Details concerning all aspects of meal plans, including serving and equivalency times, are available at www.dineoncampus.com/umbc. This is an essential link for meal plan and dining information that is both current and a great resource for understanding and enjoying the many facets of Dining Services at UMBC. Every effort is made to maintain all information as accurately as possible. Terms and conditions governing meal plans may change from time to time and, in the event of a discrepancy, the most current regulation takes precedence over previously published information. UMBC dining services are provided by Chartwells. Campus meal plans are administered by the UMBC Department of Campus Card and Mail Services (CCMS) http://campuscard.umbc.edu/ The UMBC Campus Card serves as your campus ID and is used to access meals plans, as well as, the various funds that may be place on your Card account for dining purposes. These include Retriever Dollars, Food Funds, Flex Dollars and Chartwells Reward Points.

UMBC MEAL PLAN CATEGORIES
MANDATORY/VOLUNTARY
UMBC issued meal plans are designed as weekly, recurring opportunities to use campus dining facilities or as blocks containing a specific number of meals that may be used as needed during the semester. The term “mandatory” refers to meal plans having a minimum weekly count of 10 and the Super 200 Block plan. The Residential Life Housing License defines which residents are required to have a mandatory meal plan and is primarily associated with residential facilities not having a kitchen area. It is a Res Life requirement and is not negotiable as it relates to health issues associated with having ready access to dining resources. All other residents may purchase any meal plan, including the smaller quantity/count “voluntary” plans. Weekly Meal Plan activation begins with breakfast on the first day of classes for the semester and ends with dinner on the last day of the semester. Meal use counters are set to the weekly maximum upon activation. There may be periods during the semester, such as the Fall Thanksgiving Break and the Spring Semester Break, when the dining facilities are shut down and meal plans are not in effect. Typically, there are 110 days in the Fall Semester and 107 days in the Spring Semester when plans may be used.

As noted, weekly meal plans do not begin until the first day of classes. Meals provided during the pre-semester move-in period, typically a 4 day event in the fall and a 1 day event in the spring, are not part of the purchased meal plan. Pre-semester meal costs for the weekly plans are covered by the University. Access to meals is made available in accordance with the announced move-in schedule for each group of residents. Meals are not provided to any group prior to the announced date. An example of a typical fall move-in sequence would be: Day 1, Dormitory residents; Day 2, Walker Avenue residents; Day 3, Apartment residents. To accommodate pre-scheduled arrivals and move-in “helpers”, guest passes (if associated with the meal plan) and Flex Dollars may be used during the move-in period at True Grits and retail venues.

Access to True Grits, the campus dining hall, is managed through activation dates on the Campus Card. Under normal circumstances, sign-in sheets are not used and “denied access” issues must be addressed by CCMS. For convenience, CCMS staff are typically present in True Grits for the majority of move-in and have the ability to make immediate on-line changes to meal plans. The Campus Card Service Counter, located in the University Center, also maintains extended hours, Monday through Thursday of opening week.

TRUE GRITS DINING AND EQUIVALENCY MEAL ZONES
DINING HALL AND RETAIL VENUES
There are designated time periods when meal plans may be used with the day being divided into meal zones. Plans are primarily designed to be used during standard dining times in the campus dining hall, True Grits (named after the campus mascot). This represents the best value for plan use as True Grits offers the widest selection available and unlimited access to those selections once the facility has been entered for the meal period. Serving times are designated in a traditional manner as breakfast, lunch (brunch on weekends) and dinner. There are a total of 19 “serving times” available during a regular semester week. Meal plans may also be used outside of True Grits at all Dining Services retail venues on campus. Retail use of meal
plans is based on an equivalency dollar value granted in exchange for not using True Grits. Equivalency Meal Zones are used to distinguish the value and time period for this exchange and run from 7:00 AM – 2:00 AM. For example, within this range, the lunch zone extends from 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM while the True Grits lunch serving time is 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM. A frequent concern centers on the unintended use of an equivalency for the “wrong” meal period. This can occur near the time of changeover from one zone to the next as these times are controlled by software and not the “frequently incorrect” time that may appear on clocks and watches. If concerns exist, it is best to ask the cashier at transition times to confirm the actual meal period that will be credited. Equivalency Meal Zones also govern the frequency and location of use for most meal plans. The non-flex meal plans may only be used once during a meal period regardless of location. The flexible plans may be used at any location, as often as desired, up to the total weekly count of the plan. The only exception is the convenience store, Outtakes, located in True Grits which accepts only one equivalency per meal zone for any meal plan. The Ultimate plan grants unlimited access to True Grits, unless an equivalency is used at a retail location first. Specific information concerning dining/equivalency options may be found on the web site www.dineoncampus.com/umbc. A variation of the meal equivalency is the Meal Deal. Many retail venues offer a predetermined menu combination that may be used in place of the cash equivalency value. These offerings can represent a great value, typically worth more than the exchange. Meal Deals are posted at the participating retail venues and may be requested from the cashier at the time of ordering.

