

Student Affairs Policy: Student P-Card Expectations & Requirements

Introduction

Student Affairs, in cooperation with Payments Services, issues some student leaders Caltech Purchase Cards (p-cards) to support their work on behalf of specific student groups across Caltech's campus, including Houses and student government. Each of these organizations is allowed up to three p-cards and is held collectively accountable for each of its cardholders. P-card holders must manage their reports, spending, and comply with ALL p-card policies and expectations throughout their tenure. This document outlines the Institute's expectations and requirements for all student p-card holders, and the consequences of repeated violations.

Expectations

All p-card holders at the Institute are held to the Institute P-card policy found here: [Institute's P-Card Policy and Procedures](#). In addition, student P-card holders are expected to adhere to the [Caltech Honor Code](#), the [Caltech Code of Conduct](#), and the guidelines established herein.

The roles and responsibilities of cardholders are broken down in the graphic below. All student p-card holders will be expected to adhere to these responsibilities. If a student feels they are unable to perform the below tasks, Student Affairs will work with the student to find an alternate p-card holder for their student organization.

Role	Responsibilities
Cardholder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only one who can make purchases • Keep card safe • Refrain from making improper or restricted purchases • Collect and record all receipts • Verify that receipts are valid and comply with Institute policy • Will retain any additional electronic/paper documentation • Reconcile transactions through a monthly expense report through Cardquest • Resolve disputes with the merchant
Expense Approver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviews applications • Determines spending limits • Issues infractions/strikes • Reviews expense report for proper documents, business justifications, and information • Electronically approves report • Regulate corrective actions

Three Strike Policy

Infractions = Strikes. Cardholders will be allowed up to three infractions before their p-card is suspended. Below you will find a chart outlining the tiered severity of each infraction type. Student Affairs understands that there are extreme situations on either end of the chart and that circumstances may need to be flexible. Student Affairs also reserves the right to reduce or escalate corrective actions at their discretion depending on the situation.

All infractions will be monitored for each student cardholder. The cardholder will be notified when an infraction or strike is recorded, to not blindsides the cardholder. Upon receiving three strikes your card will be suspended and you will be provided a path to reinstate your card. Please note that there are two infraction types that lead to automatic suspension and are equivalent to three strikes.

Chart of Infraction Types

Infraction Type	Consequence
Deliberate Misuse	3 Strikes (Automatic Suspension)
Improper Purchases	3 Strikes (Automatic Suspension)
Missing Cardquest/Expense Reports	1 Strike
Invalid or Missing Receipts	1 Strike
Transaction Splitting	1 Strike
Lost Card	1 Warning
Personal Expense	1 Warning
Invalid Business Justification	1 Warning
Other Infractions	TBD at the discretion of Pcard Office, Student Affairs, & OSE

Individual Infractions

Infractions will be tracked for each cardholder. If a cardholder receives three infractions, their p-card will be suspended. The cardholder will be notified when an infraction or strike is recorded. Upon receiving three strikes your card will be suspended and the student leader will be provided a path to reinstate their p-card. Student Affairs reserves the right to reduce or escalate corrective actions at their discretion, depending on the situation.

Group Infractions

A student group may be held collectively accountable for each of the p-card holders associated with its organization. This means that if the student group has multiple p-card holders who have their p-cards suspended, then the entire group could lose their p-card or other campus privileges depending on the severity of the situation.

Additional ways an entire student group could be held collectively accountable: outgoing leaders' failure to properly close their p-card out, making unauthorized alcohol purchases, etc.

Monitoring and Assistance

The cardholder's CardQuest account will be reviewed by OSE on the first Monday of each month, to ensure that cardholders reconcile their p-card expense reports, within CardQuest, on time. If there are late transactions (more than a month old), the Cardholder will be sent a reminder email to process their p-card expense report. This will give the cardholder two weeks to submit those expenses in the next monthly expense report. Here are the expense report [reconciliation dates](#).

