

AUGUSTA STATE UNIVERSITY
Purchasing Card
User's Guide

AUGUSTA STATE UNIVERSITY
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ASU PURCHASING CARD PROGRAM

USER'S GUIDE

PREFACE

By implementing the ASU Purchasing Card Program, The Augusta State University has taken the next step to provide departments more flexibility in making small dollar supply purchases and to significantly reduce the paperwork and processing time.

The State of Georgia has directed that all State agency purchasing card programs are modeled after their program. This User's Guide sets forth guidelines consistent with the State's program. The state's policies and procedures are located at:

http://statepurchasing.doas.georgia.gov/vgn/images/portal/cit_11783501/37106590_pcard.pdf.

The Purchasing Card is the Institution's primary tool for making small dollar supply purchases. Implemented in 2000, this program has proven effective and efficient in making purchases within delegated purchasing authority. We welcome your feedback to ensure that the program meets the campus' needs.

Acceptance and use of the purchasing card requires significant responsibility for the cardholder. Employees who use the p-card are required to follow all Georgia Department of Administrative Services purchasing rules, regulations, and guidelines. Additionally, specific Augusta State University p-card rules and guidelines are presented in this manual. Infractions, whether inadvertent or blatant have serious consequences. Be sure that you have a full understanding of all purchasing card procedures and the consequences of violating those procedures before accepting the responsibility for use of the purchasing card.

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Overview of the Purchasing Card Program

P-Card Overview

The State of Georgia Purchasing Card (P-Card) is a valuable tool for quickly and efficiently purchasing and paying for small value supply items.

What is the Purpose?

Most goods and services that faculty and staff require for their ongoing duties are within the \$5,000 small purchase level. Such expenditures currently average only about \$200. Given this fact, it makes sense that the Institution creates streamlined small order procedures. The process must include safeguards that enhance public trust. The ASU Purchasing Card Program accomplishes that goal while significantly reducing necessary paperwork and processing time.

To take advantage of these benefits requires only that existing purchasing procedures continue to be followed and that the purchases are made from vendors that accept VISA. As with all purchases, sources available under existing State of Georgia and ASU contracts must be considered first; however, the use of the card is by no means restricted to these contracts. The few restrictions are addressed in the "Restricted Purchases" section of this guide. Otherwise, cardholders are encouraged to use the P-Card for items appropriate to the legitimate needs of the Institution, within State, Institution, and Departmental guidelines.

**THIS CARD IS NOT TO BE USED FOR PERSONAL PURCHASES OR AS
PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.**

Who Benefits?

Using the p-card benefits the cardholder and department in the following ways:

- It allows employees to obtain many goods and services faster and easier;
- It significantly reduces paperwork and processing time in the employee's department, as well as in Accounts Payable and Purchasing;
- It provides cost savings through consolidated payment (one monthly payment to the Card Issuer, covering all p-card transactions versus individual vendor invoices).

Important benefits for vendors include:

- Receiving payment in three business days;
- Elimination of after-sale invoicing and collection activities;
- No additional applications or paperwork necessary if they are already VISA merchants.

P-Card Program Contacts

Purchasing Card Program Administrator:

Cookie Eubanks
Augusta State University
2500 Walton Way
Augusta, GA 30904

(706) 737-1766 Phone/Voicemail
(706) 721-1761 Fax
meubanks@asu.edu

The Purchasing Card Program Administrator is responsible for the overall planning and management of the purchasing card program, to include assisting departments in determining how to use the p-card to fit their needs, planning and coordinating training, customer service, processing p-card request forms, changes in cardholder information (name, address, increase or decrease in card limits, etc.), disputed transactions and post-audit review.

The Purchasing Card Administrator is responsible for the desktop and field audits, including planning and scheduling review of departmental internal controls and transaction detail. Also included are reviewing compliance issues with departments and making recommendations for improvement to include preparing draft finding reports for director review.

Bank of America

The cardholder must call Bank of America immediately upon discovering that the card has been lost or stolen. Also call or e-mail ASU's P-Card Program Administrator on the first available business day during normal business hours at (706) 737-1766. All other p-card issues must be directed to the listed P-Card Program Administrator.

