

[A Brief Primer on Purchasing](#)

In a continuous quality improvement environment like Lewis & Clark's, all departments are assessed. The annual audit report prepared by the College's outside auditor is one of the ways that our Finance Department is assessed on their performance. The results of this report sometimes result in new performance goals. Their goal attainment rests on our adherence to the College's purchasing policies. In that spirit, we offer a brief primer on purchasing. Any questions that are not answered by these notes should be directed to **Nancy Kaiser (3315)** or **Mary Schulte (3300)** who would always rather answer questions before the purchase rather than after!

Things you Should Know Before you Purchase: Far and away, the majority of our purchases are made through the purchase order process. The process of creating a requisition is started when you login to BlazerNet. You then select employees. There will be three options available for Online Requisitions. 1) Create/Maintain Requisitions, 2) Requisition Statuses and 3) Requisition Approvals. To create a new requisition, check the box next to "create a new Requisition" and hit submit. You will be taken to the "vendor lookup screen". At the vendor lookup screen you can perform two actions, look up an existing vendor or add a new vendor. Only add a new vendor after making sure the vendor you want is not in the system. To check to see if the vendor is in the system, do a keyword search and choose the vendor that is in the search results. If your vendor is not there, return to previous from and enter the new vendor by completing in the screen in detail and hitting submit. After hitting the submit screen, you will be taken to the requisition entry screen to complete. When the requisition is complete, hit the submit button and you will be taken to the "Requisition Information Screen" which will display all the necessary information and shows who is the approver (or the next approver) for the requisition. When you send it, it goes to the budget manager for his/her approval. The requisition process results in authorization to purchase from the account by assigning a purchase order number. Several coordinators and deans follow the practice of asking their division assistants to submit the requisition/P.O. Finance prefers that we submit requisitions at least one week before we plan to purchase.

Very infrequently a business will not accept a purchase order number, **Wendy Phipps, Coordinator of Purchasing (3320)** or in her absence, **Sheila Gross (3312)** can tell us what vendors don't take purchase order numbers. If that vendor is located within reasonable driving distance from the college, Wendy can authorize the use of the college's Visa card. You can then create a requisition, writing within the body of the requisition that you will be picking up the credit card. You will need to stop by Wendy's office (**ER 204**), sign the card out and pick up the purchase order. The card cannot be held overnight. When you have completed your purchase, return the card and the signed invoice to Wendy before 4:30.

The college has accounts with these local vendors:

- Walmart - must pick up credit card to purchase and have P.O. number
- K-Mart – open purchase order, must have P.O. number to purchase
- Target - Must pick up credit card to purchase and have P.O. number
- Schnucks - Must pick up credit card to purchase and have P.O. number
- Dollar General only at Monticello Plaza – open purchase order, must have P.O. number to purchase
- Parent/Teacher Tools – open purchase order, must have P.O. number to purchase
- Lowe's - must pick up credit card to purchase and have P.O. number
- Home Depot - must pick up credit card to purchase and have P.O. number

In general, we use check requests for reimbursements for purchases that the Purchasing Department (Wendy and Sheila) cannot complete, for example, the vendor does not accept purchase orders. Naturally, Finance wants to keep these purchases to a minimum. These purchases must still be prior approved first by your supervisor and also by Finance. When being reimbursed there must be an explanation as to the circumstances of the purchase in the comments section of the check request and who in Finance approved the reimbursement. Just explain why you couldn't use the purchase order system.

Purchasing Examples:

1. You are a program coordinator and you have been advised by your Dean that there is modest funding available to convene your adjunct faculty. You decide to order pizza and soda for the event. You then would contact the vendor and ask for an estimate of the cost of these pizzas based on the number of participants in the event and create a purchase order requisition with the estimate of costs and vendor

information. (Dominoes even adds the tip in the estimate of charges. If the vendor doesn't include tip, you can still give the delivery person a tip, but get a receipt for the tip). Call Wendy Phipps (3320) and get the purchase order number and call the pizza order in. Later, if you have a receipt for the tip, complete a check request with an explanation and you will be reimbursed through the weekly check process.

2. You have the budget to purchase software for your course. As a faculty member you are offered a special deal if you order the software online. Call Wendy Phipps (3320) and explain the situation. She may ask that you forward her the information so that she can place the order. If the order needs to be made by you she may approve the use of your credit card purchase and ask that you follow this with an explanatory email.

Things You Should Know Before you Travel: If your supervisor has approved your "Request to Attend" and you attend a meeting or conference, remember to collect all of your receipts. When you return, write a "Report of Travel" and complete a "Travel Expense Report" (your division assistant can provide these forms).

A Travel Expense report must have your name, social security number or ID number (preferred) and an account number at the top of the form. All travel is charged to a '550...' account number, with the exception of certain grants. When you drive, mileage is paid at the rate of .40 per mile. Meals are reimbursed without receipts up to \$15.00 per day; with all receipts, a maximum of \$40.00 per day. An itemized hotel/motel bill with a zero balance due must be provided – so don't use express check-out. Original receipts for all items listed on the Expense report should be attached. Your supervisor and/or the appropriate budget manager have to sign the Travel Expense report and, if the travel is out-of-state (excluding St. Louis area) the expense report must also be approved by the President. Once the Expense Report has been approved, it should be attached to your approved Request to Attend and submitted to Finance for reimbursement. If Perkins funds are being used to support the travel, after the appropriate dean signs, then Dean Jill Lane, as administrator of the Perkins funds, also needs to sign the request for reimbursement.

Note: If a Travel Advance has been received, this amount should be listed on the lower part of the Travel Expense report form. If the Advance exceeds the actual amount of expenses incurred, the unused portion must be returned with the Expense report.

Conference Registration Fees

Requests for payment of registration fees should be submitted on a check request that has been properly approved. The check request should be accompanied by a registration form and/or brochure showing the amount of the registration and the address to which the check should be mailed. The check request should list the employees attending in the description column. An approved "Request to Attend" form for each employee listed must be attached. If the conference or meeting is out-of-state (St. Louis area excluded), the "Request to Attend" form and the check request must be approved by the President. An account number must be indicated on the check request. Registration fees are a part of travel and meeting expenses and should be charged to a '550...' account number, with the exception of certain grants.

Air Fare

Air fare requests should be submitted to Purchasing on a requisition/purchase order. An approved "Request to Attend" form must be sent to Purchasing to accompany the requisition. If the conference or meeting is out-of-state (St. Louis area excluded), the "Request to Attend" and requisition needs to be approved by the President.

It's All Over by May 1: It's really important for audit purposes that the college purchasing cutoff is May 1 each year. We will receive an email from Mary Schulte in February forewarning us of the May 1 cutoff, reminding us to plan ahead for supplies that we might need between February and June 30. Between May 1 and June 30 all purchase orders need the approval of the College President or Nancy Kaiser or Mary Schulte. Also, purchase orders during this May 1-June 30th period will be processed in the next fiscal year unless the purchase order has been approved as an emergency purchase.