

# **University of North Carolina Asheville**

## **Basic Spending Guidelines by Fund Source**

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# University of North Carolina - Asheville

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# **University of North Carolina - Asheville Basic Spending Guidelines by Fund Source**

## **Introduction**

The university has a wide variety of sources of funds, each of which has its own spending characteristics. No set of guidelines can be written that addresses every possible expenditure decision which may arise. There are, however, some basic rules, regulations, and precedents which are presented here that can help to guide an employee, and/or department in making wise spending decisions. These guidelines are provided to ensure that faculty and staff can carry out the university's mission effectively, while ensuring that fiscally responsible and legal spending practices are followed. At all times, employees are responsible for following basic purchasing guidelines for the procurement of all goods and services.

## **All Sources of Funds**

### **Appearance and Reasonableness Tests**

For all potential expenditures from all sources of funds, the "appearance test" should be used, i.e., how would this purchase look to external constituents if placed on review. Another test that is useful is to ask the question "Is this expenditure necessary for a faculty or staff member to do their job or for the university to carry on its normal business?" The utilization of these tests should help to guide faculty and staff members in their decision-making. At all times, faculty and staff are encouraged to avoid the appearance of poor management of funds.

### **Exceptions and Interpretations**

Every attempt has been made to make these guidelines comprehensive. There may be cases, however, which would fall outside the guidelines and yet be legal expenditures and in the best interests of the university. If a case occurs in which an individual believes an exception should be made to the guidelines, they should request through the respective division's fund manager that an individual determination be made on a particular item. The Vice Chancellor for Finance and Operations, or designee, will work with the division's fund manager to determine the latitude available on the request, the university business purpose of the request, and other options which may be available.

## **Fund Manager Responsibilities**

The fund manager (individual responsible for the funds) has the responsibility to ensure that proper documentation procedures are followed for funds that they control and that only authorized expenditures are charged to the fund. Further, the fund manager is responsible for ensuring that any funds which they may control are reviewed at least monthly and any transactions which are incorrect or do not belong on the fund are reported to the Controller's Office. Finally, the fund manager is responsible for ensuring that they maintain a positive or zero cash balance on funds.

## **Payments to Employees**

Regardless of funding source, payments to employees are limited to authorized reimbursements, authorized awards, or authorized salaries. Payments to employees for compensation for work must follow guidelines published by the Office of Human Resources and the Office of State Personnel and must be initiated through the payroll system.

Personal reimbursements must be approved by an individual at a higher level of authority in the university's organization. These purchases should normally be made with prior planning and through the purchase process. Any such approved reimbursement must be documented appropriately for the expenditure. For example, the purchase of supplies would require following purchasing guidelines.  
<http://www.unca.edu/controller>

## **Adverse Weather Events and Other Emergency Conditions**

In the event of emergency weather conditions, certain departments have personnel critical to the university operations which require employees to report to or remain at work in order to provide emergency services. Examples of personnel who might fit this criterion are key individuals from Facilities Operations, Dining Services, Housing Services, Campus Police, and certain other support services. Under emergency circumstances, units which have such critical functions may make prudent and reasonable lodging and/or meal arrangements for critical employees who must be at the university and pay for arrangements from their normal operating budgets, regardless of source of funding. Requests for payment for these expenses should be clearly documented including the nature of the emergency, names of personnel covered, date(s) of the event, and any other relevant information which might serve to document the expenditures.

## **Penalties and Charges Resulting from Cancellations of Travel Reservations**

Penalties and charges resulting from the cancellation of travel reservations (including airline, hotel reservations and conference registrations) shall be the department's obligation if the employee's travel has been approved in advance and the cancellation or change is made at the direction of and/or for the convenience of the department. If the cancellation or change is made for the personal benefit of the employee, it shall be the employee's obligation to pay the penalties and charges. However, in the event of accidents, a serious illness or death within the employee's immediate family or other critical circumstances beyond the control of the employee, the department may pay the penalties and charges. For Penalties and Charges Resulting from Cancellations of Travel Reservations see:  
<http://www.unca.edu/policies/3.pdf>

## **Travel Reimbursements and Expenditures**

A complete set of travel reimbursement procedures may be found at:  
<http://www.unca.edu/policies/3.pdf>

## **Internet Connections**

Home internet connections are considered the equivalent of home telephones, i.e., personal expenses which are not reimbursable. In rare cases, a specific connection may be paid for by the university if it is required by the university and is for the convenience of the university. An example would be an internet connection needed for a research project which required a special hookup and monitoring outside of normal working hours. The simple use of a home computer and home internet service for business purposes is not considered justification for reimbursement.

