



Fiscal Policy – Rule 03-140-512

Gift Cards or Certificates

1. Summary

- 1.1.** All gift cards or certificates purchased by Oregon State University must exhibit appropriate use of university funds.
- 1.2.** This policy provides guidelines and restrictions related to purchasing gift cards. All references to the term “gift cards” throughout this policy shall include all types of gift cards and gift certificates unless otherwise specifically stated.
- 1.3.** All budget authorities, managers, supervisors and any employee responsible for processing or approving the purchase of gift cards should be informed and understand this rule.

2. General Requirements

2.1. Gift Card Types

- 2.1.1.** Plastic Gift Cards – Prepaid amount loaded on a tangible card to be drawn from like a debit or credit card, swiping card at point of sale or entering number for online use.
- 2.1.2.** Virtual or Electronic Gift (eGift) Cards – Prepaid amount delivered electronically (non-tangible, via email) with a card number and PIN number, used for online purchases.
- 2.1.3.** Gift Certificates – Prepaid amount shown on a document that can be presented to a vendor to reduce the amount of a purchased item.

2.2. Restrictions

- 2.2.1.** Gift cards should be purchased from a vendor using the accounts payable process.
 - a) Personal reimbursements to OSU employees for gift card purchases are not permitted.
 - b) University credit cards may only be used to purchase gift cards with an individual value of \$50 or less.
- 2.2.2.** Gift cards are not subject to [PCI compliance](#), but physical cards, virtual cards, gift card accounts, redeemable codes and any account information must be protected.

- a) Unencrypted card numbers must not be kept on any network or personal computer (PC).
- b) Gift cards must be secured and maintained in a locked container.

2.2.3. [OSU Sponsored/Branded Cards](#) are prohibited.

3. Required Process

3.1. Gift Card Purchases

- 3.1.1. Each purchase should represent the number of cards expected to be distributed for a specific purpose.
- 3.1.2. Gift cards should be maintained in [dual custody](#). One individual may be assigned the responsibility for dispensing the cards, the other would be responsible for tracking gift cards and both should be involved in all reconciliations.
 - a) If there are any undistributed cards, they should be returned to the vendor for credit when possible.
 - b) If the vendor will not refund the value of the gift cards, they should be secured and held in dual custody. A description of planned future use including anticipated disbursement dates must be approved by the unit head and included with supporting documentation.

3.2. Required Documentation

- 3.2.1. Supporting documentation should include receipts or a log that records the following information and should not include any personally identifiable information (i.e. social security or driver license numbers):
 - a) List of recipients or subject ID numbers (when confidential)
 - b) Employee ID numbers, if applicable
 - c) Amount distributed to each recipient
 - d) Date(s) of distribution

3.3. Proper Accounting

- 3.3.1. Gift cards given to employees (faculty, staff or student) are considered a cash equivalent and must be accounted for and sufficiently documented.
 - a) The business purpose should be provided to help staff determine appropriate taxability and verify whether the correct account code is being used.

- b) The value of the gift card is reported as taxable in the payroll system through the accounts payable process.
 - c) See fiscal policy-rule [03-140-507 Employee Recognition](#) for information on approved funding sources and processing requirements for these awards.
- 3.3.2.** The value of purchased gift cards and any undistributed gift cards must be reconciled to the authorized amount expended.
- 3.3.3.** OSU Foundation will not process requests for direct payment or personal reimbursement of gift card purchases or other cash equivalent gifts or awards.
- 3.3.4.** Gift card expenses paid by the university are reimbursable through the [OSU Reimbursement or FS Index Reimbursement System](#).
- 3.3.5.** Account codes for Gift Cards or Gift Certificates:
 - a) 20168 Awards – Employees
 - b) 20169 Awards – Non-Employees
 - c) 20190 Testing Group Incentives
 - d) 25140 Research Subjects

4. Related Information

- 4.1.** University Policy [03-100 Fiscal Policy Program Authority](#)
- 4.2.** Please refer to all other policies, standards, fiscal rules and related guidelines that may be applicable, including but not limited to the following:
 - 4.2.1.** Fiscal Policy-Rule [03-140-507 Employee Recognition](#)
 - 4.2.2.** Fiscal Policy-Rule [03-160-102 eCommerce](#)
 - 4.2.3.** [University Information and Technology Policies](#)
- 4.3.** Please check with your supervisor for unit-level procedures related to this rule.
- 4.4.** Following are forms and other resources related to this policy:
 - 4.4.1.** None
- 4.5.** [Fiscal Policy Program Definitions of Terminology](#)
- 4.6.** [Fiscal Policy Program Frequently Asked Questions](#) (FAQs)

5. History

- 5.1. Original Issue Date: 01/2003
- 5.2. Previous Versions: 12/2021 (minor revision) & 11/2013 (FIS 410-27 Gift Cards or Certificates)
- 5.3. Next Scheduled Review Date: 06/2025

6. Contacts

- 6.1. Policy Steward: Director of Vendor Payment Strategies ([contact info](#))
- 6.2. Program: Fiscal Policy Officer ([contact – for program inquiries only](#))