

## **Gifts and Hospitality Policy and Procedure**

### **1 Introduction**

Whilst the University expects its employees and staff to comply with this policy, it does not confer contractual rights or form part of any contract of employment and may be amended by the University or replaced at any time following appropriate consultation and negotiation with recognised trade unions. Breach of this policy may be addressed via the University's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure and Code of Conduct.

This policy will be reviewed by the Clerk to the Board of Governors on a 3-year basis or amended in response to changes in future legislation and/or case law.

### **2 Ownership**

The Clerk to the Board of Governors owns and manages this policy on behalf of The University of Northampton.

### **3 Organisational Scope**

This is a corporate policy and applies to all employees (and workers, as applicable) of The University of Northampton including any wholly owned subsidiaries, unless an alternative policy exists, subject to any qualifying conditions.

### **4 Policy Statement**

4.1 A policy cannot cover all circumstances, applying this policy relies on your common sense and personal and professional integrity.

The most simple test is whether a fair-minded member of the public, knowing all the facts, would see anything improper or suspicious about your acceptance of a gift or hospitality.

Before accepting ask yourself:

- Would I be embarrassed if anyone found out about it?
- How would I feel if I read about it in the paper?

- Does receiving it influence me in any way?

If you are in any doubt, refuse the offer.

#### 4.2 You cannot accept the following:

- Gifts or hospitality designed to induce you to do something or not do something. This is bribery, and the University's Anti-Bribery Policy applies
- The offeror is seeking to enter into a specific contractual or financial relationship with the University/company
- There is an open procurement exercise or invitation to tender, and the offeror has bid or intends to bid
- A contractor is offering gifts or hospitality with the object of obtaining preferential treatment in connection with a contract
- You are, or will be, making a decision in relation to the offeror. This includes students whose work you have not yet marked
- Acceptance jeopardises the reputation of the University/company and/or goes against its values and behaviours as set out in the Strategic Plan
- Acceptance places you under an obligation, or might be seen as placing you under an obligation
- Acceptance creates a conflict between the performance of your duties to the University/company and your personal interests. Acceptance leads to a suspicion that such a conflict is created. For company directors, there are specific provisions in the Companies Act 2006, and you should ensure that you are familiar with these
- Cash, as its source is not traceable, and it is likely to be construed as bribery

#### 4.3 The University keeps a register of Gifts and Hospitality. The register is kept:

- To ensure that the organisation is transparent in its dealings and protect its integrity and good reputation
- To monitor how well this policy is applied
- To ensure that individual members of staff are not compromised by accusations of impropriety

## **5 Definitions**

### **5.1 Gift**

Something offered to you because of your role in the University/company by a person or organisation external to the University/company. For the purposes of this policy, 'gift' refers to:

- Physical items
- Benefits for example free use of sporting or other facilities, discounts such as discount shopping cards, provision of services or goods at a reduced price, free membership of a club or facility, financial support or gifts for an office party, the option to buy goods or services at favourable price.

## 5.2 Hospitality

Food, drinks, entertainment for example music, theatre, sporting events, cultural events, receptions, presentations, accommodation, travel to and from such events which are offered to you and members of your family by an external organisation because of your role at the University.

## 6 Key Principles

### 6.1 What hospitality can I accept?

Reasonable entertainment in the course of a normal business relationship with a value of up to £100.

If you believe the value is over £100, query whether the hospitality is proportionate and reasonable in terms of that business relationship. Record your acceptance of it on the Gifts and Hospitality Register.

If in doubt, check with your Line Manager before accepting.

Hospitality is likely to come from an organisation with which there is an existing business relationship. If there is not, take extra care, the reason for unsolicited offers of hospitality should be interrogated.

### 6.2 What gifts can I accept?

| Estimated Value | Record on the Gifts and Hospitality Register? | Retention                                                                 |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Up to £15       | No                                            | You can keep it for your personal use                                     |
| £15 - £50       | Yes                                           | You can keep it for your personal use or consider sharing with colleagues |

|                       |     |                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----------------------|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Over £50              | Yes | You can accept the gift on behalf of the University. It becomes property of the University and you should hand it to your line manager as soon as possible |
| Not sure of the value | Yes | You can accept the gift on behalf of the University. It becomes property of the University and you should hand it to your line manager as soon as possible |

### 6.3 Can I accept gifts and hospitality from colleagues?

Yes. This policy does not apply to the giving of gifts and hospitality between work colleagues, for example birthday or Christmas gifts and invitations to drinks or meals. Colleagues should refer to the section in this policy on what should not be accepted. Both givers and receivers should be sensitive to perceptions and comfortable that none of the situations listed there are created.

### 6.4 What about donations?

A donation is a gift given to an organisation in its capacity as a fund or cause and in support of that fund or cause. It is given typically for charitable or philanthropic reasons. For the University, this is covered by the Acceptance of Donations and Donor Relations Policy and Procedure. For University companies which have not established their own policies, offers of a donation should be referred to the Board of Directors.

### 6.5 Guidance for Line Managers on the Disposal of Gifts

The options for disposal of gifts worth over £50 are:

1. Give to an organisation as a charitable donation
2. Consult the Marketing Department about whether they could offer the gift as a prize
3. Display in the University
4. Divide equitably amongst colleagues

If in doubt, consult your own line manager. The ultimate authority for decisions about the disposal of gifts is a member of the Senior Management Team.

### 6.6 Recording Conversations

Unauthorised audio recording of conversations is prohibited.  
 Anyone in breach of this may be subject to disciplinary action

## 7 Procedure for the Register of Gifts and Hospitality

- 7.1 Items can be added to the register at the following link:  
<https://mynorthamptonac.sharepoint.com/sites/OVC/Clerk/GiftsandHospitality>
- 7.2 You may add your own items, or someone else can do it on your behalf
- 7.3 Other members of staff cannot access entries you have made on the register. Annually, the Register is collated and reviewed by the University's Audit Committee. This allows the Audit Committee to monitor whether this policy is being applied
- 7.4 The Register is retained by the Clerk to the Board of Governors for a period of 10 years. It is not routinely made available publicly. However, were a request made under the Freedom of Information Act, it could be released. It would be reviewed prior to release to ensure that no items of a commercially sensitive nature were disclosed, for example confidential discussions about working with another organisation

## 8 Associated Documents

Financial Regulations  
 Code of Conduct for Staff  
 Code of Conduct for Governors, External Committee Members, Officers and Senior Post Holders  
 Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy and Procedure  
 Acceptance of Donations and Donor Relations Policy and Procedure

## 9 Equality Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment must accompany this document.

## 10 Version Control

| Version Control             |                    | Approval record      |                                            |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Author:                     | Clerk to the Board | Approval:            | TU Liaison -<br>UMT -<br>JCNC -<br>Board - |
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| September 2010 | 1.1            |                                                                                                              | Board of Governors |
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| March 2014     | 1.3            |                                                                                                              | Board of Governors |
| August 2014    | 1.4            |                                                                                                              | Board of Governors |
| 19/10/2016     | 1.5            |                                                                                                              | Board of Governors |
| 13/01/2018     | 1.6            | Updated references to associated documents, template, wording to ensure alignment with Financial Regulations | Board of Governors |
| 17/04/2019     | 2.0            | Complete rewrite                                                                                             | Board of Governors |