OFFICER TRANSACTIONS: COMPLETE OVERVIEW

Student Organization Finance Office
In the “Officer Resources” page of the SOFO website, you can access SOFO’s **Transaction Checklist**, which outlines all the requirements for SOFO Transactions and Account Actions. We *highly recommend* that you reference this document when preparing and submitting transactions:

- [https://www.northwestern.edu/norris/services/sofo/assets/transaction-checklist4-2019.pdf](https://www.northwestern.edu/norris/services/sofo/assets/transaction-checklist4-2019.pdf)
Transaction Guidelines

- Only authorized officers are allowed to handle transactions with SOFO
  - Officers who have submitted a SOFO quiz, undergone training, and are currently signed into their respective accounts
- Vouchers must be completed in Black or Blue ink (no pencil!)
- A signed voucher is needed for ALL transactions
- Voucher books can be picked up at the SOFO office by authorized officers
- Unless otherwise specified, all transactions are processed in the form of a check
- All transactions take a minimum of 2-4 business days to process (unless submitted with a rush voucher)
Voucher – Example

1. Transaction type must be selected.

2. Payee Information needed:
   - Pay to the order of: Payee Name
   - Numerical Amount
   - “Sum of”/Written Amount
   - Expense for: Detailed description of expense
3. Mailing Address (if needed)
- If no address is provided, the check will be held at SOFO for pickup by one of the group officers
- Only include an address if you wish for the check to be mailed

4. Signatures:
- Every voucher requires the signatures of both officers and the advisor
- When using funds from an ASG-sponsored line, the voucher must also be signed by the group’s ASG Executive
SOFO Transactions Overview

There are four main transactions taken care of at SOFO:

- **Reimbursements**: A withdrawal from an organization’s account to pay a person back for personal funds used to facilitate a group activity.

- **Payments**: A withdrawal to pay a vendor directly (preferred method).

- **Transfers**: Movement of funds from one place to another.

- **Check Advances**: A withdrawal from an organization’s account, as an “advance” of funds to buy goods.
There are 3 types of reimbursements:

- General Reimbursements
- Petty Cash Reimbursements ($30 or less)
- Online/Digital Purchase Reimbursements

Required Documentation:

- Voucher
- Signed Original Receipts
- Blank sheet of paper (to tape receipts)
- Adding Machine Tape (to add up receipt totals)
- Petty Cash Pay-Out form (ONLY for Petty Cash)
### Reimbursements: Requirements

**Receipt Requirements:**

- **Advisor Signature**
  - Must be *on receipt*, not to the side

- **Date of Purchase**
  - Less than 85 days old

- **Vendor Contact Information**
  - Name, address, phone

- **Itemization**
  - Individual items need to be listed on the receipt

- **Proof of Purchase**
  - Indicates balance paid/zero balance due

- **Method of Payment**
  - Cash or Credit

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![Receipt Example](image-url)
Reimbursements: Restrictions

- **Receipt Restrictions:**
  - No IL sales tax will be reimbursed
    - IL sales tax on **Dine-In** restaurant receipts are the one exception
    - We will accept other types of taxes and fees (e.g. occupancy, amusement tax)
    - To avoid paying tax, you may obtain a Tax-Exempt Form from SOFO prior to your purchase
  - NO alcohol or tobacco (these will immediately invalidate any other items on the receipt for reimbursement)
  - **Tip** less than or equal to 20% of the receipt subtotal (prior to taxes) can be reimbursed; anything in excess of 20% will be refused for reimbursement
  - If shown on the receipt, the billing information must match the name of the person being reimbursed
  - **Gift cards** can ONLY be reimbursed when the receipt is accompanied by the recipient’s W-9 (for more information on W-9s, see the Payments section of this presentation)
Illinois Sales Tax

- To avoid paying IL sales tax, authorized officers may pick up one-time use tax-exempt letters to give to vendors.

