

Justification Standards Job Aid

This justification standards job aid provides guidance in the appropriate application of the [Documenting Financial/Accounting Transactions policy](#) requirements in order to ensure that the benefit to the institution and compliance with regulatory requirements of all transactions can be clearly understood by both internal and external reviewers (e.g., managers, auditors, IRS, the public). In addition to the justification requirements covered by this job aid, supporting documentation (invoices, receipts, etc.) must be sufficient to verify the accuracy and appropriateness of a transaction, comply with institutional policies and procedures, and provide a clear audit trail.

Using Acronyms: To ensure justifications are clearly understood by all audiences, acronyms should be spelled out initially before using them throughout the justification unless it is universally known and used University-wide, such as EFS or NIH.

Legend:



= No additional justification required **WHEN** information can be clearly found in the supporting documentation, is part of completing the transaction in EFS, or is not applicable based on the type of transaction.



= Conditional requirements



= Justification required

Additional requirements related to Sponsored transactions:

- When large purchases are made within the last 60 days of the project end date, such as equipment purchases, additional justification is required.
- F&A type charges such as office supplies are usually not allowable.
- When re-budgeting on a sponsored project provide an explanation for why the re-budget is necessary; identifying the reallocation or change in budget and verifying the allowability per the funding source.

For further information regarding sponsored transactions go to:

<https://sites.google.com/a/umn.edu/certified-approvers-community-of-practice-cop>

<https://research.umn.edu/units/spa/proposals/policies-compliance>

Transaction Type	Who	What	Where	When	Why	Examples
Cash Advances/Travel Authorizations Resources	 Specify additional names, etc. when funds will be used for or distributed to individuals other than the recipient of the cash advance. Exception: HIPAA guidelines must be followed for payments to human subjects.	 Must include detailed calculation and explanation supporting amount requested.			 Must be one of the five reasons allowed by the Cash Advance policy.	Examples

Transaction Type	Who	What	Where	When	Why	Examples
Credit Invoices (Non-Sponsored Accounts Receivable) Resources	 Specify when the person initiating the request is different than the preparer.				 Provide reason for credit.	Examples
Endowments (Endowment Module) Resources	 Identify who is authorizing the transaction (the person initiating the transaction typically does not have authority to spend or deposit endowment funds).	 PUF: Provide the corresponding Foundation Fund ID.		 For Deposits transactions  Identify the fiscal year the funds will be used if different from the year the transaction is entered.	 Withdrawal: Specify how the funds will be spent. This should comply with the donor intent. Deposit: Specify what has created the surplus in funds that are being deposited and how they will be used in the future. PUF: Specify how the funds will be spent.	Examples
Hospitality, Entertainment and Business Expenses (includes Dining Service or Campus Club Expenses) Resources	 Regardless of number, provide names of attendees and their business relationship to the University (employees, alumni, donor, occupations or their titles). 1) <i>See exceptions.</i>	 Provide a description/ explanation of the event or activity. For entertainment and hospitality with non-University attendees, document the nature and duration of the business discussion or activity that occurred immediately before, during, or after the entertainment. Alcohol expenses must be itemized and reported separately from food expenses. 1) <i>See exceptions.</i>			 Provide business purpose, benefit gained or expected to be gained to the department, project, program, or University. This activity has a higher element of risk and visibility, requiring thorough justifications. It is often challenging for external parties to understand how this benefits the mission of the University. Normally not allowed on sponsored projects.	Examples

