

# AUBURN UNIVERSITY

## Cellular Device & Service Policy

### POLICY STATEMENT

This University Policy is intended to address the use of Auburn University (AU) provided communication devices utilizing cellular voice or data services.

What is covered:

- Any cellular voice or data services paid for by the University.
- Any communication devices that are acquired through University cellular service provider(s) and for which part of the cost is embedded in the monthly service fee.
- Any communication devices that are acquired through the University cellular service provider(s) and for which the provider assesses an early upgrade fee.

### POLICY PRINCIPALS

Generally, Auburn University will provide office computers and data services in the employee's assigned work space and does not provide internet, phone or other computer/phone related services at an employee's home. In addition, when necessary for the performance of the employee's job duties and approved by the supervisor, AU will provide cellular devices and associated data services contracts. Because such devices, services, and accessories must be purchased through AU Preferred Vendor Contracts and billed to the University, there will be no reimbursements made to an employee for phone services, data services or the purchase of equipment and accessories. Cellular devices and services provided by AU are intended expressly for AU business use. **Department Heads/Unit Heads (DH/D) are responsible for insuring that there is a documented business need for securing communication devices and services for AU employees and that the equipment and cost is neither extravagant nor frivolous.** The documented business need must address needs beyond that of a traditional land line telephone and desktop/laptop computer. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) requires that the University has a business rationale for providing a cellphone and service and such devices and services must not be provided primarily as compensation.

Specific examples of business use provided by the IRS include:

- the employer's need to contact the employee at all times for work-related emergencies;
- the employee is required to remotely access their email or calendar on a regular basis in order to carry out their job responsibilities;
- the employee must remotely complete time sensitive work on a regular basis;
- the employee has responsibilities related to emergency response or continuity of business services;
- the employer's requirement that the employee routinely travels on University business and must be available to speak with clients/constituents at times when the employee is away from the office; and
- the employee's need to speak with clients located in other time zones at times outside of the normal work day.

Employees who are classified as non-exempt should generally not be issued devices nor provided service with a justification centered upon availability outside the normal workday.

The IRS also provides examples of providing devices and service that are **not** for business purposes such as:

- to promote the morale or good will of an employee; or
- to attract a prospective employee or as a means of furnishing additional compensation to an employee.

While incidental or occasional personal use of the device and/or service is permitted without taxation under this policy, supervisors and employees are responsible for monitoring all resultant bills for appropriateness and accuracy. Devices and records are subject to audit by internal auditors, as well as state and federal auditors.

Verizon (and Southern Linc for push-to-talk devices) is the exclusive provider of cellphones and other communication devices for AU employees and, as such, is the only vendor to which payments for such devices and services will be made by the University. The acquisition of all such devices and services will be coordinated through AU's [Office of Information Technology \(OIT\)](#) upon receipt of approval from the applicable Department Head/Dean. In addition, Verizon and Southern Linc will bill OIT centrally for all such authorized charges with OIT allocating the charges out to AU Departments. If, by virtue of home base location, an employee does not have Verizon service coverage, or there is a specific product/service business need not offered by Verizon, a written request for exception to the exclusive provider provision must be signed by the appropriate Department Head/Dean and forwarded to OIT. OIT will confirm the exception need and notify [Procurement & Payment Services \(PPS\)](#). It is the Department's responsibility to establish the exception based service with a carrier. The Department will be billed directly for said service and submit the approved exception form along with payment to PPS.

The initial cost of such devices, if approved by the Department Head/Dean, can be borne by the applicable AU unit as long as the cost is reasonable and appropriate for the business needs of that employee. Generally, an employee should be restricted to one service contract paid from AU funds and the type of service should be chosen based on the predominant business need of that employee. The cost of devices and services would not typically be an allowable direct charge to a contract or grant.

Replacement costs will be covered by AU (with DH/D approval) ONLY when new equipment is needed for functional reasons based solely on the business needs for that employee. Repair/replacement costs incurred due to employee negligence or carelessness (including lost cellphones/communication devices) or fraud will NOT be covered by AU. In the event that the cost of replacement is covered by AU, the choice of replacement devices will be at the discretion of the Office of Information Technology.

In general, **no provision is made for the early termination and/or upgrade** of devices or services. All service contracts must be satisfied before an upgrade is requested and processed. Exceptions to that policy must be approved by the applicable Dean/VP and submitted to OIT.

Questions regarding this University Policy should be directed to [oitcell@auburn.edu](mailto:oitcell@auburn.edu).

Cellular Device/Service Coordinators may access the [Application for Cellular and/or Wireless Data Device](#) to formally submit requests.

ADOPTED: August 3, 2012