

## Wireless Communications Stipend Policy

**Unit:** Procurement Services

**Effective Date:** 11/22/2011

**Revision Date:** 3/1/2019

**Contact:** Kevin Stevens

**Title:** Director, Procurement Services

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### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to address the payment or reimbursement of wireless communication fees incurred by University employees while conducting University business and to establish consistent eligibility requirements to be applied to all units.

### Policy

The University of Alabama may provide a wireless communication stipend to an employee who has a documented official University business need for a communication device and continues to meet eligibility requirements as outlined under the Eligibility Requirements section below.

The wireless communication stipend is intended to reimburse the employee for the business use of the device. The stipend is not intended to fund the cost of the device nor pay for the entire monthly bill. The assumption is that most employees also use their wireless communication devices for personal calls.

Cell phones and other wireless devices should not be selected as an alternative to other means of communication, such as land lines, pagers and radio phones, when such alternatives would provide adequate but less costly service to the University.

The policy is in effect for all wireless communication devices requested outside of the plans and devices offered by Telecommunications.

### *Stipend Eligibility Requirements*

To qualify for the wireless communication stipend, the employee must have a business need, defined and approved by the supervisor or organizational unit head that includes one or more of the following:

- The employee's job requires that they work regularly in the field and need to be immediately accessible.
- The employee's job requires that they need to be immediately accessible outside of normal business hours.
- The employee is responsible for critical infrastructure and needs to be immediately accessible at all times.
- The employee travels and needs to be accessible or have access to information technology systems while traveling.
- Access via voice and/or access to information technology systems via a mobile communications device would, in the judgment of the supervisor or organizational unit head, render the employee more productive and/or the service the employee provides more effective, and the cost of mobile communications service is therefore warranted.

This access may be limited to voice communications or also require access to information technology systems—e.g., e-mail, calendar, Web, etc.

An employee ceases to be eligible when the employee's job duties change and the supervisor or organizational unit head determines that the new duties do not support a business need for a wireless communication plan allowance or when the employee terminates employment with the University.

### ***Wireless Communication Stipends***

The wireless communication stipend does not constitute an increase to base pay, nor will it be included in the calculation of percentage increases to base pay due to raises, job upgrades, retirement or other compensation increases. The stipend will be itemized on pay stubs, but will not be subject to withholding taxes.

The monthly maximum stipend amount is established by the [Office of Procurement Services](#) assisted by the [Office of Telecommunications](#) and approved by the Vice President for Finance and Operations. See the [Wireless Communication Enrollment Form](#) for allowable stipend amounts.

The determination of the stipend amount covers the employee's projected business-related expenses only.

In the event that an employee requires an allowance in excess of the highest allowable rate, the request with justification, must be submitted through the organizational hierarchy to the appropriate vice president or designee for approval.

Eligibility for the allowance or the level of the allowance provided is subject to change or cancellation without notice.

In the event that an employee who is receiving a monthly wireless communication plan allowance transfers departments, the current account will continue to be charged for the allowance unless a [Wireless Communication Device Enrollment Form](#) is submitted to the Payroll Office by the 10th of the current month for changes or cancellation. No partial month allowance will be made.

### ***Wireless Communication Stipends on Sponsored Projects***

Contact your [Contract and Grant](#) accountant for guidelines and restrictions for charging wireless communication stipends on sponsored projects.

### ***Nine-Month Faculty***

Nine-month faculty will receive a twelve-month allowance charged to the appropriate FOAP over the nine-months the faculty member earns pay.

### ***Equipment and Activation Allowance***

The University will assist with paying the net purchase cost of a cell phone device not to exceed the allowance in this policy. Employees must show a bill or purchase receipt for their cell phone in order to receive this allowance. The employee can choose a cell phone with more features and pay the difference if he/she chooses. The cell phone will belong to the employee, not to the University. The University will not pay for activation fees or insurance. Initial equipment reimbursements may be requested along with the monthly plan allowance request. Thereafter, subsequent equipment reimbursements may be allowed at the discretion of the department head, dean/director, or vice president every 24 months subject to eligibility conditions above. The University is not responsible for loss, theft, or damage to an employee's personal wireless device. Employees should consider purchasing device insurance through their service provider. See [Wireless Communication Device Enrollment Form](#) for the allowable phone reimbursement.