## **Long Distance Telephone Calls**

Long distance telephone calls are allowable from university funds only for university business. In the event of an emergency, or certain situations allowable during travel status, long distance telephone calls may be allowable. (See travel policy). Should *circumstances* arise which necessitate a university employee to make a personal long distance or cellular phone call not covered in the above, the employee should immediately notify his or her supervisor and make arrangements to reimburse the university.

## **Moving Expenses**

When authorized, moving expenses for *new* employees must be paid from discretionary or foundation funds. Moving expenses should be carefully documented and charged to account code 739300. Using the appropriate account code is very

important because the code drives the tax reporting for the moving expense payments.

### **Expenditure Account Codes**

Expenditure account codes are codes that must be used when processing financial transactions to identify various classes of expenditures, for example, salaries, travel, supplies, equipment, etc. The actual codes will provide even more detailed breakdowns of these groupings. This coding scheme gives the university the ability to create reports that include, or are broken down by, the various classes of expenditures. Information regarding expenditure account codes for coding expenditures may be found in the Office of Financial Affairs website under Quick Links (List of Account Codes).

### **Program Fund Codes**

Program fund codes (also known as Purpose Codes) are codes that help to classify financial activity by its function, for example, instruction, institutional support, research, or public service. These codes are not needed to code a financial transaction but are built into the financial system for each fund at the time the fund is created. Because of the need to report financial activity by function, a fund may not be classified into more than one function.

Program codes may impact the way funds can be spent. For example, expenditures for scholarships may only be made from accounts with the Student Financial Aid program code. If an individual had a discretionary fund and wished to use it to fund a scholarship, a separate fund would need to be created to expend from for the scholarship or the funds could be transferred to an already existing scholarship fund.

### **State Budget Codes - General Operating Funds**

This group of funds consists of state appropriated funds, federal appropriated funds, and receipt supported funds in the state budget code. The Educational and Technology fees are included in the receipt supported funds in the state budget code.

These funds should provide for expenditures for the normal activities necessary to operate the university. The nature of the purchases will depend upon the mission of the unit and the types of supplies, equipment, etc. necessary to accomplish that mission. To a certain degree, the appropriateness of expenditures will depend on that mission. For example, a purchase of a streetsweeper might be appropriate from the Facilities Division budget, but inappropriate from the English department's instruction budget.

## Miscellaneous State Budget Code Rules

The following provides information on many specific items as to their allowableness or prohibition for expenditures from State operating funds. This is not an exhaustive listing, however; these are some of the most frequent items that are encountered.

1. *Membership Dues* - Membership dues may not be paid for individual employees or for the benefit of an individual employee. Membership dues paid from state funds must be for the benefit of the university and not the individual. If the university is to benefit from an individual's membership in an organization, that benefit should derive not because of the individual, but because of the individual's position with the university, regardless of who is in the position. Although a membership may be in the name of an individual, their membership terminates at the same time they terminate employment with the university or move to another department. (State Budget Manual 4.7.4)
2. *Passports and Visas* - Reimbursements for costs incurred in obtaining or renewing a passport may be made to an employee who, in the regular course of their duties, is required to travel overseas in the furtherance of official university business. Passport expenses are chargeable to the same fund that supports the employee's trip. The university also interprets this to mean that similar related fees or expenses such as required visas may also be reimbursed. (State Budget Manual 5.1.19)
3. *Scholarships* - Scholarships may be paid from state funds only if they are part of a legislatively approved and separately budgeted scholarship program.
4. *Promotional Items* - A promotional item is an item purchased for advertising purposes to be given to an employee or non-employee. Normally, the item would have the name of a department or program printed on it with a message or telephone number.

