

CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY



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Purchasing Policies & Procedures

**Clark Atlanta University
Purchasing Policy**

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PURCHASING DEPARTMENT

Policy Purpose

This policy provides the University with a foundation for the effective management of the purchasing process. The scope of this policy defines the procedures for processing the purchase requisition, purchase order, and the receipt/delivery of goods and services. The Purchasing Department is the service unit for providing procurement services in support of University educational and research activities. The Purchasing Department is authorized to obligate and to represent the University in matters pertaining to procurement.

The Purchasing Department procures goods and services for the University and is also responsible for the following:

- Establishing efficient purchasing procedures and initiating and designing necessary forms to implement statutory requirements and University policy;
- Initiating acceptable requisitioning and receiving procedures;
- Expediting purchase orders to ensure timely delivery;
- Supplying cost estimates, specifications and general information to requisitioning departments;
- Recommending cost-reducing procedures in University procurement;
- Maintaining, managing, and accounting for central stores inventory;
- Selection of competent competitive vendors;
- Annual evaluation of vendor performance;
- Securing best quotes/bids;

The Purchasing Department is part of the Division of Finance and Administration.

Purchasing Department Mission

The Purchasing Department's mission is to continually identify and incorporate innovative purchasing practices that will support the teaching, research, and services in a cost-effective and timely manner. The department is committed to the accomplishment of this mission, while acting responsibly to protect the vital business interest of the University.

Hours of Operation

9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. EST, Monday through Friday

Walk-in visitors from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Other times by appointment

Authority

The authority to procure goods and services for the University is delegated from the Board of Trustees to the President of the University, and through him/her to the Vice President for Finance and Administration. For operational purposes, the Vice President for Finance and Administration may delegate certain procurement authority to the management personnel within the Purchasing Department. **These are the only persons authorized to commit the University to contracts for the purchase, lease, rental, or acquisition of**

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goods, services, equipment or property. No other persons are authorized to commit the University to contractual agreements.

Heads of Academic Departments and Administrative Units have approved budgets, and they and their appointed delegates are the only persons **authorized to requisition** goods and services against such budgets.

Ethical Principles

Code of Ethics

It is the policy of the Purchasing Department to adhere to the highest ethical standard in every aspect of our business.

Guidelines

The Purchasing Department of Clark Atlanta University, in adherence with the code of Ethics of the National Association of Educational Buyers (NAEB), will:

- Give first consideration to the objectives and policies of Clark Atlanta University;
- Strive to obtain the maximum value for each dollar of expenditure by developing product specifications, obtaining competitive bids and proposals, developing contracts with suppliers for products and services required by the University;
- Grant all competitive suppliers equal consideration insofar as state or federal statutes and institutional policy permit;
- Conduct business with potential and current suppliers in an atmosphere of good faith, devoid of intentional misrepresentation;
- Decline gifts or gratuities and accept no gifts or entertainment in the guise of sales expense, where the intent or effect is to unduly prejudice the recipient in favor of the donor;
- Demand honesty in sales representation whether offered through the medium of a verbal or written statement, an advertisement, or sample of the product;
- Receive consent of originator of property ideas and designs before using them for competitive purchasing purposes;
- Accord a prompt and courteous reception in so far as conditions permit to all who call on legitimate business mission;
- Cooperate with trade, industrial and professional associations, and with governmental and private agencies for the purpose of promoting and developing sound business methods;
- Foster fair, ethical and legal trade practices;
- Counsel and cooperate with NAEB members and promote a spirit of unity and a keen interest in professional growth amongst them.

Promise

In all purchasing situations, Clark Atlanta University shall ensure that all purchases:

- Are sound, appropriate, and reasonable
- Do not restrict fair competition;
- Are to be encouraged from small minority and women owned business, whenever possible;

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- Use cost as a basis for selecting vendors when all other factors are considered equal;
- Consider such matters as contractor integrity, record of past performance, and technical specification of the product or service to be purchased;
- Include a clear, accurate description of the product or service to be purchased;
- Are free from any form of discrimination or reciprocity in the awarding of business.

