



University Policy: Policy on Alcohol Service at University Events and University Business Meals

Policy Category: Student Policies, Administrative Policies, Operational Policies

Subject: Alcohol service at university events and university business meals

Office Responsible for Review of this Policy: Office of Campus Life, Office of the Provost, Office of Finance and Treasurer

Related University Policies: Employee Alcohol and Drug Abuse Policy found in the American University [Staff Personnel Policy Guide](#), [Student Conduct Code](#), Residence Hall Regulations found in the Student Conduct Code, [Paper and Digital Advertising Policy](#), [Posting Materials Policy](#), [Procurement & Contracts Policy and Guidelines](#), [Accounts Payable Policies and Procedures](#), and [Travel Policy](#).

I. SCOPE

This Policy on Alcohol Service at University Events and Business Meals (“Policy”) establishes requirements for hosting University Events or University Business Meals at which alcohol beverages are served. This policy applies to all AU community members, including faculty, staff, students, alumni, and visitors.

II. POLICY STATEMENT

American University is committed to maintaining a healthy and safe academic environment that reflects high standards of personal responsibility and behavior. The University complies with all laws related to use and possession of alcohol at University Events and University Business Meals.

III. DEFINITIONS

Business Meals - Meals in which University business is conducted.

Event Planner – the University administrator/employee responsible for organizing and managing the University Event or Business Meal in compliance with this Policy.

Licensed Vendor – a vendor who is licensed in the appropriate jurisdiction to serve alcohol at a University Event or Business Meal.

Responsible Official – Administrator authorized to approve a University Event or University Business Meal at which alcohol beverage is served. These individuals include the president, provost, dean, primary budget manager (e.g. associate/assistant dean in each academic unit), or direct report of a cabinet member.

University Event – Event organized/sponsored by the University, held on or off University Premises.

University Premises – buildings and grounds owned, leased, operated, controlled, or supervised by the University.

IV. POLICY

A. General Requirements

All University Events or University Business Meals where alcohol is available must be conducted in accordance with the following provisions:

1. Possession of alcohol is prohibited at open-air events (see [Student Conduct Code](#) for details).
2. Prior approval by the Responsible Official must be obtained for the University Event. Prior approval is not required for University Business Meals (see section C for guidelines).
3. Alcohol service at University Events must be provided by a Licensed Vendor.
4. Alcohol on University Premises or University Business Meals is limited to beer and wine. Any exception to this requirement must be preapproved by a direct report of a cabinet member and only applies to University Events.
5. Possession and/or consumption of alcohol is limited to individuals who are at least 21 years of age. If individuals under 21 years of age are expected, the Event Planner must have a procedure in place to check for proof of age.
6. Consumption, distribution, or service of alcoholic beverages must be in compliance with relevant University policies and local, state, and federal laws.
7. Advertising or promoting the availability of alcohol at a University Event is prohibited.
8. Responsible officials can deny admission, alcohol services, or continued attendance at a University Event to anyone who, in the sole judgment of the officials, is intoxicated.
9. Food or snacks and non-alcoholic beverages must be available at University Events where alcohol is served.
10. One-price, all-you-can-drink arrangements for alcoholic beverages are prohibited.
11. Bring-Your-Own Alcoholic Beverage (BYOB) arrangements are prohibited.

B. Application for Approval of Alcohol Service at a University Event

University funds may be used to pay for wine or beer at University Events with prior approval by a Responsible Official.

All Event Planners must initiate the application process for alcohol service at a University Event by submitting to the Responsible Official:

1. a completed online [Application for Alcohol Service at a University Event](#) (click to access application),
2. copy of Licensed Vendor's liquor license, and
3. a certificate of insurance with a minimum of \$1 million in liquor liability coverage from the Licensed Vendor.

Items 2 and 3 can be attached to the online application.

Paying non-University vendors with a purchasing card does not exempt the department or academic unit from submitting appropriate paperwork to the Responsible Official prior to the realization of the event.

To expedite the approval process, Event Planners are encouraged to use the University's dining services-licensed vendor, as they usually have a current license to serve alcohol. Events held at the Washington College of Law (WCL), the Mary Graydon Center, and East Campus event spaces in Constitution and Congressional Halls require the use of the University's official caterer for alcohol service in those spaces.

A copy of the license and certificate of insurance may be obtained from the Office of Procurement and Contracts.

C. Guidelines for Purchase of Alcohol at a University Business Meal

University funds may be used to pay for wine/beer during business meals if all the following conditions are met:

1. it has a valid business purpose,
2. hosts special guests or donors,
3. not charged to a federal grant or contract,
4. takes place at an off-campus location with a license to serve to alcohol (e.g., restaurant),
5. all attendees are 21 years old or older,
6. Responsible Official or Responsible Official's designee¹ must approve the purchase in the credit card approval system, or sign as "authorized approver" if using an Employee Travel and Expense Reimbursement form.

¹ A designee (an employee with sign off authority for reimbursements or corporate credit card purchases) must ensure guidelines in this policy are enforced.

University funds may not be used to pay for wine/beer when traveling on University business unless the criteria above are met.

C.1 Process Steps

Approval for alcohol purchases at University Business Meals do not require submittal of an Application for Alcohol Service but must be documented by any of the following applicable methods:

1. When using a University-issued corporate card, a Responsible Official or designee must approve the purchase electronically in the corporate credit card approval system or sign the uploaded receipt.
2. When submitting via an Employee Travel and Expense Reimbursement form, a Responsible Official or designee must sign as the “authorized approver.”
3. The Washington College of Law requires preapproval for University Business Meals with alcohol.

D. Additional Information

1. Online application is located at: [Application for Alcohol Service](https://myau.american.edu/forms/vpfin/SitePages/Online%20Request.aspx) (hyperlink) or at URL:
<https://myau.american.edu/forms/vpfin/SitePages/Online%20Request.aspx>
2. Questions about this Policy should be directed to the Office of the Vice President of Campus Life (x3310), Office of the Provost (x2127), or the Office of the CFO, Vice President and Treasurer (x2700).
3. The University reserves the right to amend this policy in accordance with the law, community standards, or the best interests of the University.
4. All other University policies related to alcohol must be adhered to including, but not limited to, the Drug and Alcohol-Free Workplace Policy, the Student Conduct Code, Residence Hall Regulations, Housing License Agreement, and Travel Policy.

E. Policy Enforcement

Failure to comply with this Policy may result in disciplinary or other remedial actions (including removal of alcohol by Public Safety from University Premises).

V. EFFECTIVE DATE

May 1, 2018

Previous revision: October 2010.