Please share suggestions for improving the ASU P-Card program including suggestions for training, this guide, and procedures with the P-Card Program Administrator.

How to Get a P-Card?

The Request Form

Completing the P-Card Request Form is the first step in obtaining a p-card. The form must be approved by the department head, and submitted via hand delivery, email, or campus mail to the P-Card Program Administrator. Pay careful attention when completing the form. The request form includes the following areas:

Employee Information

When filling out the request form the following items are required:

- The cardholder's complete department name
- The name the cardholder wishes to appear on the p-card (preferably as seen on the ASU Identification Card)
- The cardholder's social security number

- The cardholder's work extension
- The cardholder's ASU email address
- The departmental approver name and email

Department (approval) Information

The request form also requires the following departmental information:

Default Account

Each card issued will be assigned a default account which is identified by the Department Head on the P-Card Request Form. This is the PeopleSoft account string that will automatically apply to every p-card transaction unless changed during the reconciliation process. Any additions, deletions, or changes must be submitted via email to the P-Card Program Administrator prior to the cycle cutoff.

Cardholder Monthly Limit

The department head is responsible for suggesting the cardholder's monthly spending limit which can mirror the monthly budgetary limits for supplies within the department. If this space is left blank on the request form the spending limit will be set by the P-Card Administrator.

Department P-Card Approver

The departmental P-Card Approver (Usually the chair, director, etc.) is a designated representative that makes all p-card requests and oversees departmental p-card processes.

Electronic Reconciler

The reconciler is the individual who will receive the paper or electronic statement, allocate charges to the appropriate account strings, enter the appropriate cost centers (account codes) for each transaction, and return the statement on or before the due date each month.

Statement Approver

The statement approver is the individual - Chair, Director, or Department/Administrative Manager - that reviews the reconciliation documents and indicates approval by signing the Bank of America paper statement where indicated, or a hard copy of the electronic statement. The approver may delegate approval authority to another individual; this requires a memo or email addressed to the P-Card Program Administrator. The cardholder and approver can never be the same.

Department Head/Manager

The Department Head/Manager is the Chair, Director, or Department/Administrative Manager and must indicate approval by signing the request form prior to submission to the P-Card Program Administrator.

P-Card Orientation Training

P-Card orientation training is the second step in obtaining a p-card. All personnel with purchasing responsibilities who wish to purchase small-value

supply items with the State of Georgia Purchasing Card must complete training before distribution of the p-card. Training details the cardholder, reconciler, and approver responsibilities based on the state purchasing contract with the card provider. In addition to these topics, other topics include:

- The Purchasing Card Program purpose and benefits
- How to make a purchase
- Purchasing resources
- Shipping and receiving requirements
- Spending controls
- The reconciliation process
- P-Card Do's and Don'ts (Restrictions)
- Small and Minority vendor presentation and requirements
- P-Card Compliance Issues (to include possible disciplinary actions for non-compliance)

Employee Agreement Form

The final step in receiving a p-card is the Employee Agreement Form. This form outlines the terms and conditions for use of the p-card and must be signed by the cardholder before distribution of the p-card. By signing the form, the employee attests to:

- Receiving and understanding the procedures for use and protection of the card,
- Understanding responsibilities in the reconciliation process and billing disputes,
- Understanding and accepting consequences of card violations.

Using the P-Card

The p-card can only be used by the assigned cardholder to make small-value supply purchases. The following procedures should be followed for all purchases with the p-card:

Decision to Buy

When making the decision to buy, the cardholder should:

- Review the restricted purchases and the basic purchasing procedures to ensure the transaction is appropriate.
- Review the statewide contracts; if a contract exists for an item, it is mandatory to purchase from the contracted vendor no matter the cost.
- If purchasing faculty recruitment ads, follow established procedures in place by Human Resources and Purchasing.
- Make a concerted effort to include small/minority owned businesses when making purchases. In addition, vary the suppliers to give fair treatment to all suppliers and to assure that the price obtained is reasonable. Varying the suppliers provides small/minority entrepreneurs the opportunity for doing business with ASU.

