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Introducing the Purchasing Card Program

Welcome to the Boston College Purchasing Card Program (p-card). The p-card is a procurement tool that provides an extremely efficient and effective method of purchasing goods and services with a value of less than $5,000. The p-card should not be confused with the University's American Express Corporate Card, which is a separate program designed to facilitate the handling of travel and entertainment expenses only. THE BOSTON COLLEGE PURCHASING CARD IS TO BE USED FOR BUSINESS PURPOSES ONLY. The p-card program delegates authority to purchase approved commodities, directly from merchants that accept the VISA credit card provided the purchase conforms to University Policy. The p-card works like a personal credit card where items are bought via presentation of the card to a merchant. However, payments are made from one central billing by Boston College from a specified general ledger account. The benefits of the p-card to you and Boston College are significant.

Benefits to the Cardholder:

- Goods and services can be more quickly and easily obtained.
- Work related to the purchase of and payment for goods and services is significantly reduced.
Benefits to the University:

- Reduces the number of requisitions, purchase orders, invoices and checks.
- Enables the Procurement Services Department and Accounts Payable to focus on higheryield, value-added activities.

Uses

The p-card is designed to be used for purchases related to University business only. Use of the card for personal purchases is strictly prohibited. University accounting policies, as well as good business practices, must be followed in using the p-card, reconciling purchases, and retaining documentation.

Possible uses for the p-card include the following:

- Subscriptions and publication renewals
- Teaching aids and laboratory supplies
- Office supplies*
- Copier service agreements
- Memberships and dues*
- BC Bookstore purchases
- Miscellaneous low-dollar (under $5,000) supply orders
- Copy and reprographic service*
- Items presently paid for by employees and for which they are subsequently reimbursed through PeopleSoft.

*Federally funded research accounts would exclude these items (see Sponsored Funding Restrictions below)

Becoming a Cardholder

The p-card (Visa Card) is issued to individual employees or others who are granted authority to purchase goods, within specified limits, from the designated University account. The Department personnel with overall budget responsibility for a particular General Ledger account, also known as the P-1, will designate authority and spending limits for each card issued. The Departmental P-card Administrator is responsible for creating and reconciling p-cards.

P-cards must not be shared. In order to designate responsibility for use of the card and the associated retention of receipts and reconciliation, separate cards must be issued to each person drawing funding from an account. The Department P-1’s determine as to whether to maintain cardholder receipts centrally or designate it to cardholders or others in the department. A reconciliation of monthly statements to PeopleSoft is required on a monthly basis by the Departmental P-Card Administrator or assigned pcard administrator within a service center. Final responsibility for retaining documentation and control over receipts and cards issued remains with the individual Departmental P-Card Administrator designated by the P-1.
Cardholder applications are done on-line using the PeopleSoft System by the Departmental P-card Administrator. Check with the P-1 for the name of the pcard administrator for your department. Departmental P-1’s must approved new p-card applications.

To submit a request for a card for a new departmental chartstring (one that has not had a p-card in the past), budget money must be moved to the p-card account and a "departmental p-card record" on PeopleSoft Financials must be created by the Departmental P-card Administrator before cardholders are created. See the instructions here.

Once the departmental p-card record has been set up, the Departmental P-Card Administrator can start creating cardholders. Instructions here

After the on-line card request has been submitted by the Departmental P-card Administrator and before the cardholder can pick-up a Boston College p-card, this User’s Guide must be completely read and understood. The questionnaire, which are a few questions regarding the Boston College Purchasing Card Program must be correctly answered. If this guide does not provide enough information and a personal training class is required, please e-mail pcard@bc.edu with a request.

See the Purchasing Card Questionnaire. After receiving a score of 90 or above on the questionnaire the cardholder must click the submit button to send the results to Procurement Services.

Cardholders will receive an e-mail from Procurement Services to pick-up their p-cards in Accounts Payable, Room 200 at 129 Lake Street when the cards are received from the bank (7-10 days). Cardholders must sign the Cardholder Agreement signifying that they are aware of the rules prior to receiving a card. Cardholders must bring proper picture identification (valid driver’s license or Boston College ID) in order to pick up a p-card. If a cardholder cannot pick up their card then Procurement Services needs to be notified at pcard@bc.edu to make arrangements for someone else to get their card.

