

GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY POLICY

Section A: Background and Legislative Context

- A1 The offering and acceptance of modest gifts and hospitality may be considered an accepted part of normal business or as a means of fostering and developing business relationships.
- A2 It is important that the giving or receiving of gifts and hospitality can stand up to internal and public scrutiny. The Policy sets out the principles and requirements expected of staff in offering and receiving gifts and hospitality. Separate guidance is available to assist colleagues in making judgments about appropriate use of gifts and hospitality.
- A3 It is a specific offence under the Bribery Act 2010 to offer an inducement to a foreign public official anywhere in the world, e.g. Government ministers, diplomats, embassy staff and international border officials. Additional care is required to avoid such gifts or hospitality being seen as an inducement and to avoid allegations of misconduct and impropriety. All gifts and hospitality offered to such individuals should be:
- reasonable and proportionate to the business being conducted;
 - approved in advance by the Faculty Pro-Vice Chancellor or Service Director, with guidance from the Head of Governance as required.

Section B: Definitions and Scope

- B1 **Gifts:** A gift is normally a tangible item or other benefit given by the University or one of its staff members or other representatives to another person or organisation or vice-versa. Gifts may range from token gifts of little value to a substantial gift of higher value. Common modest gifts given or received include business and branded stationery, flowers, confectionery, USBs and other promotional items.

Hospitality

- B2 Corporate hospitality refers to the entertainment and related arrangements that the University may offer to partners or 'clients'. Common hospitality includes lunches, dinners, accommodation or entertainment, and range from token hospitality of little value such as providing food and drink (e.g. a working lunch) to high value activities such as a ticket and entertainment for a sporting event or concert.
- B3 This Policy applies to:
- all staff, governors and 'associated persons' including agents, partners, contractors, representatives and any others acting on behalf of the University;
 - all University activities undertaken in the UK or overseas.
- B4 The Policy does not apply to:
- gifts and hospitality which the University offers to its own staff or governors (e.g., GEM Awards), guidance for which is in the Travel and Expenditure Policy;
 - philanthropic gifts and donations offered to, and accepted on behalf of, the University, which is covered by the Philanthropic Gifts and Donations Policy.
- B5 The Head of Governance is the main source of advice on the operation of this Policy and is responsible for:
- the communication of the University's Policy on Corporate Gifts and Hospitality;
 - seeking assurance from Faculty Pro-Vice Chancellors (FPVCs) and Service Directors that this policy is being enforced at a local level and that local registers of gifts and hospitality are being maintained.

Section C: Principles and what is prohibited under the Policy

- C1 The main Principles of this Policy of which staff and other parties need to be aware are summarised below:

- In the course of University business staff may offer and receive gifts and hospitality which are reasonable and proportionate to the business being undertaken, and the circumstances in which it is offered and received;
- The offer of gifts and corporate hospitality should have a demonstrable link to the work of the University and represent good value for money, by following guidance in the University's Travel and Expenditure Policy and utilising University branded goods as appropriate;
- Staff must not accept gifts or hospitality if it might be perceived that their integrity or professionalism may be compromised or that decisions may be influenced as a result of their receipt;
- Staff must not accept gifts or hospitality offered or given secretly;
- Avoid offering or receiving gifts and hospitality around key decision milestones such as student admissions, assessment or contract procurement, student awards, procurements exercises;
- Lavish expenditure on gifts and hospitality offered, or received, is not permitted under this Policy, including travel and accommodation. Gifts offered by the University should not exceed £100, as per the Travel and Expenditure Policy;
- Cash should not be given or received as a gift under any circumstances;
- Cash equivalents, such as vouchers or discount cards, should not be given to, or received from, external parties except in specific circumstances where a modest token of gratitude is appropriate, e.g., volunteering activities such as research participants
- The University will not tolerate instances of the giving and taking of gifts and hospitality that contravene the Bribery Act 2010, and that individuals must not offer or accept inducements;
- Gifts and hospitality must not be provided for political campaigning purposes as this would breach the University's charitable obligations;
- Personal retention of gifts is not permitted where it is clear that the giver intended the gift to be given to the University rather than an individual. Where the intention is not clear, discretion should be used to consider whether the gift is retained by the individual to whom it was given, or the Faculty or Service (for example, to be put on display);
- A gift valued at more than £50 should not normally be retained personally unless this has been approved by an FPVC or Service Director;
- Scenarios where declining a gift or hospitality may cause offence (e.g. gifts from foreign dignitaries or religious leaders), the gift or hospitality may be accepted but should be recorded in the appropriate Gifts and Hospitality Register. In most circumstances such gifts should be treated as University property;
- Staff have a duty to declare and record gifts and hospitality received and offered (even if declined) under this Policy.