### ***Responsibilities of Employees Receiving Stipend***

When a wireless communication stipend has been approved and provided to an employee for the conduct of official business, the employee must comply with the following:

- Complete a Wireless Communication Device request form
- The employee will provide the phone number within five days of activation and will be available for calls (in possession of the wireless communication device and have it turned on) during those times specified by the supervisor or organizational unit head.

- The employee may select any wireless carrier whose service meets the requirements of the job responsibilities as determined by the supervisor or organizational unit head.
- The employee must inform the University when the eligibility criteria are no longer met or when the wireless service has been cancelled.
- The supervisor or organizational unit head may periodically request that the employee provide a copy of the first page of the phone bill in order to verify that he/she has an active wireless phone plan. The supervisor or organizational unit head may also periodically request documentation of substantial business use. At a minimum, documentation is required when initially applying for the stipend. The employee is responsible for all charges on his/her personal wireless plan.
- The employee is responsible for complying with international, federal, state, and municipal laws regarding the use of wireless phones and other communication devices while driving. Under no circumstances will The University of Alabama be liable for non-compliance.
- The employee should use discretion in relaying confidential information over wireless devices since wireless transmissions are not secure. The employee will be responsible for any fees associated with a change or termination of the contract caused by a personal decision by the employee, employee misconduct, involuntary termination, or misuse of the device or service. The University shall bear such costs in the event the termination of the employee's service provider contract is required due to a change in University policy or other reason unrelated to the employee's violation of this policy.

The employee does not need to maintain a log for business and personal phone calls if receiving a wireless stipend.

### *Security*

The University reserves the right to require any mobile device accessing the University's infrastructure to be subject to future mobile device security policies and guidelines as established by the University's Information Security Office and IT governance structure. This applies to both University and personally-owned devices.

Security policies may include device requirements for mobile anti-virus/spyware, mobile firewall, secure communications, encrypted file folders including storage cards, strong passwords, two-factor authentication, and/or destruction and disabling in the event of a lost or stolen device or termination. Costs for any mobile security measures will become the financial responsibility of the organizational unit and/or the individual owner of the device at the time such requirements become University policy.

### *Support*

Users who are authorized to obtain a cell phone without data access must obtain technical support from the vendor providing the phone.

OIT will assist with email and calendar synchronization provided that the user receives a monthly phone/data allowance from the University.

Important: Before OIT can provide support, you must at minimum be able to make and receive calls and browse the internet using your device. If you cannot do both of these, you must contact your carrier to resolve the issue before OIT will be able to help you.

Support for the cell phone portion of smart phone/PDA devices must be obtained from technical support from the vendor providing the phone.

### *University-Owned Wireless Communication Devices*

In some documented cases employees, with the approval of their organizational unit head, may purchase a University owned wireless communication device and its associated plan. Application for the University owned devices should be made through the Office of Telecommunications.

No personal calls are allowed on University owned wireless communication devices. Business officers or designees in the organizational unit must review the monthly bills of University owned wireless communication devices to ensure that no personal calls were made. Inadvertent or emergency personal calls must be reimbursed to the University.

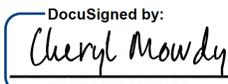
***Miscellaneous***

Extraordinary business use of an employee's personal wireless device in excess of the monthly stipend can be reimbursed with appropriate documentation and approval. Exceptions to this policy require approval from the appropriate associate/assistant provost, assistant/associate vice president, provost or vice president. Misuse or fraudulent receipt of a wireless communication stipend may result in progressive administrative and/or disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment and criminal prosecution. Departmental policies may be more (but not less) restrictive than the University policy.

**Scope**

This policy applies to UA employees.

**Office of the Vice President of Finance and Operations**

Signed:  3/1/2019  
  
Cheryl Mowdy  
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