Promotional items paid from state funds should be of minimal value and should be charged to the advertising account code 737000. In the cases of office supplies which may have the name of a department printed on them at nominal cost, these items would be coded to the supplies account code. Examples of appropriate purchases of promotional items from state funds are as follows:

- a. Health/safety related - example, purchase of small refrigerator type magnets or pencils with the university's emergency telephone number on them, it being in the best interests of the university and the state to ensure that the emergency number is readily available.

- b. Mission and program related - example, purchases of pencils with the University of North Carolina at Asheville's name and admissions number on the pencils by the university's Admission's department.
- c. Office supplies with the name of a department or workshop printed on the materials so long as the cost of the printing is not excessive;

Examples of inappropriate purchases of promotional items from state funds would be the purchase of t-shirts, coffee cups, six-pack coolers, lunch bags, or other items which would primarily be used for personal purposes and/or would have more than a nominal value. Articles of clothing or meal related items generally fall in this category unless they are part of a required uniform (would not then be considered a promotional item).

### **Unallowable Purchases from State Budget Codes**

There are some purchases that are specifically not allowable from state funds. Listed below is information about unallowable purchases:

1. The purchase of alcoholic beverages and "setups" is prohibited from state funds.
2. The purchase of items for personal use is prohibited.
3. The purchase of food, coffee, tea, drinks, candy, snacks, break refreshments, etc. for consumption by employees or guests is prohibited from state operating funds under all circumstances other than those provided for under university and state travel regulations. The travel regulations provide specific guidance as to allowable reimbursable expenses for meals when in travel status.

State budget regulations do provide for the following:

- *External Conference:* (External conferences are those that involve the attendance of persons other than the employees of a single state department, institution or agency.) Purchase of refreshments for coffee breaks not to exceed \$4.50/participant per day is allowable when the following criteria is met: There are twenty or more participants; conference is planned in detail in advance with a formal agenda or curriculum; there is a written invitation to participants, setting forth the calendar of events, the social activities, if any, and the detailed schedule of costs. Assemblies should be held in state facilities; however, non-state facilities can be rented and the cost charged to a state agency. For further information see State Budget Manual 5.8.3
- *Internal Conference:* (Conference involving the attendance of employees within that particular department, institution or agency only. A routine staff meeting is not an internal conference.) Purchase of refreshments for

coffee breaks not to exceed \$4.50/participant per day is allowable when the following criteria is met: There are twenty or more participants; conference is planned in detail in advance, with a formal agenda or curriculum; there is a written invitation to participants setting forth the calendar of events and detailed schedule of costs. Meeting must be held in state facility when available. For further information see State Budget Manual 5.8.4 and 5.8.5

- *Training Sessions:* (Courses that further develop an employee's knowledge, skill, and ability to perform the duties of his/her present job.) Department sponsoring training sessions may provide refreshments for "coffee breaks" provided there are twenty or more participants and costs do not exceed \$4.50/per participant per day. Departments may also reimburse employees for training books and materials related to training sessions provided those books are required to participate in the training sessions. These books are considered property of the department and not the personal property of the employee. For further information see State Budget Manual 5.8.6 and 5.8.7
4. The purchase of medications (pain relievers, aspirin, etc.) and/or medical supplies for staff/employees other than as may be required by federal or state regulations or for emergency first aid is not allowable.
  5. The purchase of microwave ovens, coffee pots, refrigerators, or related items for personal office use is not allowable. This prohibition does not extend to equipment or supplies utilized for educational or research purposes.
  6. The purchase of plants or flowers (live or artificial) for decorative use in an office is prohibited except purchases by the Facilities Division as part of campus maintenance. Purchases of food, flowers, and plants are permissible when purchased for use in research, education, or for consumption by research animals rather than for decorative or personal use.
  7. The purchase or framing of pictures, art, diplomas, etc. for use in a personal office for decorative purposes is not allowed. Exceptions include the purchase/framing of motivational or informational wall hangings which are functional rather than decorative in nature and are intended for departmental use rather than for one individual's office.
  8. The purchase of party items or other decorative items to decorate an office for a holiday or party or general decorative use including the purchase of balloons and other like items is not allowable.
  9. The purchase of picnic tables for a department other than by the Facilities Division as part of the campus maintenance function is not allowable.

