

Gifts and Hospitality

Policy and Procedure

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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. This 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 Crimes Act 2011 (which brought in anti-bribery and corruption provisions similar to the UK's 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 Vice-Chancellor or Service Director, with guidance from the Chief Financial Officer or Registrar 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.
- B2 **Hospitality:** 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:
- i. all staff, governors and 'associated persons' including agents, partners, contractors, representatives and any others acting on behalf of the University;
 - ii. all University activities undertaken in the UK or overseas.
- B4 The Policy does not apply to:
- i. gifts and hospitality which the University offers to its own staff or governors, guidance for which is in the HR Handbook;
 - ii. philanthropic gifts and donations offered to, and accepted on behalf of, the University, Philanthropic Gifts and Donations are covered by the Donations, Endowments and Gifts Policy.

B5 The Chief Financial Officer and/ or Registrar are the main sources of advice on the operation of this Policy and the Chief Financial Officer is responsible for:

- i. the communication of the University's Policy on Corporate Gifts and Hospitality;
- ii. seeking assurance from the Vice Chancellor and Service Directors that this policy is being enforced at a local level and that local registers of gifts and hospitality are being maintained as required.

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 HR Handbook 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;
- Staff must 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;
- 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 Crimes Act 2011, 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 Department (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 the V-C 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.

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 Chief Financial Officer or Registrar 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 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 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) require approval in advance by a staff member's Service Director or 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 are not permitted. Gifts below £50 are 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 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 Officer. 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 Department should maintain a Register of Gifts and Hospitality, unless already included in a general register maintained by the Finance Team, 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. Access to the Registers may be requested at any time by the Vice-Chancellor, Chief Financial Officer or Registrar, members of the Board of Governors, 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 The Vice-Chancellor and Service Directors are accountable for ensuring that the Register in their Faculty or Department is maintained and updated, unless maintained directly by the Finance Team, and that the requirement for its use and accuracy is communicated to staff in their areas.
- E5 The Chief Financial Officer 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:

- Chief Financial Officer
- Registrar