

## **Purchasing Card Program Approver Procedures**

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The Approver Procedures define the key steps required to approve P-Card transactions. By approving each P-Card transaction, the Approver exercises critical control by ensuring authorized and appropriate P-Card use and correct allocation of expenses.

### **I. BECOMING AN APPROVER**

Individuals requiring the P-Card Approver role in ARC must be granted ARC Security access and be assigned the roles in ARC. **Approvers are required to complete the [Reconciling P-Card Transactions](#) web-based training once directed to do so by ARC Security.** To apply for an Approver Role:

1. User completes the Financial Systems Security Application available through [Service Now](#)
2. Security Application is routed to DAFSEE Administrator for approval
3. ARC Security directs user to complete the [Reconciling P-Card Transactions](#) web-based training. **User must score 90% or above to be granted the ARC role.**
4. Once training is completed, ARC Security grants user the ARC role.
5. P-Card DPAD submits a request to [pcard@columbia.edu](mailto:pcard@columbia.edu) to add Approver to assigned card(s).

### **II. P-CARD CHANGE MANAGEMENT**

#### **A. Requesting Additional Approval Access**

Approval authority for the P-Card program is based Security Roles assigned in ARC as requested by your Department. Approvers are assigned directly to individual P-Cards.

If an Approver needs to approve for Cardholder(s), has been granted the ARC Security Role of P-Card Approver, and cannot see transactions for those individuals in ARC, the Approver should contact the Cardholder's DPAD. The DPAD should submit an incident via [ServiceNow](#) or contact the Finance Service Center at 212-854-2122 to request the addition of the Approver(s) assigned to a P-Card.

Please note, only Approvers who have completed the Financial Systems Security Application and completed the web-based training can be assigned to a P-Card in ARC to approve a Cardholder's transactions.

## **B. Deleting Approval Access**

Approvers who leave a department/school or the University must be removed from the P-Card program. If leaving the University, the DPAD should submit an incident via [ServiceNow](#) or contact the Finance Service Center at 212-854-2122 and request that the Approver be removed from a Cardholder's P-Card.

If moving to a new department, the DPAD in the new school/department must submit an incident via [ServiceNow](#) or contact the Finance Service Center at 212-854-2122 which provides the name(s) and Uni(s) of the Cardholders to whom the Approver should be assigned.

Approvers should take the following steps when leaving the University or moving to a new department:

- Notify their DPAD and the P-Card Team
- Approve all outstanding P-Card transactions in ARC for their assigned Cardholder(s)/Reconciler(s)
- If the Approver is maintaining P-Card receipts and documentation for their Cardholder(s)/Reconciler(s) they should give the documentation to their DPAD for retention purposes

## **IV. APPROVING P-CARD TRANSACTIONS**

### **A. The Approval Process**

Approvers are responsible for reviewing and approving transactions for their Cardholders on a routine basis in ARC.

Additionally, Approvers are required to be familiar with the [Cardholder and Reconciler P-Card Procedures](#) to ensure that Cardholders and Reconcilers are compliant with these procedures.

Approvers are required to sign-off on all their assigned Cardholder's transactions in ARC. Approvers are strongly encouraged to review and approve P-Card transactions on a weekly basis (at a minimum). Approvers should take the following steps to complete the sign-off process:

- Review each transaction to ensure the following:
  - All items purchased comply with P-Card and other related University policies
  - The Cardholder/Reconciler has assigned the proper accounting information
  - The Cardholder/Reconciler has provided a business purpose where required by P-Card policy or their department

- If the transaction meets the criteria above, the Approver must sign-off on the transaction in a timely manner (see Section B below)
  - If the transaction does not meet the criteria above, the Approver should either:
    - Change the status of the transaction in ARC from “Verified” to “Staged” and require the Cardholder/Reconciler to correct the information
    - Sign-off on the transaction once the Cardholder/Reconciler resolves the issue
- OR
- Correct the information in ARC and sign-off on the transaction

It is required that an Approver review the Cardholder’s P-Card receipts to ensure compliance with policies and procedures whenever needed. Approvers should also check periodically that P-Card receipts are being maintained in accordance with the P-Card Policy.

If a transaction is allocated to a Sponsored Project but not properly signed off in time for the hard close (see Section B below) the transaction will be moved to the Cardholder’s default chart string and the DPAD or Department DAF will need to correct that transaction by completing a journal entry.

## **B. The P-Card Billing Cycle and Hard Closes**

P-Card activity runs on a monthly billing cycle similar to that of a regular credit card. The monthly billing cycle for all P-Cards is the 23<sup>rd</sup> of one month to the 22<sup>nd</sup> of the following month.

In order to account for all transaction within the fiscal period in which the transaction occurred, the P-Card Team has established a monthly schedule for posting to the Financials. The Hardclose of all P-Card transactions is generally conducted one day before the last business day of the month at 5:00pm. All transactions that have been billed during the billing period, regardless of if they have been signed-off will be posted to the Financials.

Approvers, who are out sick or are planning vacation during the hard close period, should contact their DPAD and have a back-up Approver who can be assigned to their Cardholder(s) and sign-off on their transactions.

Approvers are responsible for making sure that all P-Card transactions are signed-off by the Cardholder/Reconciler and the Approver in accordance with the hard close deadline. However, if the Approver determines that the transaction requires additional follow up before it can be signed off **and** the Cardholder should not be subject to discipline, the Approver must:

- Add a comment to the transaction in ARC detailing the reason that they cannot sign-off on the transaction in time for the hard close and that the Cardholder should not be audited.

If the Approver chooses to add a comment, the Approver has 30 days after the Hardclose to add an additional comment indicating approval of the transaction. If the transaction has not been approved within this time, the cardholder will be cited for an infraction. .

**NOTE:** If an Approver does not sign-off by the Hardclose deadline, the Approver will not have the ability to approve the transaction. Pending transactions are automatically “swept”, approved and posted when the Hardclose is conducted.

If an Approver fails to sign-off on P-Card transactions prior to the Hardclose deadline, the Cardholder will be subject to the monthly audit and discipline process.

For more information on the monthly review and audit process please visit the [P-Card website](#).

### **C. Approving Food Transactions**

Approvers are responsible for ensuring that their Cardholders/Reconcilers provide a detailed business purpose for **all** purchases of food from restaurants or grocery stores that are consumed at work-related meeting or events in ARC. The business purpose **must** include:

- Purpose of the event or meeting
- Type of meal (breakfast, lunch or dinner)
- Date of the event or meeting
- Location of the event or meeting
- Names of attendees (or a number if there are more than 10 attendees)

These details must be provided in the comments section of the transaction in ARC by the Hardclose deadline. In addition, Reconcilers are **required** to scan and attach all receipts to P-Card food transactions in ARC. Approvers **must** confirm that receipts are attached.

For more information on the monthly review and audit process please visit the [P-Card website](#).

### **D. Approving Local Preferred Vendor Hotel Transactions**

Approvers are responsible for ensuring that their Cardholders/Reconcilers provide a detailed business purpose for **all** business-related local preferred vendor hotel reservations made on their P-Card. The business purpose **must** include:

- Name of the guest
- Dates of the stay (check in and check out dates)
- Business purpose of the stay

These details must be provided in the comments section of the transaction in ARC by the Hardclose deadline. In addition, Reconcilers are **required** to scan and attach all receipts to P-Card food transactions in ARC. Approvers **must** confirm that receipts are attached.

For more information on the monthly review and audit process please visit the [P-Card website](#).