- To obtain a tax-exempt letter, you must provide SOFO with the following information:
  - Name of the person making the purchase
  - Date of purchase
  - Vendor name
Submitting Receipts

- Formatting Documentation
  - **Blank Sheet of Paper**: Tape all receipts on a blank sheet of paper.
    - Make sure that all the receipt requirements are visible.
    - If you split a receipt, make sure your advisor has signed on all parts.
  - **Adding Machine Tape**: If your reimbursement includes multiple receipts, create an adding tape to add up the total of all receipts minus sales tax, and tape this to the blank sheet of paper with your receipts.

All Formatting materials are available at SOFO
Petty Cash – Reimbursements $30 or less

- **Petty Cash** is a reimbursement that is less than or equal to **$30.00**.

- If one person is being reimbursed for multiple receipts and together they add up to more than $30, it should be processed as a regular reimbursement check (not separate petty cash transactions).

- The requirements for petty cash reimbursement receipts are the same as the reimbursement receipt requirements listed earlier.
A Petty Cash Pay-Out Form is needed for a reimbursement of $30 or less.

The receipts are attached directly to this form.

The reimbursement paperwork is processed immediately at the SOFO window and returned to the officer to be taken to the Cashier's Office, where they will distribute the cash value of the reimbursement, rather than a check.
Reimbursements – Online Purchases

- The receipt requirements for online purchase reimbursements are the same. You should treat your order and shipping confirmation(s) as your receipt.

- Online Receipt Requirements:
  - Itemization
  - Advisor Signature
  - Date of Purchase (<85 days old)
  - Vendor Contact Information
  - Proof of Purchase (indicates balance paid/“your credit card has been charged $...”)
  - Purchaser Name
    - Must match the name of the person being reimbursed
  - No IL state sales tax
    - To avoid paying sales tax on online orders, you can use the SOFO procurement card (see “Payments”)
Reimbursements – Online Example

- Amazon
  - Go to “Your Orders,” click on “Order Details,” select “View or Print Invoice” for receipt
  - Make sure the status of the order is “Shipped on …” as this indicates that the payment has processed

Order Details
Ordered on April 11, 2019 | Order# 110-3368476-7637657

Delivered Apr 13, 2019
Package was left inside the residence’s mailbox

Birch’s 3/32” (2.4 mm) Thin Premium Round Waxed Dress Shoelaces (36” (91 cm) - XL, BLACK)
Sold by: GFTOZ
Return eligible through May 13, 2019
$8.09
Condition: New

View or Print invoice
Reimbursements – Online Example

- **Uber/Lyft**
  - Submit the email you receive after completing the ride and tip
  - Remember to tip less than 20%!

![Email Receipt Example](image)
Payments

There are 5 types of payments:

- Non-Contractual Payment
- Purchase Order
- Donation
- Scholarship/Award
- Contractual Payment

Required Documentation:

- Voucher
- Signed Invoice/Memo/Contract (depending on the type of payment)
- W-9 or Employee ID (ONLY for payments to individuals)
Payments

- Payments are used to pay a vendor directly from an organization’s SOFO account, for goods or services.
- Payments are made in the form of a check or credit card payment (i.e. the SOFO procurement card), depending on how the group decides to pay the vendor.
- We strongly encourage you to use payments as often as possible (instead of reimbursements) to prevent your members from having to pay for things out of pocket!
ALL Payments require a **W-9** Form for the payee

This is an IRS form that collects taxpayer information so that a payee's income may be recorded by SOFO, per IRS regulations:

The payee name on the voucher must match the name on the W-9 exactly

**A W-9 Must Be:**
- Signed pen-to-paper by the payee (NO digital signatures)
- Dated within the current calendar year
- Filled out completely
Payments – Invoice (Non-Contractual)

- If your student group receives an invoice and would like to pay a company without the use of personal funds, you may make a payment by submitting the invoice to SOFO.

