

# Gift Acceptance Policy



**Responsibility for policy:** Director of Finance

**Approving authority:** Vice-Chancellor

**Last reviewed:** December 2023

**Next review:** December 2028

## Application

1. This policy applies to all staff of the University of Waikato.

## Purpose

2. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to staff as to proper behaviour with respect to the acceptance of gifts offered or presented to them in the course of University business, the requirements for the disclosure and recording of such gifts, and the avoidance of the perception of impaired objectivity or undue influence.

## Scope

3. For the removal of doubt, this policy does not apply to:
  - a. gifts presented to University staff by the University in recognition of significant personal events, such as retirement
  - b. University of Waikato Staff Awards.
4. The [Fundraising and Philanthropy Acceptance Policy](#) applies to fundraising undertaken on behalf of the University and philanthropic gifts, bequests and grants accepted on behalf of the University.

## Related documents

5. The following documents set out further information relevant to this policy:
  - [Art Collection Policy](#)
  - [Financial Authority Policy](#)
  - [Financial Ethics Policy](#)
  - [Fraud and Corruption Policy](#)
  - [Fundraising and Philanthropy Acceptance Policy](#)
  - [Interests \(Conflicts of Interest\) Policy](#)
  - [Procurement Policy](#)
  - [Protected Disclosures Policy](#)
  - [Purchasing Policy](#)
  - [Staff Code of Conduct](#)

## Definitions

6. In this policy:

**gift** means a reward, gratuity, benefit or other consideration beyond remuneration and reimbursement, whether solicited or unsolicited, either in the form of a tangible object (e.g. money, vouchers, shares, property, art, cultural artefacts, prizes, goods or services) or an intangible benefit (e.g. hospitality, privileged access or preferential treatment) which would not ordinarily be a legitimate expectation associated with a staff member's employment with the University. A gift may be monetary (i.e. cash or funds readily convertible to cash) or non-monetary (i.e. an item of intrinsic value)

**monetary gift** means a gift of money, gift vouchers, equity holdings, securities or any other gift that is readily convertible to cash.

## Principle

7. The University recognises that the giving and receiving of gifts, hospitality and entertainment is customary for certain justified business purposes, acknowledging that such exchanges can be sensitive because of the range of purposes they can serve, the opportunities for private benefit and the range of views as to what may or may not be deemed to be appropriate in particular circumstances.

## Monetary gifts

8. Staff members, in their capacity as staff of the University of Waikato, must not accept any monetary gift from any external party under any circumstances.

## Non-monetary gifts

9. A gift received by a staff member in their capacity as a staff member of the University of Waikato from any external party is the property of the University.
10. Staff members must not solicit or accept any gift (whatever its nature or value) from any external party if the gift:
  - a. might influence their business decisions on behalf of the University
  - b. might compromise their integrity or the integrity of the University
  - c. might be seen by others as either an inducement or a reward which might put the staff member under an obligation to a third party.
11. A staff member, regardless of their level of authority in relation to financial management, must not solicit or accept any gift from any party with whom they hold a pecuniary interest without first declaring the interest to the Director of Finance and obtaining their approval to proceed; any conflict of interest declared under this clause must be recorded in the University's Interest Register through [Kuhukuhu](#) (Financial Services: Interest Declaration).
12. In accordance with the [Procurement Policy](#) and [Purchasing Policy](#) staff members who are involved either directly or indirectly in a procurement or purchasing process must not accept a gift of any type from a supplier (or potential supplier) of goods or services where those goods or services are the same as, or similar to, goods or services that are currently the subject of the procurement or purchase process.
13. A staff member who is offered a gift which would not ordinarily be a legitimate expectation associated with the staff member's employment with the University, must disclose the details of the offer to their line manager; the relevant line manager has authority to determine whether the gift may be accepted and if so, whether it may be retained by the staff member who received it or must be shared with other relevant staff; a gift accepted by a staff member while travelling on University business must be declared to the staff member's line manager on their return.
14. The following factors must be considered by the line manager in determining whether or not a gift may be accepted:
  - a. the monetary value of the gift
  - b. whether the gift might be converted into cash
  - c. whether the gift is a gift-in-kind (i.e. a service) that the University would otherwise have needed to pay the value of
  - d. how the gift would look to an outside party (e.g. the media, government, competing suppliers, the wider public)
  - e. the reasons for the gift being offered
  - f. the frequency of the gift; one-off or regularly
  - g. whether the gift displays a company or organisational logo that might constitute advertising
  - h. the value or importance of the gift to the staff member.
15. Prizes or awards granted by professional organisations to a staff member may be accepted by the relevant staff member without the prior approval of their line manager, and are not

required to be recorded in the Gift Register through [Kuhukuhu](#) (Financial Services: Gift Register).

16. The acceptance of any gift of artwork for the University's art collection is subject to the prior approval of the Vice-Chancellor in accordance with the [Art Collection Policy](#).
17. Free travel and/or accommodation offered to a staff member to attend a conference and present a paper or chair a session is not regarded as a gift under this policy, however substantial benefits (travel, accommodation, hospitality and/or registration costs etc.) offered to a staff member to attend a conference or similar event and who has no significant role in the conference or event is considered a gift and must be recorded in the Gift Register.

#### **Recording of gifts**

18. The details of all gifts received (with the exception of prizes or awards granted in accordance with clause 15 of this policy or travel and/or accommodation offered for conference presentations or chaired sessions in accordance with clause 17 of this policy), where the value of a gift accepted from an external party is estimated by the relevant line manager to exceed \$200 must be recorded by the recipient in the Gift Register through [Kuhukuhu](#) (Financial Services: Gift Register).
19. Where several gifts have been accepted from the same external party (or connected parties) over a calendar year, they must be treated as one gift and the collective value calculated and recorded accordingly.
20. Where a decision has been made to either accept or decline a non-monetary gift, the intended recipient must ensure that the provider is appropriately informed and acknowledged.
21. The acceptance of a gift must not result in preferential treatment being given to a person or organisation in any way.

#### **Complaints**

22. Any person who believes that this policy has been breached is encouraged to advise the Director of Finance who will investigate the matter; alternatively, the complainant may follow the procedures set out in the [Fraud and Corruption Policy](#) or [Protected Disclosures Policy](#).

#### **Responsibility for monitoring compliance**

23. The Director of Finance is responsible for conducting regular audits of the Gift Register.
24. The Director of Finance is responsible for monitoring compliance with this policy and for reporting any breaches to the Vice-Chancellor.
25. Breaches of this policy may result in disciplinary action under the [Staff Code of Conduct](#).