How It Works

The account code (expense code) used for general p-card transactions is account code 68370*. Before cards are issued, sufficient funds must be transferred to account code 68370* which is the designated Purchasing Card Expense account (*Special activity departments may use other restricted account codes). The amount of money in the 68370* account is sent to the bank. Once the bank uploads this information into the system (taking approximately 2 days), this amount becomes the departmental spending limit (credit limit). Funds are deducted from this amount as transactions are approved by merchants with the bank. Payment for card transactions will be made automatically from this account. Transactions can be viewed in US Bank's Access-on-line immediately after a transaction. A record of all transactions as they were deducted from the budget can be seen on the Boston College PeopleSoft Budget Detail screens approximately two days after the transaction date.
The p-card account 68370* is for purchasing card use only and should not be used on vouchers or requisitions created in PeopleSoft.

Using the card is similar to using any credit card. Purchases may be made in person, at any store that accepts Visa, over-the-phone or through a secured internet connection. It is prohibited by the University to fax or e-mail cardholder account numbers and information for security reasons. Transactions are approved automatically based on the following criteria established by Boston College:

- Single purchase limits designated by the departmental Pcard Administrator but not to exceed the University maximum of $4999 or $999 for grant single purchase limit. (Splitting a single transaction over $5000, into multiple transactions under $5000, is not allowed.)
- Departmental spending limit is the amount transferred to account code 68370*
- Cardholder monthly spending limit (entered by departmental Pcard administrator as designated by the P1, but not to exceed the University monthly maximum of $20,000 without special approval by the Controller).
- Approved commodity for department's p-card purchases.

Transactions are available immediately by accessing the US Bank system through Access On-Line.

Restricted Commodities

The p-card is available for most purchases under $5,000. In order to effectively manage the University however, certain restrictions must be made to comply with University standards, maintenance systems, technology requirements, and state and federal regulations. Purchases of the restricted commodities, listed below, and purchases of $5,000 or more must continue to be processed in accordance with established procurement and disbursement policies and procedures. Visit the Procurement Services web site at www.bc.edu/ecommerce for a list of online contracted vendors.

The p-card is NOT TO BE USED for the following commodities:

- Travel and entertainment-related expenses and advances such as airlines, auto rentals, hotels, railroads, travel agencies, restaurants, theaters, clubs, etc. Please use the BC Travel Card by AMEX for the purchase of these items.
- Alcoholic beverages
- Animals and animal-related purchases that are restricted by law
- Automotive gasoline
- Cash advances/Travelers Checks
- Cell phones and cell phone services
- Catering and restaurant services-however, fast food from merchants listed as “take out only” establishments (not restaurants) are allowed provided the "business purpose" and attendees are recorded on the receipt. For more than 10 attendees, the event or department and number of people must be listed on the receipt.
- Construction and renovations
- Consulting services
- Firearms and ammunition
- Gift Cards and Certificates for Employees
- Payments to individuals (not companies)
- Professional services
- Personal items and services
- Prescription drugs and controlled substances
- Radioactive and hazardous materials
- Telecommunications, cable, dsl, and phone cards
- Temporary Help-must be ordered through Human Resources.

Since this list of restrictions may be amended at any time to meet the needs of this growing community, please browse this portion of the User's Guide frequently for updates. Cardholders, P-Card Administrators and P-1’s are also sent updates and P-Card Newsletters by e-mail.

In order to assure the University community of the most efficient procurement of goods and services, and to fulfill the University's obligation to consolidate all of its requirements with the authorized contract suppliers, departments should order from those suppliers who are authorized contract suppliers whenever possible. To find a listing of contract supplier go to: http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/offices/buy/catindex.html

**Sponsored Funding Restrictions**

When using the p-card on a sponsored project account, the cardholder is responsible for ensuring that all purchases meet the requirements and regulations of the specific contract or grant. The federal government places additional restrictions on the expenditure of federal funds for sponsored research and the retention of supporting documentation. A single transaction limit for federal grants is 999.00 For specific questions about using sponsored project funds, cardholders should contact the Office of Sponsored Programs at ext. 2-3398.

In addition to the above commodities, the p-card cannot be used for the following items on federally funded sponsored programs:

- General office supplies* (i.e. paper, pens, tape, etc.)
- General office equipment (i.e. chairs, desks, bookcases)
- Postage/Federal Express*
- Copy and reprographic services*

* In some cases these expenditures may be allowed as a result of the specific nature of the grant (i.e. the grant requires large mailings or the preparation and production of large reports). Please contact the Office of Sponsored Programs if you believe that your sponsored program may qualify for this exemption.

**P-1 RESPONSIBILITIES**
• P-1 must authorize new cardholders before the Departmental P-Card administrator can create a card in PeopleSoft.