Purchasing Department Organization

The Purchasing Department is a unit within the Finance and Administration Division, and reports to the V.P for Finance and Administration through the Controller's Office. The Purchasing Department is headed by the Purchasing Manager. The Purchasing Department is charged with the responsibility of administering procurements for all divisions of the University in accordance with the authority entrusted by the President and the Board of Trustees. The Purchasing Department has been given the following primary responsibilities:

- Managing the procurement function in compliance with applicable law, University policies and regulations, and related contracts;
- Purchasing all equipment, supplies, materials, and services required by the requisitioner from external vendors;
- Applying principles of value analysis to the purchase transaction to obtain the best quality for the price and delivery within the desired time frame;
- Providing departments with current information on new products and services;
- Overseeing vendor relations, maintaining a purchasing system and archiving all purchasing-related documents;
- Maintaining accurate records and files of requisitions, purchase orders, vendor catalogs, product information, vendor profiles, and other relevant materials.

METHODS OF PROCUREMENT

Procurement Overview

This policy covers the procurement of all goods and services for the University and any of its offices. All orders for goods and services must be placed by the Purchasing Department through a printed Purchase Order (PO). A PO is a legally enforceable contract between the University and the vendor, and it documents the terms of the order or agreement.

Summary of Procurement Cycle:

- **Requisition:** The Requestor contacts one or more vendors for pricing information and obtains a written quote. No order is placed. The requestor creates a requisition, attaches appropriate documentation, obtains necessary approval signatures and submits the requisition to the Purchasing Department.
- **Purchase Order:** A written PO is issued to the vendor by the Purchasing Department.
- **Receiving Report:** When the goods or services have been received, the requesting department sends a written acknowledgement to Accounts Payable.
- **Vendor Invoice:** Vendors are instructed on the PO to mail invoices directly to Accounts Payable, referencing the PO number.
- **Payment:** Accounts Payable matches the PO, Receiving Documentation, and Vendor Invoice. Payment is issued according to payment terms and cashflow availability.

Requisition

It is the policy of the University that a Purchase Requisition shall be submitted prior to the purchase of goods and services regardless of the dollar amount.

The purchase requisition is used to initiate the procurement of equipment, materials, supplies, and services. The Purchasing Department uses the requisition from the department as the basis for developing and issuing a formal PO to the vendor. The requisition provides the buyer with the necessary information and authorization to purchase the items listed.

Attachments to the requisitions indicating the initiator has sought pricing information from the vendors may be used as source documents, but does not obligate the Purchasing Department to utilize the suggested vendor or to circumvent purchasing policies regarding proper investigation and, if appropriate, competitive bidding.

Avoid the use of word “confirming” on a requisition. Only a buyer in the Purchasing Department can confirm an order. ***The use of requisitions or requisition numbers to place orders with vendors, for whatever reason, is strictly prohibited.*** All requisitions shall follow prescribed channels.

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When initiating a purchase requisition, the following takes place: All requisitions shall have the signature of the director, department head, and/or chairperson. They must have accurate and valid accounting codes, and funds must be available in the designated account. The Purchasing Manager has the authority to review, accept, and or decline a purchase requisition.

The University has two (2) official requisition forms:

- Purchase Requisition – Used to communicate procurement requests (equipment, goods, supplies, and services) to the Purchasing Department and to indicate appropriate funding and approvals for the requests. (See appendix A)
- Travel Requisition – Used to request travel advances, car rentals, airline tickets, per diem, registration fees, ground transportation, lodging and other. (See travel manual for more details). (See appendix B)

Both requisitions are prenumbered, multicopy forms, and are available through the Purchasing Department.

Advance planning is critical to the proper and accurate preparation of a PO. Requisitions are processed by the Purchasing Department in the order in which they are received. Most routine orders can be placed within 2 to 3 working days after receipt, but many factors can cause processing of the order to take longer. Therefore, requisitions for standard off-the-shelf items shall be submitted a minimum of five to ten working days before delivery is required and longer lead-time should be allowed for nonstandard items.

