



New Purchasing Card Procedure 2026 Staff Resource Pack



Flinders University proudly acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands on which its campuses are located. These are the traditional lands of the Arrente, Dagoman, First Nations of the Southeast, First Peoples of the River Murray and Mallee region, Jawoyn, Kurna, Larrakia, Ngadjuri, Ngarrindjeri, Ramindjeri, Warumungu, Wardaman and Yolngu people. We honour their Elders and Custodians – past, present and emerging.

Today, over 400 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are enrolled in courses at Flinders University.



Why do we have an updated procedure?

The updated procedure provides a clearer, more consistent framework for purchasing cards use, strengthens governance and provides enhanced transparency and accountability for the appropriate use of public funds. It also provides:

- **Shared Accountability**

Cardholders and approvers share responsibility for purchases and approvals in line with new guidelines.

- **Clearer Rules and Limits**

Clear eligibility criteria and structured limits promote consistent issuance and use of purchasing cards across university Colleges and Portfolios.

- **Efficiency and transparency**

Changes aim to support efficient purchasing while protecting individuals and the University from risk of misuse.

Updated Purchasing Card Procedure





Core principle across every spending decision – the appropriate use of public funds

Expenses must be reasonable, necessary for University business and withstand public scrutiny. Cardholders must clearly explain the University purpose behind each transaction to justify expenditure. Approvers actively confirm expenditures align with university obligations as a publicly funded institution. Cardholders are encouraged to seek advice from supervisors or the Purchasing Card team when unsure before making a transaction. Cardholders and approvers are personally responsible for transactions.

What's changed in the new procedure?



Greater emphasis on judgment and guidance

The updated procedures places greater emphasis on the use of judgement in spending decisions, supported by clearer guidance on what constitutes appropriate use of public funds.



Defined eligibility categories

Eligibility for purchasing cards is now clearly defined by specific categories linked to business needs.



Redesigned spending limits

Spending limits vary by role and category with clear rules for temporary increases and automatic reversion.

Cardholder eligibility and spending limits

Eligibility Categories

Cards are issued to staff only in four defined categories with demonstrated business need ensuring consistent allocation.

Spending Limits

Standard monthly and transaction limits vary by category, with senior leaders having higher maximum limits.

Temporary Limit Increases

Temporary limit increases require documented business need, CFO approval, and last up to 30 days.

Controlled Temporary Increases

Temporary limit increases require justification, approval, and are capped at 30 days for everyone to help manage risk.

Automatic Limit Reversion

Limits automatically revert to standard levels after temporary periods, preventing limit creep.

Planning and Justification

Cardholders must plan for high-value needs, and approvers ensure increases have operational justification.

Category	Description	Standard limit	Max temp limit
1	Frequent travellers	\$5000/month \$2000/single transaction	\$10,000/month \$5,000/single transaction
2	Regular procurement	\$5000/month \$2000/single transaction	\$10,000/month \$5,000/single transaction
3	Regular external facing engagement	\$5000/month \$2000/single transaction	\$10,000/month \$5,000/single transaction
4	College exec or Portfolio leadership	\$10,000/month, \$5,000/single transaction	As determined by CFO
	SET	\$20,000/month, \$10,000/single transaction	As determined by CFO



Routine Purchases Are Within Limits

Staff typically operate comfortably within standard spending limits for routine operational purchases like office supplies. Spending limits support responsible and appropriate expenditure.



Temporary Limit Increases

Higher expenditures for short term projects require advance requests for temporary limit increases, helping to ensure compliance with procedures.



No Split Transactions

Splitting purchases to bypass limits is strictly prohibited and considered non-compliant behavior.

Hospitality, catering and examples

Appropriate Catering Use

Catering for workshops with external partners supports participation and aligns with university objectives, meeting public funds requirements.

Inappropriate Social Spending

Purchases like birthday cakes or casual coffee catch-ups for internal staff primarily serve social benefits and are unlikely to meet public funds criteria.

Responsibility Hospitality Spending

Modest, justified refreshments at external events align with purpose, while lavish spending is discouraged.

Accountability and Oversight

Cardholders should ensure purchases can be justified to auditors, and approvers must challenge unclear or personal benefit transactions.



