maximum guidelines (per diem not allowed for visitors). More information about travel meals can be found here.

PER DIEM

The University uses the per diem rates established by the U.S. Government. One of the benefits of using per diem is that the traveler does not have to save receipts, thus relieves administrative burden for both the verifiers and approvers. All meals provided by a conference must be deducted from the per diem claim. If per diem is claimed for meals, separate meal expenses are not appropriate. Per diem rates and additional detail can be found here.

DAILY MAXIMUM

With this option, the traveler may claim a daily maximum of actual receipts. All meals provided by a conference must be deducted from the daily maximum claim. A business meal may occur while traveling – in that case, you would deduct the travel meal and claim a business meal (using business meal guidelines).

DOMESTIC: $75/day  (Breakfast: $15, Lunch: $25, Dinner: $35)
INTERNATIONAL: $125/day  (Breakfast: $25, Lunch: $35, Dinner: $65)

Quick tips

All travel meals should be coded to the travel expenditure type used for the rest of the travel (i.e. 52410 domestic travel, 52420 foreign travel, etc.).

Only business meals incurred while traveling should be coded to a different expenditure type (i.e. 52355 food, 52230 recruitment, etc.).
BUSINESS TRAVEL

LODGING

Travelers are expected to use Egencia to book lodging accommodations, which reflects Stanford University’s negotiated rates. Egencia will flag hotel rates above the guidelines to alert the traveler. If Egencia is used, the traveler does not need to save and upload comparison data. More information about lodging can be found here.

NIGHTLY RATE GUIDELINES (EXCLUDES TAXES/FEES):

- $200 – Domestic / International

EXCEPTIONS:

Conference hotels: If a traveler attends a conference, they may stay at the conference hotel at the negotiated conference rate. For conferences hosted at an independent venue (e.g. convention center), the attendees will usually be provided a range of neighborhood hotels, and will be expected to select the mid-point hotel.

Cities: If a traveler visits the following cities, the guidelines may increase to the following respective nightly rates (excludes taxes/fees):

- $450 – Palo Alto and vicinity (primarily for visitors)
- $300 – Boston, Washington DC, Chicago / Tokyo, Hong Kong, Paris, Shenzhen
- $250 – Los Angeles, San Diego, Seattle / Accra, Bangalore, Beijing, Nairobi, Sao Paulo, Shanghai, Toronto, Vancouver

Documentation: In rare instances where reimbursements exceed location guidelines, a rational and reasonable explanation will be required.

Quick tips

Standard rooms should be booked (no deluxe, premium, suites, etc.).

Itemized hotel folio is a required piece of support (unless per diem is claimed).

In-room movies are considered personal expenses.

Laundry is a reimbursable expense only if the business trip exceeds 6 days.
BUSINESS TRAVEL

GROUND TRANSPORTATION

Travelers are expected to select the most reasonable and economical mode of transportation. Options include: driving own car, renting a car (Zipcar, Enterprise, etc.), ride share services, taxi, train, etc. More information about ground transportation can be found here.

BAY AREA AIRPORT TRANSPORTATION

- Actual roundtrip expenses up to $200 (includes personal mileage and parking fees)

DESTINATION AIRPORT TRANSPORTATION

- Actual roundtrip expenses

Car services should only be used for special situations * and/or when it makes the most economical sense, such as a small group travelling together. If a car service is selected, a reasonable and rational explanation must be provided. It is expected that you book car service using Stanford Travel.

*Special situations include very early/late flights, to/from a remote residence, or when the traveler needs additional assistance (i.e. requires medical accommodation).

LOCAL GROUND TRANSPORTATION (NON-AIRPORT)

- Travelers are expected to select the most reasonable and economical option. Car services are generally not considered the most economic option.

Quick tips

Common travel expenditure types:
- 52410 (domestic travel allowable)
- 52420 (foreign travel allowable)
- 52445 (non-SU domestic travel allowable)
- 52455 (ground transportation)
- 52510 (conference fees)

All travel ground transportation should be coded to the travel expenditure type used for the rest of the travel (i.e. 52410 domestic travel, 52420 foreign travel, etc.).

Only local ground transportation should be coded to expenditure type 52455 ground transportation.
BUSINESS TRAVEL

LOCAL TRAVEL

No overnight stay allowed when traveling 50 miles or less each way from Stanford or from home, whichever is farthest. If you would like to request an exception to this guideline, ensure your circumstance falls within the criteria below and the following questions are addressed. Please request the exception through your department’s DFA. Note that if an exception is approved, the nights do not need to be consecutive.

- Is the employee’s attendance necessary?
- Per IRS guidelines, the employee must have adequate rest time. The University defines this as 7 hours. After commuting is considered, will the employee have less than 7 hours to rest at home?

Quick tips

Cash advances may be issued for out-of-pocket business travel expenses and should be cleared once the trip has occurred. More information can be found here. Cash advances are available for Stanford faculty and staff only (not permitted for non-SU travelers).
PURCHASE OF GOODS & SERVICES

Stanford’s Buy & Pay Guide has a list of commonly purchased goods and services and the best purchasing methods and related expenditure types.

More detail on the individual purchasing methods can be found here: Purchase Order, Non-PO Payment Request, Purchasing Card (or here), Travel Card, Amazon Business, SmartMart

PURCHASING CARD

Only business-related, non-travel expenses should be charged on the Pcard. Personal expenses are not permissible under any circumstances.

Items purchased must be under $5,000. Split transactions are not permissible under any circumstances. If item is above $5,000, the department must create a purchase order or non-PO payment request.

AMAZON BUSINESS

The recommended and preferred purchasing method at Stanford. Before purchasing items from other suppliers, check Amazon Business first for availability. Amazon Prime is available through Amazon Business so departments no longer need to purchase Prime to receive free shipping.

- Free two-day shipping on Prime-eligible items
- Relieves administrative burden for both verifiers & approvers

Quick tips

Computers/tablets: should always be purchased via IRT.

Cell phones: should always be ordered through your dept. OrderIT contact.

Headphones: headphones to diminish noises and distractions up to $100 are permissible. Noise cancelling head phones are generally not permissible.

Office equipment/furniture for home office: not permissible.

Smart watches: not permissible.

Space heaters: not permissible.

STAP funds may be used to help pay for career development activities.

Expenses should be verified and approved within 60 days.
OTHER ITEMS

DONATIONS

It is generally not permissible to donate to or sponsor a non-profit organization, regardless of the dollar amount. Please see the Admin Guide and the Controller’s Office website for additional information. Exceptions are rare and must be pre-approved by the University CFO. Please send your exception request (which should include the information stated in the Admin Guide) to Archna Mehta, SoM Controller, who will consult with the University CFO.

RESIDENTS & FELLOWS

Revised policy for residents and fellows coming soon

Quick tips

Executive funds – all expenditures must adhere to the same business expense guidelines, regardless of the fund type used.