Approval Signatures

If your requisition falls within one of the ranges below, the requisition needs to be signed by the appropriate person(s):

- **\$1 up to \$499** - Initiator, Manager/Supervisor, or PI;
- **\$500 to \$2,499** - Initiator, Manager/Supervisor, or PI, Director, or Department head;
- **\$2,500 to \$9,999** - Initiator, Manager/Supervisor, or PI, Director, Department head, Dean of school or Vice President;
- **\$10,000 and over** - Initiator, Manager/Supervisor, Director, or Department head, Dean or Vice President of unit, Vice President for Finance or Provost;
- Note: Individual grants and budgets may have additional approval requirements, such as government grants. The University reserves the right to impose more strict guidelines at any time.

Formal Purchase Order

An official purchase order—a legal contract—is issued by the Purchasing Department as a result of the purchase requisition from the requesting department.

The Purchase Order (PO) describes the items purchased and the circumstances under which they are to be procured. It also specifies the contractual performance and payment authorization, for example: information about installation, delivery point, extra manuals, electrical requirements, and insurance provisions.

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The Purchasing Department will contact vendors directly to place orders in all cases. Departments should not place orders directly with vendors. Any unauthorized orders (verbal or written) are the responsibility of the individual placing the order, and will not be reimbursed from University funds.

Purchasing may obtain telephone quotations and place orders by phone on “**Rush orders.**” A requisition form is still necessary.

To determine the status of an order call, the Purchasing Department. **DO NOT CONTACT THE VENDOR DIRECTLY.** A vendor will usually acknowledge receipt of an order showing his acceptance and/or inconsistencies in price, terms, and delivery.

A copy of the PO shall be sent to the requesting department.

Special Considerations

Blanket Purchase Orders

A Blanket Purchase Order may be issued up to \$5,000 to departments when there is a need for repetitive, routine goods or services from a single vendor. When the encumbered dollars have been used, a new requisition must be processed to reestablish a blanket order for further purchases. Numerous change orders shall not be allowed against a blanket order. Blanket orders will only be valid for the current fiscal year. No capital equipment or furniture can be purchased under a blanket order. The requesting department is responsible for managing its own blanket orders and for ensuring that the total amount is not exceeded.

Competitive Bids

The Purchasing Department reserves the right to obtain competitive bids whenever such action is determined to be appropriate and in the best interest of the University.

Prior to submitting a requisition, the requesting department should gather three (3) competitive bids for purchases of equipment, materials, supplies, or goods greater than \$5,000 and purchases of services greater than \$10,000. Contracts shall be awarded based upon the concept of the “lowest, best, and most responsive bid.” The University reserves the right to decline any or all bids. See the Sole Source section below for instructions on purchasing when competitive vendors are not available.

Exceptions may be made to the competitive bid requirement for emergencies. Exceptions must include appropriate documentation and approvals in accordance with the emergency purchasing guidelines in this document.

All documentation of competitive bidding must be attached to the requisition, including copies of the bids not selected and any documentation of a sole source provider. These documents become part of the official University record, and are subject to periodic audit.

Contracts

A contract is an agreement stating terms and conditions under which goods or services will be provided on request for a specified price. While a PO may technically constitute a contract, the term “contract” here means a formal, written agreement signed by all parties.

All professional service contracts shall be reviewed by the Office of General Counsel. The contract must accompany the requisition and must be signed by the Vice President for Finance and Administration.

A written contract may be appropriate, in addition to a PO, in the following circumstances:

- The nature of the work and obligations of the parties must be set out in detail and specificity;
- Payment terms are complicated and require special handling;
- Equipment being acquired is unusual, unique or special in some way (i.e., design, engineering, testing, or other special factors that might be risks of the transaction);
- Consulting services;
- Research;
- Construction or installation of fixtures, which may expose the University to liability to third parties;
- License agreements, rentals, and leases.

Emergency Purchasing

An emergency purchase is made without following the normal purchasing procedures in order to obtain goods or services to meet a vital and/or unforeseen requirement. Circumstances that constitute an emergency purchase are: a condition that creates a threat to the health, welfare or safety of staff and/or students; or a condition that endangers lives, property, or the continuation of vital programs.

A requisition requesting an emergency purchase shall be accompanied by written justification and approved by the affected Dean, Chair, Director, or Vice President.

Consultants and Independent Contractors

Requisitions for personal professional services require the completion of a Professional Service/Consultant Statement of Work form (available from the Purchasing Department). This form documents the terms and conditions of services being provided and must be signed by the individual.