Making the Purchase

There are three main methods of making purchases. These are:

Over the Counter

When making an over-the-counter purchase

- Verify that the vendor accepts VISA. If not, and it is a supplier you will need for future purchases, notify the P-Card Program Administrator. If so, provide the p-card for payment and make sure the vendor understands that the purchase is exempt from state and local sales tax. If necessary, we can provide a copy of ASU's exemption certificate.
- Verify that no sales and use tax is included in the final purchase price before signing the sales draft.
- Retain the receipt

Phone or Fax

When placing an order via phone or fax

- Provide the vendor with the requested card information.
- Make sure to tell the sales representative over the phone, or indicate on the fax order form, that the purchase is exempt from state and local sales tax. If necessary, we can provide a copy of ASU's exemption certificate.
- Provide vendor detailed shipping instructions to include the proper shipping address and information such as your name and label the package with P-Card or VISA listed on the address label.
- Retain appropriate documentation for the purchase

Internet Orders

When placing Internet orders:

- If available, always use the Governmental or Educational section of the vendor's website for placing orders to ensure tax exemption. If the vendor does not have these sections available the vendor may inadvertently charge sales and use tax. If this is the case, the cardholder must contact the vendor to request a credit to the p-card and if necessary, we can provide a copy of the sales tax exemption certificate.
- Complete the necessary order process and provide card information to include the billing address that appears on the cardholder bank statement.
- Retain appropriate documentation for the purchase

Other things to consider when making purchases are:

Shipping Information

When making purchases via phone, fax, or Internet, give the billing and shipping address in the following format:

Augusta State University, Receiving Office
Department Name - Bldg Name and Room # - Name
2500 Walton Way
Augusta, GA 30904 - 2200

This allows delivery directly to the cardholder with no delay or hold in the Receiving Office. Since there is no purchase order number for the vendor to

reference, the second line of the address creates the Augusta State University delivery information. In the instance that the vendor misdirects a package, most of the campus can direct it to the proper unit. **NEVER SHIP TO YOUR HOME ADDRESS.**

Purchase Returns

If the cardholder determines that the material is defective or incorrect:

- Contact the vendor to request a shipping address and return authorization number. Each department is responsible for the preparation and shipment processes.
- Request a credit the p-card.
- On the transaction log, indicate that goods have been returned for credit by placing a "C" in the received column.

Ensure that the credit appears on the next monthly statement. If not, process the charge as a disputed item.

Spending Controls

Cardholder Spending Limits

Since the Augusta State University, not the individual employee, will pay for the purchases made with the P-Card, additional authorization controls have been added to these card accounts. These limits are imposed at the point of sale when the card is swiped. The available limits on a card include but are not limited to:

Monthly limit suggested by department

Daily limit

Single equipment item \$999.99

The daily and single equipment item limits include shipping and handling charges. Individual cardholder limits are suggested by the Department Head/Manager and are indicated on the p-card request form.

Merchant Activity Type Limits

Specific types of businesses identified by a Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) Codes are restricted on the card). The institution prohibits the use of the card for travel, entertainment, cash advances, and services - other items are listed in "Restricted Items" section of this manual. If you have any problem using your card with a certain vendor, please contact the P-Card Administrator.

Cardholder/Reconciler, and Approver Responsibilities

Cardholder Responsibilities

When accepting the P-Card, the cardholder becomes an authorized purchasing agent for the Institution and has certain responsibilities. These include:

Protection of card

The cardholder must protect the security of the p-card and p-card number. No one may use the card but the assigned cardholder. If the card information is compromised or the card has been lost or stolen, the cardholder must call the card provider. Also call or e-mail ASU's P-Card Program Administrator on the first available business day during normal business hours at (706) 737-1766.

Limitations on Vendors

Purchases from friends, relatives, or from companies where the cardholder has a financial interest are prohibited.

The cardholder must not accept any gift or gratuity from any vendor when it is offered, or appears to be offered, to influence your decision-making regarding p-card purchases.

