

ASC Guidelines for Employee Recognition Events and Holiday Gatherings

Issued: October 15, 2018
Revised: January 17, 2025

These guidelines apply to employee recognition events throughout the year and to celebrations over the Holidays.

Employee Recognition:

According to the University's Expenditure Policy, the University recognizes the contributions of its employees in achieving its overall mission and encourages departments to acknowledge these contributions through employee recognition. Such programs include formal award programs, appreciation of service programs, and general celebratory events of all kinds where University funds are used to support expenses.

For more information, see the following university policies and guidance:

- [Expenditures](#)
- [Reward and Recognition](#)
- [Faculty and Staff Appreciation Guidance](#)

Celebratory Events:

Approval workflows are as follows -

- Event at a Chair/Director's house or any off-site location – Chair/Director expense needs approved by the College Divisional Dean.
- Event at an off-site location, Chair/Director not attending – Chair/Director provides approval.
- Event in the office or OSU location, Chair/Director attending – Chair/Director expense needs approved by the College Divisional Dean.
- Event in the office or OSU location, Chair/Director not attending – Chair/Director provides approval.
- If the College Divisional Dean will be in attendance, please seek College approval from the Chief Administrative Officer through your Finance Director.

Budget Guidance:

Units must honor limits on frequency and amount that may be spent from **any** University funding source in support of unit-wide events including summer picnics, year-end events, celebrations that recognize service upon departures, and holiday celebrations - including lunches or receptions). Excluded are welcome receptions for new hires, student events, and departmental seminars/training events.

Units should spend no more than \$75/employee from University funds. Supplementing this amount through personal contribution of funds in support of food and beverage expenses is allowed, however, supplementing alcohol expenses is not allowable. As an example, a unit with 10 employees may spend no more than \$1,500 annually on these events (\$75/person x 10 employees x 2 events). Cost Center Manager's are responsible for tracking these expenditures for their cost center(s).

This limit does not include rental fees for space, tables, chairs, etc., which should be kept to a reasonable minimum due to the abundance of existing OSU facilities. The limit, excluding taxes and reasonable tip, includes all food, beverage, entertainment and gifts. All applicable tax rules must be followed if giving gifts to employees. Expenses for rental fees, formal awards or gifts in specific recognition of service or accomplishment, food, and non-alcoholic beverage may be expensed to general funds in accordance with the University's Expenditures policy; however, all alcoholic beverages, entertainment, and holiday gifts must be expensed to discretionary funds.

Also, important to note, the \$75/employee from University funds is the total budget, inclusive of any allowable non-employee guests, such as spouses/partners. Guests may be included as allowable and appropriate, but the budget is set by the number of OSU employees present. Units should document the names of individuals in attendance, similar to that utilized for business meal expenses.

Other Considerations:

- ASC Guidelines for the Purchase of Alcohol still apply as follows:

https://ascintranet.osu.edu/sites/default/files/asc_guidelines_for_the_purchase_of_alcohol_5.14.14_0.pdf

