

The Office of Finance and Treasury would like to share an update to the business expense policy guidance, previously issued this past spring. There is no change to the existing business expense policy, however we have revised our guidance to help clarify circumstances where certain expenses are allowable for the 2020-2021 academic year.

We have highlighted specific updates below to help you plan your programs and activities:

- **Meals** – The cost of food, meals, and associated delivery expenses incurred while working or attending virtual business meetings remotely is not an allowable expense. However, for student focused activities, there may be circumstances where food is a central part of the program’s curriculum or community building purpose even if performed remotely, and thus would be an allowable expense with the appropriate departmental approval. An example of an allowable meal expense could be a virtual program where food is being provided to students to foster a sense of community. Purchases can be made centrally via a University credit card or through personal reimbursement. Please note that gift cards for meals are not an allowable expense.
- **Gifts to Employees and Nonemployees** – Gifts to employees and non-employees of a modest value are allowable in limited certain circumstances such as in recognition of certain personal and professional events. Additional information can be found in the [business expense policy](#). As a reminder, holiday gifts are not an allowable expense.
- **Gift cards** – These are allowable only if approved by the Human Subjects Committee of the University Research Board. Cash or cash equivalent awards made as part of official University programs are treated as taxable compensation and paid through payroll. Because of IRS regulations, cash or cash equivalents (such as gift cards, gift certificates, or points on a University card) are not appropriate as gifts or awards.

Thank you for your collaboration and patience as we continue to navigate these extraordinary times. If you have any questions on the guidance mentioned above, please feel free to contact the Financial Service Center at [finance@princeton.edu](mailto:finance@princeton.edu) or 609-258-3080.