MEAL PLAN TYPES

RECURRING REGULAR PLANS

The weekly count meal plans reset with breakfast each Monday morning. Unused meals do not carry forward to the next week; the reset is for the total weekly count of the plan. Each use at True Grits or equivalency exchange at a retail venue incrementally decreases the available meals for the current week. For any Meal Equivalency Zone, only one use of a recurring regular plan may be applied during that time period. Once the total count for the week has been reached, no additional meals are available until Monday morning with the reset to the weekly count of the plan. The recurring regular plans are: Fab 14 (mandatory), Terrific 10 (mandatory) and Advantage 5 (voluntary).

RECURRING FLEXIBLE PLANS

These are recurring weekly plans analogous to the regular plan with one important exception. They are not restricted to a single use in a Meal Equivalency Zone and, accordingly, may be used multiple times during any period, at True Grits or retail venues, as long as the weekly total count has not been exhausted. The only exception is at the convenience store in True Grits, Outtakes, which is restricted to a single equivalency during any meal zone. This flexibility may be particularly beneficial as it allows more latitude in dining times with respect to the Meal Equivalency Zone restrictions. The recurring flexible plans are: Flexible-14 (mandatory) and Flexible-10 (mandatory).

BLOCK PLANS

The block plans are presented as a total count of meals that are available for an entire semester. They do not reset on a weekly basis. Each use at True Grits or equivalency exchange at a retail venue incrementally decreases the total number of meals available for the semester. A special feature of the block plans is the ability to do multiple swipes during the same meal period at True Grits. Once the total count for the plan has been reached, no additional meals are available through that particular block plan. Additional block plans may be purchased at any point during the semester. The block plans are: Super 200 (mandatory), Mega 50 (voluntary) and Mini 25 (voluntary).

THE ULTIMATE PLAN

This Ultimate plan allows unlimited entry into True Grits during any meal period for the entire semester. Retail use, however, is restricted to one equivalency use per meal zone. Additionally, the first use of The Ultimate Plan during any specific meal period determines subsequent use for the remainder of that meal period. If that first use is at True Grits, no meal equivalency may be used for that period; if that first use is an equivalency, True Grits may not be entered during that period. The Ultimate plan is classified as mandatory.
RETAIL OPERATIONS IN TRUE GRITS

LATE NIGHT AND OUTTAKES

As noted, True Grits offers 19 serving times during the typical week based on the traditional breakdown of breakfast, lunch /brunch and dinner. Food is available in True Grits outside these meal periods through Late Night and Outtaktes. Late Night is a retail operation that allows the purchase of food (pizza, subs, sandwiches) through use of a meal equivalency, Flex Dollars or non-plan money. Late Night is offered in Wing 2 of True Grits, Sunday through Thursday, 8:00 PM – 2:00 AM. Convenience type foods are available in Outtaktes every day of the week except between 2:00 – 2:30 AM. Purchases may be made using an available meal equivalence, Flex Dollars or non-plan money.

ASSOCIATE PLAN AND OTHER FOOD DOLLARS

FLEX DOLLARS

All meal plans, except the Mini-25 Block, include Flex Dollars. These are dedicated funds, automatically attached to a plan, which may be used to purchase food at any Dining Services venue. Flex Dollar amounts are predetermined for each plan and may not be purchased separately or increased during the semester. While Flex Dollars may be used for any Dining Services purchase, they are intended to cover the difference between a meal equivalency allowance and actual cost at retail venues. Regular semester Flex Dollars do not carry forward and all unused Flex Dollars are forfeited at the end of the semester. The only exception is the Flex 50 plan offered during the Winter Session in that unused Flex Dollars are credited to the subsequent spring semester. Flex Dollars may only be used at Dining Services venues on campus with one exception, Papa John’s Pizza delivery, made possible through a special arrangement with Dining Services. This agreement is subject to change at any time during the semester without prior notice. Flex Dollar amounts are as follows:

- The Ultimate $ 80.00
- Weekly 14 plans $ 85.00
- Weekly 10 plans $ 90.00
- Advantage 5 $ 60.00
- Super 200 Block $100.00
- Mega-50 Block $ 25.00

FOOD FUND DOLLARS

The UMBC Campus Card allows for the depositing of funds to a Card account for use at campus venues in a manner similar to a debit card application. There are two types of deposits to the Campus Card: Retriever Dollars and Food Fund Dollars. Retriever Dollars may be used for any campus purchase. Food Fund Dollars may only be used at Dining Services venues. In use, they are analogous to Flex Dollars but may be added at any time and are not forfeited at the end of the semester. If both Flex and Food Dollars are available in a Card account, the system will automatically use the Flex Dollars first since they will be lost at the end of semester.