• P-1 is responsible for determining the best method of receipt retention for the departments or service centers provided it meets the University or Sponsored program records retention policy. The P-1 will determine if monthly statements and receipts will be maintained by the cardholder or centrally by the Departmental P-card Administrator. (Scanned images of receipts are allowed)

• The P-1 must assign a Departmental P-card Administrator for each p-card record, determine single transaction limits (within policy), and verify that all p-card transactions have been reconciled and meet policy requirements.

• If Departmental P-card Administrator has a p-card, then the best practice is to have the P-1 review the transactions or assign an independent person in the department or service center to review the transactions.

DEPARTMENTAL P-CARD ADMINISTRATOR RESPONSIBILITIES:

• The Departmental P-Card Administrator is the person responsible for creation of departmental accounts and creation of cardholders in accordance with the P-1 and University directives using the PeopleSoft Purchasing Card screens. This also involves setting any individual limits determined by the P-1.

• The Departmental P-Card Administrator is responsible for maintaining and updating cardholder information as necessary and for maintaining adequate budget in the associated p-card accounts.

• Statements and the corresponding receipts are maintained, either individually or centrally with the Departmental Pcard Administrator for a minimum of three years for Boston College funding. Scanning receipts is recommended. See the granting agencies requirements for receipts retentions.

• The Departmental P-Card Administrator is responsible for obtaining copies of all cardholder’s statements, reconciling them to the transactions reported for the month in PeopleSoft for the applicable budgets.

• The Departmental P-card Administrator must review all transactions for compliance with University policies and research any issues on fraud or concerns to the P-1. All reconciliations must be signed and dated by the Departmental P-card Administrator.

• All spending limits are determined by the individual department's P-1 and administrated through the Departmental P-Card Administrator. To adjust the amount of money available in the chart string's spending limit, the Departmental P-card administrators can create a budget transfer and transfer funds INTO or OUT OF the designated p-card account. This transaction will create an automatic message to the bank to increase or decrease the spending limit of all cardholders with the associated chartstring. Increases in the spending limit will usually be available within two business days after the PeopleSoft transaction has been approved. Decreases require a waiting period, and restrict card use during that time, to allow transactions still pending to be processed before funds are removed and released to other account code.

• Departmental P-card Administrators are responsible for reviewing the balance available in p-cards to avoid declining cards. A report called BC_PCARD_BUDGET_LOW should be reviewed, at least monthly, to view balances on pcard accounts.
• **Changes to individual cardholder profiles**: monthly limits, or single transaction limits must be made by the Departmental P-card Administrator after P-1 approval. Single transaction limits cannot exceed $4,999 except under special circumstances and approved by the Controller.

• **Ghost and Special P-card Uses**: In special high volume areas, Boston College may opt to use p-cards in unique ways to meet the needs of the University. This may include designating one card to be used for all transactions by a specific merchant or extending limits for special circumstances. If you feel you have a need for this capability, please contact the Manager of the University P-Card Program at x2-3055.

• **Emergencies**: In EMERGENCY SITUATIONS, such as a rush purchase which exceeds the spending limit of the cardholder, please contact the Manager of the University P-Card Program at pcard@bc.edu. The Manager will obtain approvals and if accepted, will contact the bank to request special circumstances and actions to meet the need.

• **Cancellation of P-Cards**: P-cards must be canceled as soon as possible when an employee leaves or plans to leave the University or department by the Departmental P-Card Administrator or P-1. If they are not available, contact pcard@bc.edu. To cancel a p-card, Departmental P-card Administrator can use an on-line transaction (Cardholder Create/Update) to deactivate the card, and, if necessary, apply for a new card.

**PeopleSoft Reconciliation for the Departmental P-Card Administrator**

• Once a merchant submits the transaction to his bank, it will take approximately two days for the transaction detail to be transferred to the Boston College accounting system as the transaction will go from the merchant to the merchant's bank, then to US Bank, then to Boston College. (Transactions can be viewed immediately in US Bank's Access-on-line) The transaction will then be entered into the financial accounting system (PeopleSoft General Ledger System) for the University and will be included in the department's financial reports the following day.
• The Departmental P-Card Administrator must obtain statements for all associated cardholders and match the statements to the PeopleSoft Query: BC_PCARD_DATA_BY_DEPARTMENT which will give detailed activity for all cardholders. Any discrepancies should be reported to pcard@bc.edu. After the accounts have been reconciled, the reconciliation must be signed, dated and maintained by the Departmental P-Card Administrator.

• The University receives one master summary bill from our p-card banking agent (US Bank) from which we make payments monthly.

