

## **Auxiliary Services Responsible Buying Guidelines**

Please review the “Code of Ethics for Department Staff Responsible for Buying”. The Responsible Buying Guidelines document is a supplement to item 4b of the Code of Ethics, the University’s Business Expenses policy, and the policy on Hospitality and Entertainment of Non-Employees. It is meant for those in the department that have major purchasing responsibilities, anyone who has input into a purchasing decision i.e. Bookstore buyers, U Market buyers, Assistant Director of Facilities, or those travelling for a business-related conference or event.

**Maintain a high level of ethics. Decline rebates, gifts, money or anything of value offered by vendors other than items of nominal value (under \$5).** The following list is not meant to be all inclusive of situations that might occur but to serve as examples of responsible behavior.

### Items/Merchandise

1. Items of greater value than \$5 should be given to the employee’s department for charitable use. Examples are the Community Fund Drive, Ronald McDonald House, drawing for prizes for customers or students.
2. An employee registers for a conference and as part of the registration fee there are items of value that are included (mugs, wearing apparel, books, etc.) It is appropriate for the employee to keep these items because they were paid for as part of the conference fee.
3. An employee attends a conference and puts their name in a random drawing for an item of value and wins the drawing. If the value of the item is over \$5, the employee may keep it but should report it to their supervisor.
4. A vendor offers an employee items to be distributed to others.
  - a. If the item is something not time sensitive (i.e. wearing apparel) it should be donated to a charity as described in item 1.
  - b. If the item is time sensitive (i.e. tickets to some type of event) the director should decide on the use of the item and document how the item was used.
  - c. If the item is perishable (i.e. food) the director of the department can designate how it should be used (i.e. put in employee lunchroom).

### Meals

5. An employee attends a conference and a vendor invites the employee and/or a small number of other attendees to a meal or event. The employee can attend if they pay for their own meal. They are in travel status and would be eligible for reimbursement up to the allowable per diem. Because of the small number of persons being offered this favor, it is likely that either the giver or the receiver or any third party could perceive it as a favor or incentive being offered to an individual. (And therefore in violation of MN State Statute 15.43)
6. An employee attends a conference and a vendor invites the employee to attend a meal or event where there will be many other people. The employee can attend the event at the expense of the vendor. Because of the large number of persons being offered this favor, it is unlikely that either the giver or the receiver or any third party could perceive it as a favor or incentive being offered to an individual. (And therefore not in violation of MN State Statute 15.43)

7. Lavish meals (“lavish” being defined as over the University’s per diem rate) should not be accepted. It is also not appropriate to accept lavish meals which are then invoiced at a price within the University’s per diems, but well below the actual value to conceal its inappropriate lavishness.
8. Employees may pay for their own meal when out with a vendor at any time.
9. It is only appropriate for the University to pay for employee meals if a business reason exists, i.e. team building, employee recognition. Refer to the University’s Business Expenses policy for additional details regarding allowable employee meal purchases.
10. A company you do business with suggests that you have a **weekly/monthly/quarterly (recurring/ongoing)** lunch with them, at their expense, to discuss any issues you might have about the product or service that you use. These types of ongoing meetings should occur during regular business hours, not over lunch. If there is a legitimate business need for a meeting to be held with a vendor over the lunch hour, it should be infrequent and the employee’s portion would be reimbursable by the University.

#### Miscellaneous Events/Offers

11. A company that you currently do business with or a company that you have the potential to do business with wants to take you on an out of town trip to provide education, look at their product or service or meet others who use the product or service and they will pay expenses of the trip. There is a strong business reason to make the trip. The employee can attend but the University department should pay for the trip with AVP approval.
12. A company that you currently do business with invites an employee to an event at a fine dining restaurant, golf outing, boat trip, etc. to have them meet company executives, other customers, express appreciation for a project completed, etc. The value of this would be over \$5. The employee can attend with director approval but the company should invoice the University department for the cost of the event or the employee needs to personally reimburse the company the cost of the event. Existing University per diem rates would apply.
13. An employee is offered merchandise or invited to an event hosted by another department at the University and the value is over \$5. The employee can attend/accept since this is an internal University transaction, not external as described in the examples above.

In general, Auxiliary Services employees should ask themselves, “Are you comfortable with anyone being aware of this situation?” or, “Will this behavior withstand the ‘light of day’ test?” prior to accepting anything of value from a vendor/supplier.