Purchasing and Companion Card Procedure

Section 1 - Introduction and Purpose

(1) This Procedure must be read in conjunction with the Purchasing, Companion Card and Petty Cash Policy (the Policy) and its associated documents.

(2) The University of Newcastle (University) considers Purchasing Cards and Companion Cards as secure and efficient payment mechanisms for University business. Cardholders are entrusted with these cards and must use them responsibly in accordance with University policies, procedures and internal controls.

(3) This Procedure supplements the Policy by establishing operational protocols, internal controls, and transaction safeguards to ensure compliance and accountability.

Section 2 - Audience

(4) This Procedure applies to:

a. all cardholders including but not limited to University staff, and employees of onshore controlled entities; and
b. delegates of the University and its onshore controlled entities who are authorised to act as Purchasing Card Approvers.

Section 3 - Scope

(5) This Procedure applies to all transactions made using:

a. a University Purchasing Card;
b. a controlled entity Purchasing Card; or
c. a Companion Card.

(6) This Procedure applies to onshore controlled entities, unless otherwise indicated within the body of this document or expressly excluded in Section 14.

Section 4 - Definitions

(7) In the context of this document, the following definitions apply:

a. “business expenditure” means any cost or expense incurred by the University or its controlled entity in the course of carrying out its operations;
b. “cardholder” means a person who is approved to hold and is issued a University Purchasing Card or Companion Card, and is authorised to make purchases or payments in accordance with this Procedure and the Purchasing Companion Card and Petty Cash Policy;
c. “emergency purchase” means a necessary and unplanned expense that must be incurred immediately to

prevent harm, ensure safety, or maintain essential operations when no other reasonable payment method is available;

d. “Head of controlled entity” means the appointed General Manager, Chief Executive Officer, or equivalent;
e. “may” denotes discretion or permission to act, depending on context and delegated authority where relevant;
f. “petty cash” refers to funds available for the reimbursement or purchase of items of small value that cannot otherwise be purchased via Purchasing Cards or direct debit;
g. “portable and attractive items” means items of equipment that are portable and attractive in nature, that:
    i. have a value greater than $100;
    ii. do not meet the University's definition of an asset;
    iii. are susceptible to theft or loss due to their portable nature and attractiveness for personal use or resale. Examples include, but are not limited to laptop computers; IT peripherals; mobile phones; cameras; digital / film / video projectors; label printers; televisions; power tools; drones; DVD players; VR / AR equipment; other audio-visual equipment; and white goods including kitchen equipment.
h. “pre-approval” means approval for expenditure, by an authorised delegate, that is required prior to using the Purchasing Card for the expenditure. Evidence of pre-approval is necessary;
i. “Purchasing Card” means a corporate credit card issued to an eligible cardholder for University business or controlled entity expenditure;
j. “Purchasing Card Approver” refers to a delegate who is authorised to approve Purchasing Card transactions;
k. “should” indicates a good practice requirement. Relevant personnel are expected to comply unless specific circumstances make it inappropriate to do so. In such cases, the rationale and decision-making process must be documented and retained as part of the procurement record.
l. “supporting document means documents required under this procedure to validate a purchasing card transaction. Supporting documents include and are limited to:
    i. an image of an Australian Taxation Office (ATO) compliance Tax Invoice for all expenses greater than $82.50, including GST;
    ii. a legible receipt for expenses less than $82.50 (including GST) or for an international purchase;
    iii. a no-receipt declaration, where applicable;
    iv. a Statutory Declaration, where required;
    v. evidence of pre-approval, where required; and/or
    vi. documented justification of an emergency purchase, where required;
m. “travel portal” refers to the University's online travel and approval system.

Section 5 - Responsibilities

Cardholder Responsibilities

(8) Cardholders are responsible for ensuring all Purchasing Card or Companion Card transactions are legitimate, properly documented, acquitted in the University's Expense Management System, and represent reasonable, economical, and efficient use of University or controlled entity funds.

