

Procurement Card Guidelines

OVERVIEW

The Corporate Card Program is intended to streamline and simplify the purchasing process for specific types of transactions. The program is **not** intended to avoid or bypass appropriate use of payment procedures (requisitions, purchase orders, payment requests, iBuyNU, expense reports, blankets, etc.).

With the guidance from Northwestern University, the McCormick School of Engineering has implemented the following procedures for cardholders and Supervisors/Approvers. This document was created as a supplement for Northwestern Engineering users and should be used in conjunction with the [Northwestern University Corporate Card Program Cardholder Guide](#). If any of these procedures are not adhered to, Northwestern's Corporate Card Office and the Northwestern McCormick School of Engineering Administration has the right to suspend and revoke a cardholder's corporate card.

GETTING A CARD

To obtain a card, please fill out the [Northwestern Corporate Card Application and Agreement Form](#) (URL).

Unless instructed by the McCormick Financial Operations Manager, the per transaction limit should be \$2,500 and the monthly credit limit should be \$5,000. Also, unless directed otherwise for the McCormick Financial Operations Manager, travel and entertainment categories should **not** be checked.

The application will route for approvals via OnBase first to your supervisor and then to the Financial Operations Manager for Dean's Office approval.

Cardholders are required to complete the [Corporate Card online training course](#) in Northwestern's MyHR Learn.

Cards are issued once the cardholder successfully completes the training and can be picked up from the Evanston Corporate Card Office at 2020 Ridge Ave., 1st floor room 111. Please bring your photo ID for pickup.

USING THE CARD

Purchases must comply with the following: [Corporate Card Cardholder Guide](#); [Northwestern Travel and Entertainment Guidelines](#); [Northwestern Purchasing and Payment Policy](#)

Prior to using the card, cardholders should confirm whether or not the given product or service is available through a Northwestern Preferred Vendor or in iBuyNU. More information is available on [the PPS Preferred Vendor page](#).

The corporate card should **never** be used to purchase gift cards.

Sales Tax

Northwestern University is a tax-exempt 501(c)3 organization for research and education. Therefore, no sales tax should be charged on business-related purchases. The cardholder should inform the vendor of the tax-exempt number for Northwestern at the time of purchase (it is printed on the bottom of the card).

It is the responsibility of cardholders to ensure that no sales tax is charged on their purchases. If sales tax was charged, the cardholder should immediately contact the vendor to have the sales tax reversed. McCormick Financial Operations Manager approval is required for exceptions.

Requesting Changes to a Card

Permanent

Permanent dollar limit and MCC (merchant) code changes on existing cards can be requested as follows:

- For a permanent change, simply fill out the Northwestern [Corporate Card Change Request Form](#) (URL) to the Corporate Card office. The request will route via OnBase first to your supervisor and then to the McCormick Financial Operations Manager for approval.

Temporary Lift Requests

For a temporary change send an email to the McCormick Financial Operations Manager with the following information:

- Type of lift request: Transaction Limit, Monthly Cycle Limit, Merchant Category Limit and (in rare exceptions) enabling Travel and Entertainment
- State the value of the new limit or purchase type requested as well as the needed expiration date of lift. Please note that merchant code lifts are short term – the purchase should be made within two business days of request.
- Brief Justification
- NetID and Name as appears on card

Your card must be in good standing without transactions over 60 days to request a lift.

MANAGING THE CARD

Corporate card transactions are [required to be reconciled within 30 days](#) after the transaction occurs.

How to Reconcile Corporate Card Charges?

The process for reconciling transactions is as follows:

- Transactions are automatically loaded into My Wallet, which is a module in NUFinancials
- Cardholders or their proxy (see below) prepare an expense report in NUFinancials, pulling the transactions into the expense report from My Wallet

- Detailed receipts need to be electronically attached as one combined pdf file. If a receipt only has a transaction total (not line by line purchase), an exception form will need to be completed and uploaded. The Preferred method to route for signatures is DocuSign.
- The chart string and account code need to be verified
- A detailed line description (what was purchased, reason for the purchase) needs to be included for each transaction
- If a proxy prepared the expense report and submitted it on the cardholder's behalf, the cardholder will need to certify their expense report first in NUFinancials
- The expense report will then route to supervisor for approval
- **Please ensure the ER Supervisor field is not blank** prior to routing for approvals. Contact the HR team to make an assignment or gather a wet signature prior to routing in the system

Please review the Knowledge Base job aid "[My Wallet Transactions in Expense Reports in NUFinancials](#)" for a step-by-step walkthrough

90-Day Cost Transfer Form

Unlike other types of financial transactions, Expense Reports will not automatically prompt the submitter when a [90-Day Cost-Transfer Memo Justification Form](#) must be prepared, signed and attached to the Expense Report. The Preferred method to route for signatures is DocuSign.