- Invoice Requirements:
  - Original company invoice
    - Must be an Invoice (not a quote/estimate)
  - Vendor contact information
  - Itemized list of items being purchased
  - Advisor signature
  - No IL sales tax (a tax-exempt letter can be obtained from SOFO)
  - Accompanied by W-9 form

- Payments to companies or individuals for services or rentals cannot be processed without a contract (covered later in the presentation).
Payments – SOFO Procurement Card

- The SOFO procurement card is a credit card that you may use to make payments directly to vendors (this is NOT the same as a group debit card)

- Procurement Card Request Requirements:
  - List of items to be purchased (similar to an invoice)
    - Vendor Name
    - Itemization (what will be purchased)
      - With Amazon, you should create and print a Wish List; with most other vendors, you can simply print out an itemized Shopping Cart
    - Advisor Signature (if multiple pages, on every page)
  - In addition to the documents submitted for these transactions, you must also send an email to the SOFO Manager that includes:
    - Group name and voucher number
    - Link to the Shopping Cart/Product Page or Wish List (Amazon)
    - Your preferred shipping address
  - Groups will need to make sure that the IL sales tax is not included on invoices submitted for procurement card payments (use tax-exempt form).
    - Exception (Amazon): SOFO has a tax-exempt Amazon account. With all other vendors, you must establish tax exemption with the vendor before submitting your request to SOFO (call your company representative or customer service for instructions on tax exemption)
Some vendors have pre-existing agreements with NU that allow us to purchase goods tax-exempt (and sometimes at a discount). To make a purchase from a preferred vendor, please reach out to the SOFO Manager to schedule a meeting.

- List of NU Preferred Vendors:
  - [https://www.northwestern.edu/procurement/purchasing/purchasing-strategic-sourcing/preferred-vendors/secure/index.html](https://www.northwestern.edu/procurement/purchasing/purchasing-strategic-sourcing/preferred-vendors/secure/index.html)

When meeting with the SOFO Manager, you will need to submit a list of items to be purchased, including:

- Vendor Name
- Itemization (please come prepared with the item numbers of each item to be purchased)
- Advisor Signature (if multiple pages, on every page)
- On-Campus Shipping Address
Payments – Travel

- Travel accommodations can be booked directly through NU’s travel portal. To make a travel booking, please set up a meeting with the SOFO Manager.
  - We *strongly encourage* you to book travel this way, rather than having your members or guests pay for travel out of pocket and wait for reimbursement.

- To book travel with the SOFO Manager, you will need the following traveler information:
  - Full name, gender, and date of birth (month/day/year) *as it appears on their government-issued ID*
  - Phone number
Payments – Purchase Orders & Donations

- **Purchase Orders:**
  - Purchase Orders should only be used if specifically requested by the vendor (this is rare). Should you receive this request, please reach out to SOFO for instructions on submitting the payment.

- **Donations:**
  - Donations to outside entities create tax implications for the University that must be addressed before the payment is processed. Should your organization wish to donate to an outside entity, please reach out to SOFO well in advance of the intended payment.
A request to provide a scholarship or award to a student requires that a voucher be marked as a Payment transaction. The group will also need to submit a signed letter/memo.

- **Memo Requirements:**
  - Recipient’s name
  - Amount awarded
  - Brief description of the scholarship/award
  - Signatures of both officers and the advisor
  - ONE of the following:
    - Recipient’s W-9 form (if recipient is NOT an NU Employee)
    - Recipient’s NU ID# (if recipient IS an NU Employee, including student jobs)
Payments – Contractual

Contractual payments are required whenever terms and conditions exist. They are used to pay companies or individuals for rentals or services (including performances).