(9) Cardholders must:

a. comply with the Policy, this Procedure and any associated documents;
b. complete the University Card Quiz, which is part of the ServiceNow ticket, prior to collecting a University Purchasing Card or Companion Card, and as required thereafter;
c. ensure all expenditure incurred is directly related to the responsibilities of the cardholder’s position within the University or a controlled entity;

d. obtain and retain images of original tax invoices for all Purchasing Card transactions and any cash withdrawals from Companion Cards;
e. obtain pre-approval for transactions where required under the Policy;
f. review all transactions and/or monthly statements for inaccuracies or transaction discrepancies and report these for investigation as soon as possible;
g. ensure that all goods and services purchased have been received;
h. ensure transactions are accurately coded, including GST coding, and upload supporting documents to the Expense Management System within 30 days after the end of the statement period;
i. promptly investigate any transaction discrepancy or dispute, mark it as 'in dispute' within the system, and aim to resolve it within two weeks of the transaction date;
j. maintain an up to date knowledge of the Policy, this Procedure and associated documents, as well as other related procurement policies and procedures;
k. ensure the security of card(s) and associated number(s) at all times, and report any loss or theft of a card in accordance with this Procedure;
l. not split purchases into smaller amounts to circumvent the quotation thresholds, Purchasing Card limits or transaction limits, or delegation of authority limits;
m. for University cardholders, return the card(s) to Card Services, where possible, at least seven days prior to cessation or suspension of employment with the University or during periods of absence exceeding six months. All transactions must be coded and supporting documents uploaded to the Expense Management System prior to surrender of the card(s);
n. for controlled entity cardholders, return the card(s) to the controlled entity in the event that:
    i. the cardholder resigns from their position with the controlled entity;
    ii. the controlled entity, or a duly authorised officer, determines that there is no longer a need for the cardholder to retain their card; or
    iii. the card has been cancelled by the issuing financial institution.

(10) Reference should be made to the Purchasing, Companion Card and Petty Cash Policy for information about non-compliance, should a cardholder fail to exercise any part of these responsibilities.

Purchasing Card Approver Responsibilities

(11) The Purchasing Card Approver must:

a. comply with the Policy, this Procedure and any associated documents;
b. monitor and confirm the appropriateness of all expenditure incurred by cardholders under their supervision prior to approving all transaction;
c. ensure pre-approvals have been obtained where required, as outlined in the Policy;
d. approve expenses in the Expense Management System within ten business days of the expenditure being coded by the cardholder;
e. immediately report any suspected Policy breaches or inappropriate card transaction activity to Financial Services and/or the controlled entity Chief Executive Officer or General Manager where relevant; and
f. notify Financial Services and, for University staff Human Resource Services, to redirect transactions to an alternate Purchasing Card Approver, who is an authorised delegate as per the Delegations Register, if they are unable to fulfill approval responsibilities within the timelines set out in this Procedure.

(12) Only authorised delegates of the University or controlled entities are eligible to act as a Purchasing Card Approver. Approvals of card transactions is exercised under the relevant delegated authority, and as such must comply with the requirements of the relevant Delegation of Authority Framework or the controlled entity's similar and

relevant policy document.

(13) Approvers should refer to the Purchasing, Companion Card and Petty Cash Policy for information about non-compliance assessments.

Section 6 - Applying for a Card

University Purchasing Cards

(14) Applications for University Purchasing Cards or Companion Cards can be made by submitting a University Corporate Card Application request in ServiceNOW.

(15) Once approved and notified the card is available, the cardholder can either:

a. collect the card and Personal Identification Number (PIN) from Financial Services at the Chancellery building, Callaghan campus; and sign the handover form and the new card in the presence of a Financial Services representative; or
b. contact Financial Services to arrange an alternative delivery location. For alternative delivery locations, card limits are set at $1.00 until delivery is confirmed by the cardholder.

Controlled Entity Purchasing Cards

(16) Applications for controlled entity Purchasing Cards must be made via the Chief Executive Officer or General Manager. Applications are available through Card Services.

Section 7 - Approving Card Applications

(17) Approval of applications for Purchasing Cards or Companion Cards is subject to the relevant University or controlled entity delegation of authority.

(18) University Purchasing Card applications require endorsement by the Head of College, or Division, and approval by the relevant University delegate in ServiceNOW, before the application will be workflowed to Financial Services.

(19) The progress of University Purchasing Card applications can be tracked in ServiceNOW.

(20) Unapproved card applications made via ServiceNow are automatically cancelled after 15 days.

