The Procurement Card Program ("p-card") is intended to streamline and simplify some types of purchasing. The card must never be used to avoid or bypass appropriate university procurement and payment procedures (purchase orders for iBuy NU vendors, expense reports, blankets, etc.). As always, all University purchases, including these via a p-card, must be in compliance with the established SESP and NU purchasing policies and procedures.

Currently, the procurement card resides outside of the standard, online approval process that is in place for other purchasing methods. As an internal control, SESP has implemented the procedures in this document for cardholders, reviewers, and those with purchasing oversight (e.g., principal investigator).

This guide is a supplement for SESP cardholders and should be used in conjunction with the official NU procurement cardholder guide. If any of the procedures are not adhered to, the school reserves the right to revoke an employee’s procurement card. If there is fraudulent use, it will result in personal liability and/or disciplinary action.

Those eligible for a p-Card:
- Staff who are responsible for purchasing
- Financial assistant
- Program assistant

Those ineligible for a p-card:
- Anyone without access to the NU financial system
- Students
- Visitors
- Faculty

How to get a card:
- Take Introduction to Business Processes class (HRD700)
- Take Effective Business Operations class (HRD705)
- Take Purchasing and Payments class (HRD715)
- Take Corrections, Sales & Transfers class (FMS711)
- Read the NU Procurement Card Cardholder Guide
- Read the SESP Procurement Card Cardholder Guide
- Read and complete the Procurement Card Cardholder Agreement
- Submit to the SESP Dean’s Office
- Attend training on the p-card software, held by Accounting Services

What to buy:
As a reminder, the p-card should be used where a requisition is not feasible. Make sure that the vendor removes any sales tax. If the card is charged sales tax, the cardholder must follow up with the vendor to have it refunded. The p-card can never be used for travel.

In the event that a purchase is on a research fund, it will be necessary to get approval from the Dean’s Office first. An email answering the following questions should be sent to Carmen Robinson, c-robinson3@northwestern.edu.

- What we are buying?
- Who are we buying it from? (Vendor name)
- Dollar amount of item we are purchasing?
- What chart string and account number we are buying it with?
- PI approval
- Business purpose/programmatic justification

Tracking expenses and monthly reconciliation:
Instead of keeping paper receipts, all receipts will be organized and stored in Box. For electronic receipts, save as a PDF. For any paper receipts, scan a copy.

The statement cycle runs on the 25th of the month. As the cardholder makes purchases, s/he should upload the receipts into the appropriate accounting period folder in Box.

01 Sept = 8/26-9/25
02 Oct = 9/26-10/25
03 Nov = 10/26-11/25
04 Dec = 11/26-12/25
05 Jan = 12/26-1/25
06 Feb = 1/26-2/25
07 Mar = 2/26-3/25
08 Apr = 3/26-4/25
09 May = 4/26-5/25
10 Jun = 5/26-6/25
11 Jul = 6/26-7/25
12 Aug = 7/26-8/25

Keep in mind that online orders are usually charged on the date of shipment.

At the end of the accounting period, the cardholder must download a PDF of the credit card statement, upload it to the appropriate folder on Box, and put the receipts in the order of the items listed on the statement. Every statement item must have a corresponding receipt. This can be done using a # in front of the name of the PDF of the receipt.
Any approvals, e.g., from the PI or Carmen, should be saved in the same PDF as the receipt. You can add or delete pages to a PDF using Acrobat Pro. Contact the SESP help desk if you do not have that software.

Notes regarding the purchase can be entered in the comments field in Box.

Reviewer:

Monthly, the reviewer should review the statement and receipts. S/he can “sign off” by commenting “approved” on the folder for each month. The reviewer is either the cardholder’s supervisor, or whomever has budget supervision (e.g., a PI).

Weekly reconciliation occurs according to the calendar set by the University Accounting Services. The cardholder is responsible for setting a delegate to do entry if s/he is out of the office on the day of entry. Failure to do entry in time will result in the charges for the week to hit a default account code 75695. A correction journal must then be entered.

Failure to adhere to these guidelines will result in the program losing its procurement card.