General Reimbursement & Purchasing Rules

- Reimbursement requests must be submitted within 60 days of the purchase.
  - This now includes travel expenses for trips not yet taken (airplane tickets, conference registration, etc.)
- Receipts are required for any request > $50
Chart strings represent how you code a financial transaction. It is composed of values for key chart fields, including account, fund, and department.

Two main formats you will be dealing with:
- Department-Fund-Project-Activity Code (xxxxx-xxxx-xxxxxxxx-xxx)
- Department-Fund-Program Code (xxxxx-xxxx-xxxxx)
Two Sponsored Fund Types

- All MAE chart strings begin with department # 2510x (25100 & 25105 are the only two you will likely deal with)
- “G0001 funds” (25105-G0001-1000xxxx-101*) supported by government sponsors
- “G0002 funds” (25105-G0002-1000xxxx-101*) supported by private (i.e. non-government) sponsors

*Project numbers almost always start with 1000; Activity codes are almost always 101
General supplies are usually unallowable on sponsored funds (i.e. tools, paper towels, paper, toner, pens, tape, batteries, etc.)
- Computers, hardware, & software were recently removed from this category, but **must be justified at the time of purchase!!!**

**Food is not allowed on grants**
*unless during travel or part of a budgeted workshop*
- This includes: lunches for group meetings, coffee for the lab’s coffee maker (and filters), soda & bottled water for fridge, etc.
- Alcohol charges -- never allowed on a sponsored award (including travel reimbursements)

- Membership dues
- Postage (excluding freight)
Policies for Non-Sponsored Funds

- Bear no overhead
- Food Charges
  - Note purpose of the meeting
  - Include list of participants
  - Actual bill showing what was ordered (not just the credit card slip)
- Can be used as “placeholders” for purchases that will be moved later to a G0001 or G0002 fund
Travel and expense reimbursements are submitted through Concur.

Always discuss travel plans with your faculty advisor before making any arrangements.

Book travel at least 14 days in advance.

Get receipts for everything over $50.

Mileage is currently reimbursed at $.54 cents/mile.

You must be 25 to rent a car.
FLY AMERICA ACT
(Foreign travel on federal grants)

- All federally funded travel abroad must comply with this Act and use only US carriers
- EXCEPTIONS to using US carriers:
  - CODE SHARE AGREEMENT
    - Payment must be made through the US carrier
  - OPEN SKIES AGREEMENT
    - For travel in the EU, Switzerland, Australia, & Japan
    - Not applicable to DOS or DOD awards
    - Booked through University travel agency (Carlson Wagonlit)
    - No US carrier provides service for that leg of route
- Best way to ensure compliance: Book through Concur
Meal reimbursement per meal:

- Meal receipt must be your actual order, not your credit card receipt
- Receipt must be in English
- If meals are a part of your meeting registration fee, you can’t request reimbursement
- Meals before leaving and after return are not allowable for reimbursement
Other Travel

- **Foreign Travel**
  - Graduate students are required to register all University-sponsored international travel in Concur
  - Currency conversion must be done on www.oanda.com

- **Personal travel in concurrence with business:**
  - You can only be reimbursed for the business part
  - Check Concur or a travel site (Orbitz, Expedia, etc.) and print a trip itinerary as if you were only going on the business trip. This is what you will be reimbursed.
Concur

- Accessed from the Prime Travel Portal (travel.princeton.edu)
- Used for all reimbursement requests
- Can also be used to book travel
  - The University strongly encourages its use in this regard
  - For air travel, a small icon in the top right corner of each potential flight (just above the price) certifies Fly America Act compliance through the Open Skies Agreement. The icon is a blue check mark within a small shield.
    - Note: Open Skies does not apply to DOD or DOS awards – those flights need to be made through a US carrier, regardless of the presence of the icon.
Concur Reimbursement Process

- Enter Concur and “Start a Report”
- Enter Report Name, and fill in all necessary fields
  - Include chart string allocation (department, fund, program code OR project & activity)
  - Use the optional “Trip ID” field for travel expenses you will accrue over time (remember to enter the same ID for every expense on the same trip)
- Add expenses (you can allocate expenses to different chart strings in this step if necessary)
- Attach receipts (can be scanned with app)
- Submit to the appropriate approver
  - For travel, this is your advisor
  - For other purchases, this is Debbie or Val
Princeton's online buying system

Navigate from the Prime Portal (prime.princeton.edu, “Marketplace Shopper”)

Front Page holds Princeton’s preferred vendors (database includes 4,000+ vendors overall)

Buying Process
- Search for an item or enter a preferred vendor’s contract
- Build a “cart,” and assign cart to the appropriate assignee (Debbie or Val), with note including chart string to charge
- Cart then becomes a “requisition,” which will later be turned into a purchase order by the assignee
Purchasing Card Policy

- Preapproval for all purchases is required from your faculty advisor
- See Valerie in D209 by 3:30 PM
  - Purchases on the card must be made at the kiosk in Valerie’s office
    - You cannot leave D209 with the card for use off-site
  - Fill out the form she gives you and fill out the expense in the logbook
  - Give or send the receipt or invoice to Valerie
  - $2500 limit per transaction
The preferred method for purchasing any materials at Princeton is through Marketplace. The department purchasing card should be considered a secondary purchasing option when:

- No vendor in Marketplace carries the item needed* AND
- The vendor is not willing to become a Marketplace vendor OR
- Time is critical and it is impossible to wait for the vendor to be added to Marketplace OR
- It is highly unlikely you will ever need to purchase anything from this vendor again in the future

*Note: a minor difference in price between the vendor of choice and a vendor already in Marketplace does not constitute justification to use the purchasing card.
Buying materials with personal funds or a personal credit card (or a T&E card) and requesting reimbursement should be an **ABSOLUTE LAST RESORT**

- This is **ESPECIALLY** true when the purchase will be placed on a sponsored fund

**Sales Tax**

- As a non-profit, Princeton is exempt from paying most sales taxes on purchases
- Valerie has tax exempt forms available to show to a vendor when making any purchases that would normally carry sales tax. Feel free to grab one and keep it on hand in case you do have to make a purchase yourself.
- If you do end up paying sales tax with personal funds/credit cards, you will still be reimbursed for it
- Any purchases made with the department cards (purchasing or T&E) cannot have sales tax included
  - Our tax exempt number is printed directly on these credit cards
Important Links & Forms

- Princeton Prime Portal: prime.princeton.edu
- Travel & Concur Portal: travel.princeton.edu
- Graduate International Travel Checklist: travel.princeton.edu/graduate-students/checklist