Section 8 - Staff Training

(21) All new University Purchasing Card cardholders must complete mandatory Expense Management System training via Discover prior to using their Purchasing Card or Companion Card.

(22) Staff who require additional training on coding transactions or uploading supporting documentation should refer to the Knowledge Base Articles in ServiceNow or raise a request to Financial Services in ServiceNow.

Section 9 - Using the Card for Purchasing

Entertainment or Hospitality Expenses

(23) Cardholders must exercise particular care when incurring and/or approving hospitality expenses to ensure public

accountability and operation within budget requirements.

(24) Entertainment or official hospitality expenditure must only be undertaken where it is considered essential to facilitate the conduct of University or controlled entity business through persons who are able to do so, because of their position or business needs.

(25) Unless expressly exempt, pre-approval of entertainment expenses >$500 is required in accordance with the Policy. Refer also to the Purchasing Card Transaction Classification Schedule.

(26) Entertainment and hospitality expenses up to $1,000 (including GST), which are incurred on-campus for catering or events or at NUServices venues (Bar on The Hill, LC Deli and Local Connections) may be made using a Purchasing Card, subject to the same pre-approval requirements in Clause 25, where the expenses are >$500.

Emergency Purchases

(27) Urgent unforeseen expenses may arise that require immediate payment or action, typically for critical goods or services essential to the continued operation of the University.

(28) Emergency purchases must be reasonable, not excessive, and appropriate.

(29) The Purchasing Card Approver and Financial Services will determine the validity of such transactions. Where it is determined that an emergency purchase is not valid, the transaction may become the liability of the cardholder, and reimbursement may be sought by the University or the controlled entity at its own discretion in accordance with the Policy.

(30) Justification of the emergency must be provided in the Expense Management System as an attached document or email.

Excessive Transactions

(31) Examples of transactions that may be considered excessive and constitute a breach include, but are not limited to:

a. transactions that exceed reasonable University business requirements and/or expenditure;
b. excessive transportation costs;
c. purchasing an expensive item, when a suitable lower-cost alternative exists; or
d. tips or gratuities (where custom) that exceed the customary amount pertaining to the country's standard practice.

(32) If a transaction is identified as potentially excessive, both the cardholder and Purchasing Card Approver must provide an explanation justifying the validity of the expenditure in the Expense Management System.

(33) Refer to the Purchasing Card Transaction Classification Schedule for further guidance.

Inappropriate Transactions

(34) Inappropriate transactions include any expenditure that is not permitted by this Procedure and its overarching Policy, other University policies, government regulation or law.

(35) Examples of inappropriate transactions constituting a breach include, but are not limited to:

a. expenditure exceeding Purchasing Card limits, or transaction limits where no prior authorisation has been granted;

b. expenditure exceeding the relevant Purchasing Card Approver's delegated authority;
c. cash advance of any form, except for when:
    i. made on Companion Cards by authorised cardholders; or
    ii. required in emergency situations whilst travelling on University or controlled entity business;
d. expenditure restricted to certain authorised officers - see Purchasing Card Transaction Classification Schedule for further details;
e. unless expressly exempt, purchasing goods or services from alternative suppliers where a contracted supplier relationship with the University exists;
f. purchasing gifts or benefits that contravene the Policy and its associated documents;
g. transacting with suppliers who may, in reasonable circumstances, be considered disreputable (e.g. Temu, Shein, etc) and where the University's reputation may potentially be adversely impacted; or
h. capital expenditure.

(36) Further detail is provided in the Purchasing Card Transaction Classification Schedule.

Expenditure Whilst on a Special Studies Program

(37) As University staff on approved Special Studies Programs are absent from normal duties, Purchasing Cards cannot be used during a Special Studies Program period.

(38) University expenses (i.e. those that are in addition to any expenses associated with a Special Studies Program) may be allowed if the staff member has received prior approval to perform an official duty during the Special Studies Program absence.

Online Purchases

(39) A Cardholder must only use a Purchasing Card for purchases via the internet if the website is confirmed to be secure.

(40) Cardholders must check security indicators such as an unbroken key or closed lock icon in the browser window. If these indicators are missing or a broken key/open lock is displayed, the site must not be used for purchasing.

(41) If a site cannot be verified as secure, the purchase must not proceed.

