

Acceptance of Gifts and Hospitality from External Parties Guidelines

Purpose and Scope

Clark University is committed to the utmost integrity in fulfilling its mission and thereby requires the same level of integrity from its employees. The acceptance of Gifts or Hospitality or other benefits may improperly influence an employee in their discharge of official duties or create the perception that the employee is receiving personal gain by virtue of their position at the University. These guidelines provide Clark's expectation on employees accepting Gifts and Hospitality from external sources. Departments and units may impose more stringent procedures, as they deem appropriate and necessary, to preserve the University's integrity.

Employees have a fundamental obligation to act in the best interests of the University. The purpose of this policy is to prevent employees from engaging in transactions or relationships that might influence or appear to influence their decision-making. The spirit of this guidance is to avoid accepting a gift or other offer when that offer creates even the perception that a decision was or could be biased by personal gain or could be perceived as seeking favor.

Definitions

Gift: Any item of value, including any service, favor, monies, credits, or discounts not available to others. Honoraria received for presentations or colloquia attendance and awards for service or contributions to one's field are not considered to be Gifts.

External Party: Any organization, vendor or individual that is not a member of Clark University.

Hospitality: Entertainment, meals, and travel, including, but not limited to event tickets, transportation, room or housing, registration fees, business lunches and dinners, and other comparable activity.

Immediate Family Member: A member of an employee's family, whether by blood, adoption or marriage, who is an employee's spouse, child, domestic or civil union partner, parent or sibling.

Procedures and Enforcement

1. Acceptance of Gifts and Hospitality from External Parties
 - A. Gifts received by Clark employees and/or their immediate family members from an external organization, vendor or individual in connection with the employee's duties at the University are prohibited, except for de minimis items, such as:
 - Gifts with a value of less than \$250.00 or items such as advertising tokens, giveaways and informational materials available to anyone;
 - Tokens of goodwill given by officials of other Universities; and
 - Plaques or similar awards given in recognition of an event, milestone or similar circumstance.
 - B. Business meals and other Hospitality can help establish a relationship of goodwill among current and prospective University partners. Nonetheless, the acceptance of

Hospitality may interfere with the employee’s ability to make decisions in the best interest of the University. Therefore, employees should only accept Hospitality that has a clear business purpose and where University work is being conducted.

- C. If employees are in a position to make or influence decisions regarding vendors in the process of seeking or continuing to do business with Clark, extra caution should be exercised when accepting Gifts or Hospitality from those entities as acceptance can create the perception of a quid pro quo.
- D. Exceptions may be made with respect to the receipt of either Gifts or Hospitality by the staff member’s supervisor or faculty member’s department chair and/or dean’s office. Approval for such exceptions must be documented.
 - o An example of when an exception may be made is when being offered a gift from a foreign official. Cultural norms may dictate that the gift must be accepted in order to not offend the giver. However, the gift must not be kept by the employee. Instead, the employee would work with their supervisor to find an appropriate mechanism for distributing, sharing, memorializing or disposing of the gift.
 - o All exceptions made must be reported on the institutional [Conflict of Interest form](#).
- E. Clark University employees shall not solicit individual Gift(s), Hospitality, or other personal benefit(s) to which they are not otherwise entitled from External Parties in connection with their duties at the University.
- F. This guidance is not intended to impede an employee’s ability to engage in speaking, consulting or independent contractor work, with or without compensation, if the staff member’s supervisor or faculty member’s department chair and/or dean’s office have approved of the engagement in advance.
- G. When in doubt on whether or not to report any gift or hospitality, it is highly recommended that employees err on the side of reporting to their supervisor and reviewing the [Conflict of Interest Policy](#) for direction on potential reporting.

Related Policies and Regulations

- [Conflict of Interest Policy](#)
- [Entertainment and Gift Policy](#)

History/Revision Information

Responsible Office/Division: Office of Human Resources and Office of General Counsel

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