

PENN STATE PURCHASING CARD

“FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS”

Last updated 15 January 2009

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For a complete listing of restricted goods and services, please see the following link:

<http://guru.psu.edu/policies/PSU/BS14exc.html>

Question #26: *“What is my Purchasing Card activation number?”*

Answer: - Your activation number is the last 4 digits of your Penn State ID number.

Question #25: *“Can I purchase items from ebay with my Purchasing Card and use Paypal for payment?”*

Answer: - Yes. It is permissible to purchase items from ebay, but your Financial Officer must grant approval PRIOR to making the purchase. The reason for this is that there is a higher risk associated with buying from unknown vendors on ebay and purchasing used equipment with no warranty. Also, all transactions come in under the merchant name ‘Paypal’ and under one merchant category code, regardless of what was purchased. This results in minimal data being available electronically to determine what type of product was purchased and whom it was actually purchased from. The Financial Officer must be consulted beforehand to assure he or she is comfortable with the type of products being purchased based upon the cardholder’s role or duties. In some situations, a Financial Officer may grant permission for a cardholder to purchase from ebay on a regular basis (a type of blanket approval) due to the type of items they routinely purchase. It is OK to use Paypal to make payment, however, you should not store your Purchasing Card number with Paypal. There have been an increasing number of hackers that have successfully broken into merchant’s computer systems where thousands of stored credit card numbers have been compromised.

Question #24: *“Do I have to take the Purchasing Card quiz on-line”?*

Answer: - Yes. Unless there is a compelling reason why you cannot take the quiz electronically (i.e. you have a handicap that does not allow) you must take the quiz on-line. If there is a reason why you cannot take the quiz on-line, special arrangements can be made by calling the Purchasing Card Coordinator.

Question #23: *“What do I do if my Purchasing Card is declined by a merchant”?*

Answer: - If your card is declined, you should call the Purchasing Card Coordinator who will check your account to find out the reason why your card was declined. Usual causes include the merchant entered the wrong expiration date, you are over your daily or cycle limit, or the card is blocked for the merchant category code (MCC) that the vendor is identified with. In any case, the Purchasing Card Coordinator will be able to work with the merchant and PNC Bank to resolve the problem assuming that it is an allowable use of the Purchasing Card.

Question #22: *“What do I do if there are unknown or suspicious charges on my statement”?*

Answer: - If there are unknown or suspicious charges on your statement, you should immediately call PNC Bank, at 1-877-PSU-4PNC to cancel your card and avoid any additional unknown charges. You should then file a dispute for the unknown charge by filling out the Billing Inquiry Form on the back of the statement and faxing it in to PNC Bank. Keep a copy of the fax confirmation as your proof of dispute. PNC will then investigate the charge. Disputes must be filed within 60 days.

Question #21: *“I’m changing departments, do I have to get a new card”?*

Answer: - Yes. When you leave the department, you should turn your Purchasing Card in to your Reconciler who will then cancel the account. Your new department will issue you a new card with new budget information.

Question #20: *“What do I do if I lose my card at night or on a weekend”?*

Answer: - If you lose your card at night or on a weekend, you should immediately call PNC Bank, at 1-877-PSU-4PNC and report the card as lost/stolen. On the following business day, you should call the Purchasing Card Coordinator and your Reconciler

and/or Financial Officer who will follow up by submitting a UPCA form in IBIS to cancel the card.

Question #19: *“How do I change my name or address on my Purchasing Card or statement”?*

Answer: - To change your name or address you should contact your Reconciler or Financial Officer who will submit an Update Purchasing Card Authorization (UPCA) form in IBIS with the correct information. This information will then be sent to PNC Bank to update your account. If your name has changed, a new card will be mailed to you.

Question #18: *“Can I pay for services with the Purchasing Card”?*

Answer: - Services that are not paid and reportable on an IRS 1099 – IRS 9 form may be paid for with the Purchasing Card. Services reportable, as 1099 must be paid for with a Special Request for Check (SRFC).