10. The purchase of picnic items (paper plates, cups, napkins, forks, spoons, etc.) for office/employee use is not allowable.
11. The rental of portable water dispensers and the purchase of bottled water from state funds is not normally (see exceptions below) allowable and is considered a personal expense. In the event that the quality of the water in a campus building is in question, the department should have the water tested. The Facilities Division may be contacted to determine if additional water fountains are needed in a campus building. A portable water dispenser can be rented or bottled water purchased from state appropriated or overhead funds only if there is a health/safety reason for the purchase. Examples would be if a temporary condition existed where water quality in a facility was below state standards or when university personnel (for example, Facilities' personnel) are working under weather or other conditions where water is not available otherwise.
12. The purchase of gift cards, flowers, or other gifts for employees or non-employee is considered a personal expense and is not allowable.
13. The purchase of get well cards, sympathy cards, birthday cards, Christmas cards, or other holiday cards is considered a personal expense and is not allowable.
14. The purchase of personal clothing items or t-shirts which are not part of required uniforms, safety related, or program related (for example, use in a specific research) is not allowable.

### **State Budget Codes - Educational and Technology Fees**

The Educational and Technology Fee (ETF) is used for two major purposes:

1. the provision of equipment, supplies, and maintenance for departmental laboratories with specific curricular objects, and
2. the provision of campus-wide student computer services.

These funds are student mandatory fees and like state appropriated funds, must follow all state guidelines and must be used for the purposes above.

## **State Appropriated Carryforward Funds**

State appropriated carryforward funds are state operating funds which have not been expended as of June 30 of a fiscal year and have been approved to “carry forward” as budget in the next fiscal year. Expenditures of these funds follow the same guidelines as normal state appropriated operating funds except that, with the approval of the Vice Chancellor for Finance and Operations, and inclusion in the budget flexibility plan, funds may be transferred to capital improvement codes and used for renovation and/or new construction projects. Once transferred to a capital improvement code, the carryforward funds cannot be transferred back to an operating code.

## **Overhead Receipts Trust Funds (Grants)**

(Fund number range 552100-553999)

Expenditures from overhead receipts funds must follow the same guidelines as those for state appropriated operating funds except that the funds may be transferred to the capital improvement budgets for use in renovations or new construction.

## **Sales and Services Trust Funds**

Expenditures from sales and services trust funds follow the same guidelines as those for state appropriated funds except that funds may be used to purchase meals and/or refreshments for conferences or workshops when a fee charged to participants and deposited into the trust fund includes provision for the meals/refreshments. The exception for food/refreshments is specifically limited as described above and must be included in the fund authority for the project. Purchases from a sales and services trust fund must be for the purpose of supporting the activities for which the fund was created and all costs of providing those services including salaries must be charged to trust fund. Funds received from sales of baked goods, t-shirts, and other similar items by students or faculty as part of student fund raising efforts are exempt from the requirement to be treated as state funds. These funds are treated as gifts in determining how they may be expended.

## **Auxiliary and Related Trust Funds**

Auxiliary and similar operations that collect receipts for services include the Bookstore, Student Center, University Dining, Transportation, Housing, Student Health Service, University Printing, and Central Stores. Expenditures from auxiliary funds must follow the same guidelines used for state funds except when used for certain program related activities as noted in the individual auxiliary sections below.

In all cases, state funds expenditure guidelines must be followed when using the funds for staffing an office (for example, Bookstore office personnel) or carrying on activities which are similar to state funded activities. No extra benefits, compensation, food, or any other item which could not be paid from state funds may be provided to university employees.

**Bookstore** - Must use state appropriated funds guidelines for administrative related operations for university employees as noted above. May purchase items falling outside the state funds guidelines for seasonal retail display items (fall, winter, spring, and summer) used to enhance or promote product, and for promotional giveaways (may be food related) used exclusively for the intended customer base (students, faculty, and staff). (Also, see vending receipts section below for additional information regarding expenditures.)

**Student Center** - Must use state appropriated funds guidelines for administrative related operations for university employees. May purchase items falling outside the state funds guidelines for activities/programs for students sponsored by the Student Center(s) or for decorating the Student Center facilities.

**University Dining** - Must use state funds guidelines for administrative related operations for university employees. May purchase items falling outside the state funds guidelines for program activities relating to university dining services or for decorating the Dining Center facilities. May also purchase alcoholic beverages in the event they are part of a recipe used in the Dining Services catering operation. (See vending receipts section below for additional information regarding expenditures.)

