

**SUNY Upstate**  
**Research Foundation**  
**Procurement Card (P-Card)**  
**Guidelines**

**Bank of America Visa**

Rev. 1/12/22

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### **I. What is a P-Card?**

The Research Foundation Bank of America VISA Procurement Card (P-Card) provides a convenient method for principal investigators and authorized staff to purchase small dollar materials, lab supplies, meeting expenses and allowable travel costs such as registration, lodging and airfare necessary to conduct sponsored research at SUNY Upstate University.

#### **General Guidelines**

- All purchases made with the Purchasing Card ("P-Card") are subject to RF policies and procedures including the RF Travel Handbook Unrestricted Expense Policy and the Research Foundation Unrestricted Expense Policy.
- P-Cards are issued only with the approval of the campus Operations Manager ("OM") or designee.

### **II. Who Can be Issued a P-Card?**

Only Principal Investigators, co-investigators and project-authorized signers of unrestricted sponsored programs and RF Institutional accounts can be issued P-Cards. P-Cards are not authorized for Agency type accounts (IE: MSG). P-Card user must be either a Research Foundation (RF) or State University of New York (SUNY) employee. P-Card user must have signatory and purchase authorization.

### **III. Application Process**

To obtain a P-Card, each individual must complete an application and submit it to the Compliance Administrator in Sponsored Programs Post Award. The Compliance Administrator will verify applicants' authorization for P-Card privileges. If approved, applicant will be contacted to pick up and sign for their card upon arrival. The P-Card should arrive in approximately 7-10 days. See Appendix A for the application.

A requisition must be submitted on Self-Serve in the amount of \$5,000 to reserve funds of the project/task/award. The submission will need to have BOA listed as the Supplier and the requisition number should be provided to the Compliance Administrator when returning the signed application. That designated PTA will be encumbered for the credit limit extended.

## IV. Card Purchases

### A. Dollar Limits

Individual transactions cannot exceed \$2,500. The monthly limit is generally \$5K. The transaction and monthly limit are hard limits and cannot be exceeded. Orders must not be split in order to facilitate use of this P-Card. If the project being charged is over expended, the PI must identify another source of funding to cover the purchase. Each Purchasing Card will have a preset limit. This amount can be increased with Operations Manager "OM" or designee approval.

### B. Responsibility of P-Card users

Each P-card user will be responsible for verifying all charges associated with the specific award/project number.

The RF Purchasing Card is the property of Bank of America. It may not be transferred to, assigned to, or used by anyone other than the card holder. Bank of America or the P-Card Administrator may suspend or cancel the P-Card privileges at any time for any reason. The Cardholder will surrender the P- Card upon request, to any authorized agent of the RF or Bank of America.

#### 1. Required Purchasing Practices:

**Keep your card in a secure location and do not give your card or account number to anyone other than the supplier from whom you are making the purchase.**

Use of this P-card is strictly limited to the purchase of commodities and expenses that comply with RF Travel, Procurement and Unrestricted Funds Policies.

**The P-card is not to be used for personal charges.** Improper use will result in P-card privileges being revoked.

If your purchase will exceed the per transaction limit, do not split your order so that you can use the P-Card. Use traditional purchasing procedures or contact the RF Purchasing Department at (315) 464-5720 for assistance.

Please be sure that funds are available at the time of purchase and will still be available the month following the charges since they will not be charged to that account until the statement is available and reconciled.

#### 2. Placing Your Order

**Orders may be placed by phone, online, or in person.**

- Notify suppliers that the purchase is tax exempt and provide the NYS Tax Exempt Number or tax-exempt certificate if necessary. Only do business with suppliers who will accommodate our tax exempt status. Out of state tax charges are allowable and chargeable to RF projects if you are in travel status outside of NY. If you are ordering while in NYS the purchase must be tax exempt. If the cardholder pays taxes while doing business within NYS it is their responsibility to obtain a credit or refund the amount with a check payable to the Research Foundation.
- The RF is also tax exempt in the following States: California, Florida, Kentucky, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Tennessee and Texas. This info is also located within the RF Tax Exempt Policy
- Give the supplier your name as it appears on the card, the account number, and the card expiration date.
- The cardholder is responsible for ensuring that the PTA will allow for each given expense otherwise the cardholder will be liable for those charges.
- All related invoices should be sent directly to the ordering P-card user. All merchandise should be delivered to central receiving who will then deliver the materials.
- Submit monthly the completed P-Card Monthly Requisition on Self-Serve. Attach all receipts and bank statement to the form.

NOTE: If making your purchase in person: Obtain an itemized receipt, in addition to the credit card receipt and check the credit card receipt to insure accuracy before signing. Receipts that do not clearly list the items purchased will not be considered adequate documentation.