- Documentation Requirements:
  - Invoice (if provided by the vendor), including:
    - Vendor name and contact information
    - Itemization
    - Advisor Signature
  - Contract:
    - If provided by the vendor, submit the vendor’s contract agreement
    - Northwestern Registered Student Organization Agreement (i.e. NU contract form):
      - [https://www.northwestern.edu/studentorgs/org-officers/policy-index/contracts/index.html](https://www.northwestern.edu/studentorgs/org-officers/policy-index/contracts/index.html)
    - Contracts MUST be signed by a University Official Contract Authority
      - Some Contract Authorities need several weeks’ notice to review and sign a contract, so plan accordingly!
      - If you need help finding a Contract Authority, please reach out to SOFO
  - ONE of the following:
    - Recipient’s W-9 form (if recipient is NOT an NU Employee)
    - Recipient’s NU ID# (if recipient IS an NU Employee, including student jobs)
  - Since your advisor will not be signing on the contract, they must sign the voucher
Contract Examples

- A Contract Should Be Used For:
  - Services provided by companies or individuals. A contract must be used even if the person/entity is not compensated for their appearance or performance
    - Some examples of services include speaking, performing, coaching, refereeing, photography, web page design, parking valet, musical performances, and disc jockeying
  - Any transaction that involves terms and conditions
  - Renting an off-campus venue for an event
  - Renting a vehicle (Limo, U-Haul, Car Rental)
  - Purchasing group tickets for off-campus events or shows (Broadway in Chicago, Great America, Chicago Cubs, group classes).
  - Outside caterer, sound/light company, security firm, ambulance service, and equipment rented for the event.
  - A corporate sponsorship.
  - Middle agent agreement to pay a “finders fee” in securing the act for the student group
  - A co-promoter agreement when a promoter co-produces a concert with the student group
IMPORTANT: Contracts

- Students should **NEVER** sign on a contract!
  - A contract must be signed by a University Contract Signing Authority (NOT you or your advisor) and by the vendor.

- If an invoice involves **terms and conditions**, it is considered a contract.
  - This is most common with rentals

- *SOFO cannot reimburse* someone who pays out of pocket for any contractual service (i.e. contracts MUST be processed as payments).*

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Sign on the dotted line
SOFO will provide a contract template if a vendor or an individual to be paid does not have one drafted.

Contracts Must:
- Be completed in ink
- Be signed by a University official (NOT your advisor)
- Students should never sign a contract!
- Include the name and contact information of the payee
- Indicate the event date and time
- Specify the amount to be paid
When submitting payments to individuals employed by NU:

- Include the payee’s Employee/Student ID on the voucher
- These individuals will be paid directly through the University payroll.
- This is the only type of payment in which a W-9 is not required
SOFO: Mailing Payments

- All payments to be mailed by SOFO will be mailed:
  - Through Campus Mail
    - Campus mail adds extra time to the mailing process and may take **up to 2 weeks** to get to the vendor.
  - With check ONLY (unless otherwise specified)
    - If a group needs additional documents mailed with a check they must:
      - Make a note on the voucher that additional documents should be mailed.
      - Submit copies of all documents that need to be mailed with the check.
      - Ex: Invoice, contract, etc.
Transfers

There are 2 types of transfers:

• Line Item (Internal) Transfer
• External Transfer

Required Documentation:

• Voucher
• External Only: Same documentation needed for a payment or a reimbursement depending on what the transfer is being used for.
Transfers – Line Item (Internal)

- Line Item Transfers are funds transferred within the same account (for accounts with multiple line items).
  - These require ONLY a voucher
- Usually used to clear a deficit or disperse budgeted funds to specific line items.
  - Example of line items: Storage, Spring Break Trip, Formal Event, Van Rentals

**Voucher Requirements:**
- “Account No.”: line that funds are coming out of (20XX-XXX-YY)
- “Pay to the Order of”: line that funds are going into (20XX-XXX-ZZ)
- Signature of both officers and the advisor
- If funds are coming out of an ASG-sponsored line, the voucher also requires the signature of the Account Executive (AE) or Group Executive (GE)
Transfers – External

- External transfers are funds transferred out of one group’s account into another group’s account for the purpose of a payment or reimbursement.