C2 If colleagues are unsure about whether to receive or offer gifts and hospitality, or they have any suspicions in relation to gifts and hospitality proposed to be offered or received, they should contact the Head of Governance for initial advice.

Section D: Approval of Gifts and Hospitality

- D1 Trust is the cornerstone of professional conduct in the offering and receipt of gifts and hospitality by staff. Staff are able to accept gifts given to them up to an estimated or known value of £50 (or £50 per person for hospitality) without additional approval from their Service Director or Faculty Pro-Vice Chancellor. If they consider that a gift or hospitality received might be a cause of concern, then they should discuss this with their Service Director or Faculty Pro-Vice Chancellor in the first instance.
- D2 All gifts received which exceed a known or estimated value of £50 (or £50 per person for hospitality) requires approval in advance by a staff member's Service Director or Faculty Pro-Vice Chancellor. Retrospective approval should be in exceptional circumstances only.
- D3 The giving of gifts by University staff to external individuals or organisations over a known or estimated value of £50 requires authorisation. Gifts given on behalf of the University to an individual or organisation which exceed £100 is not permitted under the Travel and Expenditure Policy. Spend below £50 is still subject to the normal approvals required by the principal budget holder for the faculty, department or service, and value for money considerations.
- D4 All gifts and hospitality offered to foreign public officials must be approved in advance by the relevant Service Director or Faculty Pro-Vice Chancellor. See A3.

D5 The above parameters apply to all staff, and the Chair of the Board of Governors is responsible for authorising or declining gifts and hospitality received or given by the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive. The Senior Independent Governor is responsible for authorising or declining gifts and hospitality received or given by the Chair of the Board of Governors.

Section E: Recording Gifts and Hospitality

- E1 Each Faculty and Service should maintain a Register of Gifts and Hospitality on which gifts and hospitality received and given should be recorded. The Register is a standard template made available to staff, and is a tool to promote transparency in gifts and hospitality transactions. It serves as an audit trail to protect individuals and the University from allegations of impropriety and may be used for reporting and disclosure purposes, including Freedom of Information requests. Access to the Registers may be requested at any time by the Head of Governance, or for audit purposes.
- E2 Gifts and hospitality offered to a member of University staff or to the University which are declined should still be recorded on the Register, as should gifts and hospitality offered on behalf the University which are not accepted.
- E3 Gifts and hospitality which do not require approval should still be recorded on the Register, with the exception of token or very low value gifts, e.g., estimated at £10 or less, which do not need to be recorded on the Register. Normal courtesies of meetings (e.g. refreshments and working lunches) and meals/accommodation received as part of training courses/conferences do not need to be recorded on the Register.
- E4 All Faculty Pro Vice-Chancellors and Services Directors are accountable for ensuring that the Register in their Faculty or Service is maintained and updated, and that the requirement for its use and accuracy is communicated to staff in their areas.
- E5 The Head of Governance will be responsible for maintaining the Register for members of the University Executive. Disclosures of these role-holders do not therefore need to be also recorded on a relevant Faculty or Service Register where this applies.

Further help and guidance about this Policy

For advice on the application of this Policy, please contact:

- Dr Adam Dawkins, Head of Governance, extension 4520
- Susan O'Donnell, Risk Manager, extension 4222

Related Policies

Other relevant policies linked with this Policy include:

- Disclosure and Conflicts of Interest Policy
- Travel and Expenditure Policy
- Counter Fraud and Bribery Policy
- Financial Regulations
- Public Interest Disclosure (“Whistleblowing”) Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy

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