**Transportation** - Must use state appropriated funds guidelines except may purchase items falling outside state guidelines when the items are purchased as part of providing a specific service contracted and paid for by a department such as Housing or Athletics. The items purchased outside the state funds guidelines must be an integral part of the contracted service and appropriate for the program to which they are being provided.

**Housing** - Must use state appropriated funds guidelines for administrative related operations for university employees. May purchase items falling outside the state funds guidelines for student activities/programs related to the housing program.

**University Printing** - Must use state appropriated guidelines.

**Central Stores** - Must use state appropriated guidelines.

## Receipts from Vending Facilities Trust Funds

The term “vending facilities” includes both of the following: (1) any mechanical or electronic device dispensing items or something of value or entertainment or services for a fee, regardless of the method of activation, and regardless of the means of payment, whether by coin, currency, tokens, or other means; and (2) a snack bar, cafeteria, restaurant, café, concession stand, vending stand, cart services, or other facilities at which food, drinks, novelties, newspapers, periodicals, confections, souvenirs, or related items are regularly sold. [N.C.G.S. 143-12.1(g). N.C.G.S. 111-42(d)]

North Carolina general statutes specifically restrict the use of vending receipts. The following uses of net proceeds from the operations of vending facilities are authorized:

- a. Scholarships and other direct student financial aid programs;
- b. Debt service on self-liquidating facilities;
- c. Any of the following student activities if specifically authorized by the Chancellor:
  - Social and recreational activities for students residing in self-supporting university housing. However, expenditures for these purposes shall not exceed the amount of total net proceeds derived from vending facilities located in such housing facilities;
  - Special orientation programs for targeted groups of students (eg., peer mentor programs);
  - Operating expenses of scholarships and other student awards and honors programs.
- d. Specified use of net proceeds as a condition of certain gifts, grants, or bequests. (For example, a condition of a gift of a vending facility to the university might be that proceeds are to support some specific segment of the university.)
- e. Retention to provide for working capital, replacement of facilities and equipment, and other purposes to support the continuing, orderly operation of the particular self-supporting service operation.
- f. Transfers to other self-supporting student service operations and authorized capital improvement projects, upon the written recommendation of the chancellor and subject to the written, advance approval of the president.  
[N.C.G.S. 116-36.4]

**Contracts and Grants Trust Funds**  
(Fund number range 552100-553999)

Contracts and grants must follow all state appropriated funds guidelines, sponsor specific terms, and conditions noted in the awards documents unless excepted as noted below.

Exceptions to the state funds guidelines are allowable only when superseded by more stringent authority (e.g. Federal OMB A-21). An example of an exception would include a Federal or Federal flow through sponsor specifically allowing for the payment of travel expenses at a Federal per diem rate (for example, for foreign travel) or allowances for food costs for seminars or workshops associated with the objectives of the award.

Contracts and grants are subject to Cost Accounting Standards (CAS) set forth in OMB Circular A-21. Cost Accounting Standards and other guidance in Circular A-21 are applicable to Federal and Federal flow through awards as well as any other external funds referencing Circular A-21 and/or CAS in their terms and conditions.

**Remaining Available Balances from “Fixed Price” Contracts Trust Funds**

Expenditures of remaining balances available after all costs related to the contract have been paid for a “fixed price” contract must follow the guidelines for state appropriated funds.

**Gift and Endowment Income Trust Funds**  
(Fund number range 556001-556999)

Expenditures from gift and endowment income funds must be made prudently with the intent of the donor in mind and follow the restrictions set by the donor. Expenditures for alcoholic beverages are subject to the same restrictions applicable to general state funds (i.e. not allowable). The primary purpose of an expenditure must be for the benefit of the university and, therefore, not for the direct benefit of an employee.

**Endowment Principal Funds**

Endowment principal funds are funds provided to the university, normally in the form of a trust or gift, for investment to generate income. The income may be unrestricted or restricted for a particular purpose.

Expenditures are not allowable against these endowment principal funds. All endowment related expenditures must be made from *endowment income funds* (see above).