Purchase Limitations

The cardholder accepts the responsibility to ensure that restricted items are not purchased.

Transaction Log and Receipt Maintenance

The cardholder accepts the responsibilities for maintaining a transaction log and receipts as well as the responsibilities for completing the monthly reconciliation process.

Reconciler Responsibilities

The reconciler receives the statement and is responsible for the following:

- Reconciling the cardholder's transaction log with bank statements and receipts
- Reviewing the reconciliation documents for inappropriate purchases
- Verifying that each transaction is indicated as received on the transaction log
- Verifying that items are billed at the correct amount
- Allocating transactions to the correct department account number, entering the appropriate cost center code (account code), and sending the statement on or before the due date

Approver Responsibilities

Appropriate approvers for each department are the department Chair, Director, and Department/Administrative Manager. The approver has the following responsibilities:

- Reviewing the reconciliation documents and approving the allocations before the reconciler returns the statements each month.
- Reviewing appropriateness of purchased items and utilized funds.
- Identifying and discussing any minor violations with the cardholder to provide additional instruction. Discussions should be documented and attached to the log or bank statement. If major violations are noted, the situation should be documented and attached to the log or bank statement, and appropriate actions taken.
- Affixing the bank statement (paper or electronic) where indicated.

Restricted Purchases

In addition to the limits, which are controlled at the point of sale by the card, ASU limits the use of the card through policy. The card may be used only for purchases, which are made under delegated authority (see DOAS Administrative Policies and Procedures Manual, Section V, pages D3 - D8, Appendix G) or items exempt from review and approval by the Purchasing Department (see Administrative Policies and Procedures Manual, Section V, page 9D Appendix G). The following are restricted for use with the P-Card:

- Sales and use tax
- Office supplies (excluding paper) from vendors other than the current provider, Office Depot. The current provider is the first source of office supplies. While the Purchasing Office will provide notification of any changes to the agreement, it is the cardholder responsibility to ensure they are purchasing office supplies from the current provider. With this provider, you will have next day, desktop delivery.
- Computer parts & components over \$500 (to include shipping and handling) for repairs or upgrading. Examples include memory, motherboards, processors, repair items, etc.
- Computer supplies & peripherals over \$3,000 (to include shipping and handling). Examples include external drives, speakers, printers, scanners, monitors, etc.
- Computer systems or laptops regardless of price.
- Equipment (asset) items over \$3,000 (to include shipping and handling). Examples include digital cameras, audiovisual and lab equipment.
- Wireless communication devices to include cell phones, PDA's with cell phone or wireless capability, pagers, two way radios, and service hookups.
- Hazardous materials and chemicals
- Radioactive materials
- Professional services and consultants. Examples include certified public accountancy, architecture, chiropractor, dentistry, professional engineering, podiatry, veterinary medicine, registered professional nursing, law, psychologists, medicine and surgery, etc.
- Software that does store protected health information (PHI) or sensitive personnel/student information (i.e. social security numbers, etc.), regardless of price, and software over \$999.99.
- Services with multiple payments. Examples include stipends, maintenance agreement payments, etc.
- Controlled assets such as guns, ammunition, explosives, etc.
- Temporary personnel or staffing. Examples include Augusta Staffing, Kelly Girl, MAU, Sizemore, Georgia Personnel Services, etc.
- Travel services such as airlines, hotels (to include reservations), car rentals, gasoline, cash advances, traveler's checks, travel insurance, currency exchanges, meals and beverages, taxis, bus tickets, etc. (Only exception to these services are Athletic Team Travel and International Studies Abroad,)- Certain Agency, Student Activity and/or grant type accounts do have allowable food expense to support the program.)
- Personal items and/or gifts (items are considered personal if they are for the sole use of a state employee). Examples include coffee pots, food/beverages, pictures, plants, gifts for other faculty (retirees), study incentives unless supported by a sponsored account (see note).
- Restaurants, catering, or fast food establishments unless specifically supported by a sponsored account (Grant)(see note)
- Gift Cards to include Phone Calling Cards
- Flowers/florist purchases
- Jewelry

- Entertainment unless specifically supported by a sponsored account
- Building materials to include personal heaters and/or fans. Exception: lab materials
- Split purchases to circumvent credit, daily or single equipment item limits.