- **Required Documentation:**
  - Voucher
    - The receiving organization’s name is written in the “Pay to the Order of” line
    - A 20 digit chartstring will be needed for University departments
  - See Payment requirements for transfers functioning as payments
  - See Reimbursement requirements for transfers functioning as reimbursements
  - (for more detailed instructions, reference the Transaction Checklist on the SOFO website)
Some external transfer payments will be initiated by other NU departments. This means that SOFO will not be aware of these transactions until they have been posted.

Some Examples are:
- Motor Pool
- On-campus venue reservations
- Funding or charges from academic departments

It is very important that officers keep track of these transactions, because it can take up to 45 days for them to show up on the group’s audit trail.

These transactions could be debits from the account or credits to the account.

Ask the department involved for a NU Financials Journal ID# connected to the transaction, and we can verify that your group has funds either coming in or going out.
Check Advance

Required Documentation:

Before Purchase

• Voucher – including detailed description of planned expenditure

After Purchase

• Signed Original Receipts (Receipt Requirements apply)
• Blank Sheet of Paper (to tape receipts)
• Adding Machine Tape (to add up receipts)
• Check Advance Reconciliation Form
Check Advance

- A Check Advance is a check issued from an organization’s account as an “advance” to buy goods.
- It differs from a Payment in that advances are used when an invoice, or receipt, is not generated until after the sale is complete.
- It differs from a Reimbursement in that organization members do not have to use personal funds to make purchases and wait for reimbursement; rather, they will make purchases using funds taken out of the group’s SOFO account.

Check Advance Timeline:

1. Submit Voucher to SOFO
2. Pick Up Check Advance from SOFO
3. Make Expenditures
4. Reconcile Check Advance Receipts at SOFO

Compare Reimbursement Timeline:

1. Make Expenditures
2. Submit Voucher and Receipts to SOFO
3. Pick Up Reimbursement Check from SOFO
Check Advance Restrictions

- Check advances may be obtained for amounts ranging from $31.00 to $500.00.
  - If more than $500 is needed, groups may take out multiple check advances.

- Check advances can only be made payable to a group’s treasurer or president.

- Groups may make multiple purchases with one check advance.

- Advances may be used for any authorized expenditures (e.g. munchies, group dinners, etc.) that fall within University/organizational guidelines.
Check Advance Restrictions ctd.

- Advances will be refused if they would put the organization’s account in deficit.

- Advances **cannot** be used to reimburse officers on past purchases (a “reimbursement” transaction should be initiated by voucher instead).
  - Receipts or invoices dated prior to the check’s distribution from the SOFO service counter will be refused for reconciliation.

- Advances may **NEVER** be used to pay on contracts

- **No IL Sales Tax on Receipts**
  - If check advance funds are used to pay IL Sales Tax, the group will need to deposit the amount spent on tax back into the account in order to reconcile the advance.
  - You may request a **tax-exempt letter** from SOFO to avoid paying sales tax.
Check Advance Reconciliation

- All advances must be reconciled within 30 days from the date the check is printed
  - If SOFO does not receive this reconciliation within 30 days, the account will be FROZEN

- Reconciliation works a lot like a reimbursement, in that you submit all receipts to SOFO for review along with the reconciliation form
  - All receipts must follow the same restrictions as those you would submit for reimbursement, i.e. they must include:
    - The vendor contact information
    - Date of purchase
    - Itemization
    - Method and proof of payment
    - Advisor’s signature
When requesting a check advance, officers guess how much money they will need to buy the items necessary for their organization’s activity. More often than not, there will be a difference in the amount disbursed and the amount used. This is where a check advance reconciliation form is needed.

- **Underspent?**
  - Deposit the remaining funds at the Cashier’s Office and attach the deposit slip to the reconciliation form.

