



UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL

TITLE:	Celebratory Events for Employees	REFERENCE:
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PURPOSE:

The success of the University's mission is largely dependent upon the efforts of our dedicated employees. Holiday parties and celebrations of key life events are often used as a means of demonstrating inclusion and appreciation for the work and efforts by our employees. The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines on the use of University funds to host these events to ensure consistency across the University.

DEFINITIONS:

Major Holiday Events shall mean a department-wide luncheon, dinner or party in connection with an established University-wide holiday, e.g. Thanksgiving, Christmas, etc.

Key Life Events shall mean an employee's birth/adoption of a child, wedding shower, baby shower, and birthday parties.

POLICY:

HOLIDAY & KEY LIFE EVENTS

University funds **shall not** be permitted to pay for offsite celebratory events for major holiday or key life events, as defined above.

Use of University facilities and reasonable reimbursement for one annual celebratory event in recognition of major holidays is permissible. In determining reasonableness, the total per head expenditure should generally not exceed [IRS meal reimbursement guidelines](#) (\$15.00 for breakfast; \$16.00 for lunch and \$28.00 for dinner). Approvals for hosting such departmental events must be secured in advance by the Vice President, Dean or equivalent level of the respective unit.

University funds may be expended to reserve space for key life events on University property; however University funds shall not be used to provide the following: (1) food and beverage catering or reimbursement of same; (2) alcohol (3) decorations for the event; and (4) any

additional items for the event, e.g. serving trays, utensils, tablecloths, etc. The University facility may be used as a venue through which employees bring a potluck meal to celebrate such events.

Note: Our employees are diverse and each member celebrates many different holidays and observances. Keep the discussion open with your employees about how your department will recognize the holidays. Your employees may prefer not to have a gathering, but rather to recognize a holiday in other ways such as special notes to coworkers or a small gift exchange.

OTHER TYPES OF CELEBRATORY EVENTS

University departments may occasionally spend modest amounts from appropriate funding sources to recognize employees. Allowable employee recognition may take the form of celebratory events that recognize a milestone anniversary, employee retirement or work-related achievement and may include a department-wide breakfast, luncheon, or evening event. Such events may be charged using University funds when the celebratory event is to mark the achievement of a major departmental goal or to honor an employee in connection with a work-related recognition. Refer to [University Gifts and Discounts to Employees](#) policy for guidelines on the purchase of gifts and discounts for employee recognition and related regulations concerning the taxability of these items.

Departments should aim to be purposeful and economical in the planning of their events. Where a less expensive alternative exists, planners should aim to use it whenever possible. Some examples of relatively low cost celebrations include:

1. Potlucks or Semi Potluck (department supply main entrees and employees bring side dishes)
2. Ice Cream Socials
3. Bagels and fruit breakfast
4. Pizza Parties

INAPPROPRIATE USE OF FUNDS

It is inappropriate to spend University funds, except for the use of on-campus space, in recognition of employees' life events such as an employee's wedding shower, baby shower, and birthday party. Celebratory events to honor an individual for a key life event as defined by this policy may not be charged to University funds. However, the use of on-campus space is permitted.

This policy does not govern any University-wide sponsored events for all employees, such as the Week of Wellbeing, Employee Appreciation Day, Service Awards, alumni and University fund-raising events, or department level Employee Recognition events.