Computer Equipment & Software

All computer-related purchases (hardware, peripherals, and software) shall be approved by the Office of Information Technology and Communication for purposes of meeting institutional specifications and standardization.

Food Service Catering Requests

All food service/catering requests shall be approved by the Vice President for Finance and Administration or the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, prior to submittal to the Purchasing Department for processing. To ensure that all catering requests are processed in an expeditious manner, properly authorized requisitions must be submitted to the Purchasing Department at least 72 hours (3 working days) prior to the function.

Lease Purchase Agreements

In certain instances, the purchase of major equipment items may be arranged through a leasing agreement. The acquisition of all goods under a lease arrangement requires the approval of the Vice President for Finance and Administration.

Purchased Printing

All University printing or duplicating work will be initiated and channeled through the Print Center. Requests and/or purchases of outside printing or duplicating presented to the Purchasing Department will be referred to the Print Center to provide opportunity for in-house productions.

Changes to Purchase Orders

Request for modification of a PO shall be directed to the Purchasing Department in writing, on a new requisition. The reason for the change should be stated along with reference to the PO number and vendor. A PO can be changed only with the consent of both parties, and only the Purchasing Department can change a PO or contract on behalf of the University.

Cancellation of Purchase Orders

If a PO needs to be cancelled for any reason, a written request should be sent to the Purchasing Department, and should include the reason for the cancellation. It may be necessary for the Purchasing Department to contact the vendor. A PO can be cancelled only with the consent of both parties, and only the Purchasing Department can cancel a PO or contract on behalf of the University. Once a PO is cancelled, the budget commitment will be removed in Banner.

Selection of Vendors

Clark Atlanta University recognizes the importance of having a strong, mutual relationship with the multiple vendors with whom it does business. The selection of a vendor is the responsibility of the Purchasing Department. However, the vendor suggested by the requisitioner will be given preference when in the best interest of the University and when the purchase does not require competitive bidding. The Purchasing Department welcomes vendor suggestions.

New Vendors

Vendors doing business with the University for the first time will be carefully evaluated. References will be checked, formal interviews may be conducted when practicable, and

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the GSA Excluded Party List System will be checked to make sure they are qualified vendors. Authority for the final selection of the vendor shall be left to the Purchasing Department.

Vendor Approval

A vendor registration form shall be requested from vendors by the Purchasing Department or the respective department before they initially receive a formal order from the University. A visit to the vendor's office or place of business may be required.

Vendors may require that CAU also complete a credit application before accepting our order. Credit applications should be forwarded to the Purchasing Department for completion.

Affirmative Action

Clark Atlanta University conducts its purchasing in compliance with all federal, state and local equal opportunity and affirmative action laws. The University requires that vendors comply with equal opportunity employment laws and that every subcontract shall contain a provision requiring nondiscrimination in employment.

Clark Atlanta University will afford minority business enterprise (MBE), women minority business enterprise (WMBE), and socially economically disadvantaged business enterprises (as defined by the U.S. Small Business Administration) the maximum practicable opportunity to do business with the University. The University also will seek to utilize qualified certified minority enterprise business for individual purchases that do not require formal bidding.

Sole Source

A purchase requisition requesting *sole source* procurement shall be accompanied by written supporting documentation and approved by the affected Dean, Chair, Director, or Vice President. Sole source justification is not to be utilized to circumvent normal purchasing procedures. If approved, a PO will be issued.

Receipt of Goods and Services

It is the responsibility of the requesting department to verify that all goods and services under the PO have been received in acceptable condition, and to send a written confirmation of receipt to the Accounts Payable Office.

For the receipt of goods, the packing slip should be compared to the goods received, and any discrepancies noted. The receiver should sign the packing slip, note the PO number, and forward it to the Accounts Payable Office.

For the receipt of services, a copy of the PO should be signed and forwarded to the Accounts Payable Office to confirm satisfactory delivery of the services.

It is the policy of CAU that when a vendor has delivered the goods or services specified

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on a PO, he/she has legally complied with his/her part of the contract and should be paid.

