

Food Policy and Procedures

Special Meals, University Meals, light refreshments, catering, and payment requirements

APPROVAL AND TIMING

All Special and University meals require prior approval from the appropriate Vice President and Purchasing at least seven days before the event. All meals must be preapproved and encumbered on a Banner requisition before the event.

CORE REQUIREMENTS

- The purchase must comply with University policy, the funding source, and NSU mission.
- On-campus departments and University-sponsored events may not self-cater.
- Catering must be provided by the University contracted food service vendor unless Campus Dining grants a written exception.

MEAL TYPES

SPECIAL MEALS Banner Account 704211 PO Type SM. Extraordinary meals governed by PPM 49 for employees who are not in travel status.	UNIVERSITY MEALS Banner Account 704210 PO Type CO. Authorized meals for student organizations and departments using public funds for catering or food intended for consumption.
--	---

FINAL TEST

If the meal does not have a clear, documented University business purpose and the required approvals, it is not allowable.

SPECIAL MEALS

Banner Account 704211 | PO Type SM

Extraordinary meals must be in the best interest of the State of Louisiana and Northwestern State University.

AUTHORIZED CIRCUMSTANCES

- Visiting dignitaries, executive-level representatives of other governmental entities, or individuals providing identified gratuitous services to the State. Routine visits, meetings, and reviews are excluded.
- Employees required by a supervisor to work more than 12 hours on a weekday or more than six hours on a weekend to meet critical deadlines or respond to emergencies.

EXAMPLES

AUTHORIZED

Community leaders or board members; legislative delegates; event-staff meals; University committee working meetings; employment candidates only.

NOT AUTHORIZED

Departmental training or workshops; meals for interviews; NSU employee meals with candidates; routine departmental meetings; internal planning sessions.

GSA MEAL ALLOWANCES

Meal	Standard	Approved 25% overage
Breakfast	\$16.00	\$20.00
Lunch	\$19.00	\$23.75
Dinner	\$28.00	\$35.00

SPECIAL MEAL PROCESS

Before and after the event

Submit the request on time and complete all post-event documentation before payment.

BEFORE THE MEAL

- Complete the Request for Special Meals Form.
- Submit the request to the appropriate Vice President and then to Purchasing at least seven days before the event.
- Include requester name, meal date and time, estimated participants, estimated price per meal, justification, and Banner requisition number.

AFTER THE MEAL

- Submit the Special Meals Sign-In Sheet and a copy of the invoice or receipt to Purchasing.
- Include the Purchase Order number, actual cost, participant names and affiliations, and all required approvals.

PAYMENT

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

After the PO has been processed and the meal has been provided, submit the APV and original invoice or receipt to Accounts Payable.

DOCUMENT CONSISTENCY

Use the same event date, purpose, participant information, requisition number, PO number, and cost information throughout the request, sign-in sheet, invoice support, and APV.

Banner Account 704210 | PO Type CO

University Meals must support an authorized University function and protect the health and safety of attendees.

AUTHORIZED EXAMPLES

- Freshman Connections.
- Career fairs.
- Camps held on campus.
- Athletic team meals during multi-game events.

NOT AUTHORIZED

- Workshops.
- Appreciations Meals.
- Award Ceremonies
- Graduation Receptions.
- Food purchased as incentives or prizes.

CATERING REQUIREMENTS

- Use Campus Dining, Sodexo, for food preparation, catering, and service whenever possible.
- If Campus Dining cannot meet timing or budget needs, obtain written approval from Campus Dining Management before using an external provider.

EXTERNAL PROVIDER DOCUMENTATION

- General Liability coverage of at least \$1,000,000.
- Workers Compensation coverage, when applicable, or a signed indemnification statement.
- Certificate of Insurance listing Northwestern State University as Certificate Holder.
- Current health certificate from the Louisiana Department of Health, Office of Public Health.
- Disclosure of prior federal, state, or local regulatory violations.
- Current occupational license or certificate of exemption.

LIGHT REFRESHMENTS

When refreshments are more appropriate than a meal

The event scope and duration should support the expense, and food should not be the primary purpose of the event.

WHAT COUNTS AS LIGHT REFRESHMENTS

- Coffee, water, soft drinks, or punch.
- Cake, cookies, pastries, fruit, snacks, or similar items.
- Food that supplements an event but is not intended to replace a meal.

WHEN REFRESHMENTS MAY BE ALLOWABLE

- University-sponsored events, receptions, recognition ceremonies, student recruitment, community engagement, or conference breaks.
- Events that do not span a normal meal period.
- Events where the primary purpose is not providing food.

MEAL OR REFRESHMENT?

CHOOSE REFRESHMENTS

The event occurs outside a normal meal period and the business purpose can be supported with a limited, cost-effective option.

CHOOSE A MEAL

Breakfast, lunch, or dinner is specifically authorized under the Special Meal or University Meal provisions and has the required approval.

REFRESHMENT LIMIT

Refreshments may not exceed \$5.50 per person for each morning and/or afternoon session. A mandated gratuity may be added when catered.

SPECIAL SITUATIONS

Food for laboratory or classroom use

Apply the following rules when food is purchased for a non-consumption educational purpose.

FOOD FOR LABS OR CLASSROOMS

NOT INTENDED FOR CONSUMPTION

Food purchased for laboratory or educational use and not intended for consumption is not subject to this Food Policy. The purchase must still comply with NSU Purchasing Policies and Procedures.

DEPARTMENT REMINDER

- Select the most reasonable and cost-effective option needed for the business purpose.
- The fact that food is offered does not, by itself, justify purchasing a meal.
- Keep every approval and supporting document with the purchase record.

QUICK REFERENCE

Food Policy and Procedures

Standard comparison points used across NSU Purchasing guides.

Timing	Submit for Vice President and Purchasing approval at least seven days before the event.
Special Meals	Account 704211 PO Type SM Extraordinary meals under PPM 49.
University Meals	Account 704210 PO Type CO Authorized University functions.
Catering	Use Campus Dining. Obtain written approval before using an external provider.
Meal limits	Breakfast \$16; lunch \$19; dinner \$28. Approved 25% overage: \$20, \$23.75, and \$35.
Refreshments	\$5.50 per person per morning and/or afternoon session, plus mandated gratuity when catered.
Payment routing	Special Meal documentation goes to Purchasing; APV and original invoice or receipt go to Accounts Payable.
Not allowable	A meal without a clear documented University business purpose and required approvals.

NEED HELP?

Contact Purchasing before the event if the meal type, business purpose, funding source, catering method, or required documentation is unclear.