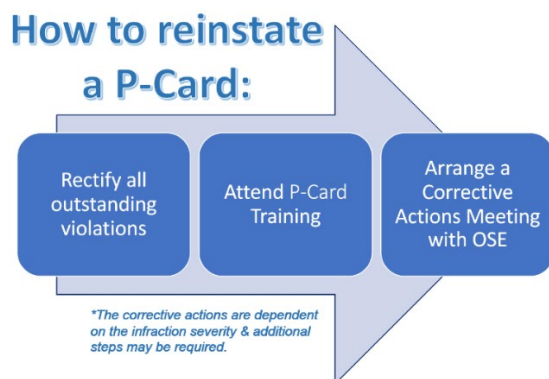
The Student Financial Hub (Hub) will be hosting monthly Financial Forums to aid student p-card holders process their monthly p-card expense report and to answer any financial related questions that may arise. These forums can be considered the Hub's office hours and are there to help with any financial matter that any student group may have, this includes but is not limited to student p-card holders.

The Financial Forums will be held in Hameetman from 12:15-1:00pm on the day before expense reports are due. [Please see the official Financial Forum schedule on the OSE website.](#)

Reinstating a Suspended P-card

If your p-card has been suspended due to receiving three strikes or for any other reason, you will need to take the following steps to reinstate your p-card.

1. Complete or rectify all outstanding P-card violations.
2. Attending an official P-card Office training session.
3. Arrange a meeting with OSE's Hub to discuss any additional next steps.
4. Additional steps may be required as corrective actions are based on the infraction's severity.



Asking for Help

Student Affairs is committed to helping student leaders manage the complexity of student finances, p-cards, etc. Please make sure to utilize all the resources available to you by visiting the [Student Financial Hub website](#), [Student Financial Services' Helpdesk](#), or reaching out directly to the [Hub via email](#). We are here to help!

Glossary – Definition of Infractions

1. **Deliberate Misuse.** Intentional improper use of the p-card. Going against the Institute's P-card Policy. Examples (but not limited):
 - a. **Intended Business Purpose.** P-card holders are only allowed to purchase items within the scope of the p-cards intended business.
 - Ex: House p-card holders can only purchase items for their house and not items for a club or other organization.
 - P-card holders can request special permission from their Expense Approver or fund manager.
 - b. **Card Sharing.** P-card holders are NOT allowed to share their p-card with anyone for any reason.
2. **Improper purchases.** Improper purchases include: unallowed items indicated on the Institute's P-card Policy, Venmo or Zelle purchases, alcohol purchases beyond the approved amount, etc.
3. **Missing Expense Report.** Not performing the monthly reconciliation on the [designated date](#) noted in the automated email notification or company message in CardQuest.
 - a. This includes cardholders with closed cards and/or outgoing leadership positions. A cardholder is responsible for all transactions on their card and submitting an expense report, even after their card has been closed. If the cardholder fails to do so, their student group, organization, or house will be held responsible and considered an automatic infraction.
 - b. Cardholders are expected to submit a report with their remaining transactions and move any recurring charges to another p-card holder in your house at the end of their tenure.
4. **Valid or Missing Receipts.** Failure to supply a valid receipt, invoice, or other supporting documentation.
 - a. Cardholders are only permitted to have **four** Missing Receipt Forms in a six-month period.
5. **Transaction Splitting.** Splitting transactions to circumvent transaction limits.
6. **Lost cards.** A cardholder is only allotted one replacement card.
 - a. If you lose a second card, your card will automatically be suspended.
 - b. You will be expected to submit a report with your remaining transactions and move any recurring charges to another p-card holder in your house.
7. **Personal expenses.** Accidental personal expenses happen, however if a cardholder exceeds **four** in a six-month period there will be an automatic infraction.
8. **Valid Business Justification** on your P-card Expense Report
 - a. To have a valid business justification answer the questions: What, When, Who, and sometimes Where. Include date of activity.
 - b. EX: Food for Blacker Interhouse on 4/13
9. **Other.** Other infractions warranting disciplinary actions, as deemed appropriate by the P-card Office or Student Affairs.