Hazardous Materials and Biohazard Shipments

Hazardous materials may be delivered directly to University departments; however, each department is responsible for ensuring that a representative is available to receive the shipments and safe handling of products occurs upon delivery. The department receiving the shipment must obtain from the vendor a Material Safety Data Sheet for all hazardous materials received. For additional information on the safe handling of hazardous materials, contact Donald Hylton, T. W. Cole Science Research Center Facilities and Safety Coordinator, at extension 6705.

Returns

In the event of any discrepancy, the respective department shall notify the Purchasing Department within 24 hours. The Purchasing Department is responsible for communication with the vendor if a package should be returned. At no time is the requestor to contact the vendor.

Time is of the essence, and government regulations require the University to file claims for damages or shortages within 15 days; failure to comply with regulations could result in the claim being disallowed. Acceptance of a return is by no means automatic, and a restocking fee may be incurred. Any charges incurred by returns will be assessed to the respective requisitioning department.

Conflict of Interest

The University will not enter into a purchase contract with a company or vendor in which an employee or employee's family has an interest, unless: 1) that interest is fully disclosed prior to entering the contract or making purchase for the materials or service, 2) the contractor or purchase is determined to be in the best interest of the University, 3) the contract or purchase is in compliance with the Georgia Ethics statutes, and 4) the contract or purchase is in compliance with the University's Purchasing Policies and Procedures. For this policy, an interest is defined as ownership of ten percent (10%) or more of the assets of a business, by any University employee or spouse or minor children of an employee. Final approval of such is granted by the Vice President for Finance and Administration and the President, and must be documented in writing.

It is the policy of the Board of Trustees of Clark Atlanta University that in the event that the Board and/or officers of the University are considering a transaction on behalf of the University which will also involve: 1) a member of the Board, an officer of the University or a member of their families, or 2) an organization with which any such person is affiliated, then such trustee or officer, at first knowledge of any such transaction, shall disclose fully the precise nature of his or her interest or involvement. While this policy applies directly to all trustees and officers of the University, it is intended to serve as a guide to all persons employed by the University, regardless, of position.

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Payment of Vendors

Accounts Payable matches PO, receiving documents and vendor invoices. If all items agree, the invoice is keyed into Banner and queued for payment. Accounts Payable will investigate any differences in quantities or amounts.

Timing of Vendor Payments

Payment of vendors will be based upon vendor payment terms or based upon CAU standard terms of “net-30 days.” Payment decisions will also be based upon available cashflow. For questions on the timing of vendor payments, contact Accounts Payable.

Payment of Students

All payments to students through Accounts Payable are made by direct deposit, either to their designated bank account or to their CashPay card. CashPay cards are issued through the Student Accounts Office to all students who have not established a direct deposit bank account. CashPay cards operate like prepaid credit cards for students who do not have a regular bank account. Their purpose is to eliminate paper checks to students for refunds, but they are also used for all Accounts Payable disbursements, including travel reimbursements or stipends.

Accounts Payable must create and transmit a direct deposit batch file to the bank. Direct deposit transactions require two (2) days for processing, i.e., transactions processed on Wednesday will post to the students’ bank accounts on Friday.

Prepaid Orders

Staff and Faculty should generally seek out vendors who accept PO and payment on “net 30 day” terms. In cases where orders must be prepaid, mark “Prepay” on the requisition. This is common for membership dues, subscriptions, conference registrations and certain hotel stays. There may be other sole-source vendors who require prepayment.

Prepaid Orders will still be processed into POs by the Purchasing Department, and forwarded to Accounts Payable, where they will be keyed as invoices. Payment of Prepaid Orders will be based upon cashflow priorities. When checks are cut, they will be mailed by Accounts Payable to the vendor along with a copy of the PO. Departments must still comply with the *Receipt of Goods and Services* section of this policy on prepaid orders.

Check Printing Schedule

Checks are generally printed in a weekly batch on Thursday and distributed on Friday. To be included in the weekly check run, paperwork—approved PO or requisition—must be in Accounts Payable by noon on Wednesday.

Requests for checks at other times should be directed to the University Controller or Associate Controller. If approved, a check will be issued after 3:00 p.m. for all approved

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requests received by 2:00 p.m.. Approved requests received after 2:00 p.m. will be processed and available the following day after 3:00 p.m.

