

Gifts and Hospitality Policy

The occasional exchange of business gifts, meals or low-level entertainment is a common practice and is meant to create goodwill and enhance relationships. However, if the receipt of business courtesies becomes excessive, it can create a sense of personal obligation on the part of the recipient. Such sense of obligation can interfere with the individual's ability to be impartial in the transaction. Staff may accept business courtesies, but such courtesies must be modest enough not to interfere with the ethical judgement of the member of staff and must not create an appearance of impropriety. Corporate hospitality and gifts (whether received or provided) must be transparent, auditable and proportionate. Subject to sections 1 to 8 below modest gifts and hospitality may be accepted. This Policy sets out the principles and requirements expected of staff in offering and receiving gifts and hospitality.

The University requires the following procedures to be followed.

1. The University accepts normal and appropriate gestures of hospitality and goodwill (whether given to/received from third parties) so long as the giving or receiving of such gifts meets the following requirements:
 - a) It is not made with the intention of influencing the party to whom it is being given, to obtain or reward the retention of a business or a business advantage, or as an explicit or implicit exchange for favours or benefits.
 - b) It is not made with the suggestion that a return favour is expected.
 - c) It is in compliance with English law.
 - d) It is given in the name of the University, not in an individual's name.
 - e) It does not include cash or a cash equivalent (e.g. a voucher or gift certificate).
 - f) It is appropriate in the circumstances (e.g. giving small gifts around Christmas or as a small thank you to the University for helping with a large project upon completion).
 - g) It is of an appropriate type and value and given at an appropriate time, taking into account the reason for the gift.
 - h) It is given/received openly, not secretly.
 - i) It is not selectively given to a key, influential person, clearly with the intention of directly influencing them.
 - j) It is not above a certain excessive value, as pre-determined by the Chief Governance Officer (which figure is currently in excess of £50).
 - k) It is not offered to, or accepted from, a government official or representative or politician or political party, without the prior approval of the University's Chief Governance Officer.
2. In no circumstances must any gift of money be made or received by a member of staff of the University.
3. Where it is inappropriate to decline the offer of a gift (i.e. when meeting with an individual of a certain religion/culture who may take offence), the gift may be accepted so long as it is declared to the individual's Line Manager and the declaration process is followed.
4. The University recognises that the practice of giving and receiving business gifts varies between countries, regions, cultures, and religions, so definitions of what is acceptable and not acceptable will inevitably differ for each.

5. The intention behind a gift being given/received should always be considered. If there is any uncertainty, the advice of the Chief Governance Officer should be sought.
6. As good practice, gifts given and received over the financial threshold (currently in excess of £50) should always be disclosed to the Chief Governance Officer. Gifts from suppliers or potential suppliers should always be disclosed.
7. The University's Gifts and Hospitality Policy requires that all gifts and hospitality of an estimated value of £50 or more, are to be recorded on the **Gift and Hospitality Acceptance Form** (in the form set out as Appendix 1) and for the following procedures to be followed.
 - 7.1. If it is not possible to value the gift or hospitality received, or if it is unknown, then that information should be declared on the **Gift and Hospitality Acceptance Form**.
 - 7.2. Gift/hospitality declarations need to be referred to the Line Manager of the person in receipt of the gift or hospitality for countersigning [in the case of the Vice Chancellor this shall be the Chair to Council].
 - 7.3. The Line Manager will send the Gift and Hospitality Acceptance Form to the Chief Governance Officer who will make a decision as to whether it can be accepted. The Chief Governance Officer may need to seek the advice of the Chief Finance Officer as to whether the gift or hospitality may be accepted.
 - 7.4. Issues that cannot be resolved by the Chief Finance Officer and the Chief Governance Officer will be referred to the Ethics Advisory Committee for consideration.
 - 7.5. If it is deemed as unacceptable for the gift/hospitality to be received, but it is not possible for it to be returned, the gift should be put to charitable use.
8. This policy does not, in any way, override the University's Financial Regulations, especially those relating to procurement, nor the Conflict and Declaration of Interest Policy. Provision of corporate hospitality is also covered in the Employee Travel and Expenses Policy and Procedure.

Review

This policy will be reviewed by the Audit Committee annually, or as and when any legislative changes occur, to ensure compliance with one of the principles of the legislation. Council will be advised of any action taken via the Annual Report from the Audit Committee.

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Reviewed November 2020

Appendix 1: Gift and Hospitality Acceptance Form

Name(s) of person(s) to whom gift/hospitality given <i>[i.e. University member of staff/spouse/partner or member of close family of employee]</i>	
College/Department/Institute	
Date gift/hospitality Received	
Organisation/person providing gift/hospitality and their relationship with the University	
Name of event (if applicable)	
Details of gift/hospitality Received	
Purpose of gift/hospitality Received (if known)	
Estimated value (if known)	
Was this gift/hospitality given solely for the named person's use? Y/N	
If 'No' please give further details: <i>e.g. shared with the team etc.</i>	
Signed	
Date declaration submitted	
Name of Line Manager	
The Line Manager is asked to countersign this form to confirm, to the best of their knowledge, the information detailed here is accurate.	
Countersigned by Line Manager	

- All gifts and hospitality of an estimated value of £50 or more are to be recorded on the proposed declaration form.
- **The Gift and Hospitality Declaration Form needs to be sent to the Chief Governance Officer for a decision.**
- If it is not possible to value the gift or hospitality received, or if it is unknown, then a declaration should be made.
- Issues that cannot be resolved by the Chief Governance Officer and the Chief Finance Officer will be referred to the Ethics Advisory Committee for consideration.
- If it is deemed as unacceptable for the gift/hospitality to be received, but it is not possible for it to be returned, the gift should be put to charitable use.