• The Departmental P-Card Administrator should also check the statements at this time for any unauthorized or questionable purchases and obtain any additional documentation, if needed. They should also review the listing of cardholders and inactivate any cards or p-card related departments that are no longer required.

Level III (Transaction Detail) P-Card Information

Level III data is detail information of items purchased provided by the merchant, through the bank, to Boston College shortly after the transaction has taken place. It is important to remember that not all vendors provide line detail information and that not all line detail information reported is accurate or complete. Tax, for example, may be reported by some merchants on every line of the transaction in the level III detail, but is only included in the Transaction Total, which is the amount actually paid, once. Therefore, level III data is best used to identify the types of products being purchased and should NOT be used for reconciliation purposes. Purchasing card statements must be reconciled to the BC_PCARD_DATA_BY_DEPT query.

Level III information can be found in PeopleSoft by selecting the Level 3 query: BC_PCARD_LEVEL3_ALL and viewing the transactions by chartstring.

Level III data can only be provided if there is a part number or a generic description for an item. Printed items, for example, are all custom and not available as Level III data.

If you have a vendor you use frequently and would like to see them include level III data in their reporting, suggest the vendor contact their merchant bank (the bank that handles their Visa transactions) to get more information on becoming a level III provider or contact Procurement Services with the vendor name and contact information and we will make arrangements for our P-card bank to contact the vendor.

CARDHOLDER RESPONSIBILITIES:

• All cardholders must learn the program requirements including the information contained in the P-card User Guide and must adhere to the rules and regulations of the program.

• All cardholders must take and pass the P-card questionnaire and must sign a Cardholder Agreement before they can obtain a card.

• All cardholders must make purchases within BC policy requirements, including using BC contracted vendors when available.

• Cardholders must obtain receipts, properly document all purchases made on the P-card, attach receipts to statements, and sign the reconciled statement on a monthly basis.
• Cardholders must obtain their statements by registering their account or accounts at US Bank's website: www.access.usbank.com
• Statements must be reconciled within 30 days but before 60 days. (US Bank/VISA will not research or credit transactions that are disputed after 60 days from the transaction date.)
• Statements must be matched by the cardholder to the receipts for each purchase. Additional documentation, if required, must be added to the receipt. Keep in mind that statements arrive in chronological order. Keeping receipts in the order that transactions are made, is helpful in the reconciliation process. Statements must be signed and dated after reconciliation is complete and given to the Departmental P-card Administrator.
• Any discrepancies in statements must be reported to US Bank's fraud department with a copy sent to Pcard@bc.edu or faxed to 617-552-2369
• Cardholders must provide a copy of their reconciled statement and receipts, if required to the Departmental P-Card Administrator for reconciliation with the budget in PeopleSoft.

Placing An Order Using the Purchasing Card For security reasons, please do not e-mail your credit card number or store it on your desktop. When placing your order, please be sure to provide the merchant with the following information:

• Indicate that it is a Boston College "Corporate" Purchasing VISA Card purchase.
• Massachusetts tax-exempt status and tax number printed on the card (E042-103-545)
• Cardholder name
• Individual card number
• Expiration date of card
• Security Code (listed on the back of your card)
• Complete delivery address including department, building and room number
• Billing address which is listed on your monthly statement.
• Description of goods or services to be ordered
• Phone number, should the merchant need to contact you
• Any other information necessary to make the purchase

Failure to emphasize that you are making a Boston College purchase may result in not receiving a Boston College agreement price or discount.

Once a transaction is approved, the cardholder needs to acquire and retain some type of documentation of the purchase and should reconcile amounts charged to the general ledger expense account designated on the card with the amount documented.

If a vendor requires a copy of our Tax Exempt Certificate, please direct them to the Procurement Services web site at www.bc.edu/suppliers. This site will provide credit reference information as well as allow the merchant to download the relevant tax certificate. This certificate must be downloaded by the vendor only, as it will require they complete vendor information prior to obtaining the certificate.
Disputes/Incorrect Charge Amounts: Reconciliation of Statements to Receipts

If you believe you have an unauthorized charge on your p-card, please complete the disputed link in US Bank’s Access-on-line. Instructions on disputing transactions: Dispute a Transaction Instructions. In some cases, it is possible for a merchant to submit a forced charge to the bank without obtaining prior authorization. In these cases, the bank has not had an opportunity to decline the charge for funding, MCC code or other restrictions. If you receive a forced charge, the bank allows you to dispute the charge within 60 days. Notify discrepancies to: pcard@bc.edu.