ADDITIONAL DINING BENEFITS

GUEST PASSES

All weekly recurring meal plans of a count 10 or higher, The Ultimate and Super 200 Block include 5 guest passes. These passes grant free entry into True Grits during a regular meal period. Guest passes are only valid at True Grits and may not be used at any other campus location. To use a Guest Pass, inform the cashier of your intention and an available pass will be taken from your account. You must personally present your Campus Card to use this feature. Guest passes are not transferable and any remaining passes are forfeited at the end of the semester.

Rewards Points

Chartwells Reward Points may be used at any Dining Services venue in lieu of cash. They are earned for the following activities:
- 1.0% of a deposit to a Campus Card (General Fund) Retriever Dollars account
- 2.0% of a deposit to a Campus Card Food Fund Account
- 2.0% of the purchase price of a Voluntary Meal Plan
- 3.0% of Food Fund or Retriever Dollars spent in a Dining Services venue
Chartwell Reward Points will be placed on the student’s Campus Card account, typically starting with the fourth week of the current semester. They may be used at any time after this by simply informing the cashier of your intent. Unused points are forfeited at the end of the semester.

Residents initially choose a meal plan as part of their Housing License and this information is provided by Res Life to CCMS for inclusion on your campus card account. Selection of mandatory plans must be done as part of the housing sign-up process. Selection of voluntary plans is encouraged to be done at the same time, but may also be done after the fact by submitting an RT ticket to CCMS. Voluntary meal plans may be added at any time during the semester. It is common for multiple small block plans, Mega-50 and Mini-25, to be purchased during the course of a semester as available meals are used up and additional are needed.

**RT Tickets**

CCMS uses the campus Request Tracker System to process meal plan orders. It is simple to use and may be accessed through the following steps:

- Login to your myUMBC account
- Select Help tab, Request Help
- Under Billing and Finances, select Campus Card,
- Use the drop down screen to select Meal Plans/Food Service
- Under Describe Issue fill in the box with the desired action you are requesting

**Meal Plan Changes**

Changes to meal plans after initial selection are made directly with CCMS. Requests for changes are done by submitting an RT ticket as outlined above. Mandatory plan changes, within the allowable selections, may include greater or lesser count plans only through the first two calendar weeks of the semester. This “grace period” ends at 11:59:59 PM on the fourteenth day after the opening of the semester. After the grace period, mandatory plans may only be changed to higher count plans. Please note that the Super 200 Block is equivalent to a 14-count meal plan. Mandatory plans may not be dropped unless your place of residency has changed to a non-dormitory location. Voluntary meal plans may be changed, up or down, or dropped, at any time during the active semester.

**Grace Period**

The Meal Plan Grace period defines two conditions:

- A window of time during which mandatory plan holders may decrease their plan count down to the limit set by the Housing License. After the grace period, mandatory plan holders may only increase their plan count. The set order for increasing plan counts is: Weekly 10’s to Weekly 14’s [includes Super 200 Block] to The Ultimate.
- A window of time during which processing fees are not applied to meal plan changes. After the grace period, processing fees may be associated with the requested change. The grace period only refers to processing charges as the per Diem costs for active meal plans are in force from day one of the semester.

**BILLING**

Meal Plan billing appears on students accounts. Plans selected through the housing license are downloaded from Res Life and processed by CCMS in a timely manner after received. Plans purchased directly from, and changes to plans made directly through, CCMS are typically processed within five business days. After the start of the semester, weekly meal plan costs are prorated on a per Diem basis; block plans on a per meal eaten basis. Flex Dollars are reconciled based on actual usage. After the grace period a processing charge may be applied. Until a meal plan is cancelled in writing, per Diem charges are applied regardless of meals eaten or frequency of use. No plan adjustments or refunds may be made after the close of the active semester.
**Per Diem Charges**

Dining Services is paid per active meal plan in our system, not for meals eaten. This arrangement exists to assure adequate food availability for the maximum potential diners on any particular day. Weekly meal plan holders are responsible for these per Diem charges regardless of plan use. Charges for dropped or changed weekly plans are calculated based on the day of the event with the plan holder billed for the prorated time any existing plan was active in the system. Block plans and Flex Dollars are reconciled on use, not proration. The addition of a weekly plan after the start of the semester is prorated as of the day of activation; Flex Dollars are applied at full value regardless of the date. Block Plans are billed at full value regardless of the date.

**PLAN AND CAMPUS CARD INFORMATION**

Information concerning account balances for meal plans, flex dollars, food fund dollars and reward points may be viewed under myUMBC/Topics/Billing and Personal Finances/Account Inquiry/Manage Campus Card. Inquiries may also be directed to CCMS by submitting an RT Ticket, or by phone, 443-612-2273. [Mnemonic aid: dial CCARD from any campus phone]. The Campus Card Service Counter is located in the University Center, first floor. Hours of operation are 8:30 AM – 4:00 PM, Monday through Friday.