**C. Examples of generally allowable sponsored purchases (up to \$2,500). All purchases are subject to sponsor guidelines. Please inquire with Compliance Administrator if questions about unusual purchase or have general related P-Card questions:**

- ❖ Registrations for conferences and seminars
- ❖ Books
- ❖ Supplies and materials
- ❖ Film processing
- ❖ Postage
- ❖ Printing
- ❖ Shipping charges (UPS, Federal Express, Airborne, etc.)
- ❖ Online purchase of any of the above
- ❖ Allowable Travel (i.e., airfare, car rental, taxis, shuttles, parking, lodging, registration, gas, etc.) Only travel items that are receipted.

**D. Unallowable or Restricted Items on Federal Sponsored Programs:**

- ❖ Personal use
- ❖ Flowers, greeting cards
- ❖ Personal celebrations and gifts of sentiment (birthdays, retirements, etc.)
- ❖ Staff morale and recognition
- ❖ Gift certificates, gift cards, stored-value card
- ❖ Recognition gifts
- ❖ Alcoholic beverages, coffee service, etc.,
- ❖ Orders exceeding the \$2,500 limit – use traditional purchasing methods
- ❖ Maintenance agreements
- ❖ Medical services
- ❖ Cash advances, Cash back on purchases, Cash refunds on returns
- ❖ Controlled substances (e.g., narcotics and prescription drugs) ❖ Live animals, Radioactive materials, Specialty gases/cylinder rentals
- ❖ Any material, agent, or toxin identified as a Select Agent or Toxin by U.S. Government regulations.
- ❖ Purchases requiring a contract and signed university authorization
- ❖ Contracted services from an individual
- ❖ Leases, insurance
- ❖ Monthly recurring or automated charges
- ❖ Computers
- ❖ IT supplies without justification as to why the item is necessary to achieve the aims of the study. See Appendix E for memorandum.
- ❖ Food purchases are not allowed, nor lunch, dinner or breakfast unless in travel status

**PLEASE NOTE: ALL TRANSACTIONS RELATED TO A DONATION, GRUBHUB AND INSTACART ARE ALL UNALLOWABLE ON ALL AWARD TYPES.**

## **E. Unrestricted Funds Policy**

1. Expenditures of Unrestricted Funds must be used to fund expenses of the RF operating locations, or SUNY that support:
  - Instruction,
  - Organized research and other sponsored activities, or
  - Institutional activities that support the SUNY Academic and Research Mission at UMU
2. In order to be paid directly by the RF or reimbursed to an individual, an expenditure of Unrestricted Funds must be:
  - Necessary to perform a valid business purpose fulfilling the mission of the RF or SUNY.
  - Reasonable in that the expense is not extreme or excessive, and reflects a prudent decision to incur the expense commensurate with the business purpose. The determination of reasonableness of the dollar amount of an expenditure must take into account relevant factors including the business purpose, the

context, the source of funds, and the circumstances surrounding the expenditure.

- Appropriate in that the expense is suitable and fitting in the context of the valid business purpose, with the primary benefit to the institution, not an individual's personal benefit.

**See the current Unrestricted Fund Expense Policy at the following link:**

[http://www.rfsuny.org/media/RFSUNY/Policies/unrestricted\\_fund\\_expense\\_policy\\_pol.htm](http://www.rfsuny.org/media/RFSUNY/Policies/unrestricted_fund_expense_policy_pol.htm)

All purchases must be made in a reasonable, rational, cost effective manner and support the SUNY UMU Academic and Research Mission. To be allowable and allocable, the purchase must be related to the program purpose. All activity is subject to periodic audit to monitor compliance with policies and procedures governing this program. Improper use will lead to suspension of privileges.

## **F. Funding Restrictions**

Before placing any order, insure funds are available in your project/award. Funding will not be available to cover expenses that exceed a grant balance. P-Card should not be used during the last 90-days of an externally sponsored award/project or after an award/project terminates. Questions regarding this restriction should be directed to the P-Card Administrator. In the event of an unallowable expense, the PI is responsible to identify another source of funds to cover the expense(s).

## **G. Payment or Account Reconciliation**

Your **monthly** review, must be completed by the end of the month following the billing period close and must include the following:

- Review the BOA statement.
- Attach **all** applicable original receipts for travel and non-travel to Self-Serve.
- Any charges for sales tax are identified as a credit pending or write a personal check to cover the tax amount made out to The Research Foundation.
- Ensure credits appear on the BOA statement for any returns. If a charge appears on your BOA statement for an item ordered, but not received, contact the supplier to resolve the matter. Suppliers should not submit charges to BOA until the goods have been shipped. If you cannot resolve the matter with the supplier, follow the process for disputes within 15 days. (see page 9). □ Any unauthorized transactions must be reported to BOA for dispute.