(42) Purchasing via online auction sites (for example, Ebay, Gumtree, Grays Online) is prohibited, as on many occasions the vendor is unable to meet the University's requirements for invoices and receipts; cannot provide necessary warranties and after sales support; and cannot provide evidence of an ethical supply chain.

(43) Transactions with vendors who can meet the University's requirements should be made outside the auction site environment.

(44) The Cardholder must ensure that websites used to make online purchases do not retain the credit card details for future purchases.

Prohibited Transactions

Portable and Attractive Items

(45) Portable and attractive items, as defined in the Purchasing Card, Companion Card and Petty Cash Policy must be purchased from an existing approved supplier and not through a Purchasing Card.

(46) If purchasing portable and attractive items from an existing approved supplier is not possible and sufficient

justification is provided, pre-approval may be granted by the Senior Manager, Purchase to Pay (Financial Services) to make the purchase using a Purchasing Card.

(47) To obtain pre-approval, the requestor must submit an Attractive Item Pre-Approval Request via email to cardservices@newcastle.edu.au, including all details relating to the purchase and why it cannot be sourced from an existing approved supplier.

(48) The purchase may only proceed after pre-approval has been granted by the Card Services team.

Personal Expenditure

(49) Personal expenditure on Purchasing Cards is strictly prohibited.

(50) Where a transaction is identified as personal expenditure, cardholders must refund the amount to the Purchasing Card within 14 business days of incurring the expense.

PayPal

(51) Cardholders are prohibited from linking their University Purchasing Card to their personal PayPal account, and are prohibited from creating a PayPal account specifically for business expenditure on Purchasing Cards.

Fraudulent Transactions

(52) Examples of fraudulent transactions which constitute a breach or misconduct may include, but are not limited to:

a. expenditure incurred whilst on long service leave, leave without pay, annual leave, sick leave, life leave or other similar leave;
b. using the Purchasing Card for any personal benefit or gain (including benefit or gain to family and friends);
c. using the Purchasing Card to obtain a personal advantage from dealing with suppliers;
d. unauthorised use of someone else's Purchasing Card or Companion Card;
e. deliberately falsifying or failing to supply supporting documents or other records (including the use of No-Receipt Declarations or Statutory Declarations repeatedly or for a significant amount, or combined amounts);
f. purchasing from a third party which may or may be perceived to constitute a conflict of interest (see Disclosure of Interest Policy);
g. a Purchasing Card Approver requesting a cardholder to purchase goods on their behalf, when the Purchasing Card Approver has the authority to also approve the transaction;
h. the use of a subordinate’s card to avoid or circumvent the normal approval channels; or
i. approving transactions which are not, or could not reasonably be determined to be for official business expenditure.

(53) Cardholders and Purchasing Card Approvers should also refer to the Purchasing Card Transaction Classification Schedule.

Section 10 - Transaction Processing Requirements

University Suppliers

(54) Where a supplier is established in the University's Finance System and either the goods or services to be purchased are valued at more than $150; or include a portable and attractive item or software or hardware licence agreement, the purchaser must purchase the goods or services from these suppliers through the provision of a Purchase Order, rather than by using a Purchasing Card.

(55) For any one-off purchase of goods from an established supplier, valued at less than $150 and which does not include a portable and attractive item or software or hardware licence agreement, a purchasing card may be used.

Supporting Documentation

Tax Invoices

(56) Tax invoices for purchases made in Australia must meet the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) requirements. See ATO Tax Invoice Requirements.

(57) If an ATO compliant tax invoice, invoice image or legible receipt cannot be provided, the cardholder must attach a No-Receipt Declaration or Statutory Declaration to the transaction in the Expense Management System.

No-Receipt Declarations

(58) No-Receipt Declarations for both Purchasing Cards and Companion Cards must be approved and reported in line with Table 1.

