



Mobile Communication Services and Equipment Guidelines

Purpose

These guidelines are to establish the extent to which the university may subsidize, through a cell phone reimbursement, personally owned cell phones used to conduct University business.

Applicability

These guidelines apply to staff and faculty who are authorized to use a cell phone and/or associated wireless services for university business and who receive reimbursement from the university to offset the cost of the cell phone for business-related calls or who may receive a university-provided shared government account cell phone.

Plan Eligibility

The University provides access to university-owned communication devices based upon an employee's job responsibilities. Those communication devices may include desktop/laptop computers with email capabilities, desk phones for transacting university business, and pagers to maintain contact with employees throughout their work period.

Some positions may require that the employee be readily available via cell phone throughout their work period or during non-work hours. If an employee's position falls into any one or more of the following four criteria, the university may subsidize the employee's personal cell phone service with a cell phone reimbursement:

1. Key personnel who are responsible for the direction, management, or provision of operationally-critical UVM facilities, infrastructure, or services, whose role requires them to be available to their staff or customers/clients while they're away from their desks and/or beyond normal business hours.
2. Key personnel who spend much of their workday away from a desk phone in order to meet the essential functions of their jobs, and who must coordinate regularly with their supervisors, contractors, dispatchers, or customers.
3. Key personnel who regularly use their cell phones during non-business hours to communicate with and/or manage one or more operationally-critical UVM systems.

4. Key personnel who have unit-level responsibility for students, the delivery of instruction and/or critical research facilities.

The cell phone reimbursement must be approved by the employee's supervisor, Dean or Vice President, and the Provost.

Allowable and Non-Allowable Reimbursements

Allowable:

The university will reimburse for the following items:

- a. Cell phone reimbursement amount is a flat \$35.00 per month regardless of plan.
- b. Deans and Vice Presidents may authorize the purchase of University owned iPads or tablets for job-specific needs. (Note: these devices are University property and will be the department's responsibility to remain with the University should there be a separation.)
- c. Deans or Vice Presidents may authorize, upon receipt of itemized invoices, reimbursement for job-related cell phone calls from international locations.

Non-Allowable:

The university will not reimburse individuals for the purchase of:

- a. Cell phone equipment or accessories
- b. Personal iPad or tablet equipment
- c. iPad or tablet service plans – personal or university-owned

Employee Responsibilities

1. Wireless communication devices used in part to conduct University business and/or to create, receive, send or store University data or information are subject to federal and state data maintenance and protection laws, such as FERPA and record retention. Employees receiving a cell phone reimbursement must comply with the federal and state requirements.
2. Use of the cell phone in any manner contrary to local, state, federal laws, or university policies will constitute misuse, and result in immediate termination of the cell phone reimbursement.
3. Cell phone device purchase, maintenance, insurance, and replacement will be the responsibility of the employee receiving the cell phone reimbursement.
4. Inform the University to discontinue the reimbursement when the eligibility criteria has changed or when the cell service is cancelled. If such notification is not submitted within 30 days of no longer meeting criteria or service cancellation, the employee must repay the University for the reimbursement received.
5. Comply with applicable laws regarding the use of cell phones while driving a motor vehicle and avoid cell phone use that may jeopardize the safety of the employee and others.

6. Acknowledge that cell phone transmissions may not be secure and employees should use extreme discretion in relaying confidential and proprietary information over the cell phone.
7. Complete a cell phone reimbursement authorization form for each fiscal year. Form should include all required fields, including valid combo code, copy of most recent cell phone invoice, cell phone number, and appropriate signature approvals. *Reimbursements will begin in the month the completed authorization form is received in the Controller's Office. (No retro's)*

University Shared Phone Plans

University-owned cell phones are provided only by exception. Where a health, safety, or regulatory justification can be established, exceptions may be granted to the general prohibition of University-owned cell phones. Generally, this will occur in the case of a cell phone that passes from person to person at shift change and does not leave the University premises or in the case of a faculty member leading a group of students abroad for study. All exceptions must be processed, justified, and approved by the departmental supervisor, Dean or Vice President, and the Vice President for Finance and Treasurer and/or the Provost.

Miscellaneous

This constitutes a reimbursement for the business usage of a personal cell phone. This reimbursement does not constitute an increase to base pay, and will not be included in the calculation of percentage increases to base pay due to annual raises, job upgrades, bonuses, benefits based on percentage of salary, etc.

Directly Charging to a Sponsored Project is Unallowable

The cell phone reimbursement *is not allowed as a direct expense* on a sponsored grant or contract.

Due to the difficulty of allocating telecommunication costs such as a cell phone reimbursement to a sponsored project, Federal regulations (OMB Circular A-21) require the University to consistently account for telecommunication expenses as an indirect cost. See *Cost Policy on Sponsored Agreements*.

Definitions

Mobile Communication Device: Portable computing and telecommunications devices that can execute programs. This definition includes, but is not limited to, netbooks, iPads, personal digital assistants, iPhone, Blackberry devices, and any cell phone with internet browsing capability.

Mobile Communication Services: Any wireless plan that allows for, but is not limited to, internet browsing functions, data service, text messaging service, wireless telecommunication service, etc.

Related Documents/Policies

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>

Cost Policy on Sponsored Agreements

http://www.uvm.edu/policies/grants/SponAgree_CostPolicy.pdf

Cell Phone Reimbursement – Authorization Form

<https://www.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/Division-of-Finance/Forms/cellphoneform.xlsx>

University-Provided Cell Phone - Authorization Form

<https://www.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/Division-of-Finance/Forms/sharedphoneauthorizationform.xlsx>