## **H. PI or Delegate Approval of P-Card Transactions**

If the reviewer does not agree with the monthly statement, the card user will be asked to verify the documents and explain the reason for any discrepancy.

Principal Investigators or Project Directors must inform the P-Card Administrator or Campus Purchasing of any transfer or termination of a card user or the transfer or termination of the designated reviewer.

## V. Questioned Items & Returns

### A. Card user Responsibilities

Whenever an item purchased with the P-card is returned to the supplier, the P-Card user must request that the supplier issue a BOA Visa credit. Under no circumstances will cash be accepted to resolve a credit situation.

#### 1. Sales Tax

The Research Foundation is tax exempt. If a charge for NYS sales tax appears on the BOA Statement, the P-Card user will contact the supplier directly to arrange to have this charge reversed. Ask the supplier to credit your account for the sales tax charged and note the credit pending on the transaction log; attach the documentation showing that the request for a charge reversal was made. BOA will not assist with sales tax issues, this is the cardholder's responsibility. If you are unable to obtain a credit, a personal check must be made out to The Research Foundation.

#### 2. Returns and Credits

All credits and returns should be documented on a requisition with the supporting documentation and filed in your file for reconciliation of the next statement.

To make a return, contact the supplier directly to determine the proper return procedures. Any credits issued will appear on a subsequent Visa statement. A requisition is required for all credits received, including statements that are a negative balance.

#### 3. Items not Received

If a charge appears on your RF BOA Visa statement for an item ordered but not received, contact the supplier to resolve the matter. Suppliers should not submit charges to Visa until goods have been shipped. **Report unauthorized transactions to BOA for dispute within 15 days.**

**If you cannot resolve any of the above matters with the supplier with the exception of sales tax, follow the process for disputes below.**



## 4. Disputes

If the P-Card user cannot resolve a dispute with a supplier or there is a charge that is unauthorized or unrecognized on the card users' Visa statement, the card user must initiate a dispute with BOA Visa within 15 days of the transaction appearing on the statement. To initiate a dispute, the card user should contact BOA directly at 888-449-2273 and also notify the P-Card Administrator or Campus Purchasing at (315) 464-5720. When submitting your reconciliation you will want to identify those charges as fraudulent and detail that BOA was contacted.

### B. BOA Responsibility

BOA will issue a credit to the card user's account and process the appropriate chargeback for all questioned items resolved in favor of the Research Foundation.

## VI. Lost or Stolen P-Card

### A. Card user Responsibility

**Any lost or stolen P-Card must be reported immediately to BOA Customer Service at 888-449-2273. Immediately following this verbal notification, the card user must also report the lost or stolen card to P-Card Administrator at 315-464-5720. A replacement card will not be issued unless the P-Card administrator is also notified.** The card user should be prepared to give their name exactly as it appears on the face of the card, the account number, the card's expiration date, and a brief explanation surrounding the loss.

Failure to comply with this notification process will result in the card user becoming personally liable for the fraudulent use of the card.

### B. RF BOA Visa Card Responsibility

BOA will take immediate action to cancel the card reported lost or stolen. BOA will initiate steps to issue a replacement card as soon as possible. The replacement card will be sent directly to P-Card Administrator in Campus Purchasing. The card holder must pick it up from the P-Card Administrator's office and sign to verify they are in receipt of the card.

## VII. Liability

The PI and or P-card user is responsible for all unallowable purchases, disallowances, misuse, fraud and costs not covered by RF or sponsor. This will also result in the termination of the P-Card. It is important to report immediately any lost or stolen P Cards to BOA and the P-Card Administrator at Campus Purchasing. Failure to comply with this notification process will result in the card user becoming personally liable for the fraudulent use of the card.

## **VIII. Termination of P-Card Privileges**

Improper use of the P-card by the card user will lead to termination of all P-Card privileges. Failure to reconcile activity as noted in these guidelines will also lead to termination of all P-Card privileges. P-Card usage will be audited periodically.

### **A. Misuse or Abuse of the P-Card**

The term "misuse or abuse" means the use of the P-Card outside the card users authorized parameters (e.g., charges in excess of the permitted limit; split-ordering, purchases of items of a type other than those allowed, failure to reconcile as noted within these guidelines, failure to report card lost or stolen, sharing card or the card number with another person). The P-Card will be revoked when misuse or abuse occurs.