- **Overspent?**
  - Turn in a reimbursement voucher for the amount overspent along with the receipts used to reconcile the check advance. SOFO will reimburse for overspent check advances.
You should now be familiar with the four main transaction types and all of their sub-types:

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You should now be familiar with the four main transaction types and all of their sub-types:
Bonus: Other Transactions

- These do not fall under the four main transaction types but are nevertheless important:
  - Deposits
  - Rush Vouchers
  - Motor Pool
  - Crowdfunding
How to deposit funds into your SOFO account:

- Deposits may take the form of cash/coins or checks.
- Deposits are made at the Cashier’s Office, located to the left of SOFO.
  - Hours: Monday – Friday, 9AM-4PM
- Anyone (not just officers) can make deposits into SOFO accounts.
- Please make all checks payable to Northwestern University, with your group name in the check memo.
- Record all deposits the group’s ledger.

Deposit Slip

Available at the Cashier’s Office
Include check information and purpose in the “Description or Source of Revenue”
Rush Vouchers

- **Rush vouchers** may be submitted in addition to the original voucher and documentation in order to have SOFO expedite a transaction.

- Rush applies only to the check making process – we cannot expedite mailing checks.
  - If you need your check to be mailed quickly, you should pick it up from our office and mail it yourself.

- A Rush Voucher MUST be submitted at the same time as the voucher/check you wish to be rushed
Rush Vouchers

- **Filling out a Rush Voucher:**
  - Transaction Type: Transfer
  - Pay to the Order of: SOFO
  - Expense for: Rush Voucher #(voucher being rushed)
  - Signed by both officers and the advisor (+AE/GE if applicable)

- **Same Day Rush:**
  - $20
  - Must be submitted before 1:00pm
  - Ready by 4:00pm on the same day

- **Next Day Rush:**
  - $15
  - Ready around the time of submission on the following business day
Motor Pool – Process

- Faculty, staff and students can use Motor Pool vehicles for official University business. Student Organization use must be authorized by the Student Organization Finance Office (SOFO).
  - All drivers must take the defensive driving course and be awarded certification.
  - Forms turned into SOFO will be reviewed and sent to the Motor Pool office on behalf of the student organization.
- Make a Motor Pool reservation before coming to SOFO.
  - Go to the Motor Pool website and familiarize yourself with their policies and procedures: [http://www.northwestern.edu/fm/services/motor-pool/index.html](http://www.northwestern.edu/fm/services/motor-pool/index.html)
Motor Pool – SOFO Form

- Bring the completed form to SOFO:
  - Deductible: Motor Pool will charge a deductible of at least $500 per vehicle in the case of an accident (and only if there is an accident).
  - Student organizations must have enough funds to cover the cost of vehicle rental plus the potential deductible.
  - Must have the signature of both officers and the advisor.
  - If traveling outside the Chicago area (more than 150 miles), the Executive Director of Campus Life will also need to sign.
Only students who have completed the university’s Defensive Driving Course may drive the rented vehicles. Drivers are checked by SOFO before submission.

Ensure that anyone who will be driving is listed on the Motor Pool Form.

If you have more drivers than space on the form, submit an Additional Drivers Form.
Organizations wishing to conduct a crowdfunding campaign MUST do so through the Northwestern University crowdfunding platform, Catalyzer (more information about the application and campaigning process can be found on the Catalyzer website):

- [https://catalyzer.northwestern.edu/](https://catalyzer.northwestern.edu/)

Organizations should NEVER set up independent crowdfunding campaigns outside of Catalyzer, as these create tax implications for which the campaign owner may be held personally liable (in Catalyzer, the University assumes these liabilities)
Bonus: Other Transactions—Wrap Up

- You should now also be familiar with:
  - How and where to make Deposits
  - What to do if you need to expedite the making of a check with a Rush Voucher
  - How to rent vehicles from the University through Motor Pool
  - How to set up a crowdfunding campaign through Catalyzer