Allowed

- Catering for workshops or meetings with a clear business purpose
- Meals with external stakeholders for clear business purpose
- Long meetings where food is required
- Catering or refreshments for University meetings over 2 hours
- Refreshments where meeting runs through a meal period
- Coffee at a business meeting with an external stakeholder
- Events only if approved in advance by a member of the Senior Executive Team (SET)



Not Allowed

- Internal lunches with no clear business purpose
- “Catch-up” meals between staff
- Hospitality that is excessive or unclear of business purpose
- Coffee catch-ups with colleagues
- Regular team coffees
- Short meetings with refreshments
- Birthday cakes, farewells, celebrations
- Staff gift cards, flowers or vouchers
- Team social events without approval from SET

Other examples



Allowed

- Buying office or lab supplies needed for your role for University business
- Purchasing items required for a project or research activity
- Shared tea, coffee and milk for communal kitchens



Not Allowed

- Personal items (e.g. passports, licences, personal fees)
- Items mainly benefiting you (not the University)
- “Nice to have” or discretionary purchases



Good practice vs poor practice



Good practice	Poor practice
Clear business purpose	Vague descriptions (eg team lunch, supplies, meeting)
Reasonable and appropriate cost	Personal or social spend
Receipts and approvals attached in FlexiPurchase	Missing receipts or approvals
Easy for someone to understand the purpose of the purchase	Trying to find work arounds for the rules

Applying judgement

Would you purchase or approve these expenditures on a University purchase card?

Scenario 1:

- Coffee and muffins for a 45 minute team meeting?
- ✗ Not appropriate

Scenario 2:

- Catering for a 2 hour workshop with external partner (with a detailed description of the purpose and who attended)
- ✓ Appropriate

Scenario 3:

- Flowers for a staff member who is leaving
- ✗ Not appropriate



Travel

Purchasing Card Use

Purchasing cards are still permitted for travel but require clear alignment with policy and documentation. Planning for travel is an important step.

Frequent Traveller Definition

A frequent traveller is now defined as someone making more than three trips per year, tightening previous criteria.

Expenditure Guidelines

Travel expenses must comply with ATO guidelines for reasonable meals, accommodation, and incidentals.

Approval and Documentation

Cardholders must support purchases with documentation, approvers ensure alignment with the Travel Policy and Purchasing Card Procedures.

More information

staff.flinders.edu.au/workplace-support/travel



Cardholder Responsibilities

- Only you can use your purchasing card – do not share it or the details.
- Use the card only for legitimate University purposes.
- Ensure all spending is:
 - reasonable
 - necessary
 - not for personal benefit
- Reconcile transactions within 14 days of statement date in FlexiPurchase.
- Upload:
 - receipts (tax invoices)
 - approvals (where required)
 - clear business purpose.
- Provide meaningful descriptions (*eg not “supplies” or “meeting”*).
- Stay within your approved limits (*do not split transactions*).
- If unsure → ask your supervisor or Purchasing Card team before spending.

Approver Responsibilities

- Review all transactions to ensure they:
 - are appropriate
 - have a clear business purpose
 - comply with policy and procedures.
- Check:
 - receipts are attached
 - descriptions are clear
 - correct coding and approvals are included.
- Approve within 14 days of submission.
- Do not approve transactions that:
 - appear personal or social
 - lack sufficient justification
 - do not meet policy or procedure requirements.
- Challenge unclear or inappropriate spend.
- Work with the Purchasing Card team on any concerns or breaches.

Key Takeaways

1. Appropriate Use of Funds

Always consider if expenditure is an appropriate and responsible use of public funds before proceeding.

2. Documented University Purpose

Ensure each transaction clearly documents its University related purpose for transparency and compliance.

3. Eligibility and Spending Limits

Understand and follow new eligibility categories and spending limits, requesting approvals when necessary.

4. Accountability and Shared Responsibility

Both cardholders and approvers share responsibility for transparent and responsible purchasing card use.



Need more information?

To access the updated Purchasing Card Procedures, FAQs, forms and quick links visit:

staff.flinders.edu.au/workplace-support/finance/corporate-credit-card

Need help?

Email: creditcards@flinders.edu.au

