

The Ledger

A Newsletter of the University Controller's Organization

Website: <http://www.co.vt.edu>

Vol. E, No. 17

March 29, 2001

Changes to Printing Charges in Banner

Since February 1, 2001, the details of printing services charges have been posted to Banner Finance funds instead of summary information. The Interdepartmental Printing Request (IPR) number is recorded in the document reference field in Banner and appears on the month end Brio transaction report.

Effective April 1, 2001, a more descriptive description field will be entered in Banner Finance for printing charges which do not have an IPR number. The description might be "satellite copiers", "docuprint", or "label printing", for example.

These changes have been made to help Departmental users with their month end reconciliations.

End of Fiscal Year Procurement

We are approaching the final quarter of our business year and it is time to plan for purchases to be made with current fiscal year funds. In order to allow sufficient time to complete the procurement, receipt and payment cycle, requisitions should be received in Purchasing and IT Acquisitions by the following dates:

March 30: All purchases valued over \$50,000 except computer hardware. All purchases of furniture and vehicles of any value.

April 27: All purchases valued under \$50,000 and all computer hardware of any value.

Purchasing and IT Acquisitions will continue to accept and act upon requisitions received after these dates. However, no assurance can be offered that the business cycle will be completed before the end of the fiscal year.

Other important dates:

June 1: All incoming requisitions will be encumbered against FY 2001-02 funds unless an exception is requested.

June 19: Anticipated final date for processing of invoices against FY 2000-01 funds.

Coming Attractions - New Finance Web Reports

The University's Finance Brio reports will be replaced with a new Finance Web system this spring. Using the SQR programming language instead of Brio software will eliminate the printing and query problems that many users have experienced.

Training will be offered to users for the new system in May or June. More training information will be provided to users at a later date.

Boise Cascade Rolls Out Customized Web Site

Boise Cascade recently rolled out a new e-procurement link on their web site that will be maintained exclusively for Virginia Tech. This web link features procedures for: setting up accounts, placing orders, return policies, and much more. These procedures have been customized to provide information that is specific to Virginia Tech and the office supply contract that was recently established. Also available is a downloadable Virginia Tech Quarterly Pricer, an on-line link to order a Boise Catalog, and contact information for various Boise representatives (i.e., who to contact for computer related items, delivery questions, and billing questions).

Please take the time to visit the new web site at <http://www.bcop.com/microsite/vt>.

American Express Purchasing Card Changes

The Auditor of Public Accounts recently completed an audit of the state purchasing card program. As a result of the audit and some recent misuse of the card, the State Department of Accounts has issued revised procedures for control and use of the card. Please make note of the following procedures.

1. Web-based purchases are allowed provided the requirements of the Department of General Services' (DGS) Electronic Commerce Policy are followed in all cases. This policy is available on the DGS website <http://159.169.222.200/dps/Manuals/docs/ecpolicy.htm>
2. Cardholders cannot have more than one card unless the cardholder is responsible for purchasing goods and services for more than one department.
3. Before cards are issued to applicants, they must read the procedures for proper use of the card and must pass an on-line test before their card application will be processed.
4. New cardholders must complete a revised AMEX application prior to obtaining the purchasing card. For security and/or fund management reasons, the **Department Head or Delegated Representative** must complete a spending analysis section on the new AMEX application. This person should review information such as Brio Financial Reports, SPO spending history, and or departmental procurement files to evaluate the cardholder's current purchasing capacity. Once this is analyzed, the AMEX card transaction limit (not to exceed \$2,000) and monthly limit (not to exceed \$100,000) should be set according to this analysis. Departments may also request lower transactions and monthly limits for current cardholders by contacting Debra Bales.
5. Authorized use of the purchasing card is limited to the person whose name appears on the face of the card. The purchasing card **must** not be loaned to another person. This does not preclude a cardholder from placing an order with a vendor by telephone

or electronically and then sending a representative to claim the items ordered. The account number must not be transmitted over insecure means such as a fax or e-mail message.

