

## **PROCEDURES FOR SAFEGUARDING AND ACCOUNTING FOR CASH AND GIFT CARDS IN RESEARCH STUDIES**

- A. Cash or gift cards for research studies must be assigned to a custodian, e.g. a member of the research study staff, responsible for safeguarding the cash or gift cards.
- B. Cash or gift cards for research studies must be maintained under lock and key by the custodian of the funds.
- C. An inventory of cards should not be kept in the department long term. The responsible research study staff should only purchase the number of cards that will be used in the current phase of the study.
- D. Access to the cash or gift cards for research studies must be controlled by the custodian of the funds.
- E. The balance of cash or gift cards on hand plus participant receipts must equal the cash and gift cards authorized and obtained. If a shortage of cash or gift cards on hand is determined, the shortage must be reported to the University's Office of Business and Finance immediately to be reported in accordance with MTSU Policy IV:04:08 Reporting and Resolution of Institutional Losses.
- F. Cash or gift cards must be used for research participant payment only and may not be used for departmental or other research expenses.
- G. Cash and gift cards for research participants are subject to audit at any time by the University, State Audit, or funding agency.
- H. Unused inventory of gift cards must always be accounted for. It is not permissible to charge sponsored research programs for gift cards that have not been used for the project. It is recommended any gift cards not used should be returned to the store for credit within 30 days of completion of the study and the cash credited back to the account making the initial purchase. Any excess cash or cards not returned for store credit must be turned into the Bursar's Office. All cash and gift cards for research participants are required to be closed out at the end of the research study.
- I. The method of tracking gift cards should be to record the following information using the MTSU Gift Card Recipient Log:
  - 1. Recipient name or, in the case of anonymous or confidential human subject participants, the participant ID number;
  - 2. Date of distribution;
  - 3. Signature of PI authorizing disbursement to recipients;
  - 4. Purpose of payment;
  - 5. Gift card serial number;
  - 6. Amount of gift card;
  - 7. Signature or initials of study participant or recipient, if available.
- J. Alternate method of record keeping for anonymous and confidential surveys - for anonymous surveys and confidential research participants, the PI must maintain a reconciliation of the number of cards given equaling the number of surveys or participants.

K. Alternate method of record keeping for mailed and electronic gift cards. - The department must maintain a reconciliation of the number of cards given equaling the number of surveys or participants.