Table 1 – No-Receipt Declaration Requirements

Transaction Amount (including GST)	Approval Requirements
$0 to $82.50	A No-Receipt Declaration is not required.
$82.51 to $150	The No-Receipt Declaration must be approved by the relevant Head of School, Head of Unit, or Head of the controlled entity.
$151 to $300	The No-Receipt Declaration must be approved by the relevant College Pro Vice-Chancellor, Division Pro Vice-Chancellor, Division Head or Head of the controlled entity.
>$300 to $4,999	If a tax invoice cannot be provided, the cardholder should complete and sign a No-Receipt Declaration, and a Statutory Declaration, declaring they have exhausted all avenues in trying to obtain a tax invoice. The No-Receipt declaration and associated Statutory Declaration must be approved by the relevant College Pro Vice-Chancellor, Division Pro Vice-Chancellor, Division Head or Chief Executive Officer or General Manager of the controlled entity. If a statutory declaration cannot be provided, the transaction may become the liability of the cardholder, and reimbursement may be sought by the University at its own discretion in accordance with the Policy. In exceptional circumstances, the Purchasing Card Approver, College Pro Vice-Chancellor, Division Pro Vice-Chancellor or Division Head may request a review of the expense by contacting the Chief Financial Officer (CFO).

(59) Any transaction without adequate supporting documentation in the Expense Management System may be considered difficult to justify as meeting the principles outlined in the Policy.

(60) The University's default position is to treat transactions without supporting documentation as personal expenditure.

(61) Cardholders will be notified if a transaction does not meet the supporting document requirements, and must provide appropriate justification to avoid reimbursement being sought.

(62) In the event that receipts or invoices are not provided for Companion Card withdrawals, cardholders must document the expenditure by making a Travel Diary note and complete a No-Receipt Declaration and have this approved in line with the approval requirements in Table 1, based on the transaction amount.

(63) Standard card expense submission and approval deadlines (see Clause 9) apply to transactions requiring a No-Receipt Declaration.

Receipts

(64) Merchant copies of receipts that are not legible in quality or do not include all relevant details, such as a description of the goods or services supplied, are not acceptable.

(65) Receipts must contain clear and meaningful descriptions of the goods or services purchased.

Pre-Approval Evidence

(66) Evidence of pre-approval, where required under the Policy, must be uploaded by the cardholder in the Expense Management System.

(67) For approved automatic periodic debit authorities, evidence of the pre-approval must be provided by the cardholder as a supporting document for each transaction.

Companion Cardholder Processing Requirements

(68) Upon returning from a trip that required the use of a Companion Card, cardholders must ensure that for any cash withdrawal, the corresponding withdrawal slip is uploaded to the Expense Management System.

(69) Upon returning from a trip where a Companion Card was used, cardholders must:

a. upload Tax Invoices and/or receipts for each transaction into the Expense Management System;
b. transfer any surplus Companion Card funds not required in the next three (3) months back to the Companion Card via an EFT transaction or cash deposit through the issuing bank. Instructions are available in ServiceNOW.
c. notify Card Services by email (cardservices@newcastle.edu.au) of any cash withdrawals that have been reimbursed from personal funds;
d. identify any foreign coins and/or notes of low value (less than $20.00 AUD after currency conversion) obtained through a Companion Card. These may be retained by the cardholder, but their value must be acquitted through the Expense Management System to ensure the money is accounted for and not recorded as money owed by the traveller; and
e. identify any foreign coins and notes worth more than $20.00 AUD after currency conversion obtained through a Companion Card. Where these surplus Companion Card funds are not required in the next three months, they must be transferred back to the Companion Card via an Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) transaction or cash deposit through the issuing bank.

(70) The above processing requirements must be completed within four weeks of the end of the month in which the trip was completed.

Section 11 - Approving Purchasing Card Expenditure

Reasonable Expenditure

(71) Before approving any expense in the Expense Management System, Purchasing Card Approvers must be satisfied that the transaction:

a. is warranted;
b. value is reasonable; and
c. is not inappropriate, excessive or prohibited.

(72) It is not possible to precisely define reasonability across all types of transactions that may be incurred on a

Purchasing Card. When determining whether the expense is reasonable, factors that should be considered include, but are not limited to:

a. the value of the transaction;
b. the frequency of similar transactions;
c. customs that may apply to the transaction (such as customary tipping in a given country);
d. the geographical cost of living (domestic or overseas);
e. the timing, location and events surrounding the transaction;
f. accepted and relevant community practices or standards; and
g. the likely risk attached to the transaction.