6. Purchasing logs or records must be updated as each purchase is made so spending limits can be monitored and purchasing activity can be reconciled to the monthly charge card statements.
7. Cardholders are **required** to forward the monthly statement and approved Payment Certification Form to the Controller's Office.

The university American Express procedure has been updated at <http://www.purch.vt.edu/html.docs/amex.html>. If you have questions regarding your AMEX reconciliation and payment issues, contact Bradley Scott (bsscott@vt.edu), 231-3623). For all other issues related to card management, contact Debra Bales, (dbales@vt.edu), 231-8548).

Points to Remember Regarding Lodging and Meal Expenses

Government Rate: When requesting a room for an official, approved overnight stay, ask for the government rate. Don't ask for the "state rate" because many hotels won't know what you mean. Most hotels will honor the federal government rate for state government rate, if they have a government rate room available. Rooms at the government rate are not always available at every hotel. It is based on the hotel and their business for the period of your stay. Hotels want to maximize their business and profits. If you secure a room at the government rate, be sure you confirm that they will honor the government rate for a state of Virginia employee. They may say you will need a government ID to show upon check-in. Inform them that your Virginia Tech ID states the university is part of the Commonwealth of Virginia (check your ID for the fine print on the back of the card, so you know it's there).

Hotel Roanoke's Virginia Tech Rate: If the Hotel Roanoke does not have any rooms available at the government rate, ask for a room at the Virginia Tech rate. The Hotel Roanoke has agreed, when rooms are available, except for football and graduation weekends or other special event weekends, to offer rooms to Virginia Tech employees at \$75.00 (2001 rate). This rate is for official business or a personal stay at the Hotel Roanoke. The normal rate is \$109-129.

If you are to be reimbursed from public funds and your lodging rate exceeds the normal rate for Roanoke (currently \$59), you should request approval to be reimbursed for the additional expenses. Your request should include the dates of your stay, the rate you've been quoted and the reason you need to lodge at the Hotel Roanoke to conduct your business. The exception request should be sent to Roger Thomas, Supervisor of Travel Disbursements and Policy, at thomasr@vt.edu.

Lodging Rates: Your reimbursement will be at the authorized rate for the location. Please note the authorized reimbursable rates differ with location of the hotel. The rate for "Washington, DC" includes several counties and Washington, DC. Other metropolitan areas have similar inclusions, see procedure <http://www.co.vt.edu/procedures/p20335r.htm> for the exact rates for all locations within the United States. A higher hotel rate can be reimbursed if the employee is attending a meeting and staying at the same hotel as the conference. The hotel reimbursable rate, if approved by the department head in advance, can be 50% higher than the stated per diem rate if the employee is attending a conference and stays at the same hotel as the conference, i.e., lodging rate is \$60, then up to \$90 can be reimbursed if at the conference hotel.

If the rate exceeds 150% of the allowable rate for the area, advance approval must be requested from the state Department of Accounts (DOA) before the reimbursement can be made. In order to request an exception, the following information must be provided:

- Name of traveler(s)
- Actual dates of lodging
- Purpose of trip
- Name and location of hotel
- Room cost (specify that room excludes taxes/fees)
- Documentation showing alternative cost comparisons from other nearby hotels that will justify the excess expense. The names of each hotel contacted and their rate have to be listed. If there are no other hotels nearby or no vacancies in the immediate area, this needs to be stated in the request.

Please e-mail any requests for exceptions to Roger Thomas, thomasr@vt.edu. He will then forward the request to DOA and they will evaluate each request and make a decision based on various factors related to individual trips.

Package Rates: Many conferences have package rates for attending the conference, which include lodging, meals, registration, etc. These packages are generally paid directly to the conference registrar; however, travelers may be reimbursed for the expenses if they submit a copy of the registration form and a cancelled check to show they paid the expenses personally.