Prior to routing Expense Reports for approvals in NUFinancials, submitters should verify that all transactions are within 90 days. We encourage submitter, Level 1&2 approvers as well as ER Supervisors to partner in ensuring this important compliance rule is observed.

Proxy Information

To be added as a proxy for another staff member, that staff member will need to add you as an additional expense user in NUFinancials. Go to NUFinancials→Navigator→Travel and Expenses→Manage Expenses Security→Authorize Expense Users.

In *Authorize Expense Users* module, search for yourself using your employee ID or NetID. Then click on the "plus" button to the right of your name. An additional row will appear, and this is where you will search for, or enter, the employee ID of the person that you want to make an expense proxy for you. Be sure to hit "Save"!

Lost or Stolen Cards

If your card is lost or stolen, or if the cardholder suspects the card or account number has been compromised, the cardholder should immediately notify JP Morgan Chase at 800.316.6056 and the Northwestern Corporate Card Office at 847.491.5340. The cardholder should also notify their department head or designated personnel.

What to do when Cardholders leave?

Cardholders who either transfer to a new McCormick department or leave the University should cease use of the card, notify the Corporate Card office and McCormick Financial Operations Manager, and return

the card to supervisor. Cardholders need to make sure all outstanding transactions are reconciled on an expense report and fully approved before leaving. If unable to reconcile transactions before leaving, receipts should be left with someone in the department that will be able to reconcile the transactions on an expense report.

Transfer employees may complete a new Corporate Card Application and Agreement Form, and obtain appropriate department approval, to receive a new corporate card in their new department.

It is recommended that cardholders stop using their card at least one week prior to leaving or transferring so all transactions can be processed. Department must make sure all outstanding transactions are processed on an expense report, with receipts, prior to the cardholder making a transition internally, or leaving the University.

Northwestern Engineering

Quick Guide for Procurement Card Do's and Don'ts

DO'S

Who Can Obtain a PCard?

- Financial Assistants
- Lab Managers
- Program Assistants
- Directors and Administrators, as deemed necessary

Correct Uses of a Procurement Card:

- Conference registration
- Association memberships
- Subscriptions (magazines, professional journals, etc.)
- Low dollar/risk transactions not available through iBuyNU
- Emergency purchases
- Small catering needs(box lunches, food trays; if applicable include attendee list)

Procurement Card Do's for Cardholders:

- Attend mandatory Northwestern PCard training session
- Keep your pcard in a secure location
- Obtain itemized receipts for EVERY purchase
- Make sure the vendor is aware of your tax exempt status
- Allocate transactions to the correct chart string with an accurate business purpose and account code on a weekly basis
- Complete reconciliation of pcard activity on a weekly basis

Procurement Card Do's for Supervisors/Approvers:

- Attend mandatory Northwestern PCard training session
- Verify that purchases are authorized, appropriate, and consistent with all procurement card and Northwestern purchasing policies
- Ensure that the expense report is accurate, complete, timely, and includes itemized receipts for every purchase
- Confirm that transactions were posted to the correct chart string and account code with the appropriate business purpose
- Verify no sales tax has been charged on the procurement card
- Ensure that if a Cardholder is leaving Northwestern, their pcard is in your possession one week before appointment end date

DON'TS

Who Cannot Obtain a PCard?

- Faculty
- Temporary Employees
- Work-Study Students
- Visiting Postdocs, Scholars, and Fellows
- Contractors

Incorrect Uses of a Procurement Card:

- Purchase of any item that can be purchased through iBuyNU (i.e. supplies, computers, toner, printers, etc.)
- Travel (airline tickets, hotels, rental cars, meals, etc.)
- Alcoholic beverages
- Dining (group meals and department outings)
- Deposits for events (catering, hotel reservations, etc.)
- Individual gifts
- Purchases of \$5K or more, including capital equipment
- Purchases of any item not allowed by Northwestern policy
- Personal use

Procurement Card Don'ts for Cardholders:

- Use the procurement card to circumvent the standard purchasing process via iBuyNU
- Use the procurement card for transaction types that are not allowed (see Incorrect Uses of a Procurement Card above) or not in compliance with Northwestern purchasing policies and procedures
- Share your pcard or pcard numbers with others
- Pay sales tax on purchases
- Discard itemized receipts
- Forget to process transactions from *My Wallet* on a weekly basis
- Transfer pcard from one department or program to another