

McCormick School of Engineering Entertainment Guidelines

A crucial aspect of education and research is to develop and nurture a collaborative, interactive environment within the greater community. To this end, faculty, staff and students occasionally gather for informal get-togethers such as seminars, team-building meetings, reviews, networking opportunities, or for planned events such as holiday parties and graduation celebrations. Often these gatherings involve light refreshments or a formal meal. Event planners should consider the cost/benefit of hosting events on campus rather than at outside venues, especially when alcohol is involved.

The University maintains guidelines to address the maximum cost per person limits when planning events to entertain University personnel or guests with the intent of prudent and appropriate stewardship of University resources, regardless of their source. The University relies upon individual judgment at all levels of the organization in determining whether entertainment expenses are necessary and reasonable. It is important to note that funds expended for entertainment are resources unavailable for other important purposes within a department, program, center or office.

All NU-hosted events must be planned in accordance with the required materials as defined by the Contracts and Required Documentation Matrix (link). Particular attention and care must be given to events that service, activities, and/or alcohol, especially when students are in attendance. A licensed bartender with alcohol liability insurance is required at any serving of alcohol, including that of events held in private residences.

These guidelines do not supersede existing University policies. They do provide further specificity for categories that are otherwise undefined in the University's policy. Should there be an expense that is projecting to be over the maximum guidelines, an exception request form is required. Please note that submission of the form should not assume approval. Exceptions will be reviewed on a case by case basis and in some cases may be denied if the expense is not justified and in accordance with University intent for such expenditures.

| Entertainment Category | NU Policy | McCormick Guideline | Notes |
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| NU Department employee holiday parties, appreciation parties, retreats | \$30 per person. Cap includes facility costs. | Aligned with NU Policy | Two (2) events total from the listed categories each fiscal year. Not towards gifts. |
| Organization Meeting: Monthly or Quarterly basis (department, committee, society, faculty organizations) | \$15 per person. Should occur no more than on a monthly or quarterly basis. | Aligned with NU Policy | |
| Student / Researcher Meetings or Events - Any in-person meal or activity | | \$15 per person for meals. Less for refreshments | Must have a programmatic purpose outside of regular defined duties of work, and should occur no more than twice a month. Alcohol prohibited. |
| Introduction of new or retirement of Faculty or Staff | \$15 per person; includes facility costs. | Aligned with NU Policy | |
| In-town meal with visitors: Dinner (includes new faculty recruitment) | \$90 per person including beverages, taxes, and tip. No more than 2-3 NU employees. | Aligned with NU Policy | Option to use fixed price dinner menus at select restaurants; see NU policy |
| In-town meal with visitors: Breakfast, Lunch, Refreshments | | \$38 per person (200% Cook County Per Diem Rate per GSA), including beverages, taxes, and tip. No more than 2-3 NU employees per visitor. | |
| In-town meal with employees | Each employee is to pay for their own meal if discussing University business, with other University personnel, while "in town". | Aligned with NU Policy | |
| Special recruitment or fundraising: Dinner | \$130 per person, including beverages, taxes, and tip for dinners. Reserved for VPs, Deans, department heads, and tenure-line faculty. | May exercise discretion to cap per person limit to a lesser amount than NU limit. No more than 2-3 NU employees per guest. | Requires Department Chair (or Dean's Office) notification and approval. |
| Special recruitment or fundraising: Breakfast, Lunch, Refreshments | | \$38 per person (200% Cook County Per Diem Rate per GSA), including beverages, taxes, and tip. No more than 2-3 NU employees per guest. | Requires Department Chair (or Dean's Office) notification and approval. |
| NU MCC Hosted Events - Conferences, Workshops, Symposium, Seminars, Meetings with External Parties - Dinner | | \$90 per person when in-person; \$40 per person when remote, inclusive of delivery fees and gratuity. | Distribution of gift cards for meals not allowed. |
| NU MCC Hosted Events - Conferences, Workshops, Symposium, Seminars, Meetings with External Parties - Breakfast, Lunch, Refreshments | | \$15 per person when in-person; \$20 per person when remote, inclusive of delivery fees and gratuity. Less for reception refreshments (e.g. coffee, tea, pastries, etc). | Distribution of gift cards for meals not allowed. |
| Graduation Reception or New Student Orientation Events | | \$40 per person, including facility charges. | |
| Graduate Student Recruitment Events - Any in-person or remote meal or activity | | \$65 per person, including facility charges. | |
| Coffee, tea, and water for reception areas where there is public traffic for daily consumption | | Not allowed | |
| Food or beverage purchases for general purpose frequently scheduled meetings or for daily consumption in a classroom or office. | Not allowed | Aligned with NU Policy | |
| Course or program related student activities - Any in-person meal or activity | | Consult with the Dean's office prior to engagement of the event. Liability waiver templates may be available | Releases and waivers serve to minimize legal exposure to the University in event of injury to a participant or property damage in connection with a University-related trip, program, or activity. |