The cardholder is responsible for following up with a merchant for any erroneous charges, disputed items, damaged merchandise, or returns. The cardholder should contact the merchant first to resolve any outstanding issues. Merchants can create a credit to the cardholder's account to remove the charge. It may take one billing cycle for the offsetting credits to appear on your statement. Most issues can be resolved this way. If the cardholder is unable to reach an agreement with the merchant, the next step is to dispute the transaction on Access-on-line. When US Bank has completed its investigation, the cardholder will be informed of the resolution and any corrections that were made. Any issues should be identified to the Departmental P-card Administrator.

Documentation and Receipt Retention

P-card statements, associated receipts and other supporting documentation should be retained for a minimum of three years for Boston College funds and the life of the grant plus a minimum of three years after the submission of the final expenditure report for restricted, funding agencies, contract or grant funds ledger accounts. Departmental P-card Administrators are responsible for verifying all documentation is filed for review. P-card reconciliation documentation must be signed, dated, retained and available for audit review by federal, state or private agencies for externally funded projects. The P-I will determine if receipts are to be held by cardholders or submitted to the Departmental P-Card Administrator. The importance of proper record retention by the cardholder cannot be understated. If a purchase is selected for audit, and the supporting documentation cannot be provided, the University may be required to reimburse the agency for the amount of the transaction. Undocumented activity may be considered fraudulent and may be subject to disciplinary action. P1s may consider scanning receipts and statements to a secured server file. Electronic documents are considered acceptable documentation to meet University P-card Audit requirements.

Boston College provides the following systems to help users meet the requirements of the program.
• The Manager of the University P-Card Program is responsible for the overall administration of the p-card program and reconciling the bank transaction feeds to the monthly University billing.
• The Manager of the University P-card Program reviews transactions for compliance to policies and may contact cardholders or Departmental P-Card Administrators to review compliance or receipts.
• Personal or Departmental training can be arranged by sending an e-mail to: pcard@bc.edu
• The Procurement Services web site offers information on the Purchasing Card Program at www.bc.edu/pcard
• PeopleSoft Financials provides the Departmental P-card Administrator access to create and maintain chart strings for p-card use, create and maintain cardholders, and run associated reports.
• PeopleSoft Commitment Control Pages allow P1s and Departmental Pcard Administrators to review budgeted amounts in the p-card, make necessary transfers to p-card accounts, and reconcile statements to the PeopleSoft p-card related expenses.
• The PeopleSoft Financials web site offers training documentation under each module, including the budget module which provides information on reviewing budget details and making budget transfers at www.bc.edu/peoplesoft
Access On-Line offers cardholders or Departmental P-Card Administrators the ability to review and print statements, view recent transactions and real-time balances, check declines, and run reports on p-card activity.
• P-card labs are offered for more detailed information on reconciliation at: http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/offices/buy/pcard/PcardLabP2s.html
• Questions on the p-card program can be sent to pcard@bc.edu

Lost or Stolen Cards

It is the responsibility of the cardholder to immediately report a lost or stolen p-card. THE UNIVERSITY IS LIABLE FOR ALL TRANSACTIONS UNTIL THE CARD IS REPORTED LOST OR STOLEN. A cardholder must report a lost or stolen p-card by phone directly to US Bank at 1-800-344-5696 and then, to the Manager of the University P-card Program at x2-3055 or e-mail pcard@bc.edu. The bank will automatically send a new card to Procurement Services and you will be notified when it arrives.

Immediately inform your Departmental P-card Administrator and any merchants who bill your card on a re-occurring basis (such as Boston Bean or Boston Globe).

Activating the P-Card

Once the card is received, US Bank needs to be contacted to activate the card by calling 1-800-344-5696 and providing them the zip code found on the address portion of your card package. Boston College does not provide social security information to the bank. The social security number field is filled with zeros.
Questions?

Any questions concerning the use of the Boston College p-card should be directed to the pcard@bc.edu or the Manager of the University P-Card Program at 617-552-3055. In addition, cardholders can receive 24 hour, toll-free account services 365 days per year, around the world, through the bank's **Customer Service Unit at 1-800-344-5696**. This Customer Service Unit can assist with dispute status, card activation, address changes, account closures, lost/stolen card reports and other general inquiry or maintenance issues. They cannot provide you with the amount available to spend, as this is a Boston College feature and not part of the normal bank system.

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Internal Audit Hotline

Please note, if a cardholder or a Departmental P-card Administrator suspects p-card fraud or unethical business practices, Internal Audit has an anonymous business ethics hotline. Please contact: 617-552-3194.