Question #17: *“Can the Purchasing Card be used for the rental of equipment”?*

Answer: - The card may be used for the rental of equipment if no signed agreement or contract is required. The card may NOT be used for the rental of charter aircraft, watercraft, tents or any purchase requiring a signed legal agreement or contract. Employees are not authorized to sign agreements unless authorized by the Board of Trustees.

Exception: Because of a master agreement between Penn State and Best Event Rental, the Purchasing Card may be used at Best Event Rental for the short-term rental of equipment and tents.

Question #16: *“May I use the Purchasing Card for entertainment expenses”?*

Answer: - You may purchase non-PSU event or admission tickets (museums, concerts, sporting events) with the Purchasing Card, but your Financial Officer must approve prior to the purchase to verify a business purpose and to validate the funding source.

Question #15: *“May I use my Purchasing Card for Travel Expenses”?*

Answer: - Use of the Purchasing Card is permitted for the following travel expenses:

Units on Employee Reimbursement System (ERS):

- All travel costs permitted if cardholder has travel limits activated, has passed the Travel portion of the Purchasing Card Quiz and has signed the cardholder agreement. For additional information, refer to the Travel Policy.

Units Not Yet on ERS:

- Air and rail travel when booked through Penn State’s travel self-booking system, PSU designated contract travel agencies, or PSU Travel Services.
- Lodging and meals at Penn State operated facilities for employees on travel status.
- Lodging and meals for group travel involving non-employees (i.e. team or student field trips), although use of a Purchase Order is encouraged.
- Conference registration
- Travel expenses in accordance with PSU travel policies for non-employees who are guests of PSU.

Question #14: *“May I purchase lab animals on my Purchasing Card”?*

Answer: - NO. Because a quarantine period must pass with live animals, and preserved (dead) animals carry their own hazard potentials, the acquisition of ALL laboratory animals must be approved by the Laboratory Animal Resources Program in the Central Bio Lab (under Veterinary Sciences in the College of Agricultural Sciences). Therefore the purchase of ANY animal is prohibited on the Purchasing Card. (Note that animal blood IS permitted.)

(reposted 13 May 1997)

Question #13: *“I am interested in receiving a journal but must become a member of the organization to receive it. Although memberships are excluded, can I use the Purchasing Card because I really want the journal”?*

Answer: - YES. The Purchasing Card may be used when the membership is an incidental result of the transaction such as to receive journals or other data sources or conference registrations where membership provides a net cost savings for registration. All individual and institutional memberships where membership is the primary purpose of the purchase MUST be approved by the Budget Executive, therefore, an SRFC must be used rather than a purchasing card so that approval can be obtained.

Question #12: *"I would like to purchase something over the Web (Internet). May I use the card for this purpose"?*

Answer: - There are security issues with using a credit card over the World Wide Web (Internet). As with any purchase you are making, you must be sure that your card number is protected. If you feel confident that your credit card information will be secure, you may make a purchase over the Web (be sure you will get a receipt!). To be sure you have a secure site, check the "Key" icon on your browser (usually in left hand bottom corner). If the Key is solid (and on a black background), it should be a secure site. If it is broken, the site is NOT secure and the card should NOT be used. Our recommendation would be to use caution in making purchases over the Web.

Question #11: *"I need to make a purchase with a certain supplier, but they insist on charging sales tax. What should I do"?*

Answer: You may make the purchase, but contact the Purchasing Card Coordinator with the name and address of the supplier for follow-up with that supplier to assure that future purchases are processed as sales tax-exempt.

Question #10: *"If I am arranging for a meeting or conference at a non-University location, may I use the card for the guarantee for meeting rooms? What about conference-attendee rooms? What about related meals during the meeting / conference"?*

Answer: As long as there is NO agreement that you or the University has to sign, this is a valid use of the card.