Distribution of Checks

- Vendor checks are automatically mailed on Friday, unless circumstances require that a check be picked up (subject to the approval of the Accounts Payable Supervisor). Remittance addresses will be verified against the invoice prior to mailing. Vendor checks will not be returned to departments for mailing, as this violates the internal controls and security measures recommended by our auditors.
- Staff & Faculty checks will be available for pick-up on Friday. Checks not picked up on Friday, will be forwarded to the mailroom on Monday for distribution through interoffice mail.
- Attachments: Requesters must include remittance stubs and provide copies of any documents that must be mailed with the checks. Accounts Payable will create an envelope to mail vendor checks with enclosures.

Vendor Payment Inquiries

BannerWeb is available to Staff and Faculty to research the status of requisitions, POs, vendor invoices and to verify whether an invoice has been paid by Accounts Payable. For unpaid invoices, contact Accounts Payable to discuss the timing of payment.

Voiding checks / Lost checks / Replacement Checks

Contact the General Accounting Reception Desk in Haven-Warren 306, extension 8803, to request that a check be voided or reissued. In the case of lost checks, it will be necessary to process a stop payment request. Replacement checks will be issued in approximately one week. If not reissued, voided checks will be credited back to the original budget charged.

Purchases Under State and federal Grants and Contracts

Grants and contracts received from federal and state agencies contain purchasing regulations and procedures with which the University must comply as a condition of accepting funds. The requisitioner and the Office of Grants and Contracts are responsible for ensuring all purchases comply with the terms of the grant or contract including Federal Office of Management and Budget Circulars A-110 and A-21.

Purchasing Tips

- Clark Atlanta University procurement policy requires advance approval of purchase requisitions and a purchase order BEFORE the University is financially committed.
- Requisitions must be filled out completely. Partial or inaccurate information slows the processing and may necessitate the return of the requisition. This includes budget coding, confirmation numbers, registration forms, complete addresses and telephone numbers of the vendors. "Special Instructions" for

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processing needs to be specific, especially in cases where prepayment or a deposit is required.

- Plan ahead to avoid last minute or emergency purchases.
- Unauthorized purchases are improper and illegal. The purchaser or the Department may be responsible for the charges.
- With certain exceptions, all correspondence with suppliers should be handled through the Purchasing Department.
- All food service catering events must include an event confirmation form. The requisition must arrive prior to the event.
- When a service is required, a Professional Service/Consultant Statement of Work Form must be used. It should be processed prior to providing the service, not after the fact.
- If it is necessary to increase the amount of a PO, a new requisition is required, along with the same signature process for your area.
- Never have more than one open blanket order to the same vendor at the same time. This will ensure that payments are charged accurately and promptly.
- There is a 3-5 day turn-around for the processing of requisitions in Purchasing, and requisitions are processed in the order received. Planning for your departmental signature process is critical. The expectation for same day service is not feasible.
- The status of a requisition can be checked in Banner in FGIBDST, using the appropriate accounting line and “Transaction Detail Information” query, or through BannerWeb, using a Budget Query.
- Questions regarding the issuance of checks or payments need to be directed to Accounts Payable. You will need the PO number when inquiring.

ADVANCE APPROVAL ONLY

DATE _____

Name of Traveler _____ Budget Affected _____ \$ _____

Address _____ \$ _____

_____ \$ _____

Department or School _____

Departure _____ Date: _____

Return _____ Date: _____

Purpose of Travel: _____

Expenditures: **SAMPLE**

M Requested by Traveler and Approved by Dean
(2) Approved by Business Office
(3) Actual Expenditure Supported by Receipts
(4) Approved for Payment

Transportation:

Mode _____ \$ _____ \$ _____ \$ _____ \$ _____

Lodging: _____

Meals: _____

Others (Itemize) _____

TOTALS \$ _____ \$ _____ \$ _____ \$ _____

Ordered by: _____

Approving Authority: _____

Business Office Approval: _____

FOR BUSINESS OFFICE APPROVAL: This form must be submitted for approval before the travel is made. Copies will be returned after approval and for re-submission for payment.

FOR PAYMENT: Please complete column (3), attach all receipts to this voucher and return all copies to Purchasing Department within seven (7) days after travel.

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