Note: If a sponsored account supports any purchase that is otherwise restricted such as personal items/gifts, restaurants, catering, flowers, entertainment, etc., the cardholder must provide a copy of the approved grant/study title page, approved budget, and the page describing allowable purchases. If the cardholder is making food purchases for meetings, luncheons, etc. supported under the grant/study, receipts for food purchases, dates of the meeting, and a list of attendees must be provided to the P-Card Administrator in addition to the grant information previously mentioned.

Transaction Log and Receipt Maintenance

Purchases must be recorded on a transaction log either manually or in a spreadsheet format as they are made. The log will assist the cardholder in keeping track of what has been purchased and outstanding purchases. The log will also facilitate the monthly reconciliation by identifying accounts for redistribution of charges. The log will identify the following information regarding each purchase:

- Date of purchase
- Supplier
- Items (optional)
- Total amount of transaction
- Received (yes/no)
- Cost center (account code)
- Redistribution account

The cardholder is responsible for obtaining receipts, packing slips, or other documentation required for permanent audit documentation of a purchase. These documents must include:

- Vendor information
- Date
- Total transaction amount to include shipping and handling
- Items purchased

The transaction cutoff cycle with the card provider is the 27th of the month. Purchases made after the 27th should be included on the next month's log to facilitate the reconciliation process. Remember, not all items purchased before the 27th will process before the statement cutoff.

Reconciliation process

Purchasing, in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and Best Business Practices, requires that a three-tiered process is in place for each cardholder to provide adequate segregation of duties with regard to the cardholder, reconciler, and approver.

In the event a department does not have adequate staff to support the three-tier reconciliation process, the cardholder may prepare the reconciling materials for approval. The cardholder and approver must never be the same person. Any questions concerning this request may be directed to Cookie Eubanks, P-Card Program Administrator, 737-1766.

Cardholder

The cardholder must maintain the transaction log and receipts. Upon receipt of the paper statement, the cardholder should review the charges for accuracy and appropriateness and compare it with the monthly transaction log and receipts. If items on the statement do not match the transaction log, one of the following should be done:

- Follow instructions for disputed charges.
- If the items purchased have not been received, determine the shipping date. VISA's vendor contract requires billing upon shipment of the order. If adequate information is provided from the vendor to conclude that the items have been shipped, indicate this transaction as "billed" on transaction log. If the items purchased have not been shipped, follow instructions for disputed charges. Any items on the transaction log that were not billed on the bank statement should be carried forward to the next month's log. Disputed items and/or items billed but not received should also be included on the following month's log to facilitate the follow up and reconciliation process for that month. The cardholder should indicate the review of the reconciliation documents by signing the paper statement where indicated and forward the documents to the reconciler.

Reconciler

The reconciler should compare the electronic or paper statement with the cardholder's receipts and transaction log, review for inappropriate purchases, and verify that items are indicated on the transaction log as received. In addition, the reconciler will verify that each transaction is billed at the correct. The reconciler then will allocate each charge to its appropriate Chart Field Code, enter the appropriate cost centers (account codes), and return the statement on or before the due date.

Approver

The approver should review the reconciliation documents and approve the allocations before the reconciler returns the statements each month. The approver will indicate their review and approval by signing the Account Summary and Activity Log where indicated.

Resolving Disputes with Vendors

In the event of an erroneous charge, the cardholder must contact the vendor and attempt to resolve the problem and document the communication (either on the statement, transaction log, or as an attachment to the statement) to include the date, the persons involved, and a brief description of the problem and outcome.

If the cardholder is unable to resolve the dispute with the vendor, he/she should contact the P-Card Program Administrator for appropriate actions and provide all the necessary documentation. A dispute form will be filed with the card provider to ensure that appropriate credit is received for the disputed items. Please note that a dispute form must be filed with the card provider no later than 60 days past the statement closing date in order to place a transaction into dispute. The cardholder should indicate the disputed charge on the paper statement by placing "D" to the left of the item.