Question #9: *"We have invited a guest to present a seminar (for example), may I use the card to hold (and/or pay for) their hotel"?*

Answer: As long as the guest is not an international, guaranteeing or paying for the room is OK. Making such arrangements for an international however is NOT valid because the INS penalizes the University severely if we pay or cover expenses for certain international individuals. (See [GURU's](#) Central Offices' Manual, under Payroll, for a grid, which explains paying expenses for internationals.)

Question #8: *"Realizing that employee hotel and meal travel expenses are not a valid use of the card for Units not yet on the Employee Reimbursement System (ERS), but that charges to the Nittany Lion Inn and the Penn Stater Conference Center Hotel are already directly billed, may I use my card for staying and eating at the Inn or the PSCCH"?*

Answer: Yes. Lodging and meals at Penn State-operated facilities for employees on travel status is permitted for all Units with the Purchasing Card.

Question #7: *"I have occasion to rent items for a University activity - or some AVS equipment or other items needed for a meeting or conference, may I use the card"?*

Answer: As long as there is no agreement that requires signature (beyond the acknowledgement that you have certain (identified) equipment and that you are going to return it on a stated date), use of the card is OK. Be aware, however, that if there IS a contract that would hold the University liable for any eventuality, the card is NOT to be used, and the agreement must be processed through Purchasing Services via an IBIS REQR. The rental of tents is NOT permitted on the Purchasing Card due to liability concerns.

Exception: Because of a master agreement between Penn State and Best Event Rental, the Purchasing Card may be used at Best Event Rental for the short-term rental of tents and equipment.

Question #6: *"There are times when we must rent a moving van or truck to move equipment, etc. May I use the card to cover the costs"?*

Answer: YES. When a truck is rented for a short term, physical damage insurance should be accepted and paid for. The Purchasing Card should not be used for long-term truck rentals.

Question #5: *"I work at University Park, may I use the card to cover out-going or incoming packages, or to purchase postage"?*

Answer: NO. Since University Mailing Services handles the out-going mail, and arrangements may be made with a service provider for over-night out-going and incoming deliveries for account billing (vs individual package billing), the card may not be used for this purpose.

NOTE: At non-University Park locations, it is all right to use the Purchasing Card for

out-going shipments. (You may be able to negotiate a better rate with a 'sub-master' plan however, by working with Purchasing Services!)

Question #4: *"May the card be used for making installment payments (e.g., \$150 per month for 4 months)"?*

Answer: NO. The University does not permit installment payments to be made on the card.

Question #3: *"We have occasions to hire a temporary help service to fill in for vacations, etc. May I use the card for this"?*

Answer: The card may be used for temporary services ONLY from the following companies that are University contract suppliers:

- Preferred Staffing Solutions
- Adecco
- Manpower
- The HR Office

Any other sources of temporary services must be acquired via Special Request for Check (SRFC).

Question #2: *"There are dozens of times that I need to acquire items that appear on the "Exceptions to the Use of the Purchasing Card" list in the Procedure and Policy. Is there any way that I can arrange for an exception?"*

Answer: If there are items on the exceptions list that you must purchase on a regular basis (monthly or more frequently), you may write a memo to the Financial Officer stating your need and a rationale for your requirements. The Financial Officer will consult with the budget administrator or budget executive, and if appropriate, submit the request to the Assistant Controller (Financial Officers) and the Purchasing Card Coordinator. These folks will determine if the exception should be approved. If approved, it would be for your card and your card only (rather than for the entire administrative area). The Financial Officer should make a copy of the written approval for you, and also make sure that the reconciler has a copy of this exception.

Question #1: *"I have a need to acquire cylinder gases (Oxygen, Acetylene, etc.) for my research at remote sites. May I use my card for this purpose"?*

Answer: You may NOT use the card for cylinder gases at University Park or Hershey. At locations OTHER than UP and HY, using the card is OK.