### **Student Activity Fee Trust Funds**

Student activity fees may be expended for student activities including the purchase of items which may not be paid from state funds so long as a prescribed student budget allocation process is followed in the allocation of funds. The funds may not be used to fund activities for university staff or university staff offices which could not be purchased from state funds (see guidelines above). No extra benefits, compensation, food, gifts, or any other items which could not be paid from state funds may be provided to university employees except where food is incidentally served to employees attending a student function. Expenditures for alcoholic beverages are prohibited.

### **Patent Royalty Trust Funds**

Patent royalty funds are royalties derived from licensing of a patent. These funds must be used for support or research. They are flexible in nature and may be used like an unrestricted gift, including payment for items which could not normally be paid from state funds, so long as the funding is for the benefit of the university and not for the personal benefit of an individual.

### **Orientation Fees Trust Funds**

Orientation fees are fees paid by students to fund the new students' orientation program. The fees may be used for payment of normal orientation expenses including food and refreshments for student orientees, orientation training (includes training retreats), and other expenses as necessary to provide a full orientation experience for students. Expenditures for alcoholic beverages are prohibited. The funds may not be used for refreshments for university staff meetings or other business which is outside the confines of the retreat, orientation training programs, or orientation program.

### **Discretionary Trust Funds**

Discretionary funds, those funds that are not budgeted to be used for some specified purpose, can be used to meet a broad range of university needs. The flexibility that is associated with discretionary funds is vitally important to the university. At the same

time expenditures of discretionary funds must be consistent with a number of general guidelines as set out below.

- Each expenditure of discretionary funds must be for a valid university purpose. These expenditures (whether for meals, travel, lodging, entertainment, official functions, gifts and awards, or memberships) must follow all university policies that apply to that type of expenditure and must be accompanied by appropriate documentation including receipt(s), purpose, date, location, and names of persons involved.

The very flexibility associated with discretionary funds means that determining the propriety of some expenditures will require judgment. In these cases, the prudent person test applies. The individual making the decision about the expenditure must be comfortable with the prospect that the specific expenditure would come under the scrutiny of individuals outside the university.

- Expenditures that confer a personal benefit upon the individual authorizing the expenditures are not allowable. Expenditures for items such as a retirement gift or an employee award that are authorized by one individual to be received by another are allowable.

Use of discretionary funds for donations or contributions to non-profit organizations is not permitted unless a substantial university purpose can be demonstrated and the receipt of the donation by the organization does not threaten the tax exempt status of the university or its foundations.

Discretionary funds come from fund raising and interest that may be allocated to departments by the Chancellor. Sales and services projects may not be used to provide funds for discretionary use.

### **Agency Trust Funds**

This category includes funds held by the university as fiscal agent for student, faculty, and staff organizations where it has been deemed in the best interests of the university to provide an accounting service. These funds do not belong to the university and the university does not determine what they can be spent for except as follows:

- a. The university requires a formal approval process to ensure, to the extent possible, that funds in these projects are not misused.
- b. The funds should not be spent for any purpose which would be detrimental to the image of the university.

The university does not require the custodian of an agency fund to utilize university travel and/or purchasing regulations or guidelines for expenditures of funds except that adequate documentation is required to ensure that an authorized person is initiating an expenditure request.

The majority of agency funds are student organization projects or clearing accounts utilized by the Controller's Office.

### **Foundation Funds**

(Fund number range 991001-999806)

Non-endowed Foundation funds are primarily derived from contributions by private donors. These funds are held in the Foundation which is a non profit corporation. Purchasing and spending policies and procedures are currently being written.

### **Other Information**

#### **Expediting Fee for H1B-Visa Forms (Form -907)**

Normal processing of an H-1B petition is currently taking between 4-7 months, while paying a premium processing (expediting) fee will ensure a response within 2 weeks.

Payments for expediting fees for H1B-Visa Forms may track the salary funding source so long as the payment is made for a business reason for the convenience of the university and not the employee, except that contracts and grant funds may not be used to pay the fee. The expediting fee is considered a business expense, specifically, a recruiting expense. Some examples of how the funding sources would track are as follows:

#### **Salary Source**

State funds  
Contracts/Grants  
Gift funds

#### **Possible Funding Sources for Expediting**

State funds or discretionary funds  
Overhead funds, discretionary funds  
Gift funds, discretionary funds