

ACCEPTING CREDIT CARDS OVERVIEW

- **Will accepting Credit Cards as a form of payment benefit my department?**

Let's face it — We are a card-carrying society. We all, at some point, have enjoyed the convenience of using a credit card or debit card to purchase something at a store, or make an on-line purchase, or even get gas at the pump. Accepting Merchant cards will increase business, help you in collecting payment for your services, facilitate easy registration for your event, or whatever your situation may be. However, accepting credit cards increases your responsibility in protecting your consumer's information, adds business expenditure, and increases your daily office procedures. Most departments would agree that the added responsibility and cost is worthwhile. Here are a few things to consider:

- **E-Commerce vs. Point of Sale (POS)**

Merchant Accounts use different types of payment modes to process credit and debit cards. E-Commerce is a mode of Credit Card acceptance using the internet. The authorization, capture, and settlement of all Credit Card information is transmitted through the internet. The actual Credit Card is never in your hand. Everything is done on-line. You simply receive the deposit information to either post to your accounts or simply reconcile as payments are processed. Firewalls protect the information as the information is in transit and stored.

Point of Sale devices use stand alone Credit Card machines that the card can be swiped through or the card information can be keyed into, in order to process the payment through a dial up phone line. These terminals are still considered very relevant technology, as they maintain a tamper proof and secure communication mode. Some of these terminals, for purposes of speed, can use the internet instead of a phone line, but firewalls should be in place to secure that mode of communication so that consumer information remains secure.

- **What will my responsibilities be with this new merchant account?**

A merchant account must be maintained by certain standards (PCI DSS) which serve to protect YOU as well as the consumer. The University has established a policy that, if complied with, will protect you, the University, and your consumers from hackers and other thieves from obtaining sensitive information. Also, reconciliation of your merchant account and your deposit account is vital to maintain proper accounting practices. Paper receipts and reports must be properly secured. There are also annual trainings, compliance self-assessments and agreements that must be updated and adhered to.