Once the dispute has been cleared and the credit appears on the next bank statement, so note.

Lost or Stolen P-Cards

The cardholder must immediately contact the card issuer if the P-Card has been lost or stolen by calling 1-800-538-8788 and notifying the P-Card Program Administrator.

Returning P-Cards

Upon termination, transfer, or retirement, the card will be surrendered to the P-Card Administrator and the return must be indicated on the termination clearance form.

In cases of card expiration, renewals are mailed directly to the cardholder. Notify the P-Card Program Administrator via email or campus mail that the new card arrived and the old card was destroyed.

Payment

The P-Card Program Administrator will receive one monthly statement for all cardholders. Payment will be made on the due date via wire transfer by the card issuer.

Reporting

Transaction activity reports that are broken out by employee and school or department will be provided as requested.

Purchasing Review

The P-Card Administrator will review all p-card activity each month and review each cardholder's reconciliation process annually to ensure compliance with p-card guidelines.

P-Card Violations (Draft Proposal)

Augusta State University (ASU) expects every individual cardholder to strictly adhere to the policies and procedures governing use of the ASU Purchasing Card (P-Card). Failure to do so could result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. Additionally such failure could result in prosecution to the fullest extent of the law, including financial restitution and criminal prosecution. This policy will be administered in accordance with other ASU, State and BOR policy.

Violations of policies governing use of the P-Card can be classified as minor or major. The action taken is dependent upon the type of violation and the number of previous cardholder violation. The Director of Purchasing or P-Card Administrator can suspend a cardholder's privileges without input from the department; however, the department will be notified of any such action. All other actions are determined at the appropriate department level. Any alleged violation or questionable transaction could result in an immediate temporary suspension of card privileges pending a review to determine what, if any, action is appropriate.

Minor Violations

Minor violations are instances that are "accidental" and without willful intent, or a delinquent reconciliation process. Example would include but are not limited to: accidentally using the wrong credit card when doing personal shopping but includes immediate discovery and notification of the P-Card Program Administrator; purchases with the card that should be made through the institution requisition system or some other established means; and failure to reconcile and return the statement in a timely manner. Reconciliation includes "account codes". Statement will close on time each month so that the expenses can be posted to the ASU financials in a timely manner.

Minor violations are considered serious offenses and repeated instances will result in progressive discipline to include termination of employment, if deemed necessary.

Possible disciplinary actions include:

1. Cardholder receives written notice of policy violation and the department head is notified of the violation. Mandatory retraining within 14 days of the P-Card Program Administrator becoming aware of the violation or the cardholder's privileges will be suspended - 1st offense.
2. Temporary suspension of cardholder's privileges for a period of 30 days and mandatory retraining before the cardholder's privileges are reinstated - 2nd offense.
3. Possible suspension without pay for 1-3 days - 3rd offense. These actions will be in full day increments and departments will coordinate with Human Resources before imposing a suspension.
4. Permanent suspension of cardholder's privileges - 4th offense, are now considered major.

Major Violations

Major violations are instances that show "willful Intent" to disregard established policy. Examples include but are not limited to: purchasing equipment or computers, splitting orders to avoid the single purchase limit, or knowingly making purchases for personal use. The circumstances of the violations will determine the appropriate action, which could include termination of employment. Each instance will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Any major violation will result in immediate temporary suspension of the cardholder's privileges and notification of the department. If deemed appropriate the bank, ASU Police, and the appropriate Dean or Vice President will also be notified. Possible disciplinary actions include:

1. Cardholder receives written counseling by the appropriate Vice President, Dean, Chair, or Director. This will be placed in the employee's official personnel file and is only an option for a first offense. Temporary suspension of cardholder privileges for 30 or more days and mandatory retraining before the cardholder's privileges are reinstated.
2. Suspension without pay for 5 days. These actions will be in full day increments and departments will coordinate with Human Resources before imposing suspension.
3. Permanent suspension of card privileges.
4. Termination of employment. Coordination with Human Resources required.