Reasonable Travel Expenses

(73) Further guidance and examples of what might be considered reasonable travel-related expenditure is contained within the University's Travel Policy and Travel Procedure, including expenditure on air travel, accommodation, and ground transportation.

Section 12 - Lost or Stolen Cards

(74) Lost or stolen Purchasing Cards or Companion Cards must be reported to the issuing bank first, and then:

a. for University cardholders, to Card Services; or
b. for controlled entity cardholders, to the Chief Executive Officer or General Manager of the controlled entity.

(75) This reporting should be done as soon as possible to prevent fraudulent use of the card. The contact numbers for lost business cards are on the National Australia Bank (NAB) website and in ServiceNOW.

(76) Immediately upon discovery of the loss or theft, cards that are lost or have been stolen outside of Australia must be reported to the issuing banking institution using the international hotline, or by phoning the toll free 1800 number located in the card terms and conditions which are provided at the time the card is issued to the cardholder or as indicated on this webpage.

Section 13 - Unauthorised Transactions

(77) Detected or suspected unauthorised transactions must be marked as “in dispute” in the Expense Management System, and reported to:

a. Financial Services, for University cardholders; or
b. the Chief Executive Officer or General Manager of the controlled entity for controlled entity cardholders.

Section 14 - Exemptions and Additional Requirements for Controlled Entities

(78) Controlled entity cardholders are not required to:

a. complete the University Card Quiz through ServiceNOW;
b. use the Purchasing Card Transaction Classification Schedule, however, must comply with the Purchasing

Companion Card and Petty Cash Policy;

c. apply the requirements of this Procedure for portable and attractive items – please see Clause 81.

(79) The use of a controlled entity Purchasing Card to purchase goods or services from an existing supplier of the University or the controlled entity may be undertaken where the full value of the transaction is less than $150.00. Transactions must not be split to circumvent this threshold.

(80) The Chief Executive Officer or General Manager, or a delegate of a controlled entity, may authorise the use of a Purchasing Card to make purchases on behalf of another employee. This authorisation must be made in writing and before the transaction occurs. The authorisation must be provided as supporting documentation to validate the expense.

(81) Pre-approvals for the following expenses must be obtained in writing before incurring the expenditure. The pre-approval may be provided from the Chief Executive Officer or General Manager of the controlled entity:

a. subject to clause 26, entertainment expenses in excess of $500.00;
b. professional memberships and subscriptions;
c. portable and attractive items;
d. consultancy and professional services.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	17th November 2026
Review Date	24th June 2029
Approval Authority	Chief Financial Officer
Approval Date	16th November 2026
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Michael Di Rienzo Chief Financial Officer
Enquiries Contact	Financial Services

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"University" - The University of Newcastle, a body corporate established under sections 4 and 5 of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

"Risk" - Effect of uncertainty on objectives. Note: An effect is a deviation from the expected, whether it is positive and/or negative.

"Asset" - Any tangible or intangible item (or group of items) that the University owns or has a legal or other right to control and exploit to obtain financial or other economic benefits.

"Automatic periodic debit authorities" - Where the merchant automatically debits a purchase card on a set date ie monthly, annually, until advised to cease.

"Campus" - means any place or premises owned or controlled by the University, but may also specifically refer to a designated operating location such as the Callaghan Campus.

"Companion Card" - A debit card provided by the University for use by international travellers to access cash withdrawals only.

"Controlled entity" - Has the same meaning as in section 16A of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

"Personnel" - In relation to a party, any employee, officer, agent, contractor, sub-contractor, student or volunteer of that party.

"Staff" - Means a person who was at the relevant time employed by the University and includes professional and academic staff of the University, by contract or ongoing, as well as conjoint staff but does not include visitors to the University.

"University business" - Work that the University has directed to be undertaken which is required, essential, and beneficial for the functions of the University. This includes, but is not limited to, attending meetings, conferences or fieldwork, but does not include activity that is not location specific, e.g. email management, writing papers. University business may be undertaken by staff and non-staff.

"College" - An organisational unit established within the University by the Council.

"Delegate" - (noun) refers to a person occupying a position that has been granted or sub-delegated a delegation of authority, or a committee or body that has been granted or sub-delegated a delegation of authority.

"Delegated authority" - refers to the specific description of the authority that is delegated or sub-delegated to a holder.