Transaction Type	Who	What	Where	When	Why	Examples
<p>Journal Entries (cost transfers, mandatory and non-mandatory transfers)</p> <p>Resources</p>	<p></p> <p>Specify who authorized the entry if it is not the preparer.</p>	<p></p>	<p></p>	<p></p>	<p></p> <p>Explain why the entry is necessary.</p> <p>For cost transfers include information referencing the original charge/entry, as appropriate.</p> <p>If cost is moved to a sponsored chart field string, must provide additional explanation including how and why the error occurred. Must adequately support the validity of the cost being charged to the project.</p>	<p>Examples</p>
<p>Payment Transactions Non-PO (includes check requests)</p> <p>PO & Non-PO Resources</p> <p>Professional Services Resources</p> <p>Goods and Services Resources</p>	<p></p>	<p></p>	<p></p>	<p></p>	<p></p> <p>Required when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business purpose or direct benefit to the project is not apparent in existing documentation. 	<p>Non-PO Voucher Example</p> <p>Check Request Example</p>
<p>Payment Transactions PO Related</p> <p>PO & Non-PO Resources</p> <p>Professional Services Resources</p> <p>Goods and Services Resources</p>	<p></p>	<p></p>	<p></p>	<p></p>	<p></p> <p>Required when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Variations from the Requisition/P.O. exist that do not warrant a Change Order. 	<p>Examples</p>

Transaction Type	Who	What	Where	When	Why	Examples
<p>Purchases from External Vendors- Requisition</p> <p>Resources</p>	<p></p> <p>Specify who requested or initiated the purchase or transaction, or who will use it (can be name of department), if not in existing documentation.</p>	<p></p> <p>Provide a clear description of the product. For service, specify time period and description of service if not in existing documentation.</p>	<p></p>	<p></p>	<p></p> <p>Required when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business purpose or direct benefit to the project is not apparent in existing documentation. <p>Common purchases such as office supplies on non-sponsored funds are generally low risk and require minimal justification. Conversely, office supplies are typically NOT allowed on sponsored projects, and if charged, would require clear explanation of the purpose and benefit to the project.</p>	<p>Examples</p>
<p>Purchases from Internal Vendors (ISOs)</p> <p>Resources</p>	<p></p> <p>Seller: Specify who requested or initiated the purchase or transaction, or who will use it (can be name of department) if not in existing documentation.</p>	<p></p> <p>Seller: Provide a clear description of the product. For service, specify time period and description of service if not in existing documentation.</p>	<p></p> <p>Seller to provide.</p>	<p></p> <p>Seller to provide.</p>	<p></p> <p>Buyer:</p> <p>Required when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business purpose or direct benefit to the project is not apparent in existing documentation. • Department must have information available that documents the benefit to the University or the project charged. <p>Common purchases such as office supplies on non-sponsored funds are generally low risk and require minimal justification. Conversely, office supplies are typically NOT allowed on sponsored projects, and if charged, would require clear explanation of the purpose and benefit to the project.</p>	<p>Examples</p>

Transaction Type	Who	What	Where	When	Why	Examples
Purchasing Card Resources	 Specify who requested or initiated the purchase or transaction, or who will use it (can be name of department), if not in existing documentation.				 Required when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business purpose or direct benefit to the project is not apparent in existing documentation. 	Examples
Travel and Employee Reimbursements *Also see Hospitality, Entertainment and Business Expenses. Resources	 For individual expenses.  Specify when requesting reimbursement for the expenses of others.	 Document the business purpose.			 Explain why travel or reimbursement was necessary and how it benefits/relates to the chart field string or project charged. Sponsored: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specify whether the traveler is presenting research. If not presenting, a specific purpose statement must be included (i.e., collaborate with other researchers, off-site research, conferences, project planning meeting, etc.) or description of work to be accomplished. For reimbursement of pre-travel expenses, establish a beneficial or causal relationship of the travel to the project or chart field string charged. 	Examples

1) Individual names and the nature of the business discussion do not need to be documented for:

- Staff meals provided quarterly or less often and that have a nominal cost per person (no more than an amount equivalent to the limits in the Business Expense Policy).
- Meals or refreshments served incidental to an educational or training event that lasts at least half a day.
- Meals or refreshments served incidental to an event where the participants of the event and benefactors to the meals and refreshments must pay to attend.
- Meals or refreshments served at an event where the participants are not employees or independent contractors of the department sponsoring or paying for the event and the event is central to the University related mission of the department.