#### **Abuse includes, but is not limited to:**

- Habitually failing to submit a monthly reconciliation report by the monthly deadline.
- Purchasing items for personal use.
- Failure to return the P-Card when terminated, or upon request.
- Failure to maintain proper records in accordance with RF guidelines.
- Using P-Card after receiving notice of its cancellation

### **B. Fraudulent Use of the Card**

The term "fraudulent use" means the use of the P-Card with a deliberately planned purpose and intent to deceive and thereby gain a wrongful advantage for oneself or anyone else other than the RF. The following actions will be taken:

- Immediate suspension of card privileges;
- Removal of card user's purchasing authority;
- Mandate employee reimbursement to the RF; and
- Formal disciplinary action which may result in termination of employment.

### **C. P-Card user Separation**

If the P-Card user leaves SUNY Upstate or joins another department, the PI or card user will send the cut up card to the P-Card Administrator in Campus Purchasing with a request to cancel the account. The P-Card Administrator will direct BOA to cancel all P-Card privileges for any card user who leaves Upstate Medical University for any reason. The card user will make all attempts to complete any outstanding reconciliation(s).

The P-Card user will continue to be liable for any charges incurred by the P-Card user until BOA is directed to cancel the P-Card.

#### **D. Failure to Submit Requisitions via Self-Serve in a Timely Manner**

**If the statement and receipts are submitted late 2 times within a consecutive month period the card will be cancelled. The escalation process is as follows:**

- **1st email communication goes out if a cardholder is one month behind submitting backup and a supervisor gets cc'd,**
- **2nd email communication goes out if a cardholder is two months behind submitting backup and the department chair gets cc'd, and if the paperwork is not received after second email the card gets terminated.**

### **IX. Audit of Individual Accounts**

It is important to note that the RF as well as external sponsors may elect to audit any and all P-Card activity at any time. Performance of these audits does not require advance notice. Therefore, it is extremely important that all project investigators and or staff retain accurate records of all transactions made using their assigned P- Cards. Copies of reconciliation documentation should be kept on file in the P-Card users office for 6 months.

### **X. Key Contact Information**

#### **Research Foundation at SUNY Upstate Medical University**

Sponsored Programs Post Award and P-Card Administrator  
(315)464-4666  
CAB 209

Accounts Payable and Travel

(315) 464-4978  
SLC 2025

Campus Purchasing and P-Card Administrator  
(315) 464-5720  
SLC 2048

## **BOA CUSTOMER SUPPORT**

### **TO REPORT AND CANCEL LOST OR STOLEN CARDS:**

**Call BOA at 888-449-2273**

This number is available twenty-four (24) hours per day, seven (7) days per week.

Immediately following this verbal notification, the card user must also report the lost or stolen card to P-Card Administrator at 315-464-5720.

## **XI. Acknowledgement**


We want to sincerely thank Donna Scuto and Carol Julian from the University of Buffalo and Buffalo State Campuses for generously allowing us to customize their P-Card guidelines and adapt it as we see suitable for the Upstate campus.

## **Appendix A**

Add new BOA Visa Application

## **Appendix B**



To: Principal Investigators, Business Managers  
From: Debbie Weber, Sponsored Programs Administrator   
Subject: Office and IT supplies on federally funded accounts  
Written Justification Now Required  
Date: February 17, 2016

This past year our campus was audited by The Research Foundation's Internal Audit Department in which they reviewed departmental processes and performed a risk assessment. A few items that were found to be unallowable on federally funded accounts were office supplies and computer/IT supplies and the expenses were moved to other accounts. These types of expenditures are considered indirect costs and not allowed as direct charges to federally funded accounts.

Under NIH guidelines, costs not readily identified or allocated to a specific project or activity incurred for the benefit of multiple projects or activities are considered indirect costs. Office supplies and IT costs are usually for the benefit of a group and are consumed by office staff or lab staff on a daily basis. Items such as toner cartridges, pens, paper, flash drives, binders, or office machines are not allowable costs. IT supplies such as hard drives, routers, software, or IT support are not allowable costs. These types of purchases are deemed to be for the daily use of all staff and not related to any specific account or grant.

There are instances where office supplies or IT supplies are necessary to complete the aims of a project or projects. If a specific type of computer is required to run a scientific program or perhaps binders, magazine racks, etc are needed for outreach programs then they may be allowed. In these situations you must provide a written justification stating how these items are necessary to complete the aims of your federally funded project when you submit a purchase requisition.

Upstate is scheduled for a federal A-133 audit this May/June and we are instituting this new requirement to be pro-active and avoid any audit findings. I understand providing a justification for these types of purchases is additional work, but by doing so we hope to avoid having to move charges and trying to find an acceptable account.

Cc: T. Boyle  
S. Delaney  
S. Mascari  
G. McMahon  
B. Moore  
J. Rudes

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## **Appendix C**

Add Expenditure Guidelines for Business Meetings, Social Events and Recruitment Meals, Exception Approval for Alcohol